

RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL REPORT TO COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

meeting date: 22 AUGUST 2023
title: PENDLE RADICALS TRAIL
submitted by: DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES
principal author: MARK BEVERIDGE HEAD OF CULTURAL AND LEISURE SERVICES

1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To ask Committee to consider a request from Mid Pennine Arts for a Plaque in the grounds of the Castle as part of their plan to extend the Radical Trail.
- 1.2 Relevance to the Council's ambitions and priorities
- Community Objectives – To sustain a strong and prosperous Ribble Valley, encompassing our objective to encourage economic development throughout the borough, with a specific emphasis on tourism.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Pendle Radicals Trail was part of the Pendle Hill Project which the Council helped to support between 2018 and 2022, it was led by the Pendle Hill Partnership which received grant funding from the lottery of over £1.8m for a series of projects in and around the area. The trail has proved very popular and has outlasted the initial Project. It is a volunteer driven project, which benefits from the research of many valuable contributors. BBC1 Songs of Praise dedicated a whole episode to the first phase of the Radicals, giving a national audience of 1.3 million.
- 2.2 The trail is now being further developed by Mid Pennine Arts, who have made a request to the Council for consideration.
- 2.3 The Radicals Trail, signposts visitors to locations linked to historic characters from the area and introducing a wider audience to those stories. In the first phase of the Radicals Trail, they celebrated among others the first Quaker, George Fox, at Pendle summit and in Downham, Benjamin Ingham at the last Inghamite church in Wheatley Lane, and the Clarion movement at the only surviving Clarion House. Details of these first trail locations can be found on the Pendle Radicals website.

3 PROPOSAL

- 3.1 The Partnership wish to make the Trail more comprehensive with four new stone panels at other sites, to form part of a second phase of work for the Trail. The new panels proposed are for David Shackleton in Clitheroe, Tom Stephenson in Whalley, Richard Cobden in Sabden and the Rev T.A. Leonard in Colne.
- 3.2 The Trail developers believe these hugely influential historic figures, leaders, and radical change makers in their various ways, have not been fully celebrated in the areas they come from, and they fit well with the figures who have been celebrated to date with the trail.
- 3.3 David Shackleton was a pioneer several times over, and a giant of politics at the start of the twentieth century. A mill worker at age 9, he rose to become the first Whitehall mandarin from a working-class background. Just the third ever Labour MP, he was the first to represent organised labour as one of their own, a voice for the textile workers. He became chair of the parliamentary Labour party, and then chair of the

TUC. And ultimately, for the newly formed Ministry of Labour, its first Permanent Secretary.

- 3.4 The rationale for placing the plaque in the Castle grounds is its proximity to the Pinnacle which came from the Palace of Westminster when it was renovated in the early 1900s as it so strongly references the home of Parliament.
- 3.5 The Partnership have identified a proposed position on the wall near the Pinnacle. Pictures of a mock-up of the plaque are attached.
- 3.6 In this way, they hope to do justice to an extraordinary son of Clitheroe. By including him in the extended Radicals Trail, they can introduce him to a wider audience, and hope to drive more visitors to Clitheroe and the Castle grounds.

4. ISSUES

- 4.1 The Castle Grounds have a limited number of information Boards and Plaques, because of the special nature of the grounds and their historic context, any additions have been carefully considered. The only information panel with reference to people is in the former Rose Garden where the Pinnacle is located, and they refer to the history of the structure.
- 4.2 There have previously been requests from people wishing to have memorials for relatives in the Castle grounds and these have been declined. Because they are not in keeping with the nature of the site. Management team are concerned that named plaques may create a precedent for requests in the future, therefore any requests need to have significant relevance.
- 4.3 If Committee agree to the installation of the plaque this would be subject to Mid Pennine Arts obtaining Listed Building Consent and to the completion of an appropriate licence agreement. Any agreement would provide for the cost of the installation and any future maintenance to be the responsibility of Mid Pennine Arts, for the plaques themselves are designed to weather and the existing interpretation panel for the Pinnacle has remained free from interference. The Council would also retain the right to remove the plaque at a future date, should it deem it appropriate to do so.

5 RISK ASSESSMENT

- 5.1 The approval of this report may have the following implications.
 - Resources – There is no cost for listed building consent, although it still needs to be applied for, this would need to be made by Mid Pennine Arts. The ongoing maintenance would be set out in the licence agreement between the Council and Mid Pennine Arts.
 - Technical, Environmental and Legal – Legal Services have been consulted in the preparation of this report and their comments are incorporated into it.
 - Political – No implications identified.
 - Reputation – The Council was part of the original Pendle Hill Project, and this request is an extension of that work. It contributes to the overall strategy to increase tourism to the town and the Borough.
 - Equality & Diversity – No implications identified.

6 RECOMMENDED THAT COMMITTEE

- 6.1 That the request from Mid Pennine Arts be approved to install the Plaque as outlined in this report.

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BACKGROUND PAPERS – None

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