



**Report To:** Planning Portfolio Holder  
**Lead Officer:** Jo Mills, Director of Planning & New Communities

7 June 2016

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## **Heritage Guardianship Sites: Landbeach Tithe Barn, East Hatley Church and Sawston Tannery Drying Shed**

### **Purpose**

1. To update on the progress of the Landbeach Tithe Barn project, in particular the access to the barn.
2. To monitor progress on the Sawston Tannery Drying Shed Project and the transfer of St Denis Church at East Hatley
3. This is not a key decision

### **Recommendations**

4. It is recommended that the Portfolio holder notes the progress made.

### **Reasons for Recommendations**

5. To keep the Portfolio Holder informed regarding Heritage sites, and enable related activities to continue.

### **Background**

#### **Landbeach Tithe Barn**

6. Landbeach Tithe Barn is a Grade II thatched listed building owned by the Council since 1986. It was leased to the Landbeach Society in 1975. The society surrendered the lease in 2014. Since that time the Council has been working with local residents to find a local solution to support the future of the barn.
7. In 2014, local residents lead by the then Local Member and supported by Cambridge Past Present and Future commenced work to establish a Trust to take on responsibility for the barn.
8. In 2015, a shadow Landbeach Tithe Barn Trust has been created, and several community events have been organised at the barn. A structural survey report, commissioned by the Council, estimated the cost of the urgent works at £80,000 and a further £40,000 of other work were recommended. The survey confirmed that the barn is not watertight, and there is some water damage to timbers. The Council

arranged for a tarpaulin to be put over the thatch roof of the barn as an interim measure to safeguard the barn from further deterioration, which was completed on 23 October 2015. The Shadow Trustees are keeping a watching brief over the tarpaulin particularly in times of heavy winds.

9. In March 2016, the Economic Development Portfolio Holder endorsed a summary project timeline and also noted the list of Shadow Trust members and length of the tenure, by way of commitment to the project.

### **Sawston Tannery Drying Shed**

10. A tannery has existed continuously on the site in Sawston for nearly 400 years. The Drying Shed was constructed during a period of rapid expansion of the tannery complex and survives relatively unaltered. The drying shed is an exceptional example of a tannery drying shed on account of its extraordinary scale. This is recognised with its Grade II\* listing status. It has regionally and national importance because it is the only drying shed known to be built on three floors and was also the largest shed identified in the search by Pre-Construct Archaeology. It was constructed with an arcaded brick ground floor, and three timber framed upper floors with louvered external walls below a hipped slate roof. The ground floor would have housed steeping tanks, with the upper floors used for skin drying. It is currently in the Historic England heritage at risk register and has been given a category 'A' rating, which means 'it is at immediate risk of further rapid deterioration or loss of fabric: no solution agreed'. Historic England has asked the Council to work in partnership to protect the Drying Shed and also to find a long-term future use.
11. The drying shed sits to the rear of the still active tanning site and is no longer in use as it does not meet the current needs of the business. There are a few other listed buildings on the tannery site.
12. The drying shed suffers from a weakness in the timber frame where a combination of decay and loss of bracing members has reduced the lateral strength. There are existing temporary supports comprising of timber raking, shores and steel ties bolted to channels, roof slates, and timbered louvers are missing. The shed is extremely vulnerable to collapse and may not survive another heavy winter.
13. In March 2016, the Portfolio Holder noted the projects next focus areas
  - (a) a structural survey of the building (following a grant application by SCDC to Historic England)
  - (b) future uses for the building through an feasibility and options appraisals
  - (c) alternative accesses to the building.
  - (d) to develop a communications plan

## **Considerations and Update.**

### **Landbeach Tithe Barn**

14. Over the last few months progress has been on number of aspects.
15. The final draft of the Heads of Terms has been sent to the Trust to for comments which will enable the Lease will be drawn up.
16. The Consultancy Team has produced a heritage statement for the Tithe Barn, setting out its history and significance. This will assist the trustees when they come to make grant applications. It will also help to inform any future listed building applications.
17. The other key issue that Officers have been looking to resolve is the easement which provides vehicular access to the barn, from Green End and along the drive across the Old Rectory. The Council has an easement which until recently has been blocked, preventing access to the barn to make necessary repairs.
18. Correspondence with owner of the land at the Old Rectory has been on going. Following legal advice, given the Owner has been given a definitive deadline of 17<sup>th</sup> June 2016 to provide a clear access. If this deadline is not met, the Council will carrying out the works on their behalf and charge it to the Owner.
19. The Shadow Trust is awaiting the outcome of its application for charitable status to the Charity Commission. Once in place the Trustees intend to convert the financial pledges they have received into donations. It will then be able to start commissioning work and preparing grant applications. It has open evening planned for 17<sup>th</sup> June 2016 seeking views on the final community use of the barn, once restored.
20. Regular meetings with the Shadow Trust continue; the project remains on programme.

