

REPORT TO EVENTS COMMITTEE

HERITAGE OPEN DAYS

Report Reference E-23-05
Meeting Date 2nd October 2023
Agenda Item 8
Prepared by Town Clerk



1.0 BACKGROUND

Heritage Open Days is England's largest festival of history and culture, launched in 1994 it takes place in September each year. It is a community led festival, comprising independently organised events across the country – the key element is that entry to events must be free.

Knutsford Heritage Centre and the Brook Street Heritage Site already host some activity as part of Heritage Open Days. In 2017/18 the *Knutsford Promenades* coordinated a weekend of activity including access to historic private homes. The Town Council participated by, in 2017, opening the Cemetery Chapel (then rarely opened) and in 2018 hosting an exhibition of Female Mayors as part of the theme of 'Wonderful Women'.

2.0 PROPOSED EVENT

It is proposed that the Town Council coordinates a programme of activity as part of Heritage Open Days. The intention would be to showcase the town's heritage, encouraging both residents and visitors to explore the town's history. There is a theme set nationally which would be considered (2024 theme to be announced).

The intention would be to form a working group of volunteers who are interested in delivering the Heritage Open Days activity. This would include representatives from Knutsford Heritage Centre and the Brook St Heritage Site which already host some activity themselves, to deliver a wider Knutsford package. The precise events that would be coordinated would be determined by the working group but may include (for example):

- Guided tours of privately owned historic homes
- Access to areas of historic buildings which are usually not public
- History connected cultural activity linked to the year's theme

The scale of the event would be dependent on the interest and activity of the volunteers engaged to deliver it, and at this stage there is no specific expectation.

3.0 BUDGET

The following has been included in the draft committee budget for 2024/25.

The primary cost would be marketing materials to promote the series of free activity. This would include the creation and dissemination of posters/leaflets listing the events (£1,250). A small budget

for incidental/activity costs has been included (£500). A target for a small sponsor (£250) has been included, for a next expenditure cost of £1,500.

4.0 DECISION REQUIRED

The committee should consider the proposal to coordinate a Knutsford Heritage Open Days programme.