

CULTURE, ARTS & HERITAGE EXECUTIVE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

TUESDAY, 3 OCTOBER 2023 - 4.00 PM



PRESENT: Councillor E Sennitt Clough (Chair), Councillor Miss S Hoy (Vice-Chairman), Councillor S Count, Councillor L Foice-Beard and Councillor P Hicks

APOLOGIES: Councillor Dr H Nawaz

Officers in attendance: Carol Pilson (Corporate Director and Monitoring Officer), Phil Hughes (Head of Leisure Services/SRO March Future High Street Project), Helen Moore (Member Services and Governance Officer) and Jaime-Lea Taylor (Creativity and Cultural Development Officer)

CAH1/23 APPOINTMENT OF THE CHAIRMAN FOR THE MUNICIPAL YEAR

It was proposed by Councillor Hoy, seconded by Councillor Count and resolved that Councillor Elisabeth Sennitt Clough be elected as the Chairman of the Culture, Arts and Heritage Committee for the Municipal Year 2023/24

CAH2/23 APPOINTMENT OF A VICE-CHAIRMAN FOR THE MUNICIPAL YEAR

It was proposed by Councillor Sennitt Clough, seconded by Councillor Tierney and resolved that Councillor Hoy be elected as Vice Chairman of the Culture, Arts and Heritage Committee for the Municipal Year 2023/24.

CAH3/23 TO RECEIVE MEMBERS DECLARATION OF ANY INTERESTS UNDER THE LOCAL CODE OF CONDUCT OR ANY INTEREST UNDER THE CODE OF CONDUCT ON PLANNING MATTERS IN RESPECT OF ANY ITEM TO BE DISCUSSED AT THE MEETING

Councillor Hicks declared in the interest of transparency he has direct and indirect links with 2020 products and marketplace.

CAH4/23 FENLAND POET LAUREATE COMPETITION

Councillor Sennitt Clough presented information regarding the Fenland Poet Laureate Competition.

Members made comments, asked questions, and received responses as follows:

- Councillor Sennitt Clough stated the key discussions are around the timing of the competition, historically entry opens in July to allow adults and young people to write their poems which closes in September and the award ceremony is held in November but what has been proposed is opening the competition entries in December with the closing date in February and the award ceremony to be held in April. Councillor Tierney commented the last award ceremony was a pleasure to attend and agreed this competition needs to go ahead under the proposed times. Councillor Hoy asked as Pride in Fenland is normally held in February will this clash with the proposed dates? Carol Pilson responded the dates will be checked by the Communication Team to make sure the dates do not clash with other corporate award ceremonies across the year. Councillor Sennitt Clough recognised this and

agreed the new times.

- Councillor Sennitt Clough stated moving onto the funding cost, there are plans in place to secure the March Town Hall for the competition at nil cost, the main bulk of the cost will be coming from the trophies, anthologies and award programmes. She advised that last year the trophies cost £300 for six trophies and she would advise this is carried on, alongside the trophy there will be a presentation of an anthology with the winners work in print alongside other winners and short-listed poetry and the other costs will be a photographer and advertising. Councillor Tierney asked if there was a budget that can be used? Carol Pilson answered the committee does not have a budget, however, the money can be found with the support of the Cabinet members within this committee as the funding could be lobbied for. Councillor Hoy asked how does the committee go about asking for the funding? Councillor Sennitt Clough added the trophies and anthologies cost £300 each is there anything within Fenland District Council that can be provided in-house? Carol Pilson responded that Fenland District Council does have an in-house Design Team who could design the anthologies, and this could be added into their work programme if members were in agreeance and the Design Team could liaise with Councillor Sennitt Clough around the design of the anthology. Carol Pilson advised in terms of photography Fenland District Council has its own camera but there is no professional photographer, but a member of staff could come along and take some pictures of the event if the members are in agreeance and the Council does have an events team which could be used if the committee is in agreeance. Councillor Count stated would it be possible to assign a support officer to ring around local business to raise sponsorship? Councillor Hoy replied this has been tried in the past without much success but added she was happy for the Communications Team to take the photographs. Councillor Sennitt Clough stated in terms of the officer contacting sponsorship is this agreed? Councillor Count commented it would be a good idea to ask officers for advice. Phil Huges replied that Fenland District Council are working with a couple of companies at present and are happy to have a conversation. Carol Pilson added that the Council will circulate to the committee the names of the companies involved to make sure the members are happy. Councillor Sennitt Clough stated she was happy with that decision.
- Councillor Sennitt Clough proposed for the adjudication that the committee became the judges for the competition. Councillor Tierney stated he felt the committee would devalue the competition as novices. Councillor Hicks asked if it would it be feasible to ask last year's winners to come back and judge the competition as they would bring experience and knowledge. Councillor Sennitt Clough agreed with this idea and stated she would put the idea to the previous winners. Councillor Hoy expressed her concerns from a Council point of view to think about the boundaries with the public and agreed with Councillor Hicks suggestion.
Councillor Hoy stated that a filter judging system could be a safer option. Councillor Sennitt Clough agreed this could work and stated the previous winners, herself and the committee could judge the initial work and filter it down to a few initial stage winners then an external adjudicator could take on the final judging. Councillor Count added he thought this was a good idea and the initial work could be sent via email in batches of 5 or 10. He expressed the view that once the work has been judged it would be a good idea if Councillor Sennitt Clough and an external judges made the final choices to represent an inside and outside body. Councillor Tierney agreed with this proposal. Councillor Sennitt Clough stated she was happy to find the external adjudicator. Carol Pilson asked in terms of an external adjudicator did members mean one of the previous winners as she felt the committee wanted to place their confidence in Councillor Sennitt Clough due to her experience and one previous winner of the competition. Councillor Count added it would be nice idea to add the sponsor to the list of adjudicators if a sponsor is found. Councillor Tierney disagreed with Councillor Count and stated it would look like the sponsor was buying their way in and this could be criticized. He proposes staying with the original idea of Councillor Sennitt Clough and a previous winner.
- The committee agreed they would all sift through the poetry and Councillor Sennitt Clough

