

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Finance and Resources
DATE	25 April 2013
LEAD OFFICER	Chief Executive
TITLE OF REPORT	Scottish National War Memorial
REPORT NUMBER	OCE/13/014

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The report brings before the Committee for its consideration a request for financial assistance from the Scottish National War Memorial.

2. RECOMMENDATION

That the Committee agrees a contribution of £1,500 from the Council's Financial Assistance budget towards the costs of the Scottish National War Memorial's project to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the Great War.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The recommended contribution of £1,500 can be met from the Council's Financial Assistance budget.

4. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

None.

5. BACKGROUND/MAIN ISSUES

Attached is correspondence received by the Chief Executive from the Chairman of the Trustees of the Scottish National War Memorial at Edinburgh Castle. The correspondence outlines a project the Memorial is undertaking to mark the 100th anniversary of the Great War.

The project comprises the researching, writing and publication of a book on the Memorial together with the development of a new website, both underpinned by a newly-commissioned high definition photographic record. In addition the project will also see the refurbishment of the Rolls of Honour housed within the Memorial.

It is considered that a contribution by the Council to this national project, sits well alongside the allocation made in the 2013/2014 budget towards the cost of renovating the local war memorials in the City. It is recommended that a contribution of £1,500 is agreed.

6. IMPACT

The subject matter of the report is relevant both to the City Council's role in upholding the civic dignity of Aberdeen and in working in the spirit of the Community Covenant the Council has with the armed forces community.

7. MANAGEMENT OF RISK

As indicated in paragraph 6 above agreeing the recommendation of the report is appropriate in light of the Council's role in supporting and highlighting the work of the armed forces community. Given this, there may be a reputational risk for the Council in rejecting the request for support.

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.

9. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

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THE SCOTTISH NATIONAL WAR MEMORIAL

Chairman Major General MJ Strudwick CBE
Secretary Lieutenant Colonel RJ Binks FCIS
Hon Treasurer Major TD Straton TD CA CTA

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Dedicated 1927. Granted Royal Charter 1947. Registered Scottish Charity: SC009869.

Our Reference: SNWM/200

1st March 2013

Dear Chief Executive,

The 100th Anniversary of the start of the Great War in August 2014 has prompted the Trustees of The Scottish National War Memorial to identify the best way of marking these historic years.

The Memorial was designed by Sir Robert Lorimer with over 120 different artists in support, built in the decade after the First World War and completed in 1927. The cost was met through public subscription organised across the burghs and parishes of Scotland with an appeal to Scotsmen in every part of the globe for contributions.

After the work of the Committee, a Royal Charter was granted in December 1947. The Trustees today consist of four individuals nominated by the First Minister, The General Officer Commanding the Army in Scotland who is Governor of Edinburgh Castle, The Lord Provosts of Edinburgh, Glasgow, Aberdeen and Dundee with six other local authorities and the Scottish Trades Unions Congress represented. This composition reflects and recognises the influence and support of the Scottish People and the importance of the Scottish National War Memorial in the psyche of the Nation.

The Trustees are conscious that the Memorial web-site is nearly two decades old, that modern communications is putting its identity and relevance at risk and that the photographic archive is woefully inadequate.

We have therefore decided to embark on a Corporate Communications Project to update our archives and modernise our approach and considerably increase our out-reach. The Project will consist of three parts: a new web-site, a high definition photographic record and a book to commemorate the Memorial as we mark 100 years from the outbreak of hostilities.

At the same time we are using the anniversary of the Great War to ensure that our Rolls of Honour are completely up to date and refurbished. The record of over 200,000 individuals of whom two-thirds died in the First World War, a quarter in the Second World War and many others in campaigns world-wide to the present day.

This Project is going to cost in the region of £50,000 and I will oversee its delivery. Inevitably we are going to require significant support and we will be approaching a number of Trusts and Foundations and individuals to seek financial assistance. I request that you will consider supporting this Project. If every Local Authority was to contribute £500 to £1,500 or whatever you decide; we would have a magnificent foundation of support to be matched by private donations. The Trustees have decided that any funding over and above the cost of the Project would be donated by the Scottish National War Memorial to PoppyScotland (Earl Haig Fund) for their important benevolent work supporting those who suffer as a result of their service in the Armed Forces.

