

## MUSEUMS COMMITTEE

15 SEPTEMBER 2014

Present: Councillors Charlesworth, Charman, Edwards, Hodges, Howard (in the Chair), Lock, Sinden and Webb (duly appointed substitute for Councillor Street).

Museum Association Representatives: Mr Adams, Mrs Barrett, Mrs Hawkins, Mr Palfrey-Martin, Mr Peak and Mrs Purdey

### 12. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Street and noted for Councillor Poole.

### 13. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors made no declarations of interest at this meeting.

### 14. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 16 JUNE 2014

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

### 15. NOTIFICATION OF ANY ADDITIONAL URGENT ITEMS

None.

### 16. 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.

A number of quotations have been sought for dealing with conservation issues in the museum store. Responses to these quotations are awaited.

The WWI pop up events held at The Old Town Hall Museum, and Hollington; Rye and Bexhill Libraries and more recently Ore library have proved to be extremely successful.

The Arts Connect programme will be funded by East Sussex County Council for a further 3 years. The first event will be held at Hastings Museum and Art Gallery on Tuesday, 21<sup>st</sup> October 2014 from 10.30am to 1.00pm.

'Uncovering Ethnography' project (Uniques) has commenced. This project partnered with other museums in Kent & Sussex will see the collections reviewed by a specialist curator. The African collections and unidentified boxes will be reviewed first.

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The Colin Taylor collection that is in the process of being transferred to St. Johns Place, is expected to take six months to transfer. A grant has been applied to fund the cataloguing, research, dissemination and public engagement.

A number of items from the collection have been granted permission to be reproduced. These items were listed in the report.

Councillor Charlesworth queried how much of the Taylor collection was in storage. Catherine Harvey, Education Officer, said they had identified a space for the items in the store room. Items were being boxed. Funding from a grant application will enable them to work with a specialist curator.

Councillor Charlesworth asked about the status of the store room. The Curator advised that the store room had been stabilised, materials were being transferred to the Keep at Falmer for conservation. The Curator will provide an update at the next meeting.

Councillor Hodges requested that digital records be taken of items that are transferred to the Keep. The Curator reassured him that the items would be returned to the museum and they would ensure the process was handled correctly.

Mrs Barrett asked if volunteers could copy the items, given the quantity and time it would take. Mrs Hawkins explained that some of the pieces in the collections were huge; it would not be an easy process for volunteers to complete.

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

### 17. FORWARD PLAN

Cathy Walling, Museum Curator, presented a report to inform members of the updated Museum Forward Plan.

The Museums Forward Plan will replace the version dated 2010-13. The plan includes a proposed Action plan for the next five years. A regularly monitored Forward Plan was a requirement of the Accreditation scheme run by the Arts Council. Hastings Museum and Art Gallery and the Old Town Hall Museum have been accredited since 2007. This will enable the Museum to apply for key funding for the Council's strategic review and also from the Arts Council.

Councillor Hodges suggested that it would be beneficial if the committee could take an objective view of what strategy the museum should take going forward. In respect of the volunteers who regularly worked at the museum, Councillor Lock asked how they were thanked. The Curator said they were invited to regular social gatherings and given cards, the same as a member of staff. In addition, they were given a long term work certificate and job references. The committee discussed educational paths for volunteers.

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Nick Sangster referred to the repairs programme and said they were addressing storage space. The Curator said they were undertaking a review of the collections in the store room as it was cleared out. It was a long process as they needed to look at the use and value of the items. The next meeting in December will look at the new acquisitions and disposal policy.

Councillor Lock queried the timeline for the museums accreditation and the acquisitions policy, he suggested the museum needed a vision document. Mrs Barrett wished to express her gratitude to the Art Fund for their help.

Councillor Charlesworth suggested the lack of storage space could be overcome by planning for an extension at the museum. Mrs Purdey added that the kitchen needed a refurbishment under general repairs. Members discussed the use of external venues such as Braybrook Terrace which could provide additional storage space.

Mrs Barrett believed that if there was an educational room at the museum, the number of student visits would increase.

**RESOLVED - that the Committee accepts the report and are satisfied with the comments in the report subject to minor corrections to the Forward Plan.**

### 18. VENUE OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Cathy Walling, Museum Curator, presented a report to consider whether the Museum was an appropriate venue for future Museum Committee meetings.

Mrs Barrett suggested the museum was a preferable venue for several reasons:- Audibility is better in the Long Gallery; new acquisitions can easily be displayed; parking is free; the meeting would not impact on visitors because it would take place on a Monday whilst the museum was closed to the public. She raised concern about the transportation of acquisitions between the museum and Town Hall, and questioned whether there was third party insurance policy for staff and the acquisitions.

Councillor Webb supported Mrs Barrett's comments, he said the meeting worked better at the Museum where members could view the paintings etc. and thought that Committee Room 3 in the Town Hall was too small for the number of people attending the meeting.

Councillor Sinden expressed his support to hold future meetings at the museum.

To facilitate this arrangement, the Curator stated that a member of staff would be paid to man the front door whilst the Museum was closed to the public on a Monday.

Councillor Charlesworth asked how much time would be taken up staffing this arrangement. The Curator confirmed it would take 12 hours per year for a paid member of staff.

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**RESOLVED** - that the members give their views on this possible use of the Museum.

### 19. **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 first quarter of 2014-15. Figures for April to June 2013 were submitted for comparison.

