MINUTES OF THE TETTENHALL COMMUNITY FORUM

Parish Rooms, Tettenhall Library 7.30 pm 9th May 2024

This was a special meeting to inform residents of the project being undertaken by David Guest and Rachel Arnold on the importance of Aethelflaed re the Battle of Tettenhall/Wednesfield in 910 AD and subsequent creation of England later by the unification of the Saxons under Athelstan, her nephew.

The chairman opened the meeting as normal and noted apologies from Neal Kelshaw and Marion Reeves Winspur. There were 13 new attendees and 5 regular members in attendance together with one Ward Councillor from Penn.

David Guest gave a lively, informative and entertaining presentation regarding the importance of Tettenhall and Wednesfield in the Battle of 910 AD. David covered his research in the various Anglo-Saxon chronicles noting the preponderance of writings from Wessex and the much lower volume of information from things like the Mercian Register. There was some debate regarding Wednesfield or Tettenhall but almost all the chronicles refer to it as the Battle of Tettenhall. David also covered the unusually prominent role of Aethelflaed as a Saxon lady but nevertheless a leader in her time. He talked about the raiding parties into the Dane Law to recover St Oswald's remains which were taken to Gloucester where a cathedral was subsequently founded, which holds St Oswald's remains. She built a church there where she and her husband are buried. David speculated on the relative merits of the Smestow Valley and Wodensfeld (Wednesfield) as the most favourable battlegrounds for the Mercian's actions against the Vikings and came down firmly in favour of the Smestow Valley due to the opportunities to hide their troops in the steep wooded valleys and being able to successfully engage with the Vikings restricted by being on horseback in marshy ground and impeded by their heavy armour. David commented there was no mention of shield war but rather mentions squadrons implying smaller groups, probably gathering in Wodensfeld as their place to meet and then moving on to Tettenhall and the Smestow Valley to engage the enemy. There was lots of interaction and questions and surprise at how little was known and appreciated about Tettenhall's role in this important historic event.

David's presentation was followed by Rachel explaining the work she is doing to create artistic material for professional artists to work on to create events, statuary and exhibition space to raise the profile of these important historical events and to create a permanent tourist attraction and visitor facilities. She distributed work completed in her workshops on various mediums for attendees to examine and study. She also

mentioned the Wednesfield to Tettenhall walk taking place on Saturday 1st June starting

at 1.00 pm from Nickleodeon in Wednesfield to walk along the canal to St Peter's and then on to Tettenhall. If you would like to participate please register at Battle of Tettenhall & Wednesfield 910 AD Walk Tickets, Sat, Jun 1, 2024 at 12:45 PM I Eventbrite, I understand there will be mead on the way!. There will be surprises along

the way for walkers. Rachel also talked about her idea for a boot camp for stakeholders and funders and told us that Birmingham Open Media want to produce a computer game based on the battle. There was a further lively discussion and a number of suggestions, eg possibility of further academic study at local universities to gain more insight into the history of the battle. Rachel was interested in looking for a historian to develop understanding.

Councillor Celia Hibbert had to leave the meeting at this point but expressed a strong interest in the subject matter and emphasised the importance of investigating and understanding our cultural history. She commented that this was not a matter that was yet under discussion at the Council but felt that it would soon have to be discussed because of the important cultural, educational and well-being impacts of a project of this nature with such an important local connection.

Rachel collected views from the people attending regarding how she could develop the project with the support of and benefit for the people of Tettenhall through a Tettenhall Community Forum Interest Group which would work with her project and develop ideas. plans and actions.

The attendees expressed their appreciation to David and Rachel via an enthusiastic round of applause and the meeting moved to Any Other Business.

In AOB the chairman recorded that the Council had accepted our petition on the Rock Junction and were due to respond on Tuesday 14th May 2024.

There being no other business the meeting closed at 9.10 pm.

**Next meeting to be held in the Spotted Cow function room at The Royal Oak, Tettenhall Wood at 6.30 pm on Thursday 23rd May 2024.**

**Agenda:**

* Apologies.
* Report on Steering Group actions and plans.
* Review of recent Planning Applications.
* Initial discussion on Council's response to the Rock Junction 6 point plan.
* Aethelflead/ Battle of Tettenhall: Discussion on Terms of Reference for a Special Interest Group and Terms of Reference for a Leader of this group.
* AOB