

Museum Committee Agenda

Monday, 11 September 2023 at 2.30 pm

Council Chamber, Muriel Matters House, Breeds Place, Hastings, TN34 3UY.
Please enter the building through the Contact Centre entrance via the seafront.

For further information, please contact Democratic Services on 01424 451484 or email:
democraticservices@hastings.gov.uk

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4.	Formal/Non Formal meetings and the timing of them <i>Cllr Andy Batsford (Cabinet lead for Health and Culture)</i>	
5.	NPO community committee members <i>Cllr Andy Batsford (Cabinet lead for Health and Culture)</i>	
6.	Museum update Report <i>(Alice Roberts-Pratt, Senior Curator)</i>	5 - 12
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8.	Museum Association Update <i>(Richard Street, Chair, Hastings & St Leonards Museum Association)</i>	

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Agenda Item 3 Public Document Pack

MUSEUM COMMITTEE

13 MARCH 2023

Present: Councillors Batsford (Chair), Sinden, Evans (from 2.49pm) and Patmore.
Museum Association members Richard Street, Susannah Farley-Green, Andre Palfrey-Martin, Steve Peak and Hilda Kean.

In attendance: Alice Roberts-Pratt (Senior Curator) and Kevin Boorman (Marketing and Major Projects Manager).

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies received from Councillors Pragnell and Rankin.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor	Item	Interest
Evans	All items	Personal – Volunteer Buddy refugee project, Trustee Idolrich Theatre Rotto, lives near to Bob Mazzer

3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the meeting held on 6th September 2022 be approved as a true record.

4. MUSEUM UPDATE REPORT

The Chair welcomed Alice Roberts-Pratt, Senior Curator, to the committee, who presented a report to update on the museum's work since the last formal meeting.

Visitor numbers and income has exceeded targets, with 25,166 visitors this year to date, and total income of £33,000.

The Jason & His Argonauts, and Hastings Open exhibitions have now closed, and the Donations: The Went Tree Trust exhibition opened in January. There has been a full events programme since September with Hastings Week talks, Family Trails, Lego Labs, Christmas Fair and ghost hunting, amongst others, all proving popular.

Targets for school engagement have been exceeded, with 1300 children reached by the museum last quarter. Seventeen loan boxes are available for schools and these are already booked out for coming months.

MUSEUM COMMITTEE

13 MARCH 2023

Since September volunteers have completed 681 hours of volunteering. An increase in volunteers will be needed for the National Portfolio Organisation (NPO) programme to support front of house and outside spaces.

There are water ingress issues with the roof of the Durbar Hall and these have been raised with the building surveyor team.

The Chair congratulated the museum team on the programme of work and said he had confidence in them to continue pushing the museum forward.

A question was raised regarding the day-to-day management and staff structure of the museum. The Chair agreed that a report could be brought to the next formal meeting once the new structure of the museum team has been finalised.

RESOLVED:

To accept this report and recommend approval by Cabinet.

Reasons:

So cabinet understands and endorses the updates on the museum's work

5. COLLECTIONS REPORT

The Senior Curator presented a report to update the committee on collections care, access, acquisitions, loans, and objects being considered for disposal.

There are issues in the Durbar Hall with woodlice and other pests entering displays. Traps have been put in place, as has silica gel to keep the relative humidity at 50%. However, this is unlikely to be resolved until the roof has been taken care of. Damp has also been noted in the bone store due to a hole in the wall which has now been sealed. Work has been undertaken to seal the cloak display case in the Durbar Hall to stop pests entering.

There have been 61 inquiries related to the collection since September and the local studies room has been open every Wednesday for bookings. There are also drop-in sessions on Saturdays to allow access to the collections for those who cannot attend mid-week.

The website is also a key enabler for collections access, allowing for blogs and videos to compliment, and expand on, exhibitions. The museum's social media presence is getting more traction and it has proved a good way to engage with people about the collections.

Various disposals are proposed as listed in the report and staff will look to offer these to other museums/organisations.

