

MUSEUMS COMMITTEE

16 MARCH 2015

Present: Councillors Poole (Chair), Howard (Vice-Chair), Charlesworth, Edwards, Hodges, Sinden, Street, Webb, Adams, Purdey, Barrett and Peak

31. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Mrs Hawkins, Councillor Charman and absence was noted for Councillor Lock.

32. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 12 JANUARY 2015

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the meeting held on 12 January 2015 be approved and signed by the Chair as a true record.

33. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

34. NOTIFICATION OF ANY ADDITIONAL URGENT ITEMS

None.

35. CURATOR'S REPORT

The Chair expressed her congratulations to the Fishermen's Museum on their accreditation.

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

1. The Old Town Hall Museum's final day open to the public is Sunday 29 March 2015. The collections will then be transferred and placed into storage at St. Johns Place and the Corporate Archive. This work will involve a 20 step plan to pack and remove the collections. The curator confirmed the Corporate Archive was environmentally controlled and secure.

Mr Peak suggested that priority should be given to getting the permanent exhibition back up and running at St. Johns Place. The Curator advised him that it was intended to provide a temporary display because it would take longer to fund and plan a permanent display which could take between 1 year and 1 year and 6 months to arrange. The Chair added that the process could not be rushed and it was the consequence of year on year funding cuts. The museum would need to be resilient.

Councillor Hodges said he would like to see a permanent display including artefacts. The Curator confirmed the 'Ships Figure Heads' would be moved to St. Johns Place.

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2. The Arts Council has granted Hastings Museum and Art Gallery a resilience fund of £33,000. The museum will undertake a thorough review of how it operates, including governance, income generation, audience engagement, workforce development and consider what exhibitions and activities are provided. The project will run for 12 months commencing on 1 April 2015.

Councillor Charlesworth asked if a detailed list could be provided of items that are going into storage. The Curator confirmed that she would hold complete records of items in storage and items on temporary display and that access to the collections would be given to researchers.

3. The Accreditation return has been submitted and the removal of the Old Town Hall Museum accreditation will be processed at the same time. The assessment will be made during the new few weeks.

4. Permission has been given for the following requests for reproduction of images:

a) 3 images of the Pier Ballroom for a BBC2 documentary, with working title 'Demolition'.

b) an image of the oil painting 'The Sacrifice of Jephthah' by Sebastiano Mazzoni for a book on the artist written by Dr Paolo Benassai and published by Edizioni dei Soncino, Italy.

5. The 'Young Curators' project led by HMAG in partnership with Culture Shift and the Hastings and Rother Arts Education network, for 14-19 years old to undertake practical work experience of the Museum sector, is underway. So far the group have led a taster day and family activity day during February half-term. Plans are in progress for an easter egg trail and family fun day during the Easter holidays. Later in 2015 the group will produce a display and provide creative workshops on the role of women in WWI. The Curator will give a full report on what they have achieved at later meeting.

6. In 2015, the museum joined 'Visitor Finder', funded by the Arts Council England. The purpose of the group is to help the museum gather visitor data and to understand and use it more effectively. Working with other local museums and galleries, the data will provide an insight into the demographics and profile proximity; behaviour, attitudes and motivation of visitors. The Curator advised that the questions in the questionnaire did cover visitor 'intentions' and were spelt out clearly.

RESOLVED – (by 13 votes to 1) that the Committee accepts the report and are satisfied with the comments in the report.

36. 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 2014-15. Figures for October to December 2013 were submitted for comparison.

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It was noted that the attendance figures for Hastings Museum and Art Gallery had increased when compared with the previous year, this was due to the half term activities: Jaws and Claws and the WWI exhibition. Similarly the numbers of pupils in organised groups had also increased during October to December. Overall the total number of visits combined for Quarter 3 had increased by 3398.

Attendances to the Old Town Hall Museum had decreased in addition to a reduction of pupils in organised groups. Therefore the total number of visits combined for Quarter 3 had decreased by 406 when compared to the previous year.

The number of website visits had increased significantly by 6678. Mrs Barrett raised her disappointment at the lack of information on the website for special exhibitions. The Curator advised her that this matter had been dealt with and a request had been submitted for more images. She confirmed the new website will be launched next month.

Weddings and Ceremonies had increased for the year. Although one wedding was held in quarter 3, a total of 22 ceremonies have been made for 2015-16. The next Wedding Fair will take place in April 2015.

