

AGENDA MANAGEMENT SHEET

Name of Committee Nuneaton And Bedworth Area Committee

Date of Committee 20 September 2006

Report Title 'Scenes Revisited' - celebration of George Eliot in 2007

Summary Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council, the George Eliot Fellowship and Warwickshire County Council are working together to celebrate the 150th Anniversary of George Eliot's first published work of fiction 'Scenes of Clerical Life'. These three short "works" are closely set in Nuneaton and provide a unique opportunity to promote interest in the history of the community in the early 19th Century. The partners seek the support of the Area Committee for the initiative.

For further information please contact: Adrian Litvinoff
Area Manager North,
Warwickshire Library and
Information Service
Tel: 01926 - 476730
adrianlitvinoff@warwickshire.gov.uk
No.

Would the recommended decision be contrary to the Budget and Policy Framework?

Background papers None

CONSULTATION ALREADY UNDERTAKEN:- Details to be specified

- Other Committees
- Local Member(s) This report constitutes consultation with local members
- Other Elected Members Councillor Barry Longden, Bob Stevens
Colin Hayfield
- Cabinet Member
- Chief Executive
- Legal Ian Marriott

- Finance Paul Walsh
- Other Chief Officers Economy and Environment
- District Councils Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council
- Health Authority
- Police
- Other Bodies/Individuals

FINAL DECISION YES

SUGGESTED NEXT STEPS:

Details to be specified

- Further consideration by this Committee
- To Council
- To Cabinet
- To an O & S Committee
- To an Area Committee
- Further Consultation

Agenda No

Nuneaton And Bedworth Area Committee -

'Scenes Revisited' – A Celebration of George Eliot in 2007

Report of the Director of Adult Health and Community Services

Recommendation

Members are recommended:

- To send a letter to the Heritage Lottery Fund in support of the application
- To nominate a Member to represent the Area Committee as a Stakeholder
- To suggest any other way in which the Committee wishes to support the initiative

1. George Eliot is Warwickshire's *other* world-class writer, and her significance is to some extent masked by the huge attention directed to Shakespeare.
2. 2007 will be the 150th anniversary of publication of 'Scenes of Clerical Life', George Eliot's earliest published work of fiction. It first appeared in magazine instalments throughout 1857, and was rapidly acclaimed for the honesty and humanity of its social observation, including by Dickens and Thackeray.
3. Set closely in Nuneaton, these three short "works" provide a unique account of community life in the early 19th Century. They not only portray the lives of some notable clerics and their families, but also the condition of all classes in Nuneaton, particularly communities in Coton End, Stockingford, the town centre and the Arbury Estate. The themes include health and poverty, the power of patronage, the treatment of religious dissent, and middle class domestic violence.
4. Officers of Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council and Warwickshire County Council working with the George Eliot Fellowship have developed activities based on 'Scenes' to promote interest in George Eliot's work and the town of Nuneaton within it. Other organisations are also keen to take part, including BBC Coventry and Warwickshire, Nuneaton and Bedworth Heritage Forum, and Coventry City Library Service. There are likely to be activities in schools, and reading groups across the county will be encouraged to include 'Scenes' in their programme for the year.
5. The provisional programme is designed to engage both residents and visitors and includes the following activities:

- The George Eliot Fellowship intends to offer free copies of 'Scenes of Clerical Life' to existing and new Reading Groups in Warwickshire and beyond
 - A programme of 'Scenes' guided walk and tours
 - Speaker events featuring well-known authors with an interest in George Eliot
 - Screenings of film and television adaptations of her novels
 - A touring exhibition illustrating life in early 19th Century Nuneaton using parish and church records
 - Young people's responses to George Eliot through creative arts projects in schools
 - Publications such as local history leaflets, study guides, and a DVD
6. Some of these activities will require external funding, and an application is being submitted to the Heritage Lottery Fund. The Fund welcomes letters in support of applications. Once the outcome of the application is known participating organisations and stakeholders will be consulted about the programme detail and the promotional campaign planned to support it.
7. The Committee has clearly demonstrated its interest in preserving and promoting the social history of Nuneaton and Bedworth by investing in the 'Working Lives' Oral History Project. It is hoped that Members will also support this initiative as a further measure to broaden the enjoyment and appreciation of Nuneaton and Bedworth's social and cultural heritage.
8. Members are therefore recommended:
- To send a letter to the Heritage Lottery Fund in support of the application
 - To nominate a member to represent the Area Committee as a stakeholder
 - To suggest any other way in which the Committee wishes to support the initiative.

Graeme Betts
Director, Adult Health and Community Services
Shire Hall
Warwick

21 August 2006