



## ARMADA 1588 HERITAGE TRAIL WORKING GROUP

### MEETING NOTES

DATE	8 <sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2025	TIME	9.00AM	VENUE	SALISBURY GARDENS
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#### ATTENDEES

*David Baldwin – came up with the idea based on years of research and running this as a philanthropic exercise to benefit the town*  
*Neil Gibbs – runs the Spyglass, looking to expand Pirate Fest and the Carnival, therefore has a keen interest in the project*  
*Katherine Burden – Town Clerk*  
*Ian Bond – councillor at Ventnor Town Council, wishing to ask some questions about the project*  
*David Gordon – Town Manager at Cowes Town Council*  
*Andy Ashdown – Senior Visitor Experience Officer, National Trust. Understands that there may be an interpretation board on Ventnor Downs hence wishing to know more about the project*  
*Morgan Williams – Officer at Ventnor Town Council, who has been providing some administrative support to the project*  
*Will Harvey – editor of the South Wight Chronicle. With the help of his partner, Abby, has been key to assisting with the illustrations and design work*  
*Abby Wilkinson – AW Design; creative consultant*  
*Steve Cooper – Mayor of Ventnor, has been overseeing the project along with Steph Toogood*  
*Steph Toogood – Deputy Mayor of Ventnor*  
*Maurice Kane – Secretary of Ventnor Bowling Club; interest in the project due to the cup to be competed for in May*  
*Cherie Earle - Ventnor Bowling Club*  
*Catherine Hammond – Business and Voluntary Sector Officer for Ventnor Town Council*  
*John Nicholson – Mayor of Cowes and IW Councillor*

#### ITEM

#### SUBJECT

1)

#### APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Morgan to leave as soon as Catherine Hammond arrives.

2)

#### DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Katherine Burden – Town Clerk declared she is the daughter of David Baldwin.

3)

#### PROJECT OVERVIEW

David Baldwin presented an overview of the reasons behind the project with a brief explanation of the Armada history and the involvement of the Isle of Wight and Ventnor in particular. He explained the event will involve the sailing past of the Spanish Galleon the *Santa Maria*, gun salutes from ship to shore by Hartley's Companie (15<sup>th</sup> century Reenactment group) bell ringing, shanty singing, flag raising and activities on the beach. The ship will stay in Cowes until the 26<sup>th</sup> May.

4)

#### INTERPRETATION BOARDS

#### TO FINALISE THE LOCATION OF THE INTERPRETATION BOARDS AND PROVIDE UPDATES ON ANY PERMISSIONS REQUIRED

- Steve congratulated David, Will and Abby for their hard work with the boards. Will said he had gained so much experience working on this “masterpiece” and it is a great story for all.
- Andy Ashdown asked if the boards are sequential, and David Baldwin pointed out that they can be read separately.

- Ian Bond suggested that the illustrations would benefit from numbers being put on the actual image to cross reference with the annotations. Will Harvey to do this.
- Will Harvey has gained permission from Sam Twining to install boards on his land. IW Council has granted permission for the other boards. Morgan will finalise locations for the boards and how they will be erected now that we have agreement from IW Council.
- The extra board at Shore Road car park will be at an accessible height for wheelchair users.
- David Baldwin has produced an audio description for visually impaired users to explain what they would have seen from the Downs in the time of the Armada.

#### **DISCUSSION WITH THE NATIONAL TRUST:**

Andy Ashdown (NT) expressed his concerns over the installation of the board on the Downs near the Trig Point. He was interested to hear an overview of the project as he stated that he had come to the table late in the process of this venture.

The possibility of installing an interpretation board on National Trust land raises a few points to look at and discuss. Andy stated that he will need to contact Emily Thearle, the Rural Surveyor, who will be able to assist with the issues surrounding the fact the land is an AONB and SSSI. Potentially, the NT could grant a temporary licence with provision for the sign to be removed and surface made good. If a sign is less than 0.3m<sup>2</sup> and temporary (up to 28 days) then it wouldn't need planning permission. However, the location is within the AONB so we would need to confirm whether it requires 'prior approval'.

