

**MUSEUMS COMMITTEE  
17 MARCH 2014**

Present: Councillors Charlesworth, Hodges, Howard, Martin,  
Street and Westley (in the Chair).  
Museum Association Representatives: Mr Adams, Mrs A  
Hawkins, Mr Palfrey-Martin, Mr Peak and Mrs Purdey

**28. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were noted for Councillor Batsford, Mrs Barrett, Virginia Gilbert, Head of Amenities, Resorts and Leisure and lateness for Councillor Hodges.

The Chair welcomed new member Alison Hawkins to the Committee and Andrew Palfrey-Martin who had returned following a period of sickness.

**29. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillors made no declarations of interest at this meeting.

**30. MINUTES**

**RESOLVED** – that the minutes of the meeting held on 16 December 2014 be approved and signed by the Chair as a true record.

**31. 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.

The Museum Curator confirmed the Heritage Lottery Fund had agreed a grant of £34,400 for the World War 1 Centenary project.

A free one-day introduction to social media training course has been arranged for April 2014 for HMAG staff and volunteers and other local heritage venues and groups. It has been funded by the Hastings Remembers project, though the lottery fund and will be delivered by an external specialist. It is intended that by increasing the use of social media, it will complement and enhance the new HMAG website. Both Twitter and Facebook accounts have been set up for the museum, so staff can feed in items. The Twitter address is '@Museumhastings'. The Hastings Remembers web pages will be used to provide local stories of the First World War Project as a tool to build followers during the course of the project.

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It was noted that Hannah Miles, had replaced Alison Hawkins as Keeper of Local History and Archives. Hannah started on 11 March and has been working two days a week.

The Curator confirmed that she had arranged a visit to the new Keep at Falmer on Friday, 11 April at 11am. Feedback from this visit will be provided at the next meeting.

Marion Purdey offered her congratulations to the museum for obtaining lottery funding and Catherine Harvey for completing the paper work.

**RESOLVED – that the Committee accepts the report and are satisfied with the comments in the report.**

**32. MUSEUM ACCREDITATION UPDATE**

Cathy Walling, Museum Curator, presented a report to update members on the Museums' Accreditation status.

The Accreditation Scheme is administered by the Arts Council for all UK museums and galleries, it forms the baseline for agreed quality standards. Hastings Museum and Art Gallery and the Old Town Hall Museum were fully accredited in 2009-10 under the scheme. Both Museums will re-apply in August 2014 with returns completed on 28 February 2015. The Accreditation Scheme has been updated by the Arts Council and there is a requirement for new documentation which will need governing body approval by Cabinet. Therefore it is intended to discuss these documents along with policies and statements at the next three meetings of the Museums Committee to meet the deadline required.

Councillor Charlesworth raised concern about the amount of paperwork involved to achieve the accreditation. The Curator advised that they were working to a schedule and there were templates they could utilise to assist with the workload.

**RESOLVED – that the Committee accepts the report and are satisfied with the comments in the report.**

**33. 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 third quarter of 2013-14. Figures for October to December 2012 were submitted for comparison.

The attendance figures for both Hastings Museum & Art Gallery and Johns Place were down compared to the previous year.

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Similarly, attendances to The Old Town Hall Museum were down compared to the previous year, reflected by the impact of the reduction in opening hours to three days a week during the winter period.

It was noted that educational visits had been made in the majority by Language Student Groups and secondly by schools and colleges.

The total visitor numbers for the calendar year in 2013 were 39,157 at Johns Place (38,452 in 2012) and 27,375 at the Old Town Hall (29,271).

The figures for the number of website visits had increased for Quarter 3 by 11,663.

Wedding and Civil Ceremonies held in the last quarter had reduced compared to the previous year. Wedding bookings compared with last year were lower than average everywhere, because of superstition associated with the year 2013. To date, a total of 13 bookings have been made for 2014/15.

The Curator informed the committee that a Wedding Fayre had been arranged to take place on Sunday, 14 September 2014. Entry will be free.

