

Newsletter Number 16



Presentation on the Regeneration of Great Yarmouth. Friday 13 November 2020

Sheila Oxtoby, Chief Executive of Great Yarmouth Borough Council, explained that in 2017 the Town Centre Masterplan had been produced to develop the Market Place, the Conge, Hall Plain and to link them all together. In July 2019, after expressing an interest in the **Future High Streets Fund**, Great Yarmouth was one of 51 towns selected to put in a formal application. This included:

- Residential densification and a heritage centre
- Rebuilding of a covered market and relocation of the Library into a learning centre in the Market Place. There would be extensive tree planting and landscaping
- Improving the sense of arrival by providing residential accommodation in the Conge with a tree lined road.

The application was sent in on 5 June asking for a grant for £19,927,228. The total bill would be £49,220,336 with GYBC contributing £24,563,709.

Great Yarmouth was one of 101 towns and cities to be selected to submit applications for up to £25M for the **Town Deal**. The objects are to improve:

- Local transport
- Digital connectivity
- Urban regeneration and land use
- Art, Culture and heritage
- Skills infrastructure
- Enterprise infrastructure

Many of the projects overlap with the Future High Street Fund and the Borough has received and is putting large investments into:

- Offshore wind energy
- Developments around the port
- The development of North Quay
- New Marina Centre
- Connectivity. £120M for the third river crossing
- Local cycling and walking routes
- Sculpture trail
- Digital communications in town centre

The Town Board carried out several surveys to judge the support of the population for these plans and 80% were in favour.

Application for funding for the restoration of the Winter Gardens from the Heritage Lottery Fund has to be in by February 2021 and it is among a handful of remaining applicants left. Work is in hand to develop a strong business case.

Submission of the application to the Town Deal needs to be submitted by 9 December.

Darren Barker, Culture Heritage and Design Manager and the Managing Director of the Great Yarmouth Preservation Trust, said that the regeneration of the Town Centre needed a holistic approach with good landscaping, quality building, decluttering and plenty of tree planting. The Preservation Trust had received a £1.9M grant for the the Heritage Action Zone to help in this.

He said the town wall was one of the main assets of the town. It is 1.2 miles long and needs improved accessibility. The area near the Market Place needs comprehensive repair and young people are being trained to do this.

It is important that vacant historic floor space is being brought back into residential use and that shop fronts are improved and this will be held by grants. The Rows are being improved and new residential accommodation in traditional style is to be built on the area facing King Street carpark.

In the discussion which followed all agreed on the importance of having a clean town and this was being helped by the appointment of Chris Silverwood, Director of Operational Services of the Executive Leadership Team. It was important to tackle behavioural aspects among some sections of the community. Paul Davies suggested a community dig on the course of the Town Wall in the Minster cemetery and suggested reconstruction of the St. Nicholas Gate. Darren Barker was supportive of the proposal. The Council was keen to preserve the Iron Duke public house.

Carl Smith, Leader of the Council, was full of praise for the work being done by the Council officers and said that many councils in Norfolk were amazed at the number of grants that the Borough had been able to obtain.

Winter Art Trail

The Town Board has obtained funds to increase footfall in Great Yarmouth and Gorleston during the Winter months although the recent restrictions due to Covid has delayed the implementation of various projects. These will include illumination of several of the heritage sites in the town which the Civic Society has been suggesting for some time. The Town Board has asked the Civic Society to oversee some Art Trails which we hope will take place at the end of February and beginning of March. We hope this will involve displays of various forms of art in shop and business windows along with performing arts in the Market Place and the plaza at the top of Gorleston High Street.

Anyone interested in submitting art - of any form - or wishes to help with the organisation should contact hsturzaker@icloud.com. Brian Ollington will be putting on a display of historical photographs of Great Yarmouth and Gorleston and Peter Jay will have a display from his circus museum. There will be some trails connected with the Rows. Residents will be asked to submit photographs of favourite views of Great Yarmouth and Gorleston which will be judged and prizes will be awarded for the best.

In spite of the restrictions and gloom caused by the Covid Pandemic the plans for the regeneration of the Borough should bring encouragement to all residents and let us all work together to further improve Great Yarmouth and promote civic pride.

With best wishes,

Hugh Sturzaker