

# Overview and Scrutiny Committee



19 January 2021

<b>Title</b>	<b>The Lower Sunbury Lendy Memorial</b>
<b>Purpose of the report</b>	To make a recommendation to Cabinet.
<b>Report Author</b>	Deborah Ashman
<b>Cabinet Member</b>	Councillor Barratt
<b>Confidential</b>	No
<b>Corporate Priority</b>	Item is not in the current list of Corporate Priorities but still requires a Cabinet decision
<b>Recommendations</b>	<p><b>Committee is asked:</b></p> <p><b>To consider the report written about the Lendy memorial by Alan Doyle and to recommend to Cabinet a course of action based on the information currently available.</b></p> <p><b>To consider and accept the offer of supporting an application to the Arts and Humanities Research Council for a grant to undertake further research on the Lendy statue. Respected historians in African History, have approached the Council for a letter of support. If any further new information is received after this research is undertaken it can be further considered by Councillors.</b></p>
<b>Reason for Recommendation</b>	<p><b>Full Council has asked the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to consider the issues surrounding the Lendy Memorial, as highlighted by the 'Topple the Racist' organisation which supports Black Lives Matters. A petition containing the signatures of over 2000 residents in support of the memorial has been received by Spelthorne Council. Respected historians in African History, have approached the Council for a letter of support to apply for a grant to undertake further research on Lendy . If any new information is received after this research is undertaken it can be considered by Councillors.</b></p>

## 1. Key issues

- 1.1 The Lendy Memorial is to two brothers, Charles Lendy and Edward Lendy, who originated from Sunbury and who died within 3 weeks of each other in different parts of Africa. Allegations have been made against the characters of these two men. Specifically, they are both accused of “being responsible for murdering African tribes with machine gun fire “. This all happened in the nineteenth century.
- 1.2 In June 2020 a website was published by the Stop Trump coalition (Topple the Racists) in support of the Black Lives Matter protests. The website mapped out more than 100 statues across Britain, which they stated paid tribute to slave traders and "racists". The Lendy Memorial is one of these statues.
- 1.3 Topple the Racists state that they want debate and it's the responsibility of the local communities to decide what statues they want in their local area. They are not advocating statues should be destroyed
- 1.4 Once the Council became aware of the controversy, immediate action to protect the statue was organised. The statue remains covered whilst the situation is being considered.
- 1.5 The local Sunbury residents initiated an on-line petition in support of the statue. This continues to be a sensitive issue for the community and the petition now holds over 2000 signatures.
- 1.6 Alan Doyle is a local Sunbury resident. He is an investigative journalist by profession, who has been researching the Lendy family on and off for over 30 years. Topple the Racists based the allegations about the statue on a website article which makes partial references to a longer paper on the subject Mr Doyle had written 10 years ago.
- 1.7 The Council approached Mr Doyle after establishing his credentials and asked him to review the information and draft a report for consideration.
- 1.8 The issues are complex, and Mr Doyle has explained in his report how the brothers differed from one another. His findings reflect these differences. There are no recommendations as it is down to Councillors to decide what course of action may need to be taken.
- 1.9 On a separate issue Officers had previously approached 2 respected historians, who specialise in African history including Slavery and Colonialism and asked them if they would be prepared to research and draft a factual historical report on Lendy for Councillors to review . They responded by submitting a proposal to Officers but stated due to the complexity of the background to the history of the memorial they would have to charge £28,000 as it would take extensive research time to unravel this complex story. After discussing this charge with MAT, Officers looked for other solutions and Alan Doyle kindly assisted.
- 1.10 Spelthorne has now been approached by the historians who are applying for a grant from the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) to conduct research into historical monuments and the legacies of Empire. They have identified five statues that had been highlighted by the Black Lives Matters Movement, of which Lendy is one.

- 1.11 They have specified what they will undertake in the research and have listed this in the proposal which replicates the specification that Officers had previously drafted.
- 1.12 The two historians state they intend to undertake the research anyway but would like support from the relevant Councils so they can evidence that they are working in partnership.
- 1.13 The project will be funded by the AHRC so no financial assistance is requested from Spelthorne Council. A letter of support from the Council is requested which will be included in their funding application. This letter will record a commitment to the proposed research project and an explanation of the benefits to the Council this project will give.
- 1.14 There is no timetable for the research to be started or concluded, therefore the detailed report submitted by Alan Doyle should be considered and actions recommended to Cabine .
- 1.15 It should be noted that there is also a housing development called Lendy Place, also in Lower Sunbury.

## **2. Options analysis and proposal**

- 2.1 Remove the statue. This could satisfy the Topple the Racist organisation, however the overriding local community view is in support of the statue.
- 2.2 Place a summary on a plaque identifying the controversy (perhaps with a QR code so that information can be read using a smart phone). This may satisfy some opponents of the statue as their demand has always been that of education.
- 2.3 Continue to keep the statue covered. This will not satisfy the people that have signed the petition.
- 2.4 Remove the covering and return the statue as was, however there is a risk of damage or destruction by those supporting the Topple the Racists and Black Lives Matters organisations.
- 2.5 Enhance the information about the statue to visitors of the Walled Garden through media such as written reports, books and website links. This could be done in conjunction with point 2.2.
- 2.6 In reference to the proposals from the research historians, by agreeing to become a partner it will demonstrate to the whole community the willingness to review all information available and an openness to ensuring all information is known about the Council's community assets and local history.
- 2.7 To refuse to support the additional research proposed. This may generate questions as to why the Council wishes to refuse obtaining further information free of charge which would enable them to make further informed decisions if required.

## **3. Financial implications**

- 3.1 If the Council decides to remove the statue, consideration will then have to be taken about the naming of the housing development in Sunbury ("Lendy Place"). If it was decided to change the name, the full cost to the residents would have to be paid by the Council. This cost would have to be researched but would amount to several thousand pounds.

- 3.2 The cost of enhancing the information is minimal and could be costed within existing budgets.
- 3.3 It should be noted that the Council has attempted to involve other specialists in this field to further ensure impartiality, however this proved difficult and very costly. A figure of £28,000 was asked for to research The Lendy Memorial alone.

#### **4. Other considerations**

- 4.1 It is evident that Topple the Racists and Black Lives Matter focus heavily on education and knowledge about injustices of the past and present. By ensuring that information is available by the Lendy memorial visitors would be informed about the issues.
- 4.2 Consideration has been given to the other 28 statues there are in Spelthorne, but none appear to carry the controversy of the Lendy Memorial.

#### **5. Sustainability/Climate Change Implications**

- 5.1 No sustainability or climate change implications have been identified.

#### **6. Timetable for implementation**

- 6.1 The timetable will depend on the decision of the Council.

**Background papers:** There are none.

**Appendices:**

#### **Appendix A**

**'The Lower Sunbury Lendy Memorial', by Alan Doyle**