

## **Almonry Development Working Group**

Notes from a meeting on 14 Feb 2020

### **Present:**

Cllrs Favell, Kiloh and Sharman

Mr Stephen Gray

### **Update on background work needed to support the Strategic Plan**

Further research about potential users is needed. Given the time constraint, it was agreed that the best way forward would be to get quotes from community groups and potential business users.

It was noted that without the improvements being completed, it is difficult to approach organisations that may be interested in using the building. However, it was suggested that organisations such as the Wealden Building Studies Group, Civic Society, Institutes (eg Architects, Historic Building Conservation, Accountants etc) could be approached. It could also be suitable for an oral history group or a museum research group.

MK will ask the Town Clerk to enquire if RALC would want to use The Almonry for meetings if it was improved.

The Almonry is not big enough for these meetings.

MK will work with the Town Clerk to collate data regarding the current energy use in The Almonry and research projected savings due to roof insulation, modern heating system and improved plumbing etc. to show benefits. (Lewes Town Council may have an energy plan.)

We need to obtain the heat requirement for the building from Carnell Warren Associates in order that we can consider options eg heat exchange methods etc.

MK will also research environmental grants for heating etc. and also from Biffa and Veolia.

Battle is outside the area for Biffa and Veolia. A Government grant may be possible through the Renewable Heat Incentive scheme.

MK will also talk to Veronique Poutrel at ESCC, who may also be able to help BTC to look for EU funding.

MK has emailed Veronique.

GF will look through the HLF grant documents to see if research has already been undertaken into residents' views about whether The Almonry should be open to the public.

GF couldn't find these data, so MK will ask LS if any research was undertaken.

GF will ask the M&TD Officer to advise how best to research residents' views about disabled access. GF will consult the Town Clerk regarding the design for a flyer.  
A questionnaire is on the website and paper copies are in the office and given out at the Town Forum.

Talks need to be held with RDC regarding capital funding support. MK, HS and GF will arrange to meet with Kathryn Field, Kevin Dixon and Vikki Cook in the first instance.

Only KD has replied. GF to email again.

It was noted that Carol has arranged valuations and has already provided information about rents.

These have been incorporated into the Plan.

A resident has suggested forming a focus group. GF will discuss this with the M&TD Officer and Cllr Would.

GF discussed this with M&TD Officer. On reflection, the group felt that there was too little time to arrange a focus group.

MK will talk to another organisation faced with similar problems - suggest Lewes Town Council.

MK is in conversation with a contact.

The Town Clerk would need to approach the National Trust about the possibility of taking on ownership with BTC as tenant, but HS will find out who the contact would be for acquisitions.

The group felt that is unlikely that the NT would take on the property in its current state. (However, if the repairs were undertaken at a cost to the taxpayer, it may not be financially beneficial to the Council.)

HS has had written confirmation that NT is not interested in The Almonry. HS will forward the correspondence.

Consideration should be given to the possible income from sales in the TIP - BMLH needs to be consulted. It could be possible to share profits and it would benefit BMLH if the TIP sold their goods during the winter months.

The Town Clerk will contact museum group to discuss.

GF will talk to the M&TD Officer for ideas about ways to demonstrate that the project is aimed at improving the town.

M&TD Officer is giving this thought.

GF will ask the Town Clerk to contact Graham Glenn in the Property team at ESCC to enquire if they may want to consider renting space for hot desking, as suggested by BH at RDC.

The Town Clerk will action this.

GF will ask the Town Clerk to enquire if the architect could supply illustrations of how the inside of the building would look.

The architect cannot supply illustrations, but will supply a floor plan without room labels etc.

### **Draft Strategic Plan**

HS has reviewed the January 2020 draft and has not suggested changes at this time. SG noted that a timetable should be included in the Plan. A further draft is to be sent to SG for review. He will then send comments and questions to the group to help them to better formulate the needs and requirements for The Almonry.

### **Tender Review**

SG has agreed to sit on the review panel if the meeting can be at 14.00. He will require access to the tender documents at 13.30 for preparation.

### **AOB**

It is inevitable that BTC will need to apply to RDC for an extension to the Planning consent. SG advised the group to ensure that this was not left until the last minute.