It was noted that a number of educational visits held during the last quarter were made from schools outside Hastings. Councillor Street identified an error in item 5 of the report, the words 'Ore Valley Academy' should read 'Ore Village Primary Academy'.

The total number of visitors for the calendar year 2014 had increased by 4011 at Johns Place and decreased by 7280 at the Old Town Hall.

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

37. **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 2015, for Quarter 3, 2014-15.

Exhibitions

10 January 2015 to 3 January 2016: 'All at Sea'. Maritime paintings from the Museum collection.

14 February to 19 April: 'Uncovering Africa'. Objects from the collection uncovered as part of regional partnership project.

7 March to 7 June: 'Voyage, Paintings by Louis Dodd'.

25 April to 21 June: 'Fakes, Fear and Forges: Sussex in the 16th and 17th Centuries'. A Higher Education Innovation Fund project.

20 June to 13 September: Cabinets of Curiosities.

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Events

28 March to 12 April: Easter Egg Hunt

7 April; Easter fun day led by Young Curators.

25 April: 'St Peter's Beard & the Martyr's Fireback: fakes, faith and the reconstruction of Sussex's past'. Talk by Dr Paul Quinn, University of Sussex.

26 April: Wedding Fair

21 May, 4, 11, 18 & 25 June: Beats and Voices. Music sessions open to learning disabled adults in East Sussex.

26 May: 'Something Fishy'. Family Activity Day.

19 June: 'Titus Oates'. Talk by Professor Tim Harris, Brown University.

21 June: 'Wellington and Hastings'. Talk by Brion Purdey to commemorate bi-centenary of Battle of Waterloo.

Councillor Hodges reported that as part of the 18th military event, a military regiment would be visiting Hastings. Further details will follow when known. Mrs Purdey requested photographs be taken of the event.

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

38. MUSEUM ACQUISITIONS

Cathy Walling, Museum Curator, presented a report informing members of fourteen items acquired by the Museum in the last quarter and the names of donors. The items included: -

The following items have been acquired by Hastings Museum in the last quarter.

1. Photographic slides, prints and negatives. Donor: Bequest of John French
2. Pantomime programme, White Rock Pavilion, 1966. 3 Copies of 'Music for All' magazines, 1930s. Donor: Mr R Mucci
3. Second World War Cookery leaflet. Donor: Mrs L Tinker
4. Hollington Park School magazines 1958 to 1989. Donor: Mrs J Louis
5. First Day covers of Grey Owl. Donor: Mr B Silsby
6. Order of Service for foundation of St Leonards Parish Church, 1953. Donor: Mr D Hails

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7. Cannon ball found in Cambridge Road. 3 bowls from West Hill Pottery 1970s. Donor: Mr P Fuller
8. Fire Brigade Call books from Halton station, 1949 – 1971. Donor: Mr R May
9. Photographic slides and glass slides. Donor: Mr P Holland
10. Muffin Club wooden spoon. Rose & Bates Jewellers box. Donor: Mrs E Barrett
11. Aerial photographs of Hastings & St Leonards. Donor: HBC Planning Dept
12. 'Views of Hastings & Neighbourhood' by Broderick. Donor: Mr J Mephram
13. Collection of 100 local postcards. Donor: Mrs D Hayward
14. First World War postcards and drawings of Harry 'Bunk' Marchant. Donor: Mrs B Sims

Mrs Barrett advised the Curator that item 10, Muffin Club wooden spoon had already been accessioned. In addition, she asked if the description on the label of her father's 1930's swimming costume could be changed from 'womens' swimming costume to 'mens' swimming costume. The Curator advised the modesty panel suggested it was a ladies costume, but she would compromise and amend the description to '1930's costume worn by donor's father'.

Mr Peak referred to item 7 and asked if there had been an update on the cannon ball found in Cambridge Road. The Curator advised him the cannon ball had been discovered in the garden of a property in Cambridge Road but at this time she had no further details.

Mr Palfrey-Martin recommended members read the fire brigade call books, which he felt were a fascinating insight into how the fire brigade operated from the 1940's onwards. There are approximately 66 or 67 books in the collection to read.

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

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>
39(E)	Offer to purchase	Paragraphs 8 & 9

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39. OFFER TO PURCHASE

Cathy Walling, Museum Curator, presented a report for Members to consider an item offered to the Museum for purchase.

RESOLVED – (unanimously) that the committee recommends to Cabinet the item not be purchased at this time.

(The Chair declared the meeting closed at. 3.25 pm)