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Richard Farhall

From: Town Hall
Sent: 18 October 2017 12:14
To: Richard Farhall
Subject: FW: Airfields of Britain Conservation Trust (ABCT) - Rye Airfield, possible commemorative plaque - FAIRLY URGENT

Importance: High

From: Kenneth Bannerman [mailto:kenneth@abctemail.org.uk]
Sent: 18 October 2017 11:56
To: Town Hall <townhall@ryetowncouncil.gov.uk>
Subject: FW: Airfields of Britain Conservation Trust (ABCT) - Rye Airfield, possible commemorative plaque - FAIRLY URGENT
Importance: High

Dear Mr Farhall

Thank you very much for your time just now – resending my original email of June 4.

I also mentioned in passing our full-sized memorial unveiling at Friston during 2015: see our Airfield Finder page if this is of interest too.

Yours faithfully

Kenneth P Bannerman
Director General

Office: 0141 206 3660
kenneth@abctemail.org.uk

Web: <http://www.abct.org.uk/>
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/Airfields>
Tweets: <https://twitter.com/ABCTlive>



Suite 225
2 West Regent Street
Glasgow
G2 1RW

Airfields of Britain Conservation Trust is registered in England and Wales under Company No: 08940364
Registered Office: Suite 1, 3rd Floor, 11-12 St. James Square, London, SW1Y 4LB

Reg Charity No (England and Wales): 1156877
Reg Charity No (Scotland): SC041123

From: Kenneth Bannerman [mailto:kenneth@abctemail.org.uk]
Sent: 04 June 2017 23:08
To: 'townhall@ryetowncouncil.gov.uk' <townhall@ryetowncouncil.gov.uk>

Subject: Airfields of Britain Conservation Trust (ABCT) - Rye Airfield, possible commemorative plaque

Importance: High

Good evening.

Apologies for this email but the Airfields of Britain Conservation Trust (ABCT) – Britain's, and almost certainly the world's, first national airfield charity – would be pleased to honour Rye Airfield by providing an example of our standardised airfield plaques which have already proved highly successful elsewhere across Britain.

This memorial would be of enormous all-round benefit for all parties concerned, whether financially or socially, locally or nationally.

Our charity primarily erects full-sized memorials: 54 to date across Britain, together with for good measure four plaques. However, there are two main reasons for going down the plaques route with Rye, as follows:

1 - ABCT is now fully underway with a massive one-off scheme to honour Britain's World War One Home Defence fighter Flight Stations and landing grounds (such as Rye) which played a major part in winning the conflict. Such has proved demand and interest that sixteen plaques are already confirmed to be installed, and the overall total could easily surpass the 100 mark. We are moving as fast as we can here, particularly bearing in mind what happened to me last year (see the end of this email).

2 – The second reason concerns practicality. If ABCT could have unveiled a full-sized memorial at this type of airfield, we of course would have. This is a crucial part of ABCT's strategy, for as regards especially our full-sized memorials all ABCT asks potentially interested parties is for the memorial location to be at the airfield itself, of course not even so much as accidentally causing any form of obstruction and firmly secured. We try and do this as well with our plaques – three of the four installed to date do exist at the airfield, affixed to walls – but (a) as in the case of Rye the average member of the general public would then be looking at a completely empty field and as a result be somewhat confused, while (b) a plaque (without e.g. a supportive plinth) could not otherwise exist there due to the complete absence of any supporting walls etc.

Therefore, as will shortly happen elsewhere in England, the most realistic (albeit not absolutely perfect) alternative would be to have the plaque positioned within the nearby village or town. If we look at this possible situation in a general sense i.e. anywhere in Britain, this could be at places such as the local community or village hall, pub, shop or church. The problem of not being at the airfield itself would be further remedied to a degree by having our website domain address featured at the bottom of the plaque, which would then direct interested people to our extremely popular website (see below for more details) to see the airfield's precise geographical position.