A larger or permanent board would need planning permission and be of a sufficiently sturdy construction. The area is SSSI and SAC designated so consent would also need to be obtained from Natural England.

Andy pointed out the issue of the appropriateness of the information, design style and how the story fits in with our own plans to update the countryside interpretation across all our places. National Trust branding will need to be investigated. The NT proposed strategy for this kind of interpretation is to help facilitate a temporary licence, then work with partners to review content and potentially help to create something more permanent that meets National Trust criteria.

David Baldwin pointed out that there are already five boards in the vicinity of the Trig Point with differing styles, branding, construction, and erection. Andy said that this was to be investigated.

Andy thought that a permanent A0 board would be too big for NT land and David said that A1 would be suitable. The plan for the board installation will be vertical and on posts cemented into the ground.

The route was discussed with reference to the fact that it will go across NT land. Andy said that we may need a licence for this and said he will find out and get back to us ASAP.

Outcome of the discussion:

- Steve Cooper apologised that the group had not included the National Trust earlier in the process.
- Steve Cooper suggested that a board on the Downs is not installed temporarily, and we should work with the NT to produce a suitable board with the correct info, branding, and location to be installed in the future.
- This was agreed by the group.
- Katherine suggested that this could be erected next year for an anniversary.
- David Baldwin suggested the battle of Dunnose in July.

5)

#### FLAG:

##### TO PROVIDE AN UPDATE ON THE PERMISSIONS FOR THE FLAG DESIGN.

##### TO DISCUSS PRINTING TIMINGS AND COST

- No reply from the King of Spain about permission to use the red ensign on the Armada flag design. David Baldwin explained a complicated series of steps that need to be followed to gain permission involving the MOD, Embassies and Spanish MOD. David B is still waiting for a reply.
- If there is no reply to David B stated that we would remove the red ensign from the flag and replace with Recalde.
- Flagpoles are either publicly owned or belong to Spyglass or Longshoreman's and are in place.
- Steph stated that flag printing time is 2 weeks.

#### MAP/LEAFLET:

##### FINALISE DESIGN AND PRINTING OF THE LEAFLETS:

- Will H stated that the design for the DL leaflet needs to be signed off before going to printers.
- Steph stated that 5000 will be printed. However, Will H pointed out that this will 'go in no time'.
- The group discussed locations for the leaflet to be distributed - island and mainland.
- Will stated that we need to promote the town as there is the perception that "Ventnor is closed."
- Leaflets to be distributed all over the island – we need to promote Ventnor at ferry terminals.
- The group will discuss with Will Miles from Visit Isle of Wight about distribution of leaflets on mainland south of M4 corridor.
- We will send a copy of the leaflet to Andy Ashdown to explain the trail. It was suggested that the NT. could distribute the leaflet

#### OTHER MERCHANDISE:

Will Harvey suggested paper flags for sandcastle building on beach – Catherine will make these with Well-being Café members.

6)

#### LAUNCH

##### TO DISCUSS DETAILS OF THE ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE LAUNCH EVENTS IN MAY:

##### LAUNCH DAY MAY 21<sup>ST</sup>

- *Santa Maria* arriving at 1.30pm after leaving the Channel Islands.
- The ship will hopefully sail/drift slowly past Ventnor for gun salutes (at an approximate speed of 5 knots) arriving at Dunnose at 3pm. It will then sail on to Cowes.
- Will Nixon will be in his role as Town Crier on the seafront walking from one gun salute station to the other.
- Shanty singers – 6 groups have been booked, and some have offered Spanish themed songs.
- The event is not in the school holidays and is a working day so we need to attract as many people as possible and to provide activities that will keep people on the seafront and town.
- Hostelrys to be encouraged to get on board and provide food and drink for lunch and the afternoon/evening. Check if Phil will be cooking Paella at the Mill Bay.

- Neil Gibbs stated that he wants the event to be successful and include businesses **all** around the town.
- Neil Gibbs has ideas for Spanish themed food and drinks.
- Steph will be hosting a Story telling and Sea Shanties evening at the Spyglass.
- Story tellers are needed for this. Catherine/Steph to contact Ventnor Exchange about finding story tellers. Open Mic night at the Exchange?
- Contact the new Basque restaurant opposite Co-op. The chef has cooked for the King of Spain.
- Contact the Bonchurch Inn and the Buddle Inn.
- Need to contact the Harbour Master for permission to fire gun salute off the Groyne.