It was noted that the attendance figures for Hastings Museum and Art Gallery had dropped slightly when compared with the previous year. However, numbers of pupils in organised groups had increased, resulting in an overall increase in the number of visits by 190.

Attendances to the Old Town Hall Museum had decreased in addition to a reduction of pupils in organised groups. The total number of visits combined had decreased by 1,526 when compared to the previous year.

The number of website visits had increased significantly by 11,092. The curator said the new website was close to being completed and would be launched in December 2014.

The number of weddings and civil ceremonies had decreased by 2 compared to quarter 1 last year. A number of bookings have been made as follows: 14 ceremonies booked for 2014/15 and 11 for 2015/16.

The Curator reported that the Wedding Fair held on 14 September 2014 was extremely successful with 40 stalls and 800 people in attendance. Pictures of the event were available for members to view on Facebook.

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

### 20. **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 October to December 2014, for Quarter 3, 2014.

These included:-

#### **Exhibitions**

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

5 July to 15 September: 'White Rock Baths', photographs by Brian Rybolt.

26 July to 13 November: 'Hastings Remembers, Local Stories of the First World War'.

22 September to 30 November: 'Misogyny is Suicide' by HKB Finn. Photographs and soundtrack, part of AfriKaba Festival.

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29 November to 22 February: 'The Eyes are Listening', paintings of six contemporary artists based in Sussex.

6 December to 1 February 2015: 'Tangible Keepsakes from a Dream', photographs of Hastings by Hans van Erp.

### Events

Events for AfriKaBa - the Festival of African and Caribbean heritage, arts and culture.

4 October: African and Latin Dance Workshop with Shardarae Kasumu

5 October: AfriKaBa Adventure Story with Dende the Samba Reggae, Afro-Brazilian storytellers.

10 October: HKBFiNN with Amplifier, the world's first spoken word opera.

17 October to 28 November: Friday morning Local History talks with Edward Preston.

18 October: 'Lady Annie Brassey, Life, Travels and Adventure', with Julian Porter

28 October: Jaws and Claws Activity Day

15 November: 'We Will Not Kill', talk on conscientious objectors of WWI with Anne Kramer

22 November: Museum Association Autumn Concert

6 December: Deck the Halls - Christmas Crafts with Rachel Hine

7 December: Museum Association AGM

Two weekly term-time preschool drop-ins in partnership with Hastings Children's Centre:

Wednesdays: Book Bugs

Thursdays: In2Play

Steve Peak mentioned the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Evacuation of Dunkirk will take place in May 2015, followed by the 200<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Battle of Waterloo in June 2015 and the 950<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Battle of Hastings on 14<sup>th</sup> October 2016.

Catherine Harvey said they will try and accommodate these events where possible.

It was noted the Museum Association AGM will be held on Sunday, 7<sup>th</sup> December 2014 at museum, starting at 2pm. This popular event will feature mystery objects, a quiz and refreshments. Mrs Barrett encouraged officers and councillors from the committee to attend.

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

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### 21. 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. Life saving medal awarded to J Beard 1899. Donor: A. Campbell
2. Eleven Books on Hastings history and street directories. Donor: Mrs M Hutchinson
3. Two WW2 booklets. Donor: Mrs J Wild
4. Copy of Grey Owl's 'The Tree'. Donor: T Kitson
5. Two Telegrams sent to William Cushen re son missing in 1916. Donor: Dr C Williams
6. Six Books on WW2. Donor: R Foster
7. Twenty-one White Rock Pavilion programmes, miscellaneous local ephemera. Donor: A Palfrey-Martin
8. Wooden shield with arms of Royal Regiment of Artillery 114 Field Reg, Hastings, Fire Guard Armband, Royal Sussex Regiment silk handkerchief case, 1920s lightbulb, photo of dinner at Old Hastings House, WWI army prayer book. Donor: P. Fuller
9. Rule book for rink hockey, Poison gas alert book. Donor: D Holdster
10. Postcard of Fishermens Church, views of Hastings & St Leonards, Views of Battle Abbey. Donor: Mr Williamson.
11. Licence for alterations at 36-38 Marina, 1909. Donor: D Campber.
12. Collection of items from Hastings Information Bureau, including blouse, former property of Maureen Lane. Donor: Mrs N Lane.
13. Eighty-five local theatre and performance programmes. Donor: P Klijn.
14. Hairdryer in original box. Donor: D Carrick.
15. GEC TV instruction booklet, F J Parson's 'Rules for Compositors'. Donor; R Mucci.
16. Mesolithic flint debitage from Hastings Castle. Donor: C Milkins.
17. Glass gas shades. Donor: A McMurtie.
18. Watercolour painting of Crowhurst Viaduct by F Fulford. Donor: Ms S Fulford.

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19. Womens' costume from house in St Leonards, c 1913. Donor: Mrs D Rolls.

Councillor Charlesworth informed the committee that she had acquired a mayoresses brooch belonging to Miss Burden, a former mayoress who had left instructions in her Will for the brooch be returned. The Curator confirmed the new acquisition will be reported at the next meeting.

Councillor Hodges proposed a motion that the committee give their thanks for the brooch. This was seconded by Mrs Purdey.

The committee also wished to express their gratitude to the museums staff who had manned the front door and helped to set up the room for this meeting.

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

(The Chair declared the meeting closed at. 3.40 pm)