

Reference No. HDC 2121

NOTICE OF DECISION OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR LEISURE AND CULTURE

Pursuant to the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012, Regulation 13(1) and Section 9F (4) of the Local Government Act 2000

Loan of the Shipley Reliquary by Shipley Parish Church to Horsham District Council (Horsham Museum)

Decision	To approve the loan agreement drawn up to accept the loan of the Shipley Reliquary to Horsham District Council (Horsham Museum).
Reason for Decision	Shipley Parochial Church Council (Shipley PCC) own the Shipley Reliquary, an important medieval religious artefact that has recently returned to the UK. The Reliquary is offered, on loan, to be displayed in Horsham Museum.
Possible alternatives considered but rejected	Not to accept the loan – but as the Reliquary would not be able to be displayed by the Church locally, this would mean that it is unlikely that the local community would be able to access it.
Conflict of interest and any dispensations granted	None
Date of Decision	24 August 2021
Date by which decision may be implemented	1 September 2021

This decision is an executive decision as described in Section 14 of Part 4C *Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules* of the Constitution of the Council. A copy of this decision notice has been provided to all members of the council and the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Signed: **SIGNATURE REDACTED**
Councillor Roger Noel, Cabinet Member for Leisure and Culture

Not Exempt

Background Information

1 Introduction and Background

- 1.1 The Shipley Reliquary, a Limoges enamel casket dated to c1200, discovered in Shipley church in 1830, loaned to the Victoria and Albert museum between 1917 and 1939, was stolen from Shipley Parish church in 1976. It is the most complete and one of the finest reliquaries in the UK. The Reliquary has since been recovered and returned to the church authorities.
- 1.2 Shipley PCC have offered to loan the Reliquary to Horsham District Council so that it can be on display in Horsham Museum for a minimum of five years.
- 1.3 Once the loan agreement has been signed, Horsham Museum are able to seek grant funding to develop a wide range of educational activities to help re-integrate this medieval masterpiece back into the community.

2 Relevant Council policy

- 2.1 Corporate Plan 2019-2023: A thriving economy. (2.3.3) Enhance our culture, leisure and heritage facilities to attract visitors and to support the local economy.

3 Details

- 3.1 The loan is proposed on an initial five year term and thereafter on a rolling basis with review and break points every five years.
- 3.2 The Reliquary will be housed in the most secure section of Horsham Museum, within a specially designed and reinforced display cabinet. The Reliquary will be fully insured including appropriate cover should it be stolen or damaged whilst on display.

4 Next Steps

- 4.1 Once the loan agreement is signed by both parties and in place, practical steps can be undertaken to transfer the Reliquary to Horsham Museum in readiness for public display. This is anticipated to be by October 2021, once Horsham Museum is reopened to the public.

5 Outcome of Consultations

- 5.1 Leisure and Culture PDAG members were informed of the potential loan of the Shipley Reliquary on 20 January 2021 and were supportive.

- 5.2 Ongoing consultations have also taken place with various stakeholder groups and organisations including: Shipley Parish Church, parishioners of Shipley, Chichester Cathedral, Louvre Paris, V&A Museum UK.

6 Resource Consequences

- 6.1 Horsham Museum was given a legacy of £25,000, to be used for public benefit and engagement. Part of this legacy will fund the new display cabinet, transportation costs of the Reliquary, conservation report and any subsequent work required. It is envisaged that the cost of such works will be under £10,000.
- 6.2 Horsham District Council are committing to spend a low cost premium of £[REDACTED] per annum over the initial five year term. In the event of a claim for the Reliquary the higher excess of £[REDACTED] would apply. The alternative option is a higher premium at £[REDACTED] per annum with a lower excess of £[REDACTED]
- 6.3 Ongoing management and overseeing the display of the Reliquary will be within normal Museum operations.

7 Legal Considerations and Implications

- 7.1 The nature of the loan agreement is such that ecclesiastical law will apply and Horsham District Council will need to ensure that it complies with the terms of any faculty granted by the Consistory Court of the Diocese of Chichester in respect of the loan. Ecclesiastical law is a specialist area of law, so Legal Services would potentially need to outsource and gain specialist advice if there are any future concerns or challenges throughout the term of the loan.
- 7.2 Horsham District Council will be responsible for the cost of any conservation works during the term of the loan and solely responsible for the cost of insuring the Reliquary. Any theft, accidental damage, vandalism and destruction of the Reliquary through acts of God are all covered by insurance. It is therefore a low risk but if the insurance was not to pay out any reason the Council may be liable for the full value of the Reliquary.

The Reliquary is currently valued at £[REDACTED]

8 Risk Assessment

- 8.1 The risk to the Reliquary through theft or damage has been negated by the purchase of a specialist display cabinet, improved security and handling arrangements in place. Should a theft occur the risk will be reputational; the financial risk will be covered through insurance. The Museum by employing a Conservation expert and undertaking their advice will also minimise any damage caused through the display.

9 Procurement implications

- 9.1 None

10. Equalities and Human Rights implications / Public Sector Equality Duty

- 10.1 The Reliquary was created through Christian belief and shows saints and Christ on a cross. It is also a sacred devotional object that held a sacred item be it cloth, bone, wood, skin of a saint. Whilst it has great religious significance the artistic quality of the workmanship and its age can be appreciated by all denominations irrespective of religious belief – as shown in Museums throughout the world. However due regard for its Religious significance will be taken into account in its display and in promotional/media material

11 Environmental Implications

- 11.1 As the Reliquary will be on display in Horsham it is closer to the community from where it originates, rather than in a regional or national Museum, and therefore reduces the impact of travel from the majority of visitors.

12 Other Considerations

- 12.1 There are no other considerations.

Background Papers

None

Wards affected:

All

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