



MEETING PAPER

Subject: Proposed Plaque Plan for the civic year 2023-2024

Meeting: Events and Communications Sub-Committee

Date: 23 August 2023

Meeting Paper by Taylor Williams (Committee Clerk)

NON-CONFIDENTIAL

Heritage Plaques

When looking at the Town Council's plaque plan, we need to ensure that once installed a plaque will be accessible and have a sustained impact, therefore the design, positioning, inscription and quality of the plaque must be considered.

For the wording, a good plaque will stimulate interest in the public and generate general and specific enquiries. The text should be informative, highlighting key information so that it is self-evident why the event/place/person warrants a plaque, whilst avoiding bulky text that would detract from opportunities to generate further queries, and which people will often not read. In-depth historical information and analysis can be provided elsewhere, for example local historian groups will have information available to the public, churches will provide information on their history, and other plaques such as Belle Vue would be supported by information panels.

Plaques will be 300mm round disc in a grey/green tone, for which an official RAL colour number will be required to ensure all plaques are made to the same specification. The size may be subject to change if it is felt that the plaque warrants more information but that should be the exception. Some suppliers suggest using uppercase for text to give a more balanced appearance.

The existing agreed iconography are a cross for plaques with a religious connotation, a 19th century herring lugger for anything connected to fishing, maritime activity or mercantile trade, and a reduced form of the old Borough badge (this has any variations with existing plaques as some feature only the crown and rose and others feature St Margaret, therefore the icon to be used will need to be clarified). It should also be noted that once the Lowestoft Borough coat of arms is transferred, plaques of high heritage and civic value could use the coat of arms for iconography, but this should only be used when relating to the period when Lowestoft was a borough (1885-1974).



(Examples of the two town motifs)

A new category of flora has been suggested for plaques related to parks and open spaces. For Belle Vue it has been suggested to use a bluebell and for Kensington Gardens it has been suggested to use a daffodil in connection with the holocaust memorial. Flora has also been suggested for war-related plaques, specifically the Flanders Poppy, though this need not be for all war-related plaques as the HMS Europa plaque in Sparrows Nest could use the herring lugger as it commemorates the RNPS and maritime service specifically.

English Heritage advise that the average time from plaque proposal to installation is 2 years therefore this report suggests 2 plaques a year be the average, though this is subject to change based on demand for a plaque and deadlines (i.e. anniversary years).

Plans for 2023-2024

The previous batches have been reviewed and re-prioritised based on their need (i.e. if it is a replacement plaque, how urgent is the replacement) and if there are any significant anniversaries for the event/location/person being commemorated. It has also considered buildings that are in development where the installation of plaque prior to completion would not be ideal.

We want to have a meaningful selection of plaques that highlight the history of the town, and often an anniversary presents an opportunity to focus on the subject and inspire a renewal of interest. Proliferation of plaques is not desired, and we would not want too many plaques unveiled in one year as the budget may become strained, also having fewer planned plaques allows for the Council to have flexibility when members of the public present new plaque proposals.

For 2023-2024, the following three plaques have been proposed:

Belle Vue Park

The 28 May 2024 marks the 150th anniversary of the parks opening and would be an opportune time to install a plaque for Lowestoft's oldest and first public park.

Traditionally, the iconography used would be the Town motif, however a suggestion has been made to consider a bluebell.

It is suggested to site the plaque on the white arch building on the Yarmouth Road entrance.

Permission required: it is Lowestoft Town Council land.

The suggested wording has been altered as there is a planned information panel for the park to provide in-depth information on the park's history and notable assets:

The original wording supplied reads as follows:

Opened in 1874 as The Arboretum, it was laid out with thatched cottage on the North Common.

It had steps down to the ravine and a spring-fed fountain with a pagoda up above.

The Grade II listed Ravin footbridge was built in 1887 and the park extended in 1905.

The RNPS Memorial replaced the pagoda in 1953.

Three 32 pounder cannons were replaced here in 1972 marking this as one of the town's three national coastal defensive Battery sites from Tudor to Victorian times

The suggested amendment reads as follows:

*Belle Vue Park
Lowestoft's first public park
Opened 28 May 1874*

St Margaret's Church

2024 marks 125 years since the refurbishment of this church and as the original parish church of Lowestoft it is a key landmark in the town. Further discussions on permissions (DAC permission and a faculty) would be required and as it is a Grade I listed church building the plaque could not be sited on the church wall itself. The iconography used would be the Cross Motif.

The original wording supplied reads as follows:

*St Margaret's Lowestoft Parish Church is the third longest in Suffolk,
after those of St Mary and St James, Bury St Edmunds.
Of classic perpendicular style and build dating from c. 1450-80, but with a mainly early-fourteenth
century tower and high-altar crypt of the same period.
A fine medieval place of worship full of ecclesiastical and Lowestoft heritage features*

The suggested amendment reads as follows:

*St Margaret's Parish Church
The third longest church in Suffolk and dedicated to St Margaret of Antioch.
Founded by the Priory of St Bartholomew after Henry I granted them the manor of Lowestoft in 1230
The tower is constructed in the early decorated style of 1300-1370 and with the crypt is dated mid-to-
late 14th century
A fine medieval place of worship with ecclesiastical and local heritage features*

Fiammetta Wilson

19 July 2024 marks the 160th anniversary of Fiammetta's birth, a remarkable woman of her time, with many accomplishments in her field of astronomy. Officers are currently making enquiries on her place of birth or the family home to ascertain where the plaque could be installed (which would require landlord and business owner permission). The iconography used would be the Town Motif.

The suggested wording reads as follows:

*Fiammetta Wilson
Born Helen Frances Worthington 19 July 1864
British astronomer
Part of the first group of female Fellows of the Royal Astronomical Society, elected January 14 1916
Observed over 10,000 meteors during her career*

