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FURTHER WRITTEN RESPONSES FROM PRO CORDA TRUST TO THE SIZEWELL C EXAMINATION AUTHORITY FOLLOWING PRO CORDA'S APPEARANCE AT THE INQUIRY ON 19TH MAY 2021

1. INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

The below responses are in addition to Pro Corda Trust's presentation at the Inquiry, also taking in further written response to the question asked by the Examination Authority at the end of that presentation and further to our written representations provided as part of the consultation process.

Pro Corda Trust, as well as operating a fulltime national and international music school and concert venue at Leiston Abbey, are the site's Managers for the English Heritage Trust. In 2020 Pro Corda acquired additionally the freehold of Leiston Abbey from the Church of England, making the site now a straightforward two-way partnership between English Heritage (EH) and Pro Corda. As Leiston Abbey is a "free site" within EH's operations and structure, the fulltime running and staffing at Leiston Abbey is entirely Pro Corda's. We have been EH's managers for 20 years.

Further, Pro Corda's unique education offer - founded as the National Chamber Music School, and now offering its small ensemble curriculum to schools nationally and taking in its national programme for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) - is intrinsically linked to the heritage offer at the Abbey. We have developed our own heritage offer via a 3 year crowd sourced platform with Dig Ventures welcoming attendees from all over the world, and as part of this programme undertook extensive surveys of visitors and their needs (which include permanent café and toilet provision at Leiston Abbey.)

It is for the above reasons of site management, and the make up of Leiston Abbey's year round users via Pro Corda's management, that the Trust wish to respond equally to some of the questions the Examination Authority have set out for English Heritage, Historic England, East Suffolk Council, Suffolk County Council, and of course the Applicant. This is alongside our responses to the questions set out to Pro Corda (listed in some sections of the Planning Inspectorate Document volumes as "The Pro Corda Music School.")

2. RESPONSE TO VERBAL QUESTION FROM THE EXAMINATION AUTHORITY AT END OF VERBAL PRESENTATION ON 19TH MAY 2021.

The Panel asked about the fulltime nature / intensity of Pro Corda's delivery at Leiston Abbey. Pro Corda now serves over 2,000 students each year. The Trust is the only fulltime performing arts education organization in the UK to devote 50% of its delivery to children and young people with additional needs and disabilities. Our total annual participant number makes us one of the largest music course providers in Europe. The vast majority of our courses and programmes are residential.

Our use of Leiston Abbey as a music school commenced in 1979 when the Trust purchased the buildings at the Abbey site, and the last 15 years have seen a period of intense growth as Pro Corda went from being largely a school holiday music course provider to being a fulltime school serving young people from across the UK (and beyond,) and across all sections of society. Our cutting edge SEND programme (which regularly receives national press coverage) means that many of our students we serve at Leiston Abbey are among the most vulnerable young people in society. Many of those also come from deprived backgrounds and some of our outreach courses have a make up of 75% of students on free school meals (FSM.)

Leiston Abbey is a place of complete sanctuary, educational and holistic nourishment, and artistic inspiration for all our students.

Our course programme (during normal times) sees a back to back series of over 50 courses pa. Pro Corda was the first course provider of its kind to bring its courses back after the first lockdown last July, and again after the most recent lockdown in April. Our work to serve our existing users (and many others) during the pandemic has been covered widely in the media, and our national educational remit is stronger than ever before due to the diversity of our reach across the educational establishment.

3. SPECIFIC WRITTEN RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS SET OUT IN THE PLANNING INSPECTORATE DOCUMENT

Volume 1.

AR.1.18 (Question for ESC, SCCC, EH and the Applicant.) "The Applicant concludes that the effects of construction and operation on Leiston Abbey in amenity and recreation terms would be significant. Is this conclusion agreed?"

The SZC construction impacts Leiston Abbey's ability to operate in any of its current usage contexts – recreational and educational – unless proper mitigation is secured. In particular this requires focus on the following key areas to reduce the impact:

- Round the clock site security
- Management of increased ad-hoc footfall
- Proper mitigation of visual, noise, and heritage impact.

Beyond the above, Pro Corda believes that within proper partnership working between EDF, EH and Pro Corda, the visitor and user experience at Leiston Abbey can be preserved and that, with the right approach, a positive lasting legacy can be enabled.

Without this mitigation we feel Leiston Abbey's current usage – in any of its areas – is not sustainable during the construction period.

AR.1.35 (Question for EH.) "What effect do you consider (the project) would have on visitors to Leiston Abbey and would you regard the effect as significant?"

Pro Corda's position, as managers of the site for EH, is that the effect is very significant because of the

need to control access via enhanced security arrangements. The effect and consequences of inadequate control would be severe on not only our business and charity but also on the heritage visitors, with heritage crime just one of the aspects which would affect public enjoyment, as well as increased costs.

We believe, as above, that proper and imaginative partnership working within the mitigation process could achieve a lasting legacy of increased visitor experience. Leiston Abbey is unusual as a monastic heritage site in being run as a full time school – and not least within the artistic specialism of the school based there together with its focus on serving the most deprived in society. Pro Corda's work also sees us working with many community groups as well as Suffolk schools (also our partnerships via SCC to serve Suffolk based children and young people with disabilities as well as young carers) and we believe that this educational focus, together with the correct investment in the site via mitigation, could create a reinvigorated visitor experience for those who visit Leiston Abbey from across the world in years to come.