MUSEUM COMMITTEE

13 MARCH 2023

RESOLVED:

To accept this report and recommend approval by Cabinet.

Reasons:

So cabinet understands and endorses the updates on the museum's work

6. MUSEUM ASSOCIATION UPDATE

Since the last formal meeting the Museum Association held its AGM in December at which Dr Hilda Kean was added to the committee representation and £2,000 was allocated to the museum, which has been used to purchase preservation and protection equipment.

Upcoming events include a Rye Harbour walk in April, a Robert Tressell walk in May, and a Rye Town walk in June.

(The Chair declared the meeting closed at 3.20pm)

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Agenda Item 6



Report To: Museum Committee

Date of Meeting:

Report Title: Museum Update Report

Report By: Alice Roberts-Pratt

Key Decision: N

Classification:

Purpose of Report

To update the committee on the museum's work since the last formal meeting

Recommendation(s)

1. To accept this report and recommend approval by Cabinet.

Reasons for Recommendations

1. Your report must clearly present reasons for all the recommendations so that these can formally be published as a matter of public record. This is a statutory requirement.

Introduction

1. This report summaries the work of the museum since the last formal Museum Committee meeting. It includes an update from the last informal meeting in November.

Informal Meeting Update

2. A need to look at how we create Community members panel, how do we go about doing this?
Concerns from Museum Association Members at lack of attendance for informal meeting
Collections Access Officer and Project Officer (NPO Funded posts) were introduced to the committee. Talked about the disposals that were on the list at the previous meeting which we had question marks over but decided we could move on with the disposal.

Visitors and income

3. The museum's visitor figures.

Visitors	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total
Actual	10,977	4,791*	-	-	15,768*
Target	5,500	6,500	5,000	4,000	21,000
Previous Year	6,711	7,548	6,019	7,178	27,556

* = As of 25/08/23

4. The museum shop, hires and weddings Income figures year to date:

Shop: £10,261.33 (target £13,500)

Events (Hires & Weddings): £6,694 (target £8,000)

Please note this does not include any balance payments due.

Weddings: 14 booked this financial year (8 past and 6 upcoming). This will be a total value of £8,475 when all payments are received.

Hires: 26 booked this financial year. This will be a total value of £2,896.50 when all payments are received.

Stripe Payments (event tickets sold via website): £1,478.93

Loan Boxes: £842.55

TOTAL £19,276.81

Projects

5. Esmée Fairbairn Collections Fund project. The project comes to a conclusion at the end of September and so the Curators are starting to wrap up their current projects. However, NPO allows us to continue the great work we've begun, and we are currently reviewing who we will be working with and how for NPO.
6. Home education

Following the success of the Digging for Hastings resource, the home education group have been involved in the development of an improved handling area in the Before Hastings Gallery using objects documented during the audit work. Workshops are currently being advertised in September to trial additional new loans and outreach resources. A consultation workshop and online survey have been arranged for September to inform the development of the NPO programme for Home Education.

7. Queer Heritage Collective

The Queer History Collective gave guided tours of the museum on 19 August for Hastings Pride 2023. This was the final output funded by Esmée Fairbairn Collections Fund. The Collective will resume regular meetings in September and continue their research into LGBTQIA+ history in Hastings, now funded by NPO and supported by Home Live Art. The output for the first year is TBC.

8. People seeking sanctuary

Portraits of the Dove Café is now closing on 24 September 2023. It received approximately 2300 visitors during Refugee Week in June. We are hosting a closing celebration with the Refugee Buddy Project on 7 September. This is the final strand output funded by Esmée Fairbairn. Strand work will continue under NPO; the output for the first year is TBC with project partners.

9. Curating for Change

D/deaf, Disabled and Neurodivergent Co-production group.

The group project is in the final stages. The group members have completed their oral history interviews, transcripts have been written, and they have created labels for the exhibition. All this work will be on show starting 16th of September with the exhibition opening of Stored Out of Sight. The exhibition is a combination of all the work throughout the year, from finding objects hidden in the store to researching them to writing a label for the exhibition.