I am copying this letter to the Civic Head, Council Leader and Chief Executive of all the Local Authorities in Scotland and undertake to keep you in touch with our progress. Naturally the book will record contributors who have made this Project possible.

Attached is an outline of the Scottish National War Memorial Project commemorating the centenary of the Great War.

Many thanks for your support,
Yours sincerely,

Major General Mark Strudwick CBE

Chairman of Trustees

**The Scottish National War Memorial Project
to commemorate the 100th anniversary of The Great War.**

The Memorial

The Scottish National War Memorial is unique in its richness and complexity, but also in the way it originated. It was built entirely by public subscription in response to the widespread feeling that a memorial in London was too remote and impersonal to express the grief of the people of Scotland who had lost so many of their young men. Each one of those losses was personal and the extraordinary achievement of the Memorial is that for all its grandeur and complexity, the personal is at its heart, right there in the individual names of those who died inscribed in the Rolls of Honour. From that base in private and individual grief, the Memorial evolves through monuments to the individual services and regiments, including the non-combatants, to express the collective grief of the Nation as a whole.

It is its success in expressing that collective emotion coupled with the comprehensive way it represents those who were involved that is so exceptional. However, crucially, it also clearly expresses the sentiment that the Nation could only ever be reconciled to so much loss if the message for the future was one of peace. Thus the Memorial enshrines the memory of the losses of war, but it is also a monument to the hope of peace. That other wars have followed and sadly there are constantly new names to enter on the Rolls of Honour is a comment on the fallibility of human nature, not on the success in enshrining their message of the team of artists and craftsmen and women who designed and built the Memorial led by Sir Robert Lorimer.

The Book and Website

The purpose of the proposed book is to tell the story of how the Memorial was designed and built and to interpret the richness and complexity of its meaning and purpose for future generations. That story has not hitherto been told. Such publications as the Trustees have sponsored in the past, while serving their purpose at the time, are no longer adequate in this global age where people of dozens of nationalities pass through the Memorial every day. It is essential too that this story is told while a sense of the original purpose of the Memorial is still accessible to us so that future generations will understand, respect and preserve it. There are two obvious places to do this, in a book and on the website. They will complement each other; both will require modern photography.

The research and writing for the book, even the organisation of the information, for instance, are a necessary precondition to building a new web site. So too is photography. There is no adequate photographic record of the Memorial. A book will be the best way of putting those images into wider circulation and thus take the reputation of the Memorial with them. A book will also serve a wider purpose than the website and so would in turn feed back into its usefulness and reputation. It will present the narrative of the Memorial in a way that the website could not do, for websites are not used or constructed in that way. They are there as a tool for finding things, not for telling a unified story with a beginning, a middle and end.

The book will tell the story of the public campaign that led to building of the Memorial, the debate surrounding its design and the way the idea was developed by Lorimer, his team and their advisors, both lay and military. The book will give an account of that team and of the work its members variously undertook. The narrative will then proceed to an exploration of the Memorial itself with an analysis and discussion of the whole building as well as of the role and meaning of its individual parts, from the separate regimental, service and other monuments, the windows in the nave and transepts, through to the shrine with the frieze around the sides, the casket at the centre and the superb windows above.

The Library and Archive

The Memorial Library holds many records dating from the inception and development of the building and Rolls of Honour, but does not have a composite portfolio of images which can be used with current technology. The gathering of such an Archive will enhance any publication and the website and provide opportunities to offer images to relatives and the wider community.

The Outreach

The book would greatly broaden the base of public interest. Even in Edinburgh, it is remarkable how often, if you speak to people about the Memorial, they simply look blank. It is an enormously important place, yet it is hardly known at all, certainly not as it deserves to be. The new website will serve those who already have an interest in the Memorial and will be properly designed to be extremely useful in the modern communication age. It will help to widen interest and broaden understanding when the searcher's interest has been aroused. The book will have a quite different publicity arc to the website and will help establish the Memorial in its proper place in the popular imagination and in the Nation's pride.