

MUSEUM COMMITTEE

11 MARCH 2024

Present: Councillors Hilton (Chair), Bishop, Evans, Patmore, Sinden and Williams.

Museum Association Members, Andre Palfrey-Martin, Susannah Farley-Green, Hilda Kean, Steve Peak and Richard Street.

Alice Roberts-Pratt Senior Curator, Caf Fean NPO Officer, Coral Harding Continuous Improvement and Democratic Services Officer.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received for Councillors Batsford, Pragnell and Webb.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING 11/09/23

RESOLVED- that the minutes of the meeting held on 11th September 2024 be approved as a true record.

Committee members raised that it was agreed previously that meetings would start at 10am. This was noted and future meetings would be held at 10am.

Committee members raised that they had agreed that the museum would move back to holding 4 formal meetings. It was advised that this will need to be agreed by Cabinet due to the Museum committee being a committee of Cabinet. A report has been drafted by the Senior Curator and will eventually go to Cabinet.

The Continuous Improvement and Democratic Services Officer advised that the Museum Committee had requested to look at changing the membership of the committee to include community members. The Museums Deed of Transfer restricts this by stating the membership should comprise of 3/5th Councillors and 2/5th Museum Association. The Deed of Transfer does allow for a Museum sub committee. The committee would like to explore this option. The committee would like for the previously submitted museum business plan to be reviewed in relation to this.

4. MUSEUM UPDATE REPORT

The Senior Curator presented to the committee the report updating the activities of the museum since the last formal meeting. The Senior Curator updated on visitors figures, shop and wedding/hire income. Projects have included;

MUSEUM COMMITTEE

11 MARCH 2024

- First Nations- The project would see members of the Blackfoot nation interpret and redisplay material their ancestors had gifted.
- Commercialising the museum- This will look at how assets can be used to make more money for the museum.
- Dinosaur gallery- Looking to revamp the gallery and have had nearly 40 applications from local illustrators to help make it more appealing.
- Visit to Amelia Scott Museum- Officers from the museum visited to get helpful insights in business models, collections, and community engagement.

The National Portfolio Organisations (NPO) reporting session discussed funding agreements and the data needed for evidence for reporting.

The Museum has been working with groups including, Home Live Art, Afri-Co-Lab, Refugee Buddy Project and the Hastings Queer History Collective. There is also work underway in creating a disability audit discussion trail. A perfumer and curator will create 3 scents for 3 different objects. Outdoor learning was being developed for the fenced outdoor space to turn this into an outdoor learning space and looking at activating the landscape. 2 trainees have also been recruited. There is an upcoming display for RNLi 200 years. The committee suggested the Fisherman's Museum is contacted for help with this. The new Learning Officer continues in the provision of services for schools which continues to receive positive feedback.

The committee discussed whether the museum committee membership could be changed and went through options. It was concluded that the Deed of Transfer restricts membership to the main committee as 3/5th Councillors and 2/5th Museum Association. The Deed of Transfer does allow for a sub committee and the committee agreed that this would be called the community panel. Officers from the Museum and Democratic Services would work together to create a draft document for Museum committee to look at.

Officers raised that there are several maintenance works needed at the Museum building. The priority work is for the roof to be repaired to Durbar Hall as this has the potential to cause further damage. The works have been logged and the Museum is now waiting on their completion. These works would be chased up.

POST MEETING UPDATE: Works are approved for the roof repair and will take place in warmer months.

RESOLVED (unanimously)

To accept this report and recommend approval by Cabinet.

5. COLLECTIONS REPORT

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

MUSEUM COMMITTEE

11 MARCH 2024

An overview of collections care activities was given which included 52 volumes of Parkin Press Clippings being digitised. Given their poor condition they will be added to the disposal list for review. The Curator of Natural Sciences has been preparing the collections stored at Tunbridge Wells for the move to Pevensey. They have also begun a re-boxing project to better care for the Marwick Library. The Officers raised the effects of the leaking Durbar Hall roof on putting the collections at risk. There will be upgrades to the data loggers to monitor humidity.

The Integrated Pest management has seen no major issues since the last meeting. Officers also updated on the digitising of the Connold Collection of glass plate negatives. There has also been a survey of objects held at the Smugglers Adventures since the 1990s. They are keen to develop their exhibition offer and are interested in some disposals for their collections.

The collections access has seen 120 enquiries relating to collections and 21 booked appointments since September for the Local Studies Room. There are talks with the website hosts to look at ways to do live updates from our collections databases instead of the current yearly update. They are also looking to 3D scan objects including the Durbar Hall. Due to high demand, a new Hastings rarities display has been completed.

The museum has purchased a limited edition print by Artist David Hockney and acquired the High Street archaeological finds. There have been several requests for loans and there is ongoing work to the disposal lists.

The committee were concerned by the affect of the Durbar Hall Roof. The committee confirmed the need to for swift repairs. They suggested that local businesses and external partnerships could help towards the costs. They were pleased with the website development and suggested expanding the Local Studies Room to increase visits. The Fisherman's Museum may be able to help with the Smugglers adventures exhibition as part of there collection relates to coastal smuggling and the Coastal Guards.

RESOLVED (unanimously)

To accept this report and recommend approval by Cabinet.

6. MUSEUM ASSOCIATION UPDATE

The Chair of the Museums Association gave an update. The Museums Association had there AGM in December and a further meeting in February where Officers attended and led a conversation on the museums future. They have also received a talk by Phil Hadland about fossils.

Forthcoming events included tours of the Commonwealth War Graves in Hastings cemetery, tours of The Mermaid Inn in Rye, Tressell Walk, talk and tour in Alexandra Park and visit to the restored greenhouse, visits to the churchyards of All Saints and St Clements and there will be a talk on the history of the local railways.

The Museums Association has seen there Facebook page grow and now has over 1000 followers. This includes people worldwide.

MUSEUM COMMITTEE

11 MARCH 2024

At their next committee meeting in April the association will be looking at the advantages and disadvantages of becoming a charitable incorporated organisation.

The Museum Association website will contain details of the forthcoming events. It also includes details on how to join.

The committee thanked the association for there work and added that the forthcoming events looked very interesting.

(The Chair declared the meeting closed at. 3.47 pm)