The group will be meeting up on 29th of August just to do some evaluation for the project and to discuss what we would like to do next year regarding the NPO funding.

10. NPO UPDATE

Hastings Museum and Art Gallery achieved NPO status in April 2023. In May 2023, Caf Fean, Projects Officer was appointed. In June Ori Calman joined the team as Collections Access Officer.

Project Officer has been getting to know the various stakeholders and participants of the groups, organising the budgets divisions, the groups we may wish to work with, resources available. Attending open days and training and working closely with our Arts Council Liaison officer to understand where we can make changes to the budgets and groups. There is a lot of work involved in the beginnings to understand how we wish to proceed.

Participant groups

Group
Hastings Queer History Collective
People Seeking Sanctuary
Home Education Group
Disability Group/ Curating for Change
People from areas of deprivation – Hollington
People from areas of deprivation – Broomgrove

Exhibitions and events

11. Long gallery exhibitions – previous and current

Two loaned-in touring exhibitions were held over the summer which were Brick by Brick and Mythomania.

Brick by Brick featured work by international artists, designers and photographers who use LEGO® bricks as their medium. This family friendly exhibition offered a range of opportunities for visitors to get creative with construction bricks and includes a LEGO® wall.

This exhibition as well as the mini figure trail attracted 500 people per day during the Easter Holidays.

Mythomania, featured works by Canadian artist Ian Kirkpatrick who uses graphic design software to produce intricate 2D and 3D artworks out of materials including stainless steel, vinyl, corrugated cardboard, Perspex and Dibond. The surfaces of his pieces are filled with complex iconographies drawn from past and present, remixed into commentaries about pressing social themes such as war, climate change and migration.

Coming up in 2024

The Ellen Prebble Exhibition

The Ellen Prebble Exhibition is the first solo exhibition of work by Hastings-based artist, Ellen Prebble. The unique collection of works illuminates this emerging artist's passion for the natural world and new perspectives on the Museum's own natural history collections. Curated in partnership with Project Art Works, a supported studio based in Hastings.

Playing the Race Card

This exhibition is a highly anticipated follow up to the original *Playing the Race Card* exhibition at Greenhalf Studio in 2022. This open-call exhibition will be accompanied by a vibrant programme of talks, performances and workshops across Hastings, celebrating Black culture, resilience, resistance and happiness. Artists are currently being invited to respond to the theme of 'Black Joy'. Submissions close on 29 September; works will be curated externally with support from Home Live Art and the Hastings Museum & Art Gallery team.

12. **Next long gallery exhibition opening 16th September**

Stored Out of Sight is an exhibition focused on revealing hidden disability history from the collection. The exhibition has been co-produced by seven people who are D/deaf, Disabled or Neurodivergent. These group members have researched and discussed objects from the collection throughout the year, and their work has culminated in the exhibition that highlights disabled people, although often not thought of, have always been part of history.

The exhibition also highlights disability activism in the 90s and the importance of fairer representation today. Without this movement, Disability would still be seen in the medical model, and change would not have been as fast-moving or as impactful as it has.

13. **Walkway past, current and next.**

18 March – Thom Kofoed 'Why I long to be a Sex Symbol'

18 June – Photographs by Nour Al Din Al Azou – Portraits of the Dove Café

Oneiropraxis

22 September – 29 October

ONEIROPRAXIS is an exhibition of recent oil paintings and drawings by the visionary artists Melissa Artemis Shemanna and Orryelle Defenestrade-Bascule. Their works combine

the surreal, the abstract, and imagery drawn from ancient civilisations and esoteric traditions to create unique visual dreamscapes.

Suitable for ages 16+

Fossil Finder in Us All

7 November – 7 January

ExploreTheArch invites you to explore our relationship with natural history and winter beachcombing for fossils. Hastings is overlooked in terms of its significant palaeontological heritage. Until now!

