

ST IVES BRIDGE CHAPEL – MANAGEMENT AGREEMENT AND POTENTIAL FUTURE USE

To: **Assets and Investment Committee**

Meeting Date: **16th December 2016**

From: **Deputy Chief Executive, Chris Malyon**

Electoral division(s): **St Ives**

Forward Plan ref: **N/a** *Key decision:* **No**

Purpose: **To propose a formal agreement with the Norris Museum to manage the Chapel of St Ledger, St Ives River Bridge on behalf of Cambridgeshire County Council.**

Recommendation: **It is recommended that the Committee;**

- **Agree the proposed draft agreement set out by the Norris Museum for management of the asset.**

<i>Officer contact:</i>	
Name:	Stephen McGee
Post:	Bridge Engineer – Highway Projects
Email:	Stephen.mcgee@cambridgeshire.gov.uk
Tel:	01223 715652

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 St Ives River Bridge and Chapel is a 15th century six span stone arch structure and is noted for being only one of four bridges in England to incorporate a chapel. The structure is a Scheduled Ancient Monument and Grade 1 listed and therefore any structural or fabric alterations must be approved by Historic England.
- 1.2 The bridge was originally a toll bridge under the ownership of the Duke of Manchester. By 1921 the bridge had fallen into disrepair and the Duke sold it to Huntingdonshire County Council (predecessor to Cambridgeshire County Council). Since 1921 the bridge has been the responsibility of the County Council, forming part of the highway asset and therefore maintained as such.
- 1.3 Legal records show that the Chapel wasn't included at the time, but was sold separately under another conveyance dated in 1928 from Mence & Mence to the County Council for the Administrative County of Huntingdon. Since 1928 both the bridge and chapel have been the responsibility of the County Council and are maintained as part of the highway network.
- 1.4 The Norris museum, prior to their closure for refurbishment, had managed the booking of the chapel without any formal agreement in place. Subsequently, St Ives Town Council took over this informal arrangement.
- 1.5 Due to circumstances outlined in this report, it is proposed that an agreement regarding management and maintenance needs to be formalised. This report aims to seek approval for the commencement of a formal agreement between the Norris Museum and Cambridgeshire County Council, which will secure the future wellbeing of an important Cambridgeshire landmark.

2. MAIN ISSUES

- 2.1 The original issue of the chapel's usage and management was raised due to an application for an alcohol licence and pop up pub. The press published several articles regarding the application and the County Council received strong public opposition to the proposals.
- 2.2 A public meeting and chapel open day was held on the morning of Friday 23 September 2016 to gauge the level of public feeling and to ascertain what the residents of St Ives would like the chapel to be used for. During the morning over 100 concerned residents attended to voice their opinion. A petition of over 800 signatures, objecting to the proposals was received and only 2 people were in support of the pop up pub.
- 2.3 From the public meeting it was discovered that residents felt the Chapel is underused and would like to see it open for more events and functions. Due to the lack of facilities in the chapel, including toilets, washing facilities, fire escapes, etc. officers do not believe that the Chapel would be suitable for commercial hire or the ability to generate income. The County Council's Registration Service Manager has confirmed that due to its on-going religious

use and lack of facilities it is not possible to grant any licence for use as an Approved Venue for civil marriages, civil partnerships etc.

- 2.4 Unfortunately, the applicant applied for the license for the pop up bar prior to any formal discussions with the County Council. Thus the application for an alcohol license and pop up pub was provisionally agreed, albeit with the caveat that appropriate insurance, licenses and consultation was obtained and carried out.
- 2.5 On Monday 4 October, a meeting took place between the County Council and the Norris Museum to set out a possible way forward for the Chapel, including responsibility for maintenance, hire etc. The following proposals were set out during the meeting;
- The County Council will continue to fulfil its maintenance duties in relation to the structure as well as carry out any repairs required;
 - The Norris Museum will hold the keys to the chapel and manage bookings and events which they deem suitable;
 - The Norris Museum also believes they would be able to attain Heritage Lottery Funding for future repair/maintenance schemes (something which the Council has tried previously and was unable to achieve).
- 2.6 Historic England has been kept abreast of all discussions and the proposals outlined in this report.

3.0 Proposed agreement

3.1 Management Agreement for the Bridge Chapel between Cambridgeshire County Council and the Norris Museum, October 2016

The fifteenth century bridge and chapel in St Ives is the major heritage asset in the town and listed as a scheduled ancient monument by Historic England. In order to make it accessible to the general public, whilst ensuring appropriate use of such a nationally significant building, a management agreement between Cambridgeshire County Council and The Norris Museum has been agreed.

Cambridgeshire County Council will continue to be responsible for the maintenance and upkeep of the bridge and chapel in accordance with Historic England's requirements. The Norris Museum will manage all access to the Bridge Chapel and ensure that all activities undertaken in the chapel directly relate to, or are sympathetic with, the nature and historical importance of the building, and seek to share and promote this local asset. All should be temporary in nature and in no way conflict with the historical integrity of the building. All activities will be undertaken at the participants own risk.

3.2 Responsibilities of Cambridgeshire County Council

- Maintenance (in liaison with Historic England);
- Ongoing schedule of repairs and / or maintenance to the fabric of the building and bridge;
- Work in the near future that will improve safety for visitors e.g. balcony repairs - the scope of which will be decided by the County Council and approved by English Heritage.

