

This Report will be made public on 14 January 2020

Report Number **C/19/56**

To: Cabinet
Date: 22 January 2020
Status: Key Decision/Non key Decision
Responsible Officer: Katharine Harvey, Chief Economic Development Officer
Cabinet Member: Councillor David Wimble, Cabinet Member for the District Economy

SUBJECT: The Step Short commemoration Memorial Arch

SUMMARY: This report seeks Cabinet agreement to take on the responsibility for maintaining the Step Short commemoration Memorial Arch, including paying for its maintenance.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Step Short charity is seeking to divest itself of the commemoration Memorial Arch asset and has requested that the District Council takes on this asset and assumes responsibility for its maintenance. On transfer of this asset the charity proposes to wind itself up.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. To receive and note report C/19/56.
2. Cabinet agrees to the transfer of the commemoration Memorial Arch asset to the Council and assumes financial responsibility for the maintenance costs which are estimated at £6k per annum.

BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Step Short commemoration Memorial Arch is located at the top of the Road of Remembrance as a memorial to the bravery of millions of soldiers who marched through the town and down 'The Slope' (as it was then known) to boats waiting for them at the harbour to take them to the Western Front between 1914 and 1918.
- 1.2 In July 2012 the Step Short charity unveiled plans to create this arch as a symbol of remembrance to commemorate the soldiers at an estimated cost of £500,000.
- 1.3 In June 2013 Cabinet agreed (13/012) to make a £200,000 contribution from General Fund Reserves towards the creation of this Arch. It also indicated at that time a willingness to consider additional support through a further report at a future meeting of Cabinet.
- 1.4 No additional further support was sought from the charity at that time and since then the Arch has remained an asset of the charity who has maintained the Arch, a now well established tourism asset in the town.

PROPOSED TRANSFER OF THE ASSET

- 1.5 The Council has been recently approached by the Step Short charity who are seeking to wind themselves up. It has requested that the Council accepts the transfer of this asset from the charity and assumes financial responsibility for its ongoing maintenance, to include an existing website, www.stepshort.co.uk.
- 1.6 The commemoration Memorial Arch is an important asset to Folkestone which supports the town's history and heritage through its recognition of the important role that Folkestone harbour played in the First World War. This is one of the important assets which supports Folkestone as a visitor destination and draws attention to the significance of the town in the first world-war period.
- 1.7 Tourism and the visitor economy is very important to the district and in 2017 it was estimated that 4.3 million day trips brought some £63million into the local economy. Assets such as the Memorial Arch have played a role in making Folkestone a visitor destination.

2. Maintenance & Financial Implications

- 2.1 There are maintenance and insurance implications to maintaining the arch.
- 2.2 The cleaning bill for the last year was £630.
- 2.3 The electricity bill for the last year was £546.
- 2.4 Insurance quotes have been obtained with the premium being around £2200.

- 2.5 It would also be prudent to budget in a small contingency amount to cover web hosting costs and any vandalism or ad-hoc repairs.
- 2.6 This gives a total budget of around £6k per year which will need to be built into the base budget for 2020/21.
- 2.7 It is assumed at this stage that there are no transferring funds from the Step Short charity although should there be any remaining funds from the charity, following closure, the Chairman of the charity has offered these to the Council as a contribution to any ongoing liabilities.

3. RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES

- 3.1 There is risk management involved in this project.

Perceived risk	Seriousness	Likelihood	Preventative action
FHDC decides not to assume responsibility of the asset	High	Low	Members agree to the recommendation in the report
Step Short winds down without transferring the asset and so the arch falls into disrepair	High	Low	Members agree to the recommendation in the report
Estimated maintenance costs are higher than anticipated	High	Low	Officers have undertaken work to accurately estimate the maintenance costs
Unexpected maintenance costs occur in the future that have not been budgeted for	High	Low	The maintenance team will regularly monitor the necessary work required and identify budget requirements as part of the annual budget setting process

4. LEGAL/FINANCIAL AND OTHER CONTROLS/POLICY MATTERS

4.1 Legal Officer's Comments (NE):

There are no legal implications arising directly from this report. However, Step Short Folkestone Limited will need to enter into a Deed of Surrender in order to bring the lease dated 20 June 2016 and made between (1) The District Council of Shepway and (2) Step Short Folkestone Limited to an end and to enable FHDC to take over the maintenance responsibility. Legal suggests that Smith Woolley who act on behalf of the Radnor Estate (the superior landlord) are notified of this and also that the licence to assign to the Folkestone Town Council is no longer proceeding.

4.2 Finance Officer's Comments (LH):

Within the draft detailed budget 2020/21 there isn't a budget for this however, within the final budget that goes for approval at Council in February 2020, £6k will be included for this item, should Cabinet agree to the proposals in this report.

4.3 Diversities and Equalities Implications (KH)

There are no diversities and equalities implications arising directly from this report.

5. CONTACT OFFICERS AND BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Councillors with any questions arising out of this report should contact the following officer prior to the meeting

Katharine Harvey, Chief Economic Development Officer
Telephone: 0777 1 773516
Email: Katharine.harvey@folkestone-hythe.gov.uk