Logos – EXPLORE THE ARCH

Suitable for all ages

Sinéid Codd

26 January – 24 March

Through photographs, paintings, and drawings, interdisciplinary artist, Sinéid Codd, invites you to explore an archipelago – a series of sculpted islands made from lost and found objects that elicit reflections on community and climate change.

14. Events programme

We've had a varied and fun events programme since March. Hastings Traditional Jack in the Green's 40th Anniversary saw 3 talks, may pole dancing and a giant building workshop take place as well as an exhibition. The African Caribbean Seaside Memories workshop in June proved to be very popular and is going to become a regular workshop with an aim to create an exhibition for Black History month in October 2024. Other events include talks by Ken Brooks, the Queer History Tour, Room 101, sound baths, and of course the Sanctuary Festival. Sanctuary Festival was extremely popular this year and we will continue to work with Hastings Welcomes Refugees to continue this amazing event.

Schools and learning

15. Museum & Schools programme, in July our Learning Officer, Foteini, sadly left the museum for another role, we are grateful for the huge amount of work she did in developing our museum learning offer. We have recruited for her role and had a huge amount of applications. We appointed Asten Holmes-Elliott who started on 4th September, we wish her the best of luck. Prior to Foteini leaving we met and exceeded all of our targets with the Museum and schools project. Lego labs continue to be extremely popular with families and we hope that with Asten's appointment we can start to look at trying to target the secondary schools and older children to engage with the museum. We continue our partnership with the National Literacy Trust and will be looking to explore new partnerships including one with University of Sussex.

Other learning activities The Curator of Natural Sciences and Outgoing Schools and Learning Officer secured £2,470 of funding for a new schools and family engagement resource as part of the Art Fund's Wild Escape project. As part of this objects from the osteology collection were repaired and mounted so they could be used in the workshops.

The Outgoing Schools and Learning Officer secured £2000 from SEMD for a going green project

New schools workshops developed include Rocks and Minerals and Dinosaurs. A placement student (Josh) developed a new WW1 workshop

Volunteering

16. Since March our volunteers have completed 303.5 hours of volunteering. Sadly, two of our regular volunteers moved away which is why our hours are down on our previous report. Tasks being undertaken include completing inventory of various collections including the ceramics, the main stores, photographs, paintings, and postcards. They have been sorting through the archaeology collections ready for disposal, helping to man events such as Lego Labs and invigilate gallery spaces. Our learning volunteer helped to deliver school sessions in Foteini's absence and did a really great job. Local studies volunteers have been essential in helping with research and enquiries. The NPO will see an increase in our volunteers to help with visitor services, collections and the outside spaces and we are currently looking at how we will begin to implement new ways of volunteer working. We continue to be grateful to our volunteers for all their help.

17. Building

The building planned & unplanned maintenance

Jobs completed:

- Southern Lightning system upgrade works
- Security bars added to upper windows of Durbar Hall
- Digilock added to ground floor kitchen door
- Main front staircase stair tread strips replaced
- Grounds maintenance – thorough vegetation clearance
- Vegetation cleared from Durbar and flat roofs

Jobs booked:

- Replacement or reinforcement of Store, Education Office, Roof and Ceramics Balcony doors
- Extension of disabled access ramp at front of museum kerbside
- Remedial electrical works to bring current install up to standard based on Electrical Installation Condition report – quote agreed, forthcoming (November planned)
- Repairs to roof of Upper Durbar

Recommendations:

To accept this report and recommend approval by Cabinet.

Timetable of Next Steps

39. Please include a list of key actions and the scheduled dates for these:

Action	Key milestone	Due date (provisional)	Responsible
	Museum Committee	11/09/23	
	Cabinet		

Wards Affected

All

Policy Implications

Reading Ease Score: 43

Have you used relevant project tools?: Y

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

Equalities and Community Cohesiveness	Y
Crime and Fear of Crime (Section 17)	N
Risk Management	Y
Environmental Issues & Climate Change	N
Economic/Financial Implications	N
Human Rights Act	N
Organisational Consequences	N
Local People's Views	Y
Anti-Poverty	Y
Legal	N

Additional Information

Officer to Contact

Officer Alice Roberts-Pratt
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Agenda Item 7



Report To: Museum Committee

Date of Meeting:

Report Title: Collections Report

Report By:

Key Decision: N

Classification:

Purpose of Report

To update the committee on collections care, access, acquisitions, loans and objects being considered for disposal.

