

AGENDA ITEM 7

RURAL, ECONOMIC & ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

31 OCTOBER 2012

REPORT OF HEAD OF REGULATORY SERVICES

REPAIR AND STABILISATION OF THE SQUIRES MONUMENT IN BURTON LAZARS

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To inform Members that English Heritage has requested a contribution from Melton Borough Council towards the repair and stabilisation of the Squires monument in Burton Lazars to facilitate its removal from the 'Buildings at Risk' Register. This request has been made on behalf of the Parochial Church Council, seeking funds to complement a grant secured from English Heritage to cover the total cost of the necessary works.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 **That the Committee authorises the part funding of the repair and stabilisation programme on the monument to bring back to a good state of repair.**
- 2.2 **That this Committee requests that the Policy, Finance and Administration Committee approves a Supplementary Estimate for the funding of £2,000 from Corporate Priorities Reserve.**

3.0 KEY ISSUES

Buildings at Risk Register

- 3.1 English Heritage have produced a National Buildings at Risk Register each year since 1998. The Register highlights grade I and II* buildings at risk in particular and directs attention to their condition and plight.
- 3.2 The first Register included six properties in Melton Borough considered at risk. Since then through negotiation with owners and in some cases through the offer of grant assistance, five of those properties have been repaired and are therefore no longer considered to be at risk and hence are now removed from the Register. These grants were awarded by the Council through its Listed Buildings Grant Scheme which was discontinued in 2011.
- 3.3 The one property that remains on the Register is the Squires Monument in Burton Lazars. Its removal would result in Melton Borough having no buildings at risk on the English Heritage Register.

Squires Monument

- 3.4 The Squires Monument is a grade II* listed structure which occupies a prominent elevated position, close by the roadside, within the Churchyard of St James Church.
- 3.5 It is described in the List as: *Chest tomb surmounted by elaborate monument. Erected by the executors of William Squire, d.1781. Limestone, formerly painted and gilt, with iron railing. Oval*

plinth of 3 steps. Moulded chest with corner volutes and to south, illegible inscribed panel. At each end a circular pier, decorated with relief panels, with symbols of Death, each topped by a globe. Above, a sarcophagus on volutes, with an oval figurative panel at each end. Above again, resting on 4 balls, a tall concave sided decorated obelisk, with an oval perforation containing an urn, and topped with a ball finial. Against the obelisk, figures representing Faith and Hope. The monument is surrounded by a spiked railing and is approximately 6m high.

- 3.6 In 1983 Alec Clifton-Taylor and A S Ireson in a book entitled 'English Stone Building' commented as follows:

' The Georgian monument is in the churchyard at Burton Lazars in Leicestershire, two miles south east of Melton Mowbray. It is about 20 ft high and commemorates William Squire, who died in 1781. Although as late as this, the spirit is decidedly Rococo and delightfully inventive. On a high base with lobed ends reposes the sarcophagus, supported at each corner by a volute. Above this is an obelisk, the four sides concave and all delicately carved and at its centre a pierced oval containing an urn. On the short sides there are two seated figures in copious draperies but unfortunately headless, two reliefs in ovals and the conventional emblems of mortality: a skull, crossbones and the rest. The carving is of good quality and so is the stone, which is thought to have come from Ketton in Rutland'

'... an unusual and fascinating example of the decorative use of stone'

Background

- 3.7 It has been a long standing aim to stabilise and repair this monument and facilitate its removal from the Buildings at Risk Register. The building requires works to its foundations and base to arrest subsidence which is causing instability, repair and new stone to that which has been damaged by subsidence and works to secure and preserve the iron railings surrounding the monument.
- 3.8 Some work has been undertaken to the railings relatively recently, but the overall scheme of necessary works to stabilise the monument has proved to be cost prohibitive.
- 3.9 Discussions have previously taken place with the Parish Council and other interested parties over raising the necessary funding etc to enable the essential works to take place. However for various reasons including difficulty with ownership, lack of appropriate craftsmen to undertake the works as well as inability to raise funds to date little progress has been possible.
- 3.10 More recently the Melton Mowbray and District Civic Society attempted to source funding from alternative means with no success.

The Current repair scheme

- 3.11 English Heritage have recently inspected the monument and drawn up a schedule of works that they describe as necessary to stabilise the monument and enable its removal from the buildings at risk register.
- 3.12 Having received quotes they have indicated that the cost of the work is in the region of £10,000 and English Heritage are prepared to finance 80% of the cost leaving a shortfall in the region of £2,000.
- 3.13 A request has been received from Dr Anthony Streeten, the English Heritage East Midlands Planning and Conservation Director for the region including Melton Borough, to consider grant

aiding that shortfall. Requests have also been made to Leicestershire County Council, the Melton Civic Society and the Melton Mowbray and District Historical Society, but neither of these bodies have funds available.

Consideration

- 3.14 After several years of attempting to get works undertaken to this monument to enable its removal from the Buildings at Risk Register this is the best opportunity to date to achieve that aim. The fact that English Heritage are prepared to finance 80% of the cost of eligible works has substantially reduced the financial burden for partnership funding.
- 3.15 In that regard the Council should give serious consideration to financing the shortfall which will be of benefit to the historic environment and will also ensure that no property is identified as being at risk on the English Heritage Buildings at Risk Register.

4.0 POLICY AND CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 This proposal has obvious linkages to the Councils priority of improving the places within the Borough.
- 4.2 At a broader level, the scheme improves the Council’s efficiency and effectiveness by securing greater investment in the historic environment from the Council’s own contribution (see para 5.1 below).
- 4.3 Offering partnership grant funding demonstrates commitment to the stewardship of the Borough’s built heritage.

5.0 FINANCIAL AND OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The contribution from Melton Borough Council towards the necessary works will be £2,000 which in turn will attract a further £8,000 from English Heritage.

6.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS/POWERS

- 6.1 There are no legal implications.

7.0 COMMUNITY SAFETY

- 7.1 There are no direct community safety implications arising from this report.

8.0 EQUALITIES

- 8.1 There are no equalities issues emerging from this report.

9.0 RISKS

9.1

Very High				
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Risk No.	Description
1.	Failure to contribute partnership funding to the English Heritage contribution

A				
High B				
Significant C				
Low D		1		
Very Low E				
Almost Impossible F				
	IV Negligible	III Marginal	II Critical	I Catastrophic

Impact →

10.0 CLIMATE CHANGE

10.1 There are no climate change implications arising from this report.

11.0 CONSULTATION

11.1 Some discussion has taken place with the Melton Mowbray and District Civic Society who are fully supportive of the English Heritage proposal

12.0 WARDS AFFECTED

12.1 Gaddesby is the only ward directly affected, although the benefits would apply to the wider community.

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Date: 10th October 2012