

Rayleigh Heritage Centre Working Party

Minutes of Inaugural Meeting held at the Rayleigh Town Council Chamber 30th May 2013 at 10am

XXXXXXXXXXPlease note update at the end of these minutes.....XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

1. Attendees

Mike Davies, Peggy Corbett, Kerry Cumberland, Eddie Dray, David Geach, Tony Harvey, Cheryl Roe, Bruce Smart, Linda Smart, Peter Waghorn

2. Apologies

Thelma Bowen, Ron Choppen, Sue Geach, Spencer Welsh

3. Introduction by Mike Davies

Mike introduced himself, welcomed everyone to this new group and asked all present to briefly introduce themselves. Cheryl Roe (Chairman RTC Environment) and Peggy Corbett (Chairman RTC Policy and Finance) have joined the group as “advisers/consultants” in view of the key role that Rayleigh Town Council will play in this project.

4. Election of Chairman

Mike asked for nominees for the role of Chairman.

Mike Davies was nominated by Kerry Cumberland and seconded by David Geach. No other nominations were received and by a unanimous show of hands Mike was elected to the Chair.

5. General Discussion

A general discussion took place and Mike gave a brief overview of the proposed Heritage Centre. He apologised for the amount of paperwork distributed and advised that it would (hopefully) reduce over time. He set out the “Terms of Reference” and specifically that the group is a Working Party where all members will be asked to contribute and undertake tasks between each monthly meeting.

The whole project is dependant on several key issues being agreed before detailed work can commence.

- a) The installation of a lift between the Ground/First/Second floors by the Todman Family Trust, together with compliance with the associated Planning/Building regulations.
- b) The agreement of an acceptable lease between the Todman Family Trust and the “Rayleigh Heritage Trust” (or whatever name is chosen) or Rayleigh Town Council.
- c) Adequate funding being in place for both the set up costs (amount to be established) and the initial ongoing costs (to be established).

NOTE: Rayleigh Town Council have agreed in PRINCIPLE to fund up to £12,000 per year in respect of the rent and also a ONE OFF payment of £2000 towards the set up costs. Mike advised that Rayleigh

Through the Looking Glass have already raised £1500 towards these costs and he hopes that this figure will soon increase to £2000.

MIKE advised that although detailed work, as outlined in the “List of Tasks” document cannot start in earnest it would be helpful if some considered thought could be given to these costs before the next meeting.

PEGGY mentioned that there could be a possible conflict of interest as Todmans are the Town Council solicitors and this will be considered by the Town Council

MIKE gave a “definition” as to the differences between a Museum and a Heritage Centre and all agreed that the words “Heritage Centre” are far more appropriate.

BRUCE suggested that residents be invited to donate items for display in the Heritage Centre and this good idea can be investigated at a later date.

MIKE outlined some initial thoughts as to the Registered Charity “The Rayleigh Heritage Centre Trust” that will need to be formed. This will have benefits as the charity will qualify for better funding opportunities/gift aid/ business rate reduction /VAT and much more. He envisages in the region of 10 Trustees to include Rayleigh Town Council (possibly Rochford District Council—either Councillor or Officer) Rayleigh Through the Looking Glass, The Historical Society of Rayleigh, and perhaps the local Community Archives, and a local school (suggestion by Peggy)

CARE: CHERYL mentioned a possible conflict of interest, with resultant complications, if a Councillor from either RTC or RDC were on the Board of Trustees; indeed we must also be mindful of potential issues if RDC are involved with 2 Museums (Windmill) in Rayleigh. It may be that an Officer can take this role.

CHERYL: from the “very provisional” list of names for the various rooms Cheryl mentioned that it might be appropriate for one room to be named after Rayleigh Through the Looking Glass....or even me. I (blushed) and said that was a decision for others not me, but I am extremely grateful for the thought.

It was agreed by all that part of the “justification” for a Heritage Centre as part of the grant funding will be letters of support from a number of local schools/groups. KERRY agreed to draft a letter and compile an appropriate list.

TONY asked if specific room sizes were known (which would help with designing and costing each of the rooms) and MIKE advised that we were awaiting details from the Todman Family Trust.

BRUCE mentioned the involvement of the local Schools/Education Room and all agreed that this will be a major consideration with any grant funding application.

It was mentioned by several that the ceilings on the second floor appeared to show signs of bowing/stress and that this issue requires clarification before any lease is agreed.

MIKE confirmed that although the project depends on the lift and lease it would be wise to start thinking about the set up costs now. Any funding application will require detailed costings and will take time and as the current lease expires in July we will need to give the Todman Family Trust an indication of timescales for the Heritage Centre to open, and they will no doubt be unwilling to allow an open ended timescale before rental payments become due.

Robert Todman has indicated that he will be looking for a “letter of Intent” from Rayleigh Town Council, but of course until the lift/lease/funding issues are further progressed this will be a problem.

6. Allocation of Tasks

RAYLEIGH TOWN COUNCIL;

To draft a suitable letter to gather support for the project from local schools/groups.

Speak to RDC to advise them of this Working Party and to see if they wish for a representative to attend future meetings.

Consider who should be the representative(s) on the Heritage Centre Board of Trustees.

Consider the possible “conflict of interest” in respect of the RTC solicitors.

EDDIE/PETER have agreed to visit a local Heritage Centre (possibly Canvey) to see if we can learn from their experiences in setting up such a Centre. There are other Essex Museums/Heritage Centres that may be able to assist (Galleywood?)

TONY asked if we have any details of the exact location of the lift, and MIKE advised these have been requested from the Todmans and are now awaited.

MIKE advised that he is happy to visit/meet anyone outside of the monthly meetings to explain specific tasks (for example the setting up of the FRIENDS group)

ALL;

To read all associated papers and to consider which specific tasks they would like to deal with (for discussion at the next meeting). Please feel free to undertake any research you (but not all members on the same one!!)

Please feel free to send me an e-mail at anytime, on any aspect of this project, but it would be helpful (and help to reduce the time of the monthly meeting) if e-mails are copied to everyone in the group.

7. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will take place on Wednesday 26th June at 10am in the Rayleigh Town Council Chamber. Hopefully in the region of one hour.

Note.....if possible written papers to be circulated to all members by Friday 21st June at the latest.

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Last evening (30th May) I received an e-mail from Sam Crowfoot on behalf of the Todman Family Trust.

They have now received a “ballpark” figure for the cost of the lift of £20,000 and as owners they will agree to pay for this cost and the installation up to a total figure of £25,000.

In addition they have given a brief outline of the lease which will be for 15 years with a starting rent of £12,000 (review every 3 years) PLUS a service charge of 4,300 per annum (currently). The lease to be in the name of Rayleigh Town Council. I have no other details at present.

ACTION for RAYLEIGH TOWN COUNCIL

To consider the implications of the lease and whether it would be preferable for the lease to be in the name of the Rayleigh Heritage Trust with the Council giving the Trust an annual grant.....and whether this would be acceptable to the Todman Family Trust. We could arrange a meeting with the Todman family to discuss.

This is my preferred option, there may be financial advantages (the Trust would get an 80% minimum reduction on business rates) and I would have no objection for a member of the Todman family to be on the Board of Trustees.

Mike Davies
Chairman
31st May 2013