



PORTFOLIO HOLDER DECISION NOTICE

INDIVIDUAL DECISION BY THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR CULTURE HERITAGE AND SPORT

TOPIC – CAPITAL GRANT TO THE EEL HOUSE

PROCEDURAL INFORMATION

The Access to Information Procedure Rules – Part 4, Section 22 of the Council's Constitution provides for a decision to be made by an individual member of Cabinet.

In accordance with the Procedure Rules, the Corporate Director (Governance), the Chief Executive and the Head of Finance are consulted together with Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Principal Scrutiny Committee and all Members of the relevant Scrutiny Panel (individual Ward Members are consulted separately where appropriate). In addition, all Members are notified.

Five or more of these consulted Members can require that the matter be referred to Cabinet for determination.

Contact Officers:

Case Officer: Bernice Heller, Tel: 01962 848 582, Email: bheller@winchester.gov.uk

Committee Administrator:

Frances Maloney, Tel: 01962 848 155, Email: fmaloney@winchester.gov.uk

SUMMARY

A capital grant of £3,000 was approved for the New Alresford Town Trust, at the Cabinet Meeting held on 19th September, 2007 (CAB 1510) towards the cost of repairs to the Eel House, with the following conditions:

- (i) The New Alresford Town Trust will provide open access for the general public to the Eel House on at least one day every weekend from April to September.
- (ii) Grant will also be subject to the group's compliance with the terms and conditions of grant currently in force.

The New Alresford Town Trust is not currently in a position to meet the requirements of condition 1 above.

In view of the concerns raised by this group, with regard to their inability to meet this requirement, a further visit was made to the Eel House by the Partnership and External Funding Officer in order to assess the current situation which is as follows:

- The building is completely stable and secure. All external walls have been rebuilt and the building can be kept locked
- The approach to the Eel House has been much improved due to the maintenance work of adjacent landowners. The general undergrowth has been cut back and the Eel House is now highly visible from the pathways.

- There is still some further work required which includes opening up the alternative access route to the building and making the interior of the building safe for visitors. A further £7,500 is required for this remaining work but it is envisaged that this will have been raised and the work carried out by the end of 2008.
- Further funds will be required to meet the training needs of the volunteers and in order to provide additional information boards.

Grant was awarded in line with the Corporate and Community Strategy as detailed below:

CORPORATE STRATEGY (RELEVANCE TO):

- High Quality Environment – ensure the historic environment is preserved and enhanced.
- Promote Health and Wellbeing by increasing opportunities to participate in sporting and cultural activities.

COMMUNITY STRATEGY (RELEVANCE TO):

- Priority 14 – Enhance the contribution of tourism to the economy of the Winchester District and ensure Winchester maintains its competitive edge.

DECISION

It is recommended that the grant conditions are amended to the following:

- Groups/parties from Hampshire educational establishments will be able to have supervised access by appointment. This will include a tutored explanation of the eel trapping process and its history. Such visits to be enhanced by appropriate fact-sheets and study aids.
- During 2008 the Eel House will be open to the public from 11.00 am to 3.00 pm on Sunday 11th May for the Alresford Watercress Festival weekend and on one day from 11.00 a.m. to 3 p.m. over the Heritage Days weekend.
- As from 1st January, 2009, the Eel House will be open to the public on 8 days for four hours per day in line with the following schedule:

Easter Bank Holiday	2 days
May Day Bank Holiday	1 day
Spring Bank Holiday	1 day
Watercress Festival	1 day
August Bank Holiday	1 day
Heritage Weekend	2 days

REASON FOR THE DECISION AND OTHER ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

Currently access to the Eel House is via privately owned land and any opening arrangements have to be agreed with the landowner. These current access arrangements also involve crossing flowing water which increases the risk to the general public.

The alternative access route is due to be completed by the end of December 2008. Once this is completed there will no longer be a need to have prior permission from the landowner for visits and the public will have a safer access route to the Eel House.

There will still be a need for all volunteers manning the Eel House to be properly trained and made aware of all Health and Safety Issues due to the location of the Eel House over flowing water.

There is a time implication involved in recruiting and training the required number of volunteers to enable the Eel House to be safely accessed by the general public.

FURTHER ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED FOLLOWING PUBLICATION OF THE DRAFT PORTFOLIO HOLDER DECISION NOTICE

N/A

DECLARATION OF INTERESTS BY THE DECISION MAKER OR A MEMBER OR OFFICER CONSULTED

None

DISPENSATION GRANTED BY THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE

N/A

RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Grant was awarded from the Capital Grant budget allocation for 2007/2008.

Approved by: (signature)

Date of Decision

Councillor Patricia Stallard – Portfolio Holder for Culture, Heritage and Sport