

Museums Committee Agenda

Monday, 10 September 2018 at 2.30 pm

Council Chamber, Muriel Matters House, Breeds Place, Hastings, TN34 3UY.
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For further information, please contact Emily Horne on 01424 451719 or email:
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1.	Apologies for Absence	
2.	Declarations of Interest	
3.	Minutes of the previous meeting	To follow
4.	Notification of additional urgent items	
5.	Curators Report <i>(Catherine Harvey, Keeper of Art & World Cultures)</i>	1 - 4

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Agenda Item 5



Report to: Museums Committee

Date of Meeting: 10 September 2018

Report Title: Curator's Report

Report By: Catherine Harvey
Curator of Art & World Cultures

Purpose of Report

To provide an update on issues arising from previous meetings and confirmation of curator's actions, with visitor figures and information on exhibitions and events

Recommendation(s)

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

Reasons for Recommendations

Curator's Report

1. Museum and School Project: The memorandum of understanding has now been completed with Bexhill Museum and the first payment drawn down from ACE. The post of Museums & Schools Officer has been advertised, attracting 25 candidates, from which 7 were called for interviews held on Tuesday 28 August.

2. Attendances: The number of visitors attending between April and June 2018 was 10,457. This compares to 11,967 for the same period last year. The museum provided a consistently well-attended programme of family activities and other events during this quarter, along with a slightly higher number of weddings. We cannot attribute the drop in visitor figures to any one factor, although whilst we had a good quality temporary exhibition aimed at our core audience at this time, the exhibition during the same period last year had a greater regional draw and additionally benefitted from exposure on BBC South East Today, which may account for its higher visitor figures.

There were 858 pupils + staff in organised groups, including language schools, Sussex Coast College, Guestling and Sandown Primary Schools, Buckswood and Vinehall. This compares to 1,019 for the same period last year. The drop in the number of local school visits may be attributed to the development work required by the Museum & Schools Project.

3. Social media: As of 23 August, the museum has 1726 followers on Twitter and 2,081 on Facebook. The museum has maintained a 4.8/5 rating on Facebook and 4.5/5 on TripAdvisor. Reduced staffing has meant that it has been difficult to maintain social media content during this quarter.

4. Weddings and Civil Ceremonies: There were 7 ceremonies in this quarter, compared to 4 in the same period last year.

5. Exhibitions in Quarter 3: The next exhibitions will be the final ones for Hastings Remembers: Local Stories of the First World War, looking at the theme of memorial & remembrance (art gallery) and the cost of war (first floor walkway), with material from the museum collections.

6. Events: As of 23 August the events programme for quarter 3 is still to be finalised, but museum-organised events include:

For Hastings Remembers -- a First World War half term family activity day on 23 October, a musical coffee morning and two artist-led adult workshops.
A series of preschool family sessions led by storyteller Kevin Graal (part of the externally-funded REAL project)

The Museum Association AGM will be held at the Museum on 2 December.

External bookings include:

Two talks at the museum during Hastings Week, one by Elizabeth Nathaniels (5 October) and the other by Andre Palfrey-Martin (12 October).

Edward Preston will resume his local history talks for five weeks from 9 November - 7 December.

Starlings Music Group will be holding four early years' museum sessions in October whilst their regular venue undergoes building work.

Friends Unlimited will be holding two concerts (6 October and 17 November).

7. Pier Heritage Assets: All of the pier's heritage assets, digital and physical, were transferred to the museum on 21 June. One touch screen table, complete with its pier material, has been incorporated into the seaside gallery and is being well-used by visitors. The physical assets are currently in temporary off-site storage and we have had confirmation from the Heritage Lottery Fund that we do not need to keep any that we are unable to reu

se. Staff are working on how to incorporate the digital assets into the museum's holdings and maintain the involvement of the pier volunteers.

8. Museum Storage: Staff are currently working on an urgent storage project, which has resulted from two separate sets of circumstances. The off-site store at Castleham needs to be emptied by 31 October and we have to ensure that alternative accommodate will be suitable for collection storage. This situation is complicated by the discovery of mould on organic material there, which means that nothing can be moved back to the main museum site as part of this process.

Mould has also been found on objects at John's Place, and whilst we believe that much of this is non-active, it is important that it is treated rigorously to contain the problem. We are currently clearing the bungalow to create containment and treatment areas, whilst the local studies room is being used to store cleaned material.

As a result of this, we have had to close the local studies room until the end of October at the earliest. We are also advising researchers that we are unable to provide access to stored collections during this period.

9. New acquisitions will be brought to the next committee meeting.

Wards Affected

None

Policy Implications

Please identify if this report contains any implications for the following:

Equalities and Community Cohesiveness	No
Crime and Fear of Crime (Section 17)	No
Risk Management	No
Environmental Issues	No
Economic/Financial Implications	No
Human Rights Act	No
Organisational Consequences	No
Local People's Views	No
Anti-Poverty	No

Additional Information

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Officer to Contact

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