

Time commenced - 5.30 pm

Time finished - 5.55 pm

SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMISSION PETITIONS SUB COMMISSION 8 APRIL 2008

Present: Councillor Higginbottom (in the Chair)
Councillors Jones and Webb

1/07 Apologies for Absence

No apologies for absence were received.

2/07 Late items introduced by the Chair

There were no late items.

3/07 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

4/07 Petitions

The Sub-Commission considered a petition concerning the Medieval Augustinian Abbey at Darley Abbey. The petition was raised by history and community groups in Darley Abbey and Chester Green and was signed by 347 people. The text of the petition was as follows:

'The settlement at Darley Abbey, which lies within the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site, had its beginnings in a medieval Augustinian Abbey of which scarcely anything remains above ground. On November 2006, walls of the former abbey were uncovered during development work but were not fully excavated. We, the undersigned residents of the City of Derby, petition Derby City Council to oversee and sponsor a community project to discover and interpret the layout of the abbey's buildings.'

The petition was presented by the lead petitioner, Joan D'Arcy. Mrs D'Arcy explained to the Sub Commission that she hoped the Council would be able to contribute support in terms of funding and officer time to this project.

Mrs D'Arcy advised that the estimated cost for running the project for one year was £5000. This included costs of employing professionals to give guidance to volunteer groups, and the cost of follow-up work such as maps and plans. She reported that informal talks had taken place regarding Heritage Lottery Funding. She also reported that two weekends in August had been set aside for non-invasive investigation regardless of whether funding could be obtained.

The Sub Commission were informed by the Council's Urban design Policy Officer Nicola Handa that the site was of some significance and that further exploration of the area would be of merit.

The Council's Urban Design Policy Officer reported that Derby City Council had a service level agreement with the County Council to have access to the County Archaeologist but that would have to consider whether use of this resource for this project was appropriate.

It was noted that officer time and funding for this type of work was limited and that there were other projects of equal merit that would need to be taken into consideration before any commitment for funding could be made.

The Sub Commission thanked Mrs D'Arcy for her presentation of the petition. The Sub Commission agreed that they supported the ideas and issues raised in the petition.

Resolved to recommend that the Council Cabinet Member for Leisure and Direct Services:

- 1) fully considers and investigates the issues outlined in the petition.**
- 2) keeps the sub commission up to date with any developments and progress regarding the petition.**
- 3) reports back on what action (if any) will be taken to the next meeting of the Scrutiny Management Commission.**
- 4) notes the Scrutiny Management Commission (SMC) Petitions Sub Commission's support for the ideas and issues raised by the petitioners.**

MINUTES END