

## REPORT TO PICKMERE PARISH COUNCIL

5<sup>th</sup> July 2022

### AGENDA ITEM 9.1      RESPONSES TO REPRESENTATIONS RE KNUTSFORD AND DISTRICT WAR MEMORIAL HOSPITAL

#### 1.      REPORT

- 1.1    At your June meeting Council resolved to support efforts to prevent demolition of the War Memorial and asked the Clerk to copy in any representations to Cllr Parkinson and Esther McVey MP. This was done, communications being sent to Historic England and Cheshire East Council, copied to Esther McVey MP and Cllr K Parkinson and the member of the public who had brought the matter to the attention of the Council.
- 1.2    In summary, the representation requested that the most urgent consideration be given to the building's emergency listing so as to prevent its demolition.
- 1.3    Responses were received from Historic England and CEC as follows. Both organisations have been thanked for their responses:

Historic England replied:

*Thank you for your email of 8 June to Duncan Wilson our Chief Executive.*

*The Knutsford and District war memorial is clearly a much-valued part of Knutsford's history, built as a mark of respect to those who lost their life in the First World War. As such, the concerns voiced about the proposed demolition of the building are understandable.*

*Whilst there is a presumption in favour of listing all war memorials, the main exception is for war memorials that are functional memorials, such as village halls, school extensions and cottage hospitals. As these memorials are first and foremost buildings, they are considered for listing against the standards for the relevant building type, considering amongst other things architectural quality, rarity, and completeness of the interior.*

*As a fairly simple building architecturally, whose hospital use has required continued upgrading and alteration over the years, we concluded that the Knutsford and District war memorial is not of sufficient special interest to be recommended for listing.*

*We sympathise with the predicament surrounding the building and acknowledge that the building is of strong local interest, but unfortunately it does not fulfil the criteria for statutory listing.*

CEC responded as follows:

*Thank you for your email in respect of Knutsford War Memorial Hospital, received 9 June 2022, it has been passed to me by the Chief Executive to provide a response.*

*The council recognises that this is an important matter for the local community and the information below should help to set out the background and current position in response to your email.*

*The redevelopment of the site has previously been through the planning process and all of the relevant information can be reviewed on planning application ref. 18/0089M and the associated application to discharge conditions ref. 20/0466D. The planning process involved a significant level of publicity and consultation, and involved a thorough and open debate of the heritage issues at the time back in 2018/19. In particular you may wish to view the consultation response from the War Memorials Trust who set out in detail the challenge in the conservation of War Memorial Hospitals. They concluded that there were not sufficient planning policy grounds to object to the planning application which involved the demolition of the building and the redevelopment of the site. An application to have the building listed had previously been submitted to Historic England but that was not successful.*

*The planning application went before planning committee in October 2018, at which point it was approved subject to a number of conditions, 3 of which related to heritage matters and would ensure protection of a number of historic items from the building and incorporating these into the new memorial garden which will sit at the entrance to the site and will be accessible at all times to the public. The conditions of 18/0089M were discharged on the 2nd February 2021. This included full recording of the building with a photographic survey and details of the war memorial garden and materials/memorials contained within the building to be retained from the existing building and used in the garden.*

*The two rolls of honour will be installed in the council offices to ensure they remain on public display. Any local heritage items, such as the dedication plaque from when the building opened as the Red Cross HQ, will be offered to Knutsford Heritage Centre for archiving or display. The memorial garden will incorporate bricks from the hospital in the gate piers and the plinth from the Haron Baronian statue, the marble dedication plaque will be displayed in the new memorial garden along with an interpretation board telling the history of the site.*

*Our officers have verified that the conditions are being adhered to by the developer following the commencement of development. So whilst the building itself could not be protected from development, the council has done everything possible to mitigate the impact and ensure that the salvaged heritage and memorial features*

*ensures that those who lost their life in conflict continue to be remembered by the people of Knutsford and the surrounding parishes.*

## **2. RECOMMENDATION**

2.1 That the report be noted.

**Jack Steel**  
**Clerk to the Parish Council**