



EXCELSIOR

The Excelsior Trust

Patron: The Princess Royal

President: The Lord Somerleyton

4 October, 2019

Dear Cllr Alice Taylor and Colleagues,

First, let us introduce ourselves. **We are the Excelsior Trust**, www.theexcelsiortrust.co.uk/, the curators of the historic LT472 “Excelsior”, a working fishing smack from Lowestoft, and one of the UK’s 60 most important historic vessels. www.nationalhistoricships.org.uk/shipshape-network/region/east-anglia/excelsior-trust

Excelsior’s Centenary will be in 2021, and we are always looking for opportunities to promote Excelsior and Lowestoft’s Maritime heritage, with our scholarship and apprenticeship schemes, and sea-going educational programmes.

After being completely and authentically restored in Oulton Broad, Excelsior was commissioned as a Sail-Training vessel in 1988 by HRH The Princess Royal, and since then The Excelsior Trust has become the largest and longest established sail-training organisation in East Anglia, providing unique and life changing opportunities at sea for young people, often from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Excelsior takes part in many old sailing ship festivals and events in Scandinavia, Europe and the UK. In 1996 The Excelsior Trust organised a very popular and successful (for the Town) heritage smack regatta in Lowestoft, and we believe Excelsior’s Centenary in 2021 will be a superb opportunity to repeat that success and build on it.

A historic Smack Race in 2021 will be a significant event on the heritage ship calendar. For the last 6 months The Trust and local enthusiasts have been working on the framework of such an event by talking informally with smack owners from the UK and Europe to see whether they would come to Lowestoft. We are also having initial discussions with Associated British Ports about the mooring of some 30 - 35 historic vessels in Lowestoft Harbour, which will become a centre-piece attraction for locals, visitors and the media.

Initial research has been extremely positive. We are now ready to widen the discussion to other partners, and we would like to invite the Lowestoft Town Council to our steering group.

The obvious success of the recent First Light Festival shows us that Lowestoft can support a major festival such as shore-based elements of a Smack Race and Sea Festival. We understand that part of LTC's long term plans are to increase the number of events promoted in Lowestoft to lift the town both economically and socially. We would like to discuss this with you.

To summarise, The Excelsior Trust are proposing a unique Maritime event for Lowestoft, and we are inviting you to be part of it. Lowestoft's fishing and maritime history is the finest heritage asset the town has, and LT 472 Excelsior is an icon of that heritage. She is one of the last examples of our shared industrial maritime heritage, and should be promoted as part of Lowestoft's Tourism and Marketing. The Excelsior Trust is ready to make a major contribution. Attached is a bullet point list of what has been suggested so far. Please join us.

Yours sincerely,

Jamie Campbell, Chairman - The Excelsior Trust

Laurence Vulliamy, Trustee with responsibility for Centenary Plans

Mary George, Marketing and Development Officer, The Excelsior Trust

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Registered Charity No: 285899*

Lowestoft SeaFestival& Smack Race 2021

Concept:

A local Smack Race with competing historic ships, that were unique to our area, would be an event of national interest amongst heritage sailing enthusiasts. During the age of sail, Lowestoft staged trawler races, from year to year, so this is a revival of a historic tradition.

The Excelsior Trust has long established contacts with historic vessels from around the world. The Trust has polled ship owners to measure interest, and happily the response has been enthusiastic and positive. The races would be spread over two days, with the historic vessels moored in Lowestoft Harbour, with access for public viewing.

A major maritime arts themed festival would occur on land to compliment the races.

Location:

The races would be held off of the iconic Ness Point, with spectators viewing from North Parade, the Ness Point, and from Belle Vue Park.

NB: Lowestoft Town Council has provisionally agreed for the use of Belle Vue Park, Sparrow's Nest Park, the new Ness Park, Ness Point itself and The Denes.

The Royal Norfolk and Suffolk Yacht Club has agreed to partner in the event. Associated British Ports are discussing mooring arrangements for the historic vessels, with free public access to the dock for viewing.

Event space owned by East Suffolk Council (the Pavilion, Royal Green and Royal Plain) is to be discussed.

Date: Friday 6th, Saturday 7th and Sunday August 8th in 2021.

There is a long lead time for scheduling of historic vessels, so an 18 month notice is essential.

This date has been chosen to maximise the summer tourist season as well as avoiding conflict with other local events.

This date also coincides with the requisite high tides and - we hope - optimum weather conditions for the historic vessels.

Patrons and Sponsorships:

The Princess Royal, Princess Anne has graciously agreed to be a Patron of the Excelsior's Centenary and we are putting in a bid to schedule her to appear at the event.

The Lowestoft Town Council has been contacted to be a sponsor and has provisionally agreed to host on their property. We have approached the East Suffolk Council. The Excelsior Trust is in discussions about attracting a prestigious national business with a Lowestoft base, as a sponsor or Patron.

Funding:

The steering group is already researching potential income streams. The group will create a marketing and funding package and has begun to prepare the business case and budgets.

Conclusion:

The Excelsior Trust are confident that the proposed event will be very attractive to locals and visitors alike, in addition to creating very positive publicity for the Town through the Media. After further 'First Light Festivals' and other potential events, this event could certainly maintain the momentum of public awareness for Lowestoft. LT 472 Excelsior is an icon of Lowestoft's past wealth and influence in the national fishing industry, and Lowestoft should celebrate her.