

PLAQUES AND PEOPLE – A PROTOCOL FOR THE BOROUGH OF MAIDSTONE

Introduction

Maidstone Borough is rich in historic events and characters which deserve the opportunity to be recognised and remembered. We have successfully acknowledged some but others remain unmarked.

As a commitment to our local heritage it is proposed that a protocol be proposed that will provide an opportunity for Plaques and memorials to be placed in appropriate places in the Borough so that the story of our Town and Borough can be celebrated.

A recommendation that a “Plaques & People” Protocol should come under the auspices of the Heritage, Culture & Leisure Committee.

[1] Where members of the public, Councillor or local organisation may suggest that a memorial plaque or monument be placed in the Borough to commemorate a historical event or personality.

[2] This has, of course, already occurred on an ad hoc basis as evidenced by examples of plaques already in place which include The Battle of Maidstone on the Town Hall, a plaque to commemorate Havock Lane at Fremlin Walk and the latest to honour Nurse Edith Cavell now on the wall of the Congregational Church in Week Street.

[3] The development of a formal protocol would assist in the bringing forward of submissions for plaques and memorials and accessing and investigating approaches for internal and external funding.

[4] If a funding application guide was brought forward it would in certain circumstances assist in securing appropriate funding through section 106 contributions for public art.

[5] Nomination procedure: All applications to be submitted to an appointed MBC officer who would have access to the HCL Committee. The officer in the first instance would verify the authenticity and legitimacy of the application and would research the facts of the proposal.

[6] A standard application form to be used with a section for funding proposals / requirements.*

[7] The officer, once satisfied that the application is bona fide would bring the proposal in the first instance to the HCL Committee for inspection and deliberation.

[8] Depending on the merits, design, funding requirements and gravity of the application the HCL Committee could pass the application and recommend, in the first instance, to The Policy & Resources Committee and if listed building consent was required would go before the Planning Committee for approval, where a fee may be payable.

The HCL Committee may seek expert advice and may wish to consult with the Conservation officer, KCC Highways, the parks department or where other open land is managed by that section and Planning department.

If a proposal was of sufficient merit e.g. a large memorial of artistic significance then it could be determined by a meeting of the full Council.

[9] Criteria for nomination: Relevant and significant association with Maidstone town and the Borough. To include events, persons or groups.

[10] Timescale for commemoration: This would depend on whether it was an event, person or group but in most cases would be to mark an anniversary or a person now deceased.

[11] Plaque / Memorial design: A “basic” plaque [The Maidstone plaque] should be of a standard design i.e. based on the majority already installed and to give a corporate image in the Borough.

The suggested design for the Maidstone / Borough plaque is:

Smooth Grey slate 18” [460mm] x 18” [460mm] x 1.25” [30mm] Inscription to be “V” cut in the stone in Times Roman style and letters enamelled in light grey. Prominent features such as a named person or event should be gilded using 23crt gold letters.

The HCL Committee could approve a different theme or design of a plaque or memorial depending on the subject and the type and style submitted on the application.

[12] Funding: Following deliberation and consultation the HCL should, if necessary amend or confirm the application accordingly. If proposed funding is not in place then research, if not already undertaken at the initial application stage, should be carried out to determine funding streams.

The application for a Plaque or memorial could be referred to the Policy and Recourses Committee to confirm or deny a funding request. If funds are not available from section 106 contributions or funds allocated to the Committee from other sources then the committee should seek alternate resources [Funds could be raised by public subscription] if it feels that the project has sufficient merit and should be taken forward.

[13] Names in the Town Hall Chamber:

Any proposal for a name to be added on the walls of the Town Hall chamber should go through the same procedure as for plaques and memorials.

Persons nominated should [at least one of the following]

Have a Strong and notable connection to the County Town.

Lived in the Borough and made a contribution of good work.

A person of historical standing who has by accident or design made Maidstone culturally richer or made a significant contribution or service to the life of the Borough.

[14] Ownership & Maintenance: This would remain with Maidstone Borough Council [or the ruling body] who will be responsible for arranging the installation of the plaque or memorial and the future upkeep and repair as part of our Heritage and Culture strategy.

* Specimen application Form

This proposed protocol report produced by Cllr David Pickett with input from / Cllr Clive English / Cllr Jenni Paterson / Cllr Gordon Newton.