ACCINGTON PALS CENTENARY COMMEMORATIONS GROUP

Tuesday, 11th October, 2016

Present:  Councillor Clare Cleary (in the Chair)
          Helen Gee, Hyndburn BC
          Ian McGuinness, East Lancashire Concert Band
          Anne Ellwood, Pals Prom Group
          Cathy Kierans, Hyndburn BC
          Helen Barrett, St John’s Church and Hyndburn Local History Society
          Shelley Whitehead, Duke of Lancaster’s Regiment

In attendance:  Annette Birch, Freelance Town Centre Heritage (THI) Project Officer
                David McKenna, Landscape Architect (IBI) - THI Project
                Simon Rhodes, Smiling Wolf, Design Consultancy - THI Project

Apologies  Miles Parkinson, Judith Addison and Paddy Short

1 Welcome by the Chair and Introductions

Councillor Clare Cleary, who was chairing the meeting in the absence of Councillor Miles Parkinson, welcomed everyone to the meeting and invited them to introduce themselves.

2 Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the last meeting held on 23rd September 2015, were submitted.

Cath Holmes congratulated all involved in the construction of the Pals Memorial in Haworth Park.

Anne Ellwood thanked everyone involved in the Pals prom event in June. The planning group had worked very well together and there was a good foundation for it to continue in future years.

Cath Holmes gave an account of the poignant visit to the Somme to mark the centenary in June and July of this year.

Agreed - That the minutes of the last meeting, held on 23rd September 2015, be received and agreed as a correct record.

3 Somme Centenary Commemorations 2016

On behalf of the Council Leader, Councillor Miles Parkinson, appreciation was shown to all concerned for the various events which had been arranged, both in the Borough and in France, to mark the centenary of the Battle of the Somme in June/July 2016.

4 Battle of the Somme - Accrington Film Premiere, 18th November 2016

On Friday, 18th November 2016, there would be a screening of the Battle of the Somme film in Accrington Town Hall, which would mark the end of the Battle which lasted 141 days.
The Imperial War Museum and members of the First World War partnership had been working together to show this UNESCO-listed film to audiences across the world and this would be an opportunity for audiences in the Borough to see this unique film in full.

5 Tree Planting for the Somme Centenary

It was reported that Les Bond had grown two oak tree saplings to commemorate the centenary and in particular the sacrifice not only of those from the East Lancashire Battalion, but also other men and women from the area. The proposal was to plant them in the rose garden in Haworth Park and to hold a tree planting ceremony in November (date to be confirmed).

6 Final Centenary Commemorations - To mark the end of the First World War, November - 2018

The group was asked to put forward ideas as to how the final centenary commemoration, the end of the First World War could be commemorated in November 2018. Various ideas and suggestions were put forward and it was suggested that an "open forum" be arranged to give everyone the opportunity to contribute.

Agreed

1. That an open forum be arranged to give interested people the opportunity to put forward ideas and suggestions to mark the centenary of the end of the First World War, which would be in November 2018; and

2. That, in the meantime, suggestions be made to Councillor Miles Parkinson.

7 Plans and Consultations on the New Town Square for Accrington

The Group was presented with the draft plans for the square which had evolved following a period of consultation. The concept aimed to link various themes in the landscape architecture, including the Pals, sport, and global heritage. Members of the group were generally supportive of the concept, as presented and made a number of specific comments or suggestions, including:

- support the proposal to take out the horse chestnut trees to create a flexible space in front of the market, replacing them with suitable trees to screen the service yard
- would like more greenery provided this is practical - look at the trees in pots at Towngate, Great Harwood as an example
- agree that a statue would not work, but support the idea of small pieces(s) of art such as the dog, to create interest
- Not keen on made-up stories - “Mary’s story”

The group was invited to make more detailed individual comments to Annette Birch, THI Officer, for collation. Shelley Whitehead indicated that she would liaise directly with IBI, the landscape architects, to discuss the aspects of the interpretation that could have relevance to young people.
8 Projects and Events Summary

The group went through the list of projects planned and completed to mark the centenary. It was noted that there had been a significant number of centenary events held or projects undertaken so far. Members of the group questioned whether the proposed liveried bus was progressing and also a proposed statue on the Coppice.

Helen Barrett confirmed that the Pals trail had been abandoned. Shelley Whitehead reported that the annual Pals service at St John’s would be on Sunday, 19th February 2017.

9 Other Business

Benches for Pals Memorial Gardens
Cath Holmes indicated that the Pals Commemoration Fund would be willing to fund a bench at the Pals Memorial Gardens, Church Street, to the same design as “Gilbert’s bench” at Memorial Park Great Harwood. It was suggested that the Fund would pay for one and the Council for a second.

Name of Group
It was suggested that at this point it might be appropriate to rename the group and members were asked to put forward suggestions.

Appreciation
Cath Holmes wished to thanks in particular officers of the Council for their work in planning and organising the commemoration events.

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