**RESOLVED – that the Committee accepts the report and are satisfied with the comments in the report.**

**34. MUSEUM EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES**

Cathy Walling, Museum Curator, presented a report to inform Members of forthcoming events and educational activities at the Hastings Museum and Art Gallery and the Old Town Hall Museum during April to June 2014, for Quarter 1, 2014.

These included:-

**Exhibitions**

Until 4 January 2015: 'The Four Seasons'. Paintings from the Museum collection.

Until 20 April: 'The Nature of Things: Plants in Art'. Ceramics, sketches, paintings, textiles from the permanent collection.

3 May to 13 July: 'Rainforest of the Sea', a photographic exhibition of the wildlife of the coral reefs, on loan from the Horniman Museum.

Until 27 April: Display of work by students at Saxon Mount School.

3 May to 29 June: 'The Nature of Things', work by St Paul's School inspired by the Museum's exhibition.

**Events**

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5-20 April: Easter Egg Hunt.

12 April: 'Deception, Ceramics and limitation', a talk by Catrin Jones from the Victoria and Albert Museum.

27 April: 'The Life and Times of Robert Tressell', a talk by Steve Peak for the Museum Association.

30 April: 'Take One Dissemination Day', showcasing the Take One Project, a practical session for teachers and heritage professionals. This event may be postponed.

27 May: 'Underwater Wonders', craft activities for half-term.

7 June: 'Rainforests of the Sea', talk by Jamie Craggs from Horniman Museum.

13, 20 and 27 June: Local History talks by Edward Preston.

Steve Peak asked if the museum would be contributing to Hastings Week. Councillor Charlesworth added that it would be beneficial to have something specific in the programme. The Curator said they have a number of events listed in the brochure and she would look further into it.

Marion Purdey said two of the museum exhibitions were stunning and would have been of interest to young people which may explain why the numbers had increased.

**RESOLVED - that the Committee accepts the report and are satisfied with the comments in the report.**

**35. MUSEUM ACQUISITIONS**

Cathy Walling, Museum Curator, presented a report informing members of six items acquired by the Museum in the last quarter and the names of donors.

The items included: -

1. 8 programmes from the Regal Theatre, London Road, St Leonards-on-Sea. Donor: Ms L King
2. Family History details and illustrated plates removed from Gasson family Bibles. Donor: Mrs S Novis
3. Two plans of houses in Tower Road West and Charles Road, St Leonards. Donor: Mr G Dudman
4. Two ashtrays from Bayeux Pottery, Ore. Donor: Mr R Mucci

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5. Banking book for Dobell Bros, Hastings and cheque dated 1909. Donor: Mr A King
6. Collection of 16 local guides and leaflets. Donor: Mr J Futrall

**RESOLVED** - that the Committee accepts the report and are satisfied with the comments in the report.

**35. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC**

**RESOLVED** – that the public be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the items of business listed below because it is likely that, if members of the public were present, there would be disclosure to them of ‘exempt’ information as defined in the paragraphs of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

<b><u>Minute No.</u></b>	<b><u>Subject Matter</u></b>	<b><u>Paragraph No.</u></b>
36(E)	Conservation in Museum Store	Paragraphs 8 & 9
37(E)	Offer of Loan and Gift in Lieu of Tax	Paragraphs 8 & 9

**36E. CONSERVATION IN MUSEUM STORE**

Cathy Walling, Museum Curator, presented a report for Members to consider conservation in the Museum Store.

**RESOLVED** – (unanimously) that the Committee accepts the report and are satisfied with the comments in the report.

**37E. OFFER OF LOAN AND GIFT IN LIEU OF TAX**

Cathy Walling, Museum Curator, gave a verbal report on the offer of loan and gift to the museum in lieu of tax.

**RESOLVED** – (unanimously) that the offer of loan and gift is recommended for acceptance in principle, subject to the outcome of the Arts Council’s decision and further research being undertaken by the Council.

(The Chair declared the meeting closed at 3.30pm)