

WALBERSWICK SCROLL ADVISORY GROUP, SEPT 2022

Report for WPC on Nicola Walker's Assessment of the Scroll dated 25 08 22 (attached)

The Assessment is in response to a commission by SAG who have paid the fee of £411.09 for this from funds which they have raised themselves.

The Assessment is comprehensive and detailed, and this report highlights seven areas of particular interest (which are listed below).

1 It provides a very thorough record of the history and the current state of the Scroll, in particular setting out the damage which has occurred over the years.

2 It recommends immediate conservation work be carried out, over three days by Nicola Walker herself in Walberswick, to mitigate further damage to the paper of the scroll were it to continue to be shown.

3 It also sets out a record of the state of the containing case and mechanism, with observations on its shortcomings, together with a suggestion of an environmental monitoring device within the box.

4 It recommends replacing the existing case with a new housing designed and made by experts (no price is put on this).

5 An ideal solution is put forward for a complete conservation of the scroll by experts equipped with a suitably large workshop for which an estimated 'ballpark' cost of £30,000 is given.

6 Providing a digital version on linen to replace the paper version (no suggestion about the consequential storage for the scroll itself, necessitated by this, has been made).

7 A note that it has become the practice in museums to allow limited access to view original artefacts with ancillary support such as digital screen backup.

After reading the report PAG's comments are -
(we use for clarity the same item numbers as the above list)

1 The Assessment is an excellent set of statements on which to base future action to secure the long term preservation of the Scroll.

2 Subject to the agreement of WPC we propose accepting Nicola's estimate of £1910 and asking her to carry out the work she outlines. (This assumes that the ideal work suggested in item 5 is not to be carried out. See later).

However currently PAG's funds are £700 (after paying for the Assessment). This means that to go forward, either WPC will need to settle this account in due course (less £700) or underwrite the cost for later reimbursement by PAG as they continue to raise funds.

However in addition to this outlined work we should like to put forward a suggestion. It seems to be accepted (by all parties who have considered the problem) that a misalignment, where certain of the individual sheets are joined, causes the veering of the scroll over the spools. Would it not be prudent therefore, also to consider realigning those very few problem sheets with authentic conservation joints at this stage?

We have referred the offer of a lecture to WLHG.

3 We should also like to query whether it is possible to treat the inside of the case, including the timber spools, with a sealant in order to prevent any escape of gases referred to in the Assessment. A decision has already been made to raise the spool over which the paper runs (to lift it from the glass edge) which should solve the wearing problem mentioned. (The plastic used for this would sensibly be a type free from producing gas).

SAG propose buying from their funds, and installing, the recommended small environmental monitoring device at a cost of around £40.

4 The use of the old football machine seems to PAG to have become, like the scroll, an integral part of the folk history of the village. It feels that the sealing, etc., mentioned in item 3 above should be explored before a decision, if any, is made for a complete new housing.

5 The cost of this full conservation of the Scroll is clearly beyond the scope of SAG (ideal as it no doubt is) and needs to be considered by WPC, who, of course, are its de facto owners. It is a considerable sum to raise and could possibly be higher as it is not based on any detailed estimate from the experts themselves. Were this full scheme to go ahead then the work described in item 2 would be unnecessary.

6 SAG have made their views clear that they do not welcome this proposal, bringing as it does, a consequent loss of authenticity and uniqueness.

7 SAG welcomes this idea of causing minimal wear on the Scroll, with video screen backup, as it is one which we have suggested as a long term solution, and recommend that it be followed.