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MUSEUMS COMMITTEE

28 NOVEMBER 2016

Present: Councillors Poole (Chair), T Dowling (Vice-Chair), Bacon, Howard, Street, Turner, (as the duly appointed substitute for Councillor Sinden)

Museum Association Representatives: Mrs Barrett, Mrs Purdey, Mr Peak and Mr Palfrey-Martin

64. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Edwards, Patmore, Sinden and Geoff Dudman

65. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors made no declarations of interest at this meeting.

66. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 12 SEPTEMBER 2016

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the meeting held on 12 September 2016 be approved and signed by the Chair as a true record.

67. NOTIFICATION OF ADDITIONAL URGENT ITEMS

None.

68. CURATOR'S REPORT

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 Learning Officer Post has been filled by Samantha Smith, she will start on 1st December. Recruitment is underway for the Keeper of Local History and Archives, the interview will take place before the end of December.
2. The Project Consultant for the ACE-funded Resilience project has been filled by Sonia Rasbery. Recruitment has started for the consultant roles and interns. Interviews for these positions will take place during December.
3. The Arts Council England has recommended Hastings Museum & Art Gallery as a partner for a project on Intangible Cultural Heritage. UNESCO via ACE is to fund a number of workshops to raise awareness of oral traditions; language, social practices and rituals, traditional craftsmanship etc. Workshops are scheduled to take place in February/March 2017.
4. The University of Sussex Africa Centre is working with Hastings Museum & Art Gallery on a project involving African collections. This will be published on the web to distribute research and knowledge.

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5. A.G. Leventis Foundation are funding a new register of Cypriot material in the UK. The Brassey collection of Cypriot material is to be photographed and the project will include identification and publication by web/or catalogue.

6. On 26 October 2016, Full Council agreed a motion to support the placing of a blue plaque to commemorate Claude Nunney.

The Curator advised she would put some of the Cypriot material in cases when research has been completed.

Steve Peak said that the Fishermen's Museum had a recording of fisherman taken 35 years ago and the Net Shop had some old fishermen's tools which could be included if required. The Curator advised that she would contact the Fishermen's Museum to discuss further if necessary.

Councillor Turner queried the level of involvement between the schools and the museum. The Curator replied that schools visits were reported elsewhere in the agenda under the 'Attendance Figures for the Museum'. Furthermore, a Learning Officer had been appointed to undertake the education role.

In reference to the African Collection, Steve Peak said there was a diary of the slave trade which was never transcribed, he felt it may be of use to the museum. The Curator replied that it was currently on display in the '66 Objects' exhibition.

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

69. POLICY UPDATES

Cathy Walling, Museum Curator, presented a report to update members on the Museum's Environmental Policy statement and Collection Management Policy.

The Curator advised that Hastings Museum achieved its Full Accreditation in December 2