and a previous winner would be the final adjudicators for the competition.

- Councillor Sennitt Clough added not everyone sends in poems by email some will be by post direct to the Council. Carol Pilson confirmed this would be fine. Councillor Sennitt Clough added she was going to ask MP Steven Barclay to host the awards if he is available. Councillor Hoy added it would be nice to invite all the local mayors and the chairman to the ceremony. Carol Pilson agreed and added Jamie-Lea is the point of contact for this committee and will discuss this further after the meeting.

CAH5/23 FEEDBACK FROM FENLAND CULTURAL STRATEGY FORUM

Members considered feedback from the Fenland Culture Strategy Forum presented by Jamie-Lea Taylor.

Members made comments, asked questions, and received responses as follows:

- Councillor Sennitt Clough stated she was concerned that no member of the committee is present at the Fenland Culture Strategy Forum and feels this would be worth addressing. Jamie-Lea Taylor agreed this would be a good idea as the Council now has this new committee.
- Councillor Hoy stated that the feedback from the past has been that Council members should not be involved with arts and culture but now there is this newly formed committee she feels it is time to change the views of the past and use the committee to highlight the Heritage, Arts and Culture within the Fenland area.
- Councillor Tierney agreed with Councillor Hoy and stated as a committee it is members responsibility to represent public opinion within the creativity of the arts and ensure the money is being spent to improve the heritage, arts and culture with the Fenland area having much to offer.
- Councillor Hoy stated that with this new committee it will give members a chance to work alongside other committees to ensure the changes that are proposed work within other areas of the Council.
- Councillor Count stated as a committee he feels everyone around the table can bring something to heritage, arts and culture within the Fenland area and stated he feels the committee has an important role to play in this area to represent the voice of the Fenland people.
- Jamie-Lea Taylor thanked the panel for all the support for the new committee and she is looking forward to seeing what can be produced.
- Phil Hughes stated before the committee was formed this came under the Steering Board which became very Council led rather than the sector leading, he stated things feel different with this committee and suggested a member of the committee sits on the Steering Board to have continued input and be able to communicate any findings between the two committees.
- Councillor Sennitt Clough stated that Councillor Seaton originally held a seat on the Steering board, and she would ask him if this is something he would like to take up again. Jamie-Lea Taylor was asked to talk to the board to ensure this was acceptable. Councillor Tierney suggested that the Chairman and Vice Chairman would be ideal candidates to represent the new committee. Carol Pilson stated it would be a good idea if the Chairman, Councillor Sennitt Clough, was to sit in on the Steering Board and represent the Culture, Arts, and Heritage Executive Advisory Committee.
- Jamie-Lea Taylor stated Councillor Seaton as Portfolio Holder was invited to attend the last Fenland Cultural Strategy Board (FCSB) meeting (1 December 2023) and he did attend. Councillor Sennitt Clough as Chair of Culture, Arts and Heritage was invited to attend the last FCSB meeting but she was unable to attend and sent apologies.
- Phil Hughes stated the board will look at the funding as the District Council will be managing the budget.

CAH6/23 UK SHARED PROPOSED FUNDING - AMPLIFYING ARTS UPDATE

Jamie-Lea Taylor stated a written presentation from Ally Oberottmen of The Norfolk and Norwich Festival Connect and Create Group will be shared with the minutes as she could not be present today.

CAH7/23 ARTS COUNCIL PROPOSED FUNDING BID UPDATE

Jamie-Lea Taylor presented an update regarding the Arts Council Proposed Funding Bid.

Members made comments, asked questions, and received responses as follows:

- Councillor Hoy asked if this was a bid for one million pounds and how does the Council feed into this? Jamie-Lea Taylor responded the funding project is looking at around seven hundred thousand pounds to cover the whole of the Fenland area, but these are early days. Phil Hughes confirmed this is Fenland District Council's bid and will be submitted to Cabinet for approval with the committee and portfolio holder being kept informed.
- Councillor Sennitt Clough stated there is a good opportunity to capitalise on this and she will continue conversations after this meeting.

5.03 pm

Chairman