#### **FRIDAY 23<sup>RD</sup> MAY BOWLING EVENT:**

- Maurice and Cherie explained the Recalde Cup at Ventnor Bowling Club. Cowes Plessey Team are to play Ventnor.
- David has designed a beautiful cup. This will be an annual event at Ventnor and Cowes Clubs.
- 10am start, refreshments will be served, possibly a buffet.
- The Spanish Ambassador and Mayor of Bilbao have been invited to present the Cup. No reply yet – to be followed up.
- Maurice invited David to the match and suggested that David could present the Cup.
- Steve Cooper to attend in Spanish costume.

#### **PRESS RELEASE:**

- Will Harvey stated that we need to work on the press release ASAP.
- Maurice will liaise with Will H about adding Bowls Match to the press release.
- Will H will include a front page article in the May edition of the Chronicle and would like a running order of the day – submission deadline 21<sup>st</sup> April.

#### **TO PROVIDE AN UPDATE ON INVITEES:**

- David Baldwin circulated a list of suggested guests.
- The working group will discuss, agree on invitees, and send invitations.
- Will and Abby offered to design the invitation with guidance from David Baldwin.

#### **DISCUSSION ABOUT FINANCING THE PROJECT:**

Ian Bond asked whether this is a VTC event and how it was being financed. He stated that it was an exciting project, but he wanted to get to the bottom of the finances. He was concerned that public money was being spent and that the other councillors did not feel included in the project. Ian stated that David Baldwin had been co-opted onto the council by being part of this working group.

Katherine Burden stated that this has been privately financed by an individual, and the council have not been involved with spending any money. It is a private endeavour, and the council have assisted by obtaining permissions and facilitating the event. This has been a transparent working group, and all councillors have been communicated with in the proper way. Agendas and meeting notes were made available to all councillors. All councillors had the opportunity to attend the meetings, and no one has attended or made any contributions. The support given by staff was staff time in kind as we do with other activities and groups in the town such as Ventnor Carnival for which K and C have attended meetings and completed work on their behalf.

Ian Bond said he has asked for a discussion at the Full Council meeting on Monday.

David Baldwin thanked Ian for his input and interest in how the project has been working.

7)

#### EDUCATION – LINKING WITH LOCAL SCHOOLS

- Catherine has had no reply from Upper Ventnor Schools but will try again. Katherine will link with St Catherine's School.
- Abby and Catherine will contact other island schools and VI Form.
- John Nicholson said it has been difficult getting a response from schools in Cowes and there wasn't much take up yet.
- The schools can book a tour on the ship, and we have been given permission from the Nao Victoria Foundation to add a link for this to any promotional materials sent to schools: [ecampos@fundacionnaovictoria.org](mailto:ecampos@fundacionnaovictoria.org)

8)

#### FUTURE LEGACY

TO DISCUSS SECURING THE LEGACY OF THE PROJECT – CONSIDER THE OPTION OF A CIC AND WHERE THE PROJECT CAN BE ARCHIVED.

- Ian Bond stated that the main legacy will be the permanent walking trails, and this is an all year interest for visitors.
- Steve Cooper is in negotiation with Ramblers Association.
- To lead walks in the Walking Festivals and Ventnor Fringe on annual basis.
- Twinning of towns suggested for the future to bring cultural and educational benefits as well as visitors. Bilbao was mentioned; however, Ian Bond thought this town was not matched for size and suggested a smaller coastal town.
- Annual Recalde Cup for Ventnor and Cowes.
- Maritime link with Portsmouth – ensure DL leaflets are distributed at the Dockyard.
- Royal Hotel – discuss heritage trail idea – they are promoting the Dickens Trail.
- Link with Cowes, and the rest of the island, to develop the history of the Armada.
- To link up with Cowes Town Council in future activities and explore a stronger link between the two towns.

9)

This is the final meeting of the Working Group. The members agreed to disband the Working Group.

Highlighted items are to be actioned.