

**MUSEUMS COMMITTEE
6 DECEMBER 2010**

Present: Councillors Cartwright, Chowney, Finch, Hodges, Martin and Webb (in the Chair)

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

Apologies for absence were noted for Councillor Charlesworth, Mr Adams and Miss Reed. Virginia Gilbert was absent on this occasion.

20. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

<u>Councillor</u>	<u>Minute</u>	<u>Interest</u>
Cllrs Finch and Hodges and Mrs Barrett & Mr Peak	24	Personal - Trustee of Old Hastings Preservation Society

21. MINUTES

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the meeting held on 13 September 2010 be approved and signed by the Chair as a true record.

22. CURATOR'S REPORT

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

It was confirmed, the draft Museum Forward Plan had been agreed by Cabinet and Full Council. The agreed forward actions will now form part of the work programme for the Curator and other Museum staff.

In order to accommodate the change in staffing responsibilities, since the departure of Victoria Williams, former Curator, some staff posts and job descriptions had been changed to reflect this.

Also confirmed, Listed Building Consent had been granted for the commemorative plaque for Muriel Matters, on No. 7 Pelham Crescent.

Permission had been given for reproductions of illustrations from the Museum collection, as noted within the report.

Cathy Walling informed the Committee the Corporate Archive at Castleham will not be used to store the Museum Archives, she re-confirmed that there were no plans to transfer the archives from the Museum store. Cllr Hodges asked if the Corporate Archive was temperature controlled. Cathy Walling said she would look into this and report back.

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The use of land behind the Museum, previously intended for an extension has been included in the Museums Forward Plan for 2012. Nick Sangster stated its purpose in the plan was to ascertain if it has commercial or other value. Members of the Committee discussed possible options for this plot of land and suggested that its status, value and any research undertaken would be of interest to the Committee. Councillor Webb stated that currently no proposals had been put forward for the plot of land and he requested that any proposals for use of the land would need to be put in writing to Richard Homewood to be considered.

Cathy Walling and some of the Committee Members attended a presentation on 27 November 2010 by Wendy Walker, about East Sussex County Council and Brighton & Hove City Council's Keep Project for Archives and Local History. Cathy Walling thanked those members who attended. Committee Members expressed concern about access to the documents held by East Sussex Record Office. Committee Members suggested that under the current system, documents and archives were disappearing because they were not being catalogued and as a result a backlog of items had occurred. Councillor Webb suggested that no further items should go to the archives and he would discuss these matters with Bill Murphy, Director of Governance and Community for East Sussex County Council, on his next visit to Hastings.

Cathy Walling confirmed that no further records from the Museum would be going over to the records office and that she would locate the agreement letter which stated that items would be returned if a request to view was received.

Marion Purdey expressed her concern regarding the future of the Cinque Ports Archives, due to the unresolved issues with the archives. She recommended that all Cinque Ports archives should be stored at Hastings.

Cathy Walling advised the Committee the meeting of the working party that had been set up within Sussex Museums Group to discuss guidelines on the deposition of archaeological archives, had been cancelled. The meeting was due to take place on 3rd December 2010.

RESOLVED – that the report be noted.

23. COMPREHENSIVE SPENDING REVIEW UPDATE

Nick Sangster, Resort Services Manager, presented a report to update members on the Comprehensive Spending Review and its possible implications.

Nick Sangster confirmed the effect of the cuts will be known in Mid January when Hastings Borough Council's grant settlement is received. Members of the Museums Committee will be informed at the next meeting.

RESOLVED – that the report be noted.

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24. OPERATIONAL REVIEW OF THE OLD TOWN HALL MUSEUM

Cathy Walling, Museum Curator, presented a report to update members on the progress towards reviewing current service provision at the Old Town Hall Museum. The report also contained the Draft Framework for Operational Review – November 2010 and a Draft Questionnaire, which both form the review of the current service provision at the Old Town Hall Museum.

Nick Sangster confirmed the requirement of this review was to enable the Heads of Service to re-evaluate the core services delivered to minimise impacts of the financial cuts.

Steve Peak stated that the Old Town Hall Museum should stay open and not close and that it would not be possible to move it to Johns Place. He suggested the Museum Association could take over the day to day running. Options such as partnership working were discussed by the Committee. Nick Sangster said he would look at suggestions and how they could work differently, the outcome of the consultation exercise will be discussed to give a range of options to be considered. Cathy Walling stated that she would speak to colleagues at the Sussex Museums Group and will report back.

RESOLVED – that the report be noted.

25. 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 second quarter of 2010-11.

Cathy Walling confirmed there had been a slight rise in visits to John's Place and a more noticeable rise at the Old Town Hall Museum, the latter increase was attributed to the number of people using the Tourist Information Centre. For clarification purposes, Cathy Walling advised the combined figures for the visits to the Tourist Information Centre and Old Town Hall Museum could not be separately defined.

RESOLVED – that the report be noted.

26. MUSEUM EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

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

These include, amongst others:

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- 'Mugsborough – A Portrait of Edwardian Hastings'. 15 January – 27 March 2011;
- 'Coastal Landscapes'. From 22 January 2011;
- Exhibition of work by Photography students from Filsham Valley School. 15 January – 20 March 2011.

Events:

- Teacher Drop-In session, with focus on Edwardian Hastings. 1 February 2011;
- School holiday Chinese New Year activities. 3-27 February 2011;
- A Roo in my Suitcase – Poetry and songs for 3-6 year-olds. 5 February 2011;
- Series of 4 weekly lectures by Edward Preston. 14 February – 7 March 2011;
- Hastings and St Leonards in the Time of Tressell – A talk by Brion Purdey. 5 March 2011;
- Spacedog – Performance with robots and electronics for National Science & Engineering Week. 12 March 2011;
- Light Beam Communication – 2 workshops for schools with Dr Jonathan Hare- NSEW. 16 March 2011;
- Tressell walk with Dr Trevor Hopper. 26 March 2011.

RESOLVED - that the report be noted.

27. REQUEST FOR LOAN

Cathy Walling, Museum Curator, presented a report to consider loans from the Museum collection. Since publication of the report, Cathy Walling confirmed that she was waiting for clarification on the items requested by Leeds City Museum and understood the items will be displayed at one of Leeds satellite museums.

The initial request was for:

Model horse and Native American figures from the Museum's Native American display. Originally part of an exhibition from the British Museum entitled 'Warriors of the Plains'.

RESOLVED - that the loan be agreed subject to confirmation that certain conditions are met.

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28. RECENT ACQUISITIONS

Cathy Walling, Museum Curator, presented an updated report informing members of items acquired by the Museum since September 2010.

These included, amongst others:

- Bronze Age axes and associated metalwork.
- Hastings Souvenir Guide and leaflets, from the honeymoon of Reginald and Valerie Cooper, 1950.
- Album of photos of Grey Owl etc with Charko family.
- Cup and Saucer commemorating visit of Prince of Wales to Hastings, 1927.
- Postcard of interior of Balmoral, Warrior Square, c 1906.

In addition to these items Eve Barratt presented a ring box by W.H Bragnell Jewellers, for the Museums collection.

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

29. 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

<u>Minute No.</u>	<u>Subject Matter</u>	<u>Paragraph No.</u>
30 (E)	Offers to purchase	Paragraphs 8 & 9

30 (E) OFFERS TO PURCHASE

Cathy Walling, Museum Curator, presented a report for the Committee Members to consider the acquisition of various items.

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RESOLVED - that the report be noted and that the offers for purchase be declined.

(The Chair declared the meeting closed at 4.10pm)