

LEDBURY TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES OF JOHN MASEFIELD MEMORIAL WORKING PARTY
HELD ON FRIDAY, 25 NOVEMBER 2022

PRESENT: Councillors Morris, Beddoes-Davis, Chowns, Hughes

ALSO PRESENT: Angela Price –Town Clerk
Emma Jackson – Community Development Officer (*Maternity Cover*)
Caroline Magnus, Chris Noel, Dr Philip Errington - John Masefield Society
Christine Tustin – Ledbury & District Civic Society; Ledbury Places (*background in Tourism and PR*).
Chloe Garner – Ledbury Poetry [Festival]
Catriona Cole – Ledbury Primary School

JM22 Councillor Beddoes-Davis kindly offered to take the minutes.

JM23 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:**

Apologies were received from Councillor Sims; Tim Keyes (Tower Captain, and lead on the Ledbury Bells Restoration Project) ; Charles Masefield (local solicitor, and descendant of John Masefield's family) ; Andy Collard (Deputy-Head of John Masefield High School, Ledbury).

JM24 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations of interest were received

JM25 **TERMS OF REFERENCE**

Members reviewed these, noting that the small amendment to Term 6 was complete; and that the parent committee for this Working Party is now the Environment and Leisure Committee.

RESOLVED:

That the Terms of Reference be recommended to the Environment & Leisure Committee for approval, at its next meeting in January 2023, and / or Full Council on 1 December 2022. This vote was unopposed.

JM26

ELECTION OF NON-COUNCIL MEMBERS TO THE JOHN MASEFIELD MEMORIAL WORKING PARTY

Representatives of The John Masefield Society introduced themselves:

Caroline Magnus – John Masefield's great niece and thereby representative of the family, as well as being a Committee member of the Society. Caroline lives locally (within 1 hour of Ledbury) at Stokesay Court, near Ludlow.

Dr Philip Errington – Academic (*his PhD was on Masefield*) and internationally recognised scholarship expert on John Masefield. Philip has also edited various works of Masefield's poetry, including a Penguins Classic edition; his bibliography of Masefield was published by the British Library. He has lectured and spoken on Masefield extensively. Philip is based in London.

Chris Noel – Lives in Ledbury, and has done so for 42 years. He has been a member of the John Masefield Society since its inception in the early 1990s. Chris will also attend meetings when Caroline is unable to, and therefore represent the John Masefield Society on this working party.

Councillor Morris, as Chair of this working party, invited those representatives of The John Masefield Society there present to become elected members. Caroline Magnus was very happy to do so; Dr Errington was equally happy to become an elected member, noting that he may be unable to attend all meetings due to distance (he advised that he could attend via an online format, and the Chair and the Clerk agreed to consider this); Chris Noel advised that as the local representative of the John Masefield Society, he would also like to be elected.

RESOLVED:

Caroline Magnus, Dr Errington and Chris Noel were all elected to the Working Party.

Chloe Garner confirmed that, following Ledbury Poetry Trustees meeting (see JM16), she wished to remain a non-elected member.

JM27

TO APPROVE AND SIGN THE NOTES OF THE MEETING OF THE JM WORKING PARTY HELD ON 23 SEPTEMBER 2022

The Chair gave members the opportunity to voice '*Matters Arising*' which were not covered elsewhere. Caroline Magnus suggested that REF JM19, The Master's House be added to the list of local venues that be considered as a potential space for creative workshops. Members agreed this was a useful suggestion, especially as the John Masefield Archive was already housed there.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting of the John Masefield Working Party held on 23 September be approved and signed as a correct record. This vote was unopposed.

JM28

ACTION SHEET

The Clerk gave a verbal update on the Action Sheet.

Both Dr Errington and Caroline Magnus spoke favourably of 2Faced Dance Company's previous interpretation of John Masefield's work. (JM19 (05)).