Should also say that I have visited this airfield on several other occasions over decades in my separate but related capacity as a major published author on British airfield history. Very early days yet but we could erect and unveil a plaque relatively quickly, indeed possibly this year, not least as one of our two main monumental masonry firms is based in the south of England and has spare plaques held on standby readiness.

Our memorials (both types) are made of Indian granite, recognised as the best material of its type in the world. ABCT plans to erect many hundreds of them at disused airfields across Britain – no less than Prince Philip unveiled one of our more recent examples.

For photographs of our plaques, see our Airfield Finder website pages for famous British airfields Heston and Lympe; we have also erected two more in the Isle of Man. Each plaque has dimensions of 600 x 600 x approximately 30 millimetres.

Experience so far has indicated that our memorials have almost entirely not required planning permission as they are officially deemed to be de minimis – various other local authorities have not even required emails, simply a courtesy telephone call. This already especially applies to our plaques.

ABCT would pay for the plaque and associated costs, though as with any other respected/responsible charity donations from other sources are always welcome. The plaque would be sent by courier from our monumental

masonry firm (this is already happening elsewhere), and all the recipient would need to do is to secure the services of a local reputable general builder who has the usual insurance cover to affix the plaque to where it is intended to be with four stainless steel screws (ABCT would pay for this if need be as well).

As for publicity/promotion, unlike our full-sized memorials there are two significant differences as regards the plaques. Point (1) is that ABCT in the main would not attend the unveiling, while (2) we would help instead of lead with any publicity/promotion, primarily leaving this to you to do as you think fit - naturally we would co-ordinate with you in this respect. This also explains to a degree why our plaques are undated, unlike our full-sized memorials.

There is considerable national and international interest in what our charity is generally achieving, not only through creating memorials and saving airfields but greatly helping people and society for the benefit of all in a wide variety of ways; various enquiries have confirmed significant interest in both historical and tourism terms. Our highly acclaimed 3,000 page website alone has proved remarkably successful, being presently one of Britain's top 100,000 most popular and with confirmed in-depth visits from over 180 foreign countries. General public feedback has proved most favourable e.g. our logo was even included in a noted book along with others for such huge firms as Shell, Nike and Apple, while ABCT has established various strong links with various phenomenally prominent businesses such as the makers of the Harry Potter firms, again through our memorial unveilings. Obviously as a charity we are not in this for any gain whatsoever but one has to say that this whole truly revolutionary concept I devised and now lead is performing astonishingly well.

Therefore, for all of these above reasons, it would be hugely beneficial for all concerned to have a plaque dedicated to Rye Airfield. This surprisingly important place has won a World War, helped saved lives and allowed the freedom we now take for granted, revolutionised everyday society for the better and now enables people to operate in an excellent environment, so is morally more than due proper and immediate recognition.

Please do also bear in mind that – never mind how the WW1 generation has now tragically completely left us - 300 WW2 veterans are dying in Britain every day, plus at least 800 in America, hence just at sheer human level this matter of airfield memorials is of the gravest urgency.

We trust this overall idea will be considered acceptable, especially when it comes to immediately waiving planning permission (which should not be needed in any case): if so, we can get moving with ordering and arranging this plaque very quickly. You can also contact me on 0141 206 3663 if necessary (leave a message if not immediately answered).

Hope to hear from you soon. Please excuse me if this email may appear for once slightly rushed but I have had to contend in more recent months with extremely serious health matters, though please note that ABCT otherwise remains fully operational since formation in 2006.

Yours faithfully

Kenneth P Bannerman
Director General

Office: 0141 206 3660
kenneth@abctemail.org.uk

Web: <http://www.abct.org.uk/>
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/Airfields>
Tweets: <https://twitter.com/ABCTlive>



Suite 225
2 West Regent Street
Glasgow
G2 1RW

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Registered Office: 20-22 Bedford Row, London WC1R 4JS

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