Volume 3.

CU.1.37 (Question for the Applicant on Noise impact.)

1. "Please provide further details and the timing of the proposed bespoke assessment of impacts from the Sizewell C Project on the Pro Corda music school at Leiston Abbey."

Our position is that much more work needs to be done here. There has been positive engagement over recent months between Pro Corda and EDF's Noise Impact Consultant. This has been, to date, a fact finding mission by the consultant to discover the full impacts of new, increased, and irregular noise patterns on the hundreds of students with autism who access Pro Corda's SEND programme.

Autism forms a particular focus of the SEND courses taking place at Leiston Abbey. As Pro Corda have set out to EDF and the consultant, one of the main benefits for students with autism who come to us from SEND schools nationally is the unique combination of our curriculum and the tranquility of the site. The biggest disruption to their curriculum and its life-transforming outcomes over the construction period is the noise disturbance.

Pro Corda were completely dissatisfied with previous baseline noise surveys EDF carried out via its former consultants, and we need to see far more survey work carried out on noise impact.

2. "Please indicate whether there has been any progress in relation to the provision of any additional mitigation requirements."

Some initial work has taken place between EDF and Pro Corda within the development of an outdoor sensory space for our autistic students to act as a "safe space" for anxieties caused by noise interruption, but more detail is needed here.

Pro Corda's other main concerns on noise – and where mitigation is needed - are:

1. The impact on the very regular series of public community concerts which are now run by Pro Corda at Leiston Abbey (as well as being a highly valued community resource, these form a significant income source for Pro Corda which helps sustain our charitable work.
2. The impact on our music coaching across all our other courses for talented young instrumentalists from across UK and beyond.

Volume 4.

HE.1.57 (Question for ESC, SCCAS, HE, EH, Pro Corda Trust/Leiston Abbey.) “Alongside the proposed site-specific WSI and Heritage s106 agreement to provide for enhancements to the visitor experience for the 2 Leiston Abbey sites, is any further mitigation considered necessary in relation terrestrial heritage effects. If necessary, how do you consider such measures should be secured?”

Here, we have had joint discussions with EDF and EH about EDF “start- up” investment in a new “Visitor Entrance” facility at Leiston Abbey which we would run (and to lever Lottery funding.) This new “Gateway” would serve the joint purpose of allowing increased control over footfall (with the vastly increased numbers now living opposite the site in the construction worker campus) as well as forming part of the enhanced visitor experience legacy (mentioned above) which proper mitigation for Leiston Abbey can enable.

Within the above, initial discussion has taken place around the siting of such a facility on the “Burnt out House” plot to the west of the Lady Chapel as the visitor enters the Abbey ruins from the main car park side.

Within enhancements to the visitor experience (and managing the increased access / impact of the proposed construction worker campus) Pro Corda’s position is that a main entrance gate and improved driveway and car park need to be part of this area of mitigation.

LI.1.124 (Question for Pro Corda/Leiston Abbey and EH.) “Does the design of the rail extension route effectively minimize the visibility of the route from Leiston Abbey.”

Our position is that the rail extension route will be very visible and form a very new backdrop to the southside of the Leiston Abbey site, in turn reducing significantly its current sense of tranquility and seclusion.

HE.1.15 (Question for the Applicant and EH.) “Please provide detail and a progress update on the proposed sustainable Conservation and Management plan.” To the Applicant – “Is the plan to be included as mitigation? If so how is this to be secured?”


Pro Corda need to be involved directly and centrally in the production and execution of a sustainable CMP – not least as fulltime managers of the Leiston Abbey site. A CMP is in our view an appropriate tool to guide and manage the change that this site is undoubtedly going to undergo over the next 10 years and beyond during the construction phase. It should also guide the post-construction camp restoration of the area (lighting, sports facilities etc,) which should also be secured by condition and agreement following consultation with Pro Corda and other affected parties.

Volume 5.

NV.1.99 (Question to Pro Corda.) “What progress has been made with securing a S106 in respect of the Pro Corda music school?”

There is much work still needed here to secure the mitigation necessary to ensure Pro Corda is not forced to move away from Leiston Abbey for the duration of the construction. Such a move would have a catastrophic impact on UK performing arts education and also national SEND education, such is Pro Corda’s remit within both. It would also have a catastrophic impact on the heritage asset as Pro Corda are the sole and full time managers of the site and the asset.

Alongside investment in security and business resilience (to mitigate the severe impact within risk and confidence for our many users – from individual families to schools,) physical investment is needed to mitigate impacts of security, safeguarding and noise. From securing the driveway and boundaries to windows to securing the heritage asset. As mentioned at the start of this document, the educational offer at Leiston Abbey is intrinsically linked to the heritage offer. The two really do need to be seen in the same context by the Examination Authority, together with the complex task of managing Leiston Abbey, when assessing the answers – from across the various bodies – to related Questions within the Planning Inspectorate documents.



Andrew Quartermain, Pro Corda CEO

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