Members noted especially the change of parent committee, and how this had impacted on the progression of actions. The Clerk confirmed that any minutes and recommendations would go straight to Full Council on 1 December, and dependent on outcome thereafter go to Environment & Leisure Committee, and Finance, Policy & General Purposes Committee, as appropriate. It was noted that both Councillor Chowns and Hughes, as Chairs of these respective committees were in attendance, and so informed of current thinking.

RESOLVED:

That the action sheet be received and noted.

JM29

DRAFT NOTICE OF INTENT

Councillor Morris noted that he was happy with the Notice of Intent, and requested it be published to raise awareness of the project.

Councillor Morris raised the possibility of a leaflet/PDF to encourage donations and sponsorship : The Notice of Intent would form the basis of this copy.

The Clerk reminded the working party that an anonymous donation of £1000 had already been received. Members welcomed this as a good starting point. Christine Tustin informed members that she, as a result of the article in the Ledbury & District Civic Society newsletter had also received communication from an interested party; she would follow this up and let Council staff know the details.

Caroline Magnus asked if there was an overall target in mind. Members noted that it was difficult at this stage to define a final amount as Phase 1 (the scoping phase) was only just beginning. Members noted that in the original project timeline (drafted following the Task and Finish Group in June and submitted to Environment & Leisure Committee in July), had identified that a final memorial could cost between £75,000-£100,000 with a target delivery date in July 2026. The CDO confirmed that this

figure was arrived at following research of similar commemorative projects that had already taken place in other towns throughout the UK.

Caroline Magnus asked for clarification if a sculpture depicting a lifelike representation of John Masefield was a possibility, advising that the family would welcome a figurative representation. Councillor Morris advised that these costs might be prohibitive. Caroline Magnus offered to share details of organisations that are Arts Council funded which could be useful at the commissioning stage. Councillor Beddoes-Davis mentioned concerns of quality in figurative art. Dr Errington reminded members of the unfortunate occurrence of a poor likeness of Masefield on the John Masefield pub sign in The Wirral, and the misnomer that arose. He also informed members that as far as he was aware, and unusually for a twentieth century poet, there was not a statue to John Masefield in existence. Dr Errington also shared an idea from the Masefield Society regarding a carved representation of John Masefield, reminiscent of a ship's figurehead and relating to nautical themes on Masefield's writing. Masefield himself historically was interested in figureheads.

Christine Tustin reminded the group that alongside deciding what form was required, a suitable location to site a memorial would need to be found. She suggested The Poetry House might house a lasting John Masefield memorial, and Dr Errington noted that in fact this building was opened by Masefield in 1938.

The idea of a Poetry Trail with plaques and lines of Masefield poetry carved into the pavement was mentioned again. Councillor Chowns reminded members that he had previously welcomed an abstract memorial that celebrated Masefield's association with water, and the sea, rather than an accurate figurative representation. He also hoped there would be an enduring legacy fund that would fund future educational projects.

Councillor Beddoes-Davis reminded the group that the idea of extensive public consultation in Phase 1 was to elicit these ideas so a community consensus could be reached in Phase 2.

RESOLVED:

That the Notice of Intent be approved and be used to progress a sponsorship / fundraising leaflet for wider distribution.

JM30

PROGRESS REPORT

The Clerk and The Chair drew members attention to the draft Project Manager role specification. Councillor Beddoes- Davis welcomed that this was an independent, contracted role.

Christine Tustin asked for clarification on whether this would be an ongoing contract, as the specification only referred to fees for Phase 1. Members agreed that it would be sensible to indicate that a Project Manager might be engaged for the longevity of the project, but further details would only be confirmed as Phase 1 progressed. Councillor Beddoes-Davis advised that the suggested day rate was low for this type of work; she recommended that the overall budget should either be increased or less days contracted to ensure candidates of a suitable calibre apply. The Clerk noted that funding the project was a concern for wider Council to consider, particularly where long-term funding could be sourced from. It was agreed that the fundraising experience should be included in the essential criteria.

