

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

LEISURE and ARTS ADVISORY BOARD

17 March 2008

Report of the Chief Leisure Officer

Part 1- Public

Matters for Information

1 HERITAGE OPEN DAYS 2008

Summary

The report advises Members about the preparations being made towards the above event.

1.1 Background

1.1.1 Heritage Open Days (HOD) celebrates England's architecture and culture by offering free access to properties that are usually closed to the public or normally charge for admission. Coordinated nationally by the Civic Trust in partnership with English Heritage, the event thrives on the enthusiasm and expertise of local people and volunteers.

1.1.2 Locally, the event is coordinated by the Borough Council and will take place during the weekend of Saturday, 13 and Sunday, 14 September 2008. It is a partnership event, with parish/town councils and local historical societies gathering support on the ground in local communities across the borough.

1.2 2008 Event

1.2.1 Preparations for HOD 2008 are already underway. Previous participants have been contacted asking if they would like to register, and parish/town councils have been requested to nominate properties to take part. Confirmation has been received that Ightham Mote will be a new participant for 2008.

1.2.2 As in previous years, Tonbridge Castle will be open free of charge to the public on Sunday, 14 September, offering mini tours of the Gatehouse. It is anticipated that local community groups such as Tonbridge Art Group and Tonbridge Historical Society will be exhibiting in the Council Chamber throughout the day. East Sussex Concert Band will be performing in the afternoon on the Castle Lawn as visitors make their way round the Castle.

1.2.3 To coincide with the weekend, local artists will be exhibiting their work on both days at the Watergate. This has been co-ordinated by local artists, Platonic and has become an established part of the event.

1.2.4 Completed forms have to be received by the Civic Trust by 1 May 2008. This ensures that all participating properties are listed on the Civic Trust's website and included in the Guardian Newspaper. For local participants a leaflet will be produced by the Borough Council in July/August and made available on the Council's website, in Tourist Information Centres/outlets; local attractions; garden centres, libraries and parish/ town councils.

1.3 Legal Implications

1.3.1 None.

1.4 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

1.4.1 Access to properties is free of charge to visitors, and in the majority of cases is run by volunteers in the local community. The cost to the Council relates primarily to staff time and the printing of leaflets, which can be met from the 2008/09 revenue budget.

1.5 Risk Assessment

1.5.1 Once participants have submitted forms to the Civic Trust, they automatically receive public liability insurance cover for the days that its properties are open.

1.6 Policy Considerations

1.6.1 Community.

Background papers:

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File H.4/5

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