

## **SHEPTON MALLET TOWN COUNCIL**

Meeting	People and Promotion Committee
Date	08 December 2020
Author	Project officer
Subject	Heritage trail proposal

### **1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 For councillors to receive a presentation from Ian Keys of the Darshill and Bowlish Conservation Society (DBCS) on a proposal for a heritage trail project in partnership with the Shepton Mallet Historical Society (SMHS) and DBCS.
- 1.2 For councillors to consider whether to fund this project, either agreeing to Option 1 or Option 2 of the funding models.

### **2.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

- 2.1 This committee has been tasked with reflecting on how it wishes to deliver on the priorities identified under the 'Promotion' section of the Town Plan, particularly 'Promote and encourage tourism' and 'Advance culture, the arts and education'.
- 2.2 A report submitted to this committee in November outlined a number of possible areas of priority focus in terms of developing tourism in Shepton Mallet. One of these themes was heritage and history, capitalising on the rich history of the town and the many historic landmarks and buildings it is home to. The report also highlighted that there is currently limited capacity within the town council to deliver on tourism-related projects as there is no designated resource for this. One option is therefore for the town council to look for delivery partners to support this work. The town council has in its town plan also made a commitment to working more closely with local organisations or groups of volunteers.
- 2.3 Members of the DBCS and the SMHS, in consultation with the project officer, have together developed a proposal for a Heritage Trail for Shepton Mallet. The proposal is outlined in Appendix A of this item. The project would be delivered as a partnership between the three partners (SMTTC, DBCS, SMHS).
- 2.4 In short, the proposal is for a collection of themed heritage trails to be mapped and advertised via a main panel located in the centre of town. Users would then download a free app which would show a map which will track the users' location via GPS and indicate the trail route. There will be various stops at different points of interest on the trail and at each of these, information about that point of interest would be available as an audio file as well as written text.

### **3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 3.1 There are two funding options for this project, one of which involves a commitment to the first five years' payment of the app maintenance fee. The town council would enter into the relationship with the app provider.

3.2 The town council has been granted £9K in funding towards tourism by Mendip Tourism Limited. These funds will be made available by the end of the current financial year.

3.3 The DBCS are able to make a financial contribution towards the delivery of this project, in partnership with the Town Council. The amount of that contribution has yet to be agreed.

**4.0 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 By using a digital support (app), the trail would not rely on printed materials and the partners will at all times be mindful of ways to minimise the environmental impact of the trail.

**5.0 TOWN PLAN REFERENCE**

Promotion

Promote and encourage Tourism	Work collaboratively to develop a tourism offering that encourages those who live locally to explore and encourages others to visit  Work with partners in the retail and hospitality industries to ensure that the visitor experience is thoughtful and inclusive
Advance Culture, the Arts, and Education	Capitalise on the rich culture and heritage that the town has to offer and advance it through self-promotion to locals and visitors alike

Place-making

Ensure the town centre is attractive and welcoming	Invest in improvements in the Market Place, in partnerships with others  Support the retention of the Library in the centre of town and its development into a wider Community Hub  Improve the signage, information boards and street furniture to make the town more welcoming
Heritage	Ensure that heritage is promoted and protected through maintenance schemes (Cenotaph, Market Cross and Shambles)

**6.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

6.1 For councillors to consider and agree whether they wish to agree to the Heritage Trail proposal. If so, whether they wish to fund Option 1 (initial set up fee and first year at approx. £5K) or Option 2 (initial set up and support for 5 years approx. £6.1K)

6.2 For councillors to nominate a lead councillor to work with the project officer and partners (DBCS and SMHS) to deliver the project.