

**MUSEUMS COMMITTEE
20 JUNE 2011**

Present: Councillors Cartwright, Finch, Forward (as the duly appointed substitute for Councillor Chowney) Hodges (in the Chair), Martin and Webb

Museum Association Representatives: Mr Adams, Mrs Barrett, Ms Cornish, Mr Peak and Mrs Purdey

Apologies for absence were noted for Miss Reed and Councillors Charlesworth and Chowney.

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following councillors declared their interests in the minutes as follows:

<u>Councillor</u>	<u>Minute</u>	<u>Interest</u>
Cllrs Cartwright, Hodges and Webb	5	Personal – Knows Michael Howard

2. MINUTES

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the meeting held on 16 February 2011 be approved and signed by the Chair as a true record.

3. CURATOR'S REPORT

Cathy Walling, Museum Curator, presented a report to provide an update on issues arising from previous meetings and confirmation of Curator's actions.

It was confirmed permission had been given for the reproductions of a collection of illustrations from the museums collection.

The addition of work by Laetita Yhap to the 'Coastal Landscapes' display in the Long Gallery had been completed.

Representatives from museums in Hastings and Rother met on 16th May 2011. Members discussed the work of the Archaeological Working Party on archaeological collecting areas and resolved to agree that representatives from Rye and Winchelsea will visit Hastings to look at the archaeology in store. The matter continues to be discussed on a county and area scale.

Steve Peak requested an update regarding storage at Lewes Public Records Office. The Curator agreed to report back to the Committee on this matter.

The Curator gave a verbal report on the two auction lots at Bonhams. The Auction House had advised the Museum had been outbid on both auction lots; Fred Judge Posters and a selection of postcards.

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RESOLVED – that the report be noted.

4. DRAFT POLICY ON THE CARE AND TREATMENT OF HUMAN REMAINS

Cathy Walling, Museum Curator, presented a report to update members on the Draft Policy on the Care and Treatment of Human Remains.

The Draft Policy acknowledges the special place human remains hold in the Museum collections and to formalise their care. The document will be reviewed every five years.

The Curator orally amended her report in respect of the 'Current Scope of Human Remains in the collection'. She explained the report should state the museum holds '200' pieces of human remains in its collections.

For clarification purposes, the Curator confirmed the legal ownership of the human remains was not the responsibility of the museum.

RESOLVED – that the report is recommended for acceptance by Cabinet.

5. UPDATE ON COMMEMORATIVE PLAQUES

Cathy Walling, Museum Curator, presented a report to update members on progress of the commemorative plaques programme.

The Curator updated the Committee on the status of the plaque for Alan Turing; it was noted the owner of Baston Lodge has submitted an application for Listed Building Consent and Planning Permission and has offered to pay the entire cost for the plaque to Alan Turing on her property. The Committee agreed to invite someone from 'Apple Computers' to the unveiling ceremony.

The Committee agreed to mount a plaque for Alf Cobb in response to a request received from Michael Howard to commemorate Alf Cobb, Robert Tressell's co-campaigner in Hastings Social Democratic Federation.

RESOLVED – that the report be noted.

6. REVIEW OF OLD TOWN MUSEUM

Cathy Walling, Museum Curator, presented a report to update members on the progress of the review of the Old Town Hall Museum. Since February 2011, two meetings have been held with interested parties to discuss the future of the museum and their aspirations of it. The curator confirmed the schedule of works to the physical layout of the Old Town Hall Museum will be

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completed by July 2011 to make additional space for the programme of activities and events to be held in July.

The Committee congratulated the curator on the improvements to the progress of the Old Town Hall Museum.

RESOLVED – that the report be noted.

7. MUSEUM ATTENDANCE FIGURES

Cathy Walling, Museum Curator, presented a report to inform members of figures for attendances, educational activities and use of the Museum's website for the fourth quarter of 2010-11.

The Curator confirmed there had been an increase in the number of visitors to Hastings Museum and Art Gallery and at the Old Town Hall Museum compared to the 2009 and 2010 figures. Educational visits were down due to uncertainties concerning school budgets, this trend had been noted by other museums since September 2010.

Members put forward suggestions in ways to encourage the schools to visit the museums and to let the schools know what the museums could offer. It was agreed to enquire what the schools were doing instead by distributing a survey to obtain feedback. Councillor Webb proposed to raise the matter at a future meeting of East Sussex County Council's Children's Services Scrutiny Committee (in his capacity as a Board Member).

RESOLVED – that the report be noted.

8. MUSEUM EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

Cathy Walling, Museum Curator, presented a report to inform Members of forthcoming events and activities.

These include, amongst others:

- Memories of a Victorian Watercolourist: Albert Goodwin. Exhibition ends 3 July 2011;
- Len Shelley and Angie Biltcliffe: A Retrospective. 23 July – 23 October 2011;
- Coastal Landscapes. Includes Fishmarket on the Sands by JMW Turner. Continues until January 2012;
- Mugsborough Images. 11 June – 25 September 2011;
- Exhibition of work by Sussex Coast College students (Foundation Degree Contemporary Crafts Practice). 25 June – 4 September 2011.

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Events:

- Ongoing: Play and Learn, every Thursday in term-time.
- Local History Lectures with Edward Preston: 24 June – 22 July 2011;
- Museum Association visit to East Grinstead. 16 July 2011;
- Something Fishy! Holiday art activities. 23 July - 4 September 2011;
- Summer of Archaeology at the Old Town Hall. 23 July – 4 September 2011;
- Finds Session at Old Town Hall Museum with Sussex Finds Liaison Officer – 21 July 2011;
- Object Handling –27 July 2011;
- 5 Hastings Treasures. Part of Old Town Carnival Week. 1 - 5 August 2011.
- Printing Workshop at Old Town Hall – 3 September 2011.
- Hastings and Rother Family History Society help with research, for Heritage Open Days. 8 – 11 September 2011.
- Local Studies Room – Special Saturday opening for Heritage Open Days. 10 September 2011.
- Museum Association visit to Cambridge. 18 September 2011.

RESOLVED - that the report be noted.

9. MUSEUM ACQUISITIONS

Cathy Walling, Museum Curator, presented an updated report informing members of items acquired by the Museum since February 2011.

These included, amongst others:

- Anglo-Saxon silver coins;
- Royal East Sussex Hospital Annual reports 1920 – 1947;
- Board, and rules for 'Ye Olde Game of Winkleing';
- Collection of Hastings ginger beer and beer bottles;
- Documents and photographs from National Gregg Association Conference, Hastings, 1935;
- 32 postcards of Hastings and St Leonards.

The curator circulated a booklet entitled 'Hastings Museum & Art Gallery Exhibitions and Events, July –December 2011' which detailed all forthcoming events.

RESOLVED – that the report be noted and the Chairman sign the acknowledgments of thanks to the donors.

(The Chair declared the meeting closed at 3.45pm)