

# HUNSTANTON & DISTRICT CIVIC SOCIETY

## MEETING MINUTES

**Date** Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> August 2018 at 14.00 to 16.05

**Venue** 2 Clarence Road, Hunstanton

### **Present**

Tony Armstrong AA, Terry Ashworth TA, Amanda Bosworth AB, Robert Clark RC, Sheila Kent ShK, Stephen Kent StK, Andrew Murray AM and Ann Stevens AS.

### **1. Welcome and apologies**

Apologies were received from Margi Blunden MB, John Bridger JB, John Alethea Gillard AG, John Maiden JM and Judy Simmons JS

### **2. Minutes of meeting held on 21<sup>st</sup> August 2018, and 3. Matters arising.**

The minutes of the July 24<sup>th</sup> HCS meeting were agreed but not signed. There were no matters arising. AA was concerned that they went over 5 pages and would be difficult to display.

### **4. Heritage Centre – alternative venues.**

The double page spread in the Lynn News illustrating **15 The Green** was thought to be impressive. The article does not make it clear that the shop area is included in the sale. Many people visiting the Heritage Centre have expressed the view that the Centre was an important asset for the town and should be supported by the Borough Council and /or the Town Council. The new Heritage Centre in Wells was thought to be very good.

Earlier in the day AA, AB, Brian Holmes BH, ShK, StK, AM and AS had viewed the former **Nat West Bank** with Guy Sankey GS from the Birmingham branch of GVA. AA thought that a terrific amount of work would need to be done to make it useable for our purposes. Many of the rooms were irregular shapes. If the upper floor were to become a flat, it was thought that a fire escape might be needed as well as the installation of a proper kitchen and bathroom. The upper floor is accessible via the alarmed rear door and can be shut off from the ground floor. There is a small store at the rear that was locked. Since closure of the bank, the counter has been removed so that the public area, cashier area and office are all one with trip hazards and the office connects to the large single story back office. The individual areas lend themselves to being used to display different subjects. The ground floor windows have secondary glazing with bullet proof Macron. AA said that it would be possible to batten out the areas and put displays on 8' x 4' boards. Although the building seemed to be structurally sound and in a good position in the town centre, it did not look as though it had been decorated recently. The electrical systems would require professional evaluation. ShK described the building as austere and unwelcoming. Prior to the building of the upper floor there had been toilets in the stationery room. AM thought that King's Lynn signs should be invited to advise on the types of signage that could be put up. Grants for the refurbishment should be available. GS told AM that some other interested parties could not make today's viewing but no other dates have been arranged and that interest had been less than anticipated. He indicated that the price was negotiable.

It was agreed that **Cornerstone** was not to be pursued because of concern about damp, the covering of carstone with render and the position opposite O'Quigley's.

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There was a general feeling that we would favour **Big G's** because it was less expensive, a more modern structure and would not need major work to be done before we could use it. The flat above the restaurant would remain as a flat. The building is probably not expandable. It was thought that the footfall of those coming to a Centre at Big G's would be different to that coming to the former Bank in the town centre.

The next steps :-

1. Contact Jill at Bird's to see whether Geoff wants to terminate his lease early, to check on any restrictive covenants, to ascertain ownership of surrounding grass.
2. AM thought that the BC planning department would not have records going back far enough to show whether there is just a void under the restaurant floor that might enable a rear access and staircase to be installed.
- 3, Check with Geoff if and when he might move out and whether the catering equipment will be removed.
4. Measure up the wall surface areas of the Bank, check on the floor structure, what might be above the 2 hatches, the possible need for a fire escape, possible signage.
5. Check with GS about the restrictive covenants in the 1920 conveyance and the meaning of the valuation of £95k on the land registry title.
6. Approach Derrick Lloyd to see whether he could help evaluate the merits of the Bank and Big G's as he is a shrewd business man with good knowledge of the area. Also possibly seek advice from Wayne Hemingway, design guru.

If Solveig were to accept a tender due by 31 August, we would need to dismantle our displays. The suggested ways in which these could be stored were a) in an empty shop being marketed by Belton & Duffy b) in a container in Heacham c) in the Town Hall basement and d) in Coal Shed Gallery.

### **5. How to raise the finance.**

TA said that we had not got the money to purchase a property and could not repay any loans. AS suggested that we might ask the USAF for help. AM said that as the Civic Society was not incorporated, it could not act as a legal entity and sign contracts. If a benefactor was to purchase the Bank at £350k, £7500 would have to be paid in Stamp Duty but Charities do not pay Stamp Duty. The RNLI receives a large amount of its income from legacies but the time scales for those are not predictable. If a person leaves more than 10% of his or her net estate to charity, the remainder is charged Inheritance Tax at 36% instead of 40% so that the beneficiaries do not lose out significantly. Also if the beneficiaries all agree, a Will can be altered within 6 months, maybe 2 years of a death. We need advice from Sharon Edwards.

### **6. Annual report – proposals for changes to the constitution.**

Item deferred.

### **7. Next meeting – Tuesday 18 September at the Heritage Centre, 15 The Green.**