

THE FUTURE OF WAVENEY DISTRICT COUNCIL CIVIC MEMORABILIA

1. Issue for consideration

- 1.1 When the Council moved out of the old Town Hall and into its new Riverside headquarters, the various items of civic memorabilia from the Town Hall, or at least those not in use for civic functions or on loan to local museums, were put into secure environmentally controlled storage in Lowestoft until arrangements could be made to consider their future.
- 1.2 In the past many of the civic items were not readily on show to the public and the Council's new/refurbished buildings also do not readily lend themselves to displaying such items. A decision is now required as to what is the best and most appropriate way forward.

2.0 Proposal

- 2.1 To address this situation, minimise the costs of ongoing storage and avoid any deterioration of objects in storage it is proposed to set up a process to decide the future of the individual items of memorabilia. A decision will be required as to whether this process should include just the items in storage or should also include some or all of the items currently out on loan. It is proposed the outcome of the process will be agreed 'item by item' actions, either Keep it, Agree Future with the donor, Gift it for public display or Sell it for the benefit of the local community.
- 2.2 This paper proposes the setting up of a cross-party Board with delegated authority to decide the future of the various civic items. It is envisaged the Board would receive a report with photographs which will describe the individual items of memorabilia along with as accurate a valuation as is possible. Also, if known, details of how each item came into the Council's possession, from where and with what if any restrictions/stipulations. The Board would then consider each item in turn and decide upon its future along the lines suggested in paragraph 2.1 above. To assist the Board and in an attempt to help with decision making a 'decision tree' has been prepared.
- 2.3 The future of the memorabilia will be of interest to all Members and decisions on its future can be expected to result in significant wider public interest. It is therefore suggested that approval for the proposed process of reviewing the items is sought from full Council.
- 2.4 It is possible that some of the items held by the Council may be sold and might raise a useable cash sum. A decision is therefore required as to what use to put this money to. For example, it could go into operational budgets, or alternatively could be used as fortuitous income and put to a specific use, perhaps one with a wider community enabling impact. It is suggested that the Board could usefully consider how best to approach this issue and that its report to Council could include recommendations on how to use any money raised.
- 2.5 In addition to various pictures, ceramics and models the civic memorabilia includes some items requiring particular attention, for example the photographs of past 'Chairmen' and the Tom Crisp Victoria Cross. Thought has already been given to what might become of these and some early ideas are set out in Appendix B.

3.0 **Governance**

- 3.1 To ensure cross party involvement it is suggested Members on the Board might comprise the Leader, the Cabinet Member for Resources & Welfare Reforms, and two other Members from the Leading Group (suggested amendment to one other Member from the Leading Group made by Overview & Scrutiny Committee), the Leader of the Opposition, another Member of the main Opposition Group and the Member from the Green Party. The Board would be supported by a member of the Senior Management Team, and officers from the Democratic Services and Legal Teams would provide advice as required; decisions would be recorded.
- 3.2 As mentioned in paragraph 2.2 above it is proposed that the Board would have delegated authority to agree the future of the various items of memorabilia, however it is also suggested that in the interests of complete openness the outcome of the Board's work would be reported back to Full Council.

4.0 **Conclusion**

- 4.1 The move out of the Town Hall site has now been completed. Much of the civic memorabilia currently in store is incompatible with the new working environment and ways of doing things and a decision is required on an appropriate process by which to determine its future.
- 4.2 A cross-party Board approved by full Council and with delegated authority could decide and approve the future of the various civic items with the outcome of the Board's work being reported back to Full Council.

Appendix B

- **Photographs of past Chairmen.**

The Riverside building does not lend itself to setting up a photo gallery approach and it is therefore suggested that it might be possible for the pictures to either be bound into a book which could be kept on display or/and digitised and run periodically as a video display.

- **The Tom Crisp Victoria Cross**

The Tom Crisp Victoria Cross is currently kept under lock and key in a secure safe.

Holding the Tom Crisp VC is an undoubted honour for the Council, but is also a responsibility that is becoming increasingly challenging in terms of insuring the medal and ensuring its safe keeping. This has meant that in practice the medal is rarely seen from one year to the next, which might be considered to be regrettable given the undoubted interest there would be in it. Some thought has been given as to the most appropriate future for the medal and proposals will be brought forward in due course following further discussions with descendants/relations of Tom Crisp.