

**“Project Mandate”**

Agenda item number:
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Date of issue:
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Meeting: Policy, Finance and Administration Committee

Date: 27 January 2014

Report by: Donna Bradbury                      Job title: Project Support (Funding Officer)

Service : Communities and Neighbourhoods

Status:

Subject: Working Dog Sculptures

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1 Purpose of report

To seek guidance from PFA with regard to the commissioning of further sculptures, being 2 Working Dog Sculptures (Springer Spaniel and a Labrador), following the installation of the German Shepherd Sculpture. Members are also asked to consider the alternative suggestion that a horse sculpture be undertaken.

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2 Recommendations

That PFA consider the options, with regard to the Sculptures within the Heritage Garden.

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3 Background

The sculpture was installed to mark the courage and dedication of all working dogs and their handlers. Military dogs have been trained in Melton Mowbray since 1946. The Civic Society, Defence Animal Centre, Melton in Bloom and MBC have all worked together in partnership to bring about this vision.

Lloyd LeBlanc (an internationally renowned artist) was commissioned to create the sculpture. The original vision was to install 3 working dogs (German Shepherd, Labrador and Springer Spaniel).

This sculpture will stand testimony to Melton's strong connection with working dogs (RAVC have had Freedom of the Borough since 1977 and Working Dogs from Melton have been awarded the PSDA Dickin Medal for gallantry.

The PDSA Dickin Medal, recognised as the animals' Victoria Cross, is awarded to animals displaying conspicuous gallantry or devotion to duty while serving or associated with any branch of the Armed Forces or Civil Defence Units. The PDSA Dickin Medal is the highest award any animal can receive whilst serving in military conflict.

Following a meeting with Lt Col Pope, Dinah Rudman and Peter Roffey on 16 January 2014, the group were satisfied that their original aspirations had been met through the installation of the German Shepherd sculpture. The group did not wish to pursue the option of installing a further 2 dogs, but did think it would be appropriate to investigate the possibility of installing a horse sculpture (within the Heritage Garden).

It was suggested at this meeting that consideration be given to a smaller pack animal with pack saddle etc.. rather than a riding horse be pursued. Col Pope can provide photos which could influence the design. The group felt it would be a very fitting tribute to the unbroken connection since 1903 of military horses and the town as well as a lasting dedication to the WW1 Centenary year.

The group were happy to lead on this and a donation of £150 from the Historical Society has been put forward.

Members are asked to give guidance on the next steps for this project.

Once any concept is agreed the sculptures take approximately 20 weeks from start to finish to be created and installed.

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4 Legal, financial and IT implications

The German Shepherd working dog sculpture has been secured at a total cost (exc VAT) OF £10,370. The two remaining sculptures would be at similar costs and subject to negotiations with the artist and stonemason.

The German Shepherd sculpture is included on the Council's insurance premium at an annual cost of £100 & IPT.

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5 Initial Assessment of risk

The installed dog is made of Bronze which is a very valuable metal. The sculpture is secured with steel rods sunk into concrete. CCTV covers the front of Parkside. The artist can clean and restore (at additional costs) should the sculptures become the subject of vandalism or graffiti.

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Equalities and diversity and staffing implications

There are no specific equalities issues regarding the proposed project. The process will involve officer time, but this will be minimal due to the learning from the first installation. The work will be undertaken within the existing capacity of Council Officers.

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