The current cost of day to day minor maintenance is borne from the bridges maintenance budget. It is important to note that due to an increase in footfall through the chapel there may be additional maintenance required going forward. The Norris Museum will inform the County Council's Highways Service as soon as any issues become apparent, but will not be liable for the cost of any maintenance work. Should work of significant value be required the County Council will determine future funding sources on a case by case basis.

3.3 Responsibilities of The Norris Museum

- To manage all uses of the chapel via a booking system (no income will be generated), any bookings made with any other party would be invalid;
- To judge appropriate use of the chapel and manage bookings accordingly;
- To hold the key to the bridge chapel and issue it to booked users at times suitable for the museum (i.e. museum opening hours);
- Monitor the use and condition of the building on a regular basis;
- To record visitor figures to the Bridge Chapel.

It will be the intention of the museum to open the chapel on a regular basis across the working week and weekend to provide guided access to the Bridge Chapel. These open sessions would be supported by a knowledgeable museum volunteer who could talk to visitors about the bridge and its history. In the future the museum would aim to install a small set of information boards so that even when the chapel is not staffed, visitors can gain an understanding of the significance of the building and bridge.

3.4 Responsibilities of users

Individuals / groups who have booked the chapel will use it at their own risk and will be asked to:

- Leave a refundable deposit for the key if their use is not supervised by The Norris Museum;

- Sign a disclaimer to say they understand that they are entering the building at their own risk; This would include those risks that are inherent in a building of this age and therefore do not adhere to modern health and safety standards e.g. the nature of the stairs down to the lower floor, balcony railings, floor levels etc.;
- Undertake to treat the chapel building with respect as a scheduled ancient monument, not to damage or deface it any way;
- Clean up after their visit removing any rubbish, dirt or debris;
- Report any fault/damage/incident or accident to The Norris Museum;
- Return the key to The Norris Museum at an agreed time in exchange for the return of the deposit.

3.5 Agreed areas of use

- Agreed by all parties that the Catholic church can continue to use the chapel for their services on Monday mornings, leaving it as they found it;
- Charitable fundraising activities e.g. selling of Christmas cards, Poppy Appeal;
- Guided walks, talks and tours;
- Temporary art installations (content, topic and form dependent);
- Unguided individual and group visits as per responsibilities of users above;
- Photograph opportunities including but not exclusive to wedding photographs, local promotion.

The aim of this agreement is to provide a co-ordinated approach to managing the Bridge Chapel as a major heritage asset of the town. By partnering it with The Norris Museum it will form a coherent heritage offer in the town and raise the profile of the chapel as a place to visit. It will also ensure that all activities are deemed appropriate for the nature of the building.

4. ALIGNMENT WITH CORPORATE PRIORITIES

4.1 Developing the local economy for the benefit of all

There are no significant implications for this priority.

4.2 Helping people live healthy and independent lives

There are no significant implications for this priority.

4.3 Supporting and protecting vulnerable people

There are no significant implications for this priority.

4. SIGNIFICANT IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Resource Implications

The following bullet points set out details of significant implications identified by officers:

- With the Norris Museum's management of the asset, there is the possibility of attaining Heritage Lottery Funding for future maintenance and refurbishment schemes;
- The Museum will also look to employ volunteers and sponsors to clean the space as well as windows;
- It is the belief of the County Council Bridges section that the proposals would benefit all parties as well as securing the future of the bridge and chapel from a structural point of view.

4.2 Statutory, Risk and Legal Implications

The following bullet points set out details of significant implications identified by officers:

- On the advice of Historic England, we shall also be adopting their policy guide for owners and occupiers of scheduled monuments.

4.3 Equality and Diversity Implications

There are no significant implications for this priority.

4.4 Engagement and Consultation Implications

The following bullet points set out details of significant implications identified by officers:

- Councillors held a Chapel open day on 23rd September 2016 with over a hundred residents attending. Residents felt the Chapel is far too underused and would like to see it open for more events and functions;
- CCC has been in consultation with Historic England who are satisfied with the proposals;
- Local Members as well as Town Councillors have been consulted and are in support of the proposals.

4.5 Localism and Local Member Involvement

The following bullet points set out details of significant implications identified by officers:

- The Norris Museum intends to publicise the Chapel and its usage to further encourage local and charitable events to take place;
- Local members have been fully informed of the scheme and agreements, and have taken key roles in developing proposals.

4.6 Public Health Implications

There are no significant implications within this category.

Implications	Officer Clearance
Have the resource implications been cleared by Finance?	Yes Name of Financial Officer: <i>Sarah Heywood</i>
Has the impact on Statutory, Legal and Risk implications been cleared by LGSS Law?	Yes Name of Legal Officer: <i>Fiona McMillan</i>
Are there any Equality and Diversity implications?	Yes Name of Officer: <i>Tamar Oviatt-Ham</i>
Have any engagement and communication implications been cleared by Communications?	Yes Name of Officer: <i>Mark Miller</i>
Are there any Localism and Local Member involvement issues?	Yes Name of Officer: <i>Paul Tadd</i>
Have any Public Health implications been cleared by Public Health	Yes Name of Officer: <i>Tess Campbell</i>

Source Documents	Location
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Draft Management Agreement for the Bridge Chapel between Cambridgeshire County Council and The Norris Museum</i> <i>Historic England – Scheduled Monuments – A Guide for Owners and Occupiers</i> <i>1921 & 1928, Conveyancing documents</i> 	<p>All documents can be found at;</p> <p>Unit 5, Wellbrook Court Girton Cambridge CB3 0NA</p> <p>The document is held electronically on the Highways Projects/Bridges directory and can be obtained by emailing; Stephen.mcgee@cambridgeshire.gov.uk</p>