

MUSEUM COMMITTEE

11 MARCH 2019

Present: Councillors Forward (Chair), K Beaney, Bishop, Evans, Levane, Sinden, Patmore, Webb and Museum Association Representatives, Mrs Purdey, Mr Peak, Mr Palfrey-Martin and Mr Dudman.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received for Councillor O'Callaghan (substituted by Councillor Evans) and Mrs E Barrett.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 25 JUNE 2018 AND 10 SEPTEMBER 2018

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meetings held on 25 June 2018 and 10 SEPTEMBER 2018 be approved as a true record and signed by the Chair.

4. NOTIFICATION OF ADDITIONAL URGENT ITEMS

5. MUSEUM UPDATE REPORT

The Museum and Cultural Development Manager presented a report to update the Committee on the museum's work since the last formal meeting.

This report outlines the work of the museum since the previous formal Museum Committee meeting and includes an update from the Informal Committee Meeting in November 2018.

The museum enjoyed a good December, with the Festive Family Trail during the Christmas holiday helping to boost the visitor figures for Quarter 3. Particularly well attended was the Winter Tales day with 235 people visiting the museum.

The museum has earned £17,264 of its target this year. This is in line with previous year's income figures. In the coming year a full review of the museum's fees and charges will be completed. New income generation opportunities are currently being identified by the museum's income generation group.

The museum has shown five exhibitions in the art gallery and walkway since September. For families, each school holiday period will include free trails or activities. The free offer will be supplemented by low-cost regular artist-led activities for children during holidays as well.

Over the past six months 1,627 pupils have visited the museum. School bookings are increasing in frequency due to repeat visits. Three new core sessions for schools have been developed: Dinosaurs and Fossils; Museum Detectives and The Romans. Handling collections and workshop resources to have been reviewed and refreshed

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and now complement our offer. The museum's website has been updated to include teacher's notes and a new online booking form has been added.

In addition an exhibition strategy has now set out as have learning and volunteer policies.

The Committee welcomed the report, discussed the revised strategy and policies, and thanked the Museum and Cultural Development Manager for his work.

A suggestion was made in regards to linking up with Summerfields Leisure Centre in order to attract groups and children's parties to the museum. The Museum Manger responded it would be good to have a more joined up approach with leisure facilities.

The Museum and Cultural Development Manager acknowledged and thanked his team for their work.

Councillor Levane proposed a motion to approve the recommendations in the report, seconded by Councillor Sinden.

RESOLVED (unanimously):

To accept this report and recommend approval by Cabinet.

6. COLLECTIONS REPORT

The Museum and Cultural Development Manager presented a report to update the Committee on collections care, access, acquisitions, loans and objects being considered for rationalisation. The report also includes collections policies for review.

The museum's offsite store has now been moved. This work was undertaken as the building has been allocated as the main depot for the council's new in-house street cleaning service. The collections were cleaned, checked and packed by the museum team with support from other council colleagues before being moved to a new temporary storage facility. The museum aims to eliminate the need for an offsite store over the next two years through the reorganisation of current storage arrangements and through a targeted programme of rationalisation.

Since November the curators have received 165 enquires related to the collections and the Local Studies Room has been well used since its re-opening in November.

The Committee discussed the report and the attached policies.

Mr Peak proposed a motion to approve the recommendations in the report, seconded by Mrs Purdey.

RESOLVED (unanimously):

To accept this report and recommend approval by Cabinet.

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7. REPORT ON HASTINGS MUSEUM & ART GALLERY BUSINESS PLAN, 2019-2021

The Museum and Cultural Development Manager presented a report to gain approval for the Hastings Museum & Art Gallery Business Plan 2019-2021, which will deliver a community museum with an improved approach to outreach, commerciality and income generation.

From 2016-18 the *Finding Our Place* project, funded by the Arts Council England (ACE), reviewed the sustainability of the museum, its collections, programme and organisational health.

This work laid the foundations for the next stage of the museum's development:

- A museum that is focused on community engagement, particularly with groups from disadvantaged areas, minorities and vulnerable groups
- A museum with a strong emphasis on promoting health, well-being, education and lifelong learning
- A resilient museum that is positioned to capitalise on funding opportunities.

The successful delivery of the business plan requires a fundamental reorganisation of staffing at the museum. The purpose of this reorganisation is to create staff structures that enable community-focused working, improve income generation and make the organisation more resilient for the future. HMAG will retain 6.7 full time equivalent (FTE) core-funded posts with an additional 1 FTE post which is externally funded.

The Museum and Cultural Development Manager informed the Committee that bullet point 2 of paragraph 4 of the report should also read inclusive. The business plan has been developed to ensure the museum is ready to capitalise on the changes to funding priorities by major grant-making organisations through a clear focus on community engagement.

The Committee welcomed the renewed focus on community engagement. It was suggested that the museum look to raise finance to build an extension on Council owned ground so that the current collection can be expanded. The Museum and Cultural Development Manager said that there is a long term ambition to seek finance for capital investment and to bring in an improved café, learning space and on-site storage.

A query was raised regarding staffing. The staffing list indicates that 3 full-time members of staff are being managed by 1 part-time member of staff. Concern was raised that, with six people reporting directly to the Museum and Cultural Development Manager, the ability to undertake the more ambitious elements of this plan may be impacted. The Museum and Cultural Development Manager replied that the team are working within the confines of what they have available.

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A question was raised regarding work experience. The Committee was informed the Museum has already welcomed two students from the local college and that work experience has been formerly included in the business plan.

The Committee discussed the possibility of engaging schools in project work looking at local heritage and history across different wards. It was suggested that the Fellowship of St Nicholas may be able to help with outreach and engagement.

The Museum and Cultural Development Manager welcomed all suggestions.

Mr Palfry-Martin proposed a motion to approve the recommendations in the report, seconded by Mr Peak.

RESOLVED (unanimously):

To accept this report and recommended approval by Cabinet.

Reasons for the recommendation:

The business plan creates the conditions for:

1. A museum that is focused on community engagement, particularly with people from disadvantaged areas, minorities and vulnerable groups.
2. A museum with a strong emphasis on promoting health, well-being, education and lifelong learning.
3. A resilient museum that is positioned to capitalise on funding opportunities.

8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

In response to a question regarding the Museum website it was confirmed that the website is now down to a basic framework of information and the underlying technology requires investment.

(The Chair declared the meeting closed at. 3.29 pm)