

BRECKLAND COUNCIL

Report of Stephen Askew, Executive Member for Communities to the: CABINET- 9th September 2009

MATCH FUNDING – THOMAS PAINE FESTIVAL

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 This report considers a match funding application for the sum £10,000 made by the Thetford Society to assist with the cost of celebrating the life of Thomas Paine. 2009 will be the 200th anniversary of his death.

2. Recommendations

- It is recommended that Cabinet:
- 2.1 Makes a match funding award to the Thetford Society of £10,000

Note: In preparing this report, due regard has been had to equality of opportunity, human rights, prevention of crime and disorder, environmental and risk management considerations as appropriate. Relevant officers have been consulted in relation to any legal, financial or human resources implications and comments received are reflected in the report.

3. Information, Issues and Options

3.1 Background

- 3.1.1 Thomas Paine (1737 – 1809) was born in Thetford and was educated at Thetford Grammar School. He was a writer, revolutionary, radical, inventor and intellectual. He lived and worked in Britain until the age of 37, when he migrated to the American colonies just in time to take part in the American Revolution. His main contribution was as the author of the powerful, widely read pamphlet, *Common Sense* (1776), advocating independence for the American Colonies. In addition he wrote *The American Crisis*, a series of pamphlets that were distributed between 1776 and 1783 that supported the American Revolution.

Thomas Paine was a great influence on the French Revolution. He wrote the *Rights of Man* (1791) as a guide to the ideas of the Enlightenment. Despite an inability to speak French, he was elected to the French National Convention in 1792. He died New York (USA) in 1809.

- 3.1.2 The Thetford Society proposes to celebrate the life of Thomas Paine by running an extensive series of events and activities between May and October 2009. Core elements of the programme include:

Re-enactment weekend and Heritage Festival – 6 to 9th June 2009

This will include a recreation of Georgian Thetford as background for concerts, library displays, street theatre, story telling lectures and workshops.

Schools Programme - May to November 2009

This will include workshops on citizenship, literature and debating competitions

Heritage Tours of Thetford – July and August 2009

Guided tours of Thetford focusing on the visitor market outlining areas of the town that Thomas Paine would have known.

Lecture Programme

This will include an eminent programme of lecturers including Tony Benn and Professor John Keene a leading expert on Thomas Paine.

Community Play - October – November 2008

This will be a commissioned work that will commence in Thetford and subsequently tour rural areas of Breckland.

- 3.1.3 The Thetford Society has undertaken wide consultation including a questionnaire survey which has been used to shape the event. In addition they have engaged with a range of organisations to develop active support for the programme and they have worked closely with the Councils Arts Development Officer.

The management group tasked with developing the programme includes representation from all the key organisations within the town including the Town Council and has a track record of developing events and activities within the town. The organisers have gone to some lengths to ensure that all sections of the community can become involved, for example translators have been engaged, facilities reviewed with a view to disabled access and events tailored to different age ranges.

3.2 Issues

- 3.2.1 The Society estimate that the total cost of the project will be £104,400 and this will be funded from:

Grants

Heritage Lottery Fund	£50,000 (Received)
Thetford Town Council	£14,000 (Received)
Other Grants	£14,140 (Received)
Box office Income	£8,000
Volunteer Time	£7,650
Breckland Council	£10,000

The amount requested represents 9.6% of project costs which is well within the 30% limit set for larger grants.

Local sponsorship has been sought and gained for the event from the local business community.

- 3.2.2 The project scores highly on community based objectives with a range of initiatives taking place. The planned mix of performance, engagement and learning demonstrates a high degree of local involvement enabling local people to reach back into the past and make comparisons with contemporary issues. The event is intended in part to enable people to take pride in the rich heritage that local people share.
- 3.2.3 The applicant has made objective links with the Council aims of developing safer and stronger communities and has also made good links to developing healthy prosperous communities. In addition the applicant has indicated that this project will significantly contribute towards people taking pride in Thetford/Breckland and thereby meet a core LSP objective. The programme also includes a rural touring dimension and in this respect enables other local communities to share in the project.
- 3.2.3 Following delivery of the activities the management group is committed to producing a monitoring report which is a condition of the Heritage Lottery Funding and have offered to copy this to the District Council and other funding organisation.

3.3 Options

3.3.1 Not to support the proposal

The advantage in this approach would be that the council could retain its funding.

There are significant disadvantages in this approach principally in terms of poor publicity implicit in the council not taking the opportunity to support a significant opportunity to celebrate a major event.

3.3.2 To support the application

The advantage of this option is that it enables the council to play an important part in supporting an event which fits well with its corporate objectives and contributes to the Council's aims.

3.4 Reasons for Recommendation(s)

- 3.4.1 This is a well considered application which shows good evidence of consultation which has been used to shape the activities and community involvement. There is a sound fit with the Council's corporate objectives and the Thetford Society through the project group have given significant thought to the management arrangements that need to be put in place.

4. Risk and Financial Implications

4.1 Risk

- 4.1.1 The principal risks associated with events that are arranged periodically arise from their novelty with people becoming involved in organising activities where they have little experience. In order to address this issue the management group have developed a Business Plan which maps key areas of activity and risk. The business plan has subsequently been used to develop and refine the project plan.

The previous experience of the group in staging events reduces the risk significantly.

4.2 Financial

- 4.2.1 Proforma B is attached.

5. Legal Implications

- 5.1 None

6. Other Implications

- a) Equality issues have been considered by the applicant and action proposed to address these issues
- b) Section 17, Crime & Disorder Act 1998: None
- c) Section 40, Natural Environment & Rural Communities Act 2006: The applicant makes reference to ensuring that project is operated taking into account the impact on the local environment.
- d) Human Resources: None
- e) Human Rights: There are no human rights issues but it is worth noting that the subject matter is entirely concerned with the historical development of human rights in Britain, USA and France.
- f) Other: None

7. Alignment to Council Priorities

- 7.1 This project links to the following priorities:

- a) Building Safer Stronger communities – The project is concerned with bringing

people in Thetford together to celebrate their local history and shared culture.

b) Healthy, prosperous communities – this project aims, among other things to promote learning and attract visitors to the town using a high profile event as an opportunity to develop the image of the town.

8. Ward/Community Affected

8.1 All wards in Thetford and wards involved in the touring events

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Key Decision Status (Executive Decisions only):

This is not a key decision but is included on the Forward Plan

Appendices attached to this report:

Pro-forma B