### **Sawston Tannery Drying Shed**

21. Since the Portfolio Holder Meeting in March, meetings have been held with Sawston Parish Council and Huntingdon's Charity to explore an alternative means of access to the building and to start to consider alternative future uses.
22. In accordance with agreed programme, a building recording survey is to be commissioned, quotes are currently being sought. The aim is for the survey work to be carryout the work this summer. The building recording will inform the project team to fully understand the condition of the building and will input into the feasibility and options appraisals that are to be carried out later this year.
23. Regular project meetings continue; the project is on programme.

### **St Denis Church, East Hatley**

24. This project has been slowed down considerably by the need to have several legal agreements in place in parallel. Recent progress has been made, and we are close to having all necessary agreements in place to enable the transfer to be made and grant released.
25. The variation of the covenant by The Church Commissioners is now complete and back with the Council
26. The Grant Agreement between SCDC and FODC has been finalised which provides funds for capital works and SCDC are in the process of raising the monies via the Finance Department to be transferred to the FOFC when required.
27. The final piece of the jigsaw is the Easement to provide access across adjacent land to the building. The Council has received confirmation that the agreement of the principles of the easement has been agreed between all parties, and final agreement with the landowner and mortgagee is shortly to be signed, which will now allow for the final drafting and completion of the associated documentation in the next few weeks.

### **Options**

#### **Landbeach Tithe Barn**

28. The recommended option is to continue to proceed with work with the Landbeach Tithe Barn Trust, to agree and sign the lease and securing access along the Old Rectory's drive.
29. An alternative is for the barn to be sold with residential planning consent; this is being seen as a fall-back position should the transfer to the Trust not be achieved.

#### **Sawston Drying Shed**

30. All parties (SCDC, Historic England and the Owners) have committed to work together over a three year period to explore options and develop a plan for the site and in particular the sustainable re-use of the Drying Shed. It is only by finding an appropriate use for the building that its future will be secure. an
31. An alternative would be to do nothing and let the building deteriorate and eventually collapse, or for the owners to apply to demolish the building.

### **Implications**

32. In the writing of this report, taking into account financial, legal, staffing, risk management, equality and diversity, climate change, community safety and any other key issues, the following implications have been considered: -

## ***Financial***

### **Sawston Drying Shed**

33. A further grant application to Historic England will be made to look to the next stages of the project including a structural survey of the building, now it has been stabilised as well as a feasibility study to unlock the potential of the site and explore alternative uses of the building/site.

## ***Legal***

### **Landbeach Tithe Barn and St Denis Church**

34. Legal Officers will need to continue in assisting to progress a lease for Landbeach Tithe Barn, providing advice and guidance regarding clearing access and to coordinate and finalise agreements in respect of the transfer of the St Denis Church.

## ***Staffing***

### **Landbeach Tithe Barn and Sawston Drying Shed**

35. Officer time from the consultancy team has, and continues to be recorded against these specific projects. In the case of the Sawston Drying Shed project SCDC Officer time forms an 'in kind' contribution towards the grant funding provided by Historic England.

## ***Risk Management***

### **Sawston Drying Shed**

36. 'Works in progress' insurance has been taken for the scaffolding. The scaffolding contract also includes the weekly safety checks of the scaffolding to ensure that it is safe and correctly fixed. In addition, advice is also been taken regarding ensuring the scaffolding is protected against intruders.

## ***Equality and Diversity***

37. None

## ***Climate Change***

38. None

## **Consultation responses (including from the Youth Council)**

### **Effect on Strategic Aims**

**Aim 1 – We will listen to and engage with residents, parishes and businesses to ensure we deliver first class services and value for money.**

39. This report is following discussions with owner and Historic England regarding the future management of the heritage asset in their neighbourhoods.

**Aim 2 – We will make sure that South Cambridgeshire continues to offer an outstanding quality of life for our residents**

40. This report outlines proposals to secure the future of an historic asset, thereby contributing to the quality of life of residents.

**Aim 3: Work with partners to create opportunities for employment, enterprise, education and world-leading innovation.**

41. This report outlines the immediate works that would provide the time to work with partners to secure the long-term future of the listed building.

**Background Papers**

None

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