Recommendation(s)

1. To accept this report and recommend approval by Cabinet.

Reasons for Recommendations

Introduction

1. This report outlines the collections related activities that have taken place at the museum since the last formal meeting of the committee.

Collections Care

2. Collections care activities – overview

Collections Access Officer has been reviewing Collection Storage areas and making recommendations for improved Collections storage, housing, disposals, digitising and updating information on Modes. She is also reviewing historic records in consultation with the Council's Data Retention Policy and Museum Collection Policy. She is identifying large projects for volunteer support including digitisation and auditing of Collections.

Collections Access Officer is also reviewing loans to other Collections and condition checking the collections and updating terms of loans.

HASMG:1960.27 Hastings, looking towards Westfield

In April, the painting suffered a large vertical tear with missing canvas fibres and central loss; pigment was also disturbed. Additionally, there was surface blooming evident on both the work and the frame.

Corinne Farmer, ACR MPhil PgCE, from Towner Art Gallery, has reviewed it and it and is working on the repair.

Storage capacity at the Tunbridge Wells store has been increased further with the re-racking and audit of archaeology along with additional racking being installed. This has added an additional 8m of shelf space. This will be used to better arrange the collections to improve access to objects for review and use and to increase capacity at John's Place by moving some objects from John's place to Tunbridge Wells.

3. The Integrated Pest Management

In April, a substantial insect pest infestation was identified in the main store in boxes of ethnographic material. The infestation was found to have spread to part of the taxidermy collection. The team have put in place a system of freeze treatment of affected objects and objects suspected to be affected. This has involved the purchasing a chest freezer. Preventive measures being put in place in addition to the programme of freeze treatment are the bagging of the taxidermy collection, the installation of pheromone and baited traps and increased monitoring and creating space in other areas of the museum as a quarantine area.

4. Other collections related things – review of our objects on display with Cllr Evans and members of the African Caribbean Community. Identified areas that can be updated to be

more inclusive and how we can tackle some of the issues of colonialism. Started with some reinterpretation.

Also working with First Nations groups to reinterpret our collections. We have been approached by Trinity Church and His Place Church to work with them on their National Lottery funded redevelopments and reinterpretation using our collections.

Concern over the Durbar Hall, might be a big fundraising project that we need to look at, wood affected by rain coming through the roof this means pests are getting into the cases. Lights and gauze below lights affected badly, needs replacing.

Plaines Gallery reopened in July. Gallery now fully interpreted, more objects out on display, The space is now working as a gallery again rather than a space left from a repacking project, previously objects in there had no labels and we now represent more First Nations rather than just the Plainses tribes.

Collections Access

5. Since March the curators have received 45 enquires related to the collections.
6. The local studies room – The Local Studies Room has had 20 booked appointments since March which has included research by Academics, artists, students, hobby historians, family interest, local projects. We continue to be extremely thankful to Andre and Bill for their continued dedication to the local studies room and facilitating these research visits which are vital in terms of local history but also collections access, being able to go the extra mile when the Curators may not have capacity to do so.
7. Other collections access updates (website, etc)
Collections Access Officer is working through Modes to update and standardise catalogue terminology and templates to ensure that the database is easily searchable by both the Public and Museum staff; a proposal is in development to link the database and website so that staff can easily promote and share the Collection online in concurrence with events and exhibitions.

Collections Access Officer and Curator (Art) ran a Collections handling session for Project Artworks (PAW) earlier in August in which PAW explored the collections and made art in response to the museum.

We are working with Hastings College Jewellery makers to create work in response to our collections which can then be sold in the shop.

Acquisitions

8. The museum has accepted the following objects for accessioning since the last formal meeting:

HASMG:2023.3 May Queen Crown from 90th May Queen Crowning
HASMG.2023.2 Local folk musician Barry Dransfield folk art doll and portrait
HASMG.2023.2.1

Collections Access Officer is reviewing and processing several objects which have been approved for accession and yet to be processed and housed.

Loans

9. Loan requests received since March – Request from National Gallery Thérèse Lessore, The Dare-Devils, oil on canvas, 91.4 x 71.1 cm. *Discover Degas and Miss La La at the Cirque Fernando*, to be held at the National Gallery, London from 6 June – 1 September 2024

Sainsbury Centre Norwich Museum – Native North American Art exhibition to be open in Spring 2024 with the Cherokee/Choctaw artist Jeffrey Gibson. – objects being reviewed currently

10. loans returned in this period - Laetitia Yhap, The Boat, Oil on board, 1987 (HASMG:1991.62) For an exhibition: *Sussex Landscape: Chalk, Wood and Water at Pallant House Gallery*, 8-9 North Pallant, Chichester, PO19 1TJ. 12 November 2022 – 23 April 2023.

Disposals

11. In line with our Collections Development Policy, contained within the Collections Management Framework, the curatorial team have advised the following objects be removed from the collection:

Collections Access Officer has drafted a gift/transfer of title agreement to share with organisations. She is finalising the transfer of five objects to the Fishermen's museum:

HASMG:1985.44 – Ship's Dead Eye

HASMG:1975.101 – Otter Board

HASMG:2004.8.1-3 - Three painted wooden fishing boats, produced for Millennium Fishermen's Arch, by artist Cathy Pope.

Collections Access Officer is in communication with the Council regarding first refusal for objects on the approved disposals list before listing them on the Museums Association website.

Collections Access Officer is also in touch with several members of the public about the return of items not accessioned.

HASMG:NUMBER TITLE (D2023.2)

Unaccessioned Unprovenanced Archaeology. Unused in storage in Tunbridge Wells for last few years. Limited potential future use. Legal right to dispose: Low risk of future claim

Reason for disposal: - Objects with little or no provenance

- Method of disposal:
- Recycling of object
- Destruction of object

HASMG:NUMBER TITLE (D2023.3)

Accessioned Unstratified Archaeology. Unused in storage in Tunbridge Wells for last few years. Limited potential future use. Legal right to dispose: Yes

Reason for disposal: - Objects with little or no provenance

- Method of disposal:
- Recycling of object
- Destruction of object

HASMG:NUMBER TITLE (D2023.4)

Unaccessioned Unstratified Archaeology. Unused in storage in Tunbridge Wells for last few years. Limited potential future use. Legal right to dispose: Low risk of future claim

Reason for disposal: - Objects with little or no provenance

- Method of disposal:
- Recycling of object
- Destruction of object

Collections Policies

12. No updates

Options

2. To accept this report and recommend approval by Cabinet.

Public Exemption

3. This report contains no exempt information.

Timetable of Next Steps

4. Please include a list of key actions and the scheduled dates for these:

Action	Key milestone	Due date (provisional)	Responsible
Discussion by Museum Committee	Museum Committee	11/09/23	
Approval by Cabinet	Cabinet		

Wards Affected

All Wards

Policy Implications

Reading Ease Score: 43.4

Have you used relevant project tools?: Y

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

Equalities and Community Cohesiveness	N
Crime and Fear of Crime (Section 17)	N
Risk Management	N
Environmental Issues & Climate Change	N
Economic/Financial Implications	N
Human Rights Act	N
Organisational Consequences	N
Local People's Views	Y
Anti-Poverty	N
Legal	N

Additional Information

Insert a list of appendices and/or additional documents. Report writers are encouraged to use links to existing information, rather than appending large documents.

Officer to Contact

Officer Alice Roberts-Pratt

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