Councillor Beddoes-Davis offered to suggest where to advertise the person specification. Councillor Hughes advised that Full Council, and associated Committees were informed of the totality of this contract, noting its provision for overall advancement of the project. He also drew attention to the importance of Phase 1 to pump prime subsequent phases. The Chair reminded members that this project did not intend to use Council monies on an ongoing basis. Dr Errington advised of potential US donations that might be explored in the future. Caroline Magnus reminded members that the Masefield family were not particularly wealthy: While Masefield's work is in copyright, his Estate is not generating much individual wealth.

Members discussed the possibility of a John Masefield talk hosted by the Ledbury & District Civic Society. Christine Tustin agreed to explore this further with Caroline Magnus and / or Dr Errington. Caroline had previously given a talk to other local groups on the Masefield childhood, and the relationship between her grandfather and great Uncle (John Masefield), and would happily revive it for this project.

Councillor Hughes drew members attention to the funding of the post, and asked that the monies requested were specific. Councillor Hughes indicated that the budget must be broken down, and that the project outputs for Phase 1 could not fall within existing staffing remits. The Clerk clarified that that this was clearly outlined in Recommendation 5, with monies for both the role of project manager (£5000) and the delivery of the project (£10,000) being included.

The CDO talked members through the Project Timeline, noting how many of the activities flowed from the appointment of a project manager. This appointment would enable the project to accelerate as activities would fall within a delivery remit of one individual contracted specifically for this project. Dr Errington asked for clarification asked for deadline on delivery (July 2026) and noted that stalling final delivery to 2028 would mark 150 years since John Masefield's birth. The CDO noted how anniversaries could be useful for fundraising purposes, especially in the final stages of a campaign / project. The Clerk asked for clarification from the Chair on the frequency of meetings and advised that monthly

meetings were preferable, and an additional meeting might be needed around Easter.

Christine Tustin suggested that at the end of Phase 1, the marketing activity be widened to include a national, possibly international audience for subsequent phases.

Members discussed funding of the project, and the specific recommendation on which cost centres had monies still available in 2022/2023 to support this project. The CDO advised members that as Phase 1 spanned two financial years (that is 2022/2023 and 2023/2024), all monies did not need to be drawn from this year. Councillor Hughes, as Chair of Finance, Policy & General Purposes agreed; he recommended that the budget for Phase 1 be split to allow for a spend of up to £9000 before the end of March 2023, and the remaining £6000 to form part of a new budget line for Ledbury Town Council budget in 2023 / 2024; this might also specify any additional funds required to minimally support Phase 2.

RECOMMENDED:

Members of the John Masefield Working Party agreed the following recommendations:

- 1. That the revised Notice of Intent be published to Ledbury Town Council's website, and shared in the form of a Press Release.**
- 2. That the Outline Specification for the engagement of a Project Manager (see *Appendix A*) be approved subject to the fundraising experience being added to essential criteria, and the day rate being revised to at least £250; and, that the Clerk be asked to advertise the post at the first available and timely opportunity, including reference to this being a multi-year project.**
- 3. That the Detailed Project Timeline (see *Appendix B*) be approved and that the dates therein be agreed as target dates, noting the updated frequency of meetings.**
- 4. That the Marketing Plan (see *Appendix C*) be approved, subject to funding being identified by Council.**
- 5. That Council give consideration to the request for funding for Phase 1 of the project, with a potential ceiling of £15,000, and that Council identify funding from within the 2022/23 budgets, namely from the Town Promotion budget cost centre 107, nominal codes 4703 (£4,000) and 4704 (£5,000) with the remaining £6,000 to be included in budget planning for 2023/2024 as a separate cost centre.**

TO DISCUSS ACTION POINTS RAISED BY CHAIR

The Chair drew members attention to the Report he had included (Agenda Item 9), and updated Members on reasons for delay in a soft launch, due 2Faced company not being available.

The CDO updated members on the Creative Challenge national initiative, arranged by 64 Million Artists, and which takes places every January. She suggested using this social media initiative to help soft launch to help the John Masefield Project and offered to provide members with further details for the next working party meeting in December. The Clerk suggested that the second week of January would be better than the first week of January, and members agreed.

The Chair drew members attention to a Full Launch date on 1 June 2023. Caroline Magnus suggested that working party members reflected on what this might be, and feedback to a future meeting.

The Chair referred members to the idea of creating a leaflet to send to potential stakeholders outlining further information about the project and suggesting varying forms of engagement. Dr Errington advised that the John Masefield Society will send out a newsletter in May/June and could include such a leaflet at that time.

Members discussed progress with workshops. The Clerk suggested that the CDO might be able to do this. The CDO (maternity cover) advised that this might be something that could be undertaken once Olivia (CDO permanent) returned from maternity leave in January. The project timeline had been adjusted to reflect this, with education workshops starting in February and running through until June, and community-based workshops running from March to end of July, incorporating Ledbury Poetry Festival and opportunities that arise while that is taking place. Councillor Hughes advised from a Resources & Personnel perspective that Council's decision to continue the contract of the maternity cover CDO role until the end of March might allow for the CDO Officers to make progress during the first 3 months until a project manager was appointed. Emma, as CDO present in the meeting agreed that progress might be slow between now and December, but from January onwards might be swifter. Councillor Beddoes-Davis said in her experience that projects which were well resourced at the outset were more likely to be successful in the long-run; she advised not commencing too soon and waiting for the resources to be in place.

It was agreed that the Clerk would arrange meetings.

The Chair raised a concern about who would lead Marketing/ Publicity on an ongoing basis. The Clerk advised that hopefully a project manager would do this. Concerns were raised over recruiting someone, and Councillor Beddoes-Davis advised that the contract might need to be negotiated, or the tasks and associated time allocated more

strategically. Members were unsure on this and opted to re-visit. Members also discussed what would happen if Full Council did not approve the Project Manager recommendation, and The Clerk advised that there were not current resources available at present, and the project would not happen. Members noted this.

Funding for the project will be led by The Clerk and Chair of Finance, in liaison with the Project Manager. The Clerk reminded members that all business relating to Ledbury Town Council has to have her approval. Furthermore, The Clerk wished to consult with the Chair of Finance on all financial matters, including all external funding applications. Caroline Magnus asked for details of where donated monies would be held, and whether a separate charitable account would be set up, that would benefit from Gift Aid. The CDO advised members that the purpose of Phase 1 was to understand if there was a broader appetite for a lasting memorial of some scale, and the potential to attract funding : Setting up a Ledbury Town Council charitable trust immediately might be unnecessary work. The Clerk agreed to advise Full Council and / or this Working Party on the tasks involved in establishing a charitable trust for this project so that members might consider how best to deposit funds raised.

RESOLVED:

- 1. That the Clerk would arrange future meetings, ideally to occur once a month, as per an updated project timeline.**
- 2. That members consider what a Full Launch event might involve and feedback at a future meeting**

RECOMMENDATION:

- 1. That a soft launch be scheduled for the second week of January, and the CDO report back to the Working Party in December on progress with this.**
- 2. That from January onwards, and prior to the appointment of a Project Manager, the Community Development Officer(s) are responsible for :**
 - I. Arranging the early workshops**
 - II. Developing the marketing, publicity and fundraising materials required to raise awareness of the project, including a leaflet to engage potential stakeholders**
- 3. That the Clerk inform Full Council on the steps involved for Ledbury Town Council to establish an independent charitable trust and associated bank account, specifically to enable gift aid and increase charitable donations**

JM32

DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The Chair and the Clerk noted monthly meetings were preferable at this early stage.

The Chair advised that some Councillors preferred early evening meetings, as they work full-time. Other members advised this would be inconvenient. The Clerk asked for feedback on in person or virtual meeting. Members concluded a hybrid version would be preferable. The date of 23 December was mooted, but members noted that this was too close to Christmas, therefore the Chair requested the meeting be brought forward by one week to Friday 16 December.

RESOLVED:

That it be noted that the next meeting of the John Masefield Working Party is scheduled for 16 December, and The Clerk would establish if 2pm or 5pm would be preferable.

Signed Date