

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Decision Report

Decision Maker:	Executive Member for Culture & Recreation
Date:	8 July 2010
Title:	Basing House launch event and access restrictions on Basingstoke Common
Reference:	1795
Report From:	Director of Culture, Communities and Rural Affairs

Contact name: Peter James/Phil Allen

Tel: 01962 826700 (PJ)
01256 840483 (PA)

Email: peter.james@hants.gov.uk
phil.allen@hants.gov.uk

1. Executive Summary

1.1. The purpose of this paper is to provide an update on the plans to hold a special event on August Bank Holiday 2010 to celebrate the re-launch of Basing House, and to request approval for temporary access restrictions to enable the event.

1.2. This paper seeks to

- set out the background to the project
- provide an update on the event planning process
- identify key issues, especially access restrictions

2. Contextual information

2.1. Basing House is due to re-open on Saturday 14th August 2010 after a £2.4 million investment project to develop its visitor and education facilities. The project is funded by Hampshire County Council, the Heritage Lottery Fund, Renaissance Southeast, Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council and Biffaward.

2.2. As the centrepiece of the soft launch it is proposed that a Civil War re-enactment event, "The Battle of Basing", is staged on Basingstoke Common, adjacent to Basing House, while at the same time a variety of complementary activities, such as Living History demonstrations and story-telling, take place on the Basing House site itself. Two large-scale battles will be staged on the Common, on Sunday and Monday, 29th and 30th August.

2.3. This will be a high profile, exciting and popular family event that will promote the re-opening of Basing House and firmly place it on the map as a 'new' visitor and tourist destination

2.4. The Sealed Knot have been engaged to deliver the event. The Common is owned by a Trust, and managed by Basingstoke & Deane Council. Natural England control access rights over common land in England. Two rights of way paths cross the Common and are managed by CCRA's Countryside Access team.

2.5. The Museums Service has worked closely with the Countryside Service and the district council in planning the event and seeking the necessary permissions to use Basingstoke Common.

2.6. To date

- The Trustees of Basingstoke Common have given their permission to use the land for the event, and agreed to remove grazing cattle from the areas required for the event. (Two of the trustees are Old Basing & Lychpit parish councillors and also district council members for the ward).
- Natural England have granted a 'direction' which restricts public access to parts of the Common for the purposes of the event.
- Countryside Access Team have confirmed that they are able to temporarily close the Rights of Way public footpaths for the event, subject to approvals from HCC and the Secretary of State for the Environment and Rural Affairs. (The latter has no objection and will grant a Special Event Notice for temporary closure of the paths).
- The Sealed Knot have drawn up a detailed plan for the re-enactments which is tailored to the story of the famous Basing House sieges, as well as plans for a Living History encampment on the site and a range of associated promotional and publicity measures for the event. The battles will feature up to 600 re-enactors, artillery and cavalry. (In 2005 the Sealed Knot staged a similar and very successful event at Cheriton which was supported by HCC.)
- The HLF has awarded a grant of £12,000 to support outreach activities associated with the event. These will be undertaken by the Museums education team working closely with the Sealed Knot, and will include working with local schools, the Edge Project, Guides and other youth groups to teach them about the Civil War and the important part Basing House played in this momentous episode in the nation's history. Proteus Theatre will perform a specially commissioned community drama as part of the event.

- Basingstoke & Deane have offered, free of charge, the services of their events management and marketing teams in support of planning, organising and promoting the event.
- For the purposes of organising and managing the event a partnership Agreement has been drawn up between HCC and Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council.

3. Finance

- 3.1. The event is proposed to be self-funding. Expenditure is currently expected to be slightly less than income generated through admission charges, pitch fees, etc. Income projections are £70,000 for the event, based on a target of 10,000 paying visitors over the three days, and pitch fees of £6,000.
- 3.2. The Culture, Communities and Rural Affairs Department budget will underwrite the event should it make a loss and any surplus will be used to contribute to the revenue budget for Basing House.

4. Other key issues

- 4.1. For the safety and security of the general public using the Common, those attending the event and the Sealed Knot members it will be necessary to temporarily restrict access to certain areas of the Common and to two Rights of Way footpaths across the Common.
 - a) Natural England have granted a 'direction' enabling public access to be restricted on specified areas of the Common for the purposes of setting up and staging the event, covering a period of six days from 25th – 30th August
 - b) An application has been made to The Secretary of State for the Environment and Rural Affairs for "Temporary Closure of a Public Right of Way to enable a Special Event to take place" for the same six day period. This Special Event notice covers two footpaths (ref nos 22 & 35 in the Parish of Old Basing and Lychpit).

5. Planning and Risk Management

- 5.1. Event management planning is being led by Basingstoke & Deane's experienced Events Management Team.
- 5.2. An Event Management Plan has been written which defines all aspects of how the event will be safely and efficiently managed, and disruption to local residents minimised. CCRA Risk Manager has been consulted and a Risk Assessment is being prepared. The Sealed Knot have 40 years' experience of performing such re-enactments, and have a code of conduct for their members and their own stringent safety rules. They have provided their own risk assessment.

6. Recommendation(s)

- 6.1. That work done so far in preparation for this event is noted.
- 6.2. That approval be given for the temporary closure of the Rights of Way footpaths 22 and 35 on Basingstoke Common for the purposes of the event.

CORPORATE OR LEGAL INFORMATION:**Links to the Corporate Strategy**

Hampshire safer and more secure for all:	No
Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate):	
Maximising well-being:	Yes
Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate):	
Enhancing our quality of place:	Yes
Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate):	

Other Significant Links

Links to previous Member decisions:		
<u>Title</u> Basing House - Heritage Lottery Fund grant aid	<u>Reference</u> 514	<u>Date</u> 22/01/2009
Direct links to specific legislation or Government Directives		
<u>Title</u> Countryside and Rights of Way Act		<u>Date</u> 2000

Section 100 D - Local Government Act 1972 - background documents

The following documents discuss facts or matters on which this report, or an important part of it, is based and have been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report. (NB: the list excludes published works and any documents which disclose exempt or confidential information as defined in the Act.)

<u>Document</u>	<u>Location</u>
None	

IMPACT ASSESSMENTS:

1. Equalities Impact Assessment:

- 1.1. The 'Battle of Basing' will be a family event that will appeal to all ages and to people of all ages and backgrounds. Special facilities, eg. accessible parking and visitor routes, will be made available for disabled people with disabilities.

2. Impact on Crime and Disorder:

- 2.1. N/A

3. Climate Change:

- a) How does what is being proposed impact on our carbon footprint / energy consumption? N/A
- b) How does what is being proposed consider the need to adapt to climate change, and be resilient to its longer term impacts? N/A