

WOODSTOCK TOWN COUNCIL

Council Paper

WOODSTOCK AT 900

1 April 2009

PETER JAY

This paper asks the Council to appoint a committee to consider and oversee plans to celebrate the 900th anniversary of the Royal Park of Woodstock (and possibly also of Old Woodstock), reporting to the Council.

A note on the history is at Annex A.

Membership

For such an important event it will be important to be inclusive of the whole town in all its diversity and to bring together the key players. Since the event to be commemorated evokes both the Park (seven miles in circumference) and the name “Woodstock”, it is appropriate that the Woodstock Council and the Blenheim estate should collaborate in this work, co-opting others as appropriate.

John Hoy has agreed to this at a meeting the Town Hall on 9th April, where he emphasised the value of close co-operation with Wake Up to Woodstock. Chris Baylis of Wake Up to Woodstock has already confirmed that he is happy to be associated with it.

I suggest that such a committee should:-

- a. be chaired by the Mayor;
- b. include four councillors elected by the Council;
- c. co-opt our honorary townsmen (John Banbury, Robert Edwards, Ian Lenagan);
- d. co-opt our District and County Councillors;
- e. co-opt representatives of Blenheim and Wake Up To Woodstock;
- f. have powers to co-opt other local representatives as appropriate;

- g. operate under Council Standing Orders;
- h. have powers to recommend to Council such financial arrangements and structures as may seem suitable and as are compatible with the Council's own rules and obligations;
- i. establish under its control a "Woodstock @ 900" project of which royal and ducal patronage may be sought (John Hoy suggested that I should write to the Duke of Marlborough next week); and
- j. make plans for the appropriate celebration of the anniversary.

The Anniversary

History fixes no exact day – or month – of the year for this anniversary. The Committee might well decide that a day – or week - in May or June fitting in with other planned events in Woodstock and at Blenheim would be best. John Hoy has suggested that a Bank holiday may be a good opportunity, either in early May or at the end of May.

The Committee would need to consider the nature of the event or events which should mark the occasion. An event - or "events" - organiser may need to be appointed to coordinate activities at Blenheim and in the town and to ensure proper traffic (!), catering and other supporting services.

A street party as in 1995 has many attractions, especially for our own Woodstock families (hard-working or not). If large numbers of visitors are expected, other arrangements may be more practical. All these things will need to be weighed by the committee, which needs therefore to start work as soon as possible.

Fund-Raising

We should maybe establish a fund-raising campaign linked to the anniversary to raise money e.g. for a new community centre, Youth Club building etc. Suitable members might include Woodstock "big hitters" with some of whom I have spoken, receiving encouraging responses all round.

Other Links

Links with the District Council in Witney will also be useful. In particular it has been suggested that we should ask Councillor Barry Norton to establish a link with Dianne Blackwell, WODC's of tourism for Oxfordshire and the Cotswolds.

Likewise a connection with Oxford Inspires would help to have the Woodstock@900 anniversary included in City and County-wide plans for events in 2010.

Motion

That council appoints a temporary committee to be known as the Woodstock@900 Committee to consider, to make plans for and to arrange how Woodstock shall mark the 900th anniversary in 2010 of the establishment of the Royal Park of Woodstock by King Henry I as follows:-

- a. the Mayor and four other councillors [namely...] shall be members;
- b. our three honorary townsmen [John Banbury, Robert Edwards, Ian Lenagan] shall be co-opted;
- c. representatives of Blenheim and Wake Up to Woodstock shall be co-opted;
- d. others may be co-opted as required;
- k. the committee shall operate under council Standing Orders;
and
- e. it has powers to recommend to council such financial arrangements and structures as may seem suitable and as are compatible with the council's own rules and obligations.

PJ