

**TAVISTOCK TOWN COUNCIL
BUDGET & POLICY COMMITTEE
TUESDAY 15 FEBRUARY 2022
BRIEFING NOTE**

REQUEST TO DONATE PAINTING

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 A request has been received from a Councillor that the Council consider accepting a donation, from him, of a painting of approximately 8ft x 4ft of Tavistock Town Hall and Bedford Square painted by four artists from the "Drawn to the Valley Art Group" approximately four years ago (copy enclosed).
- 1.2 The painting is currently in barn storage and the prospective Donor has suggested it could be accommodated in the Butchers' Hall with an acknowledgement plaque.

2. CURRENT SITUATION

- 2.1 Your Officers are not aware of a current Council policy in relation to offers/donations of artworks. It is therefore very much a matter for this Committee and the Council to determine how it wishes to proceed.
- 2.2 However, it is recognised that it would not be appropriate to treat any one offer in isolation, not least recognising the matter of precedent which could arise.
- 2.3 By way of background the Council does not generally accept donations of art, artefacts or similar. This reflects the position that there are many organisations and groups who specialise in these areas. Also that it would be very easy for a Council to become a 'default' disposal area for items with consequential impacts on storage/insurance/maintenance costs etc.
- 2.4 It is therefore suggested that offers of donations of art or artefacts should only be considered for acceptance when: -
 - (a) In some way the donation has a unique historic and artistic significance for the Town, no other avenues for safekeeping are available, and a failure to preserve it represents a material loss to the cultural heritage of the Town;
 - (b) Accordingly, that where a work of art is offered and considered potentially suitable, an independent professional appraisal be commissioned to assess the artistic, cultural and financial value

- of the piece of art (in view of the cost of professional appraisal it is suggested a threshold for those assessed as artistically significant and with a value of over £1,000 be considered);
- (c) More generally, that the threshold for the acceptance of donations shall be set at a level sufficient to avoid the Council becoming a repository for items of interest as opposed to those of intrinsic artistic and cultural significance;
 - (d) The donation gives no rise to any material conflict of interest;
 - (e) That where a donation is accepted a suitable donor agreement shall be entered into;
 - (f) That in circumstances where the Council is unable to accept a donation and, as/if appropriate, the Donor be signposted to other organisations which might be in a position to accept the donation.

3. CONCLUSION

3.1 The Council

- a) consider and, if in agreement, endorse the approach as set out in para 2.4 above;
- b) consider how best to proceed with the offer received.

**CARL HEARN
TOWN CLERK
FEBRUARY 2022
TAVISTOCK TOWN COUNCIL**