

Abingdon-on-Thames Town Council

Report of the Guildhall Fundraising Working Group, 7th August 2014

Following a meeting with Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) advisors on 25th July, the Guildhall Manager and Museum Curator produced a short presentation to highlight the information and advice given at this meeting. The presentation was given on 7th August to the Guildhall Fundraising Working Group consisting of Councillors Sandy Lovatt and Julie Mayhew-Archer.

The presentation highlighted the HLF expectation of heritage outcomes of projects funded by them. This included having regular public access to the buildings and heritage items which had benefitted from the grant funds. They also explained their current position, which is not to support applications where the outcomes are business orientated (for example, they would not aid the restoration of a building which will in future be primarily used for community or commercial room hire).

These stipulations were addressed in the presentation by suggesting that any Heritage grant application should only address the historic rooms, (Abbey Room, Council Chamber, Bear Room and Roysse Room and adjacent staircases etc.) not the Abbey Hall and modern rooms. In order to attract grant funding future use of the historic rooms would need to include regular public access which may have an impact on the current pattern of usage.

Further investigation is now being undertaken to assess the likely effect on room hire income and the potential for replacing this with income from other educational, heritage, arts or cultural events which could ensure the rooms are appropriately used, having due regard to the value of a heritage project and the potential grant sums which may be attracted. Following this work, a further report will be made to the Fundraising Working Group followed by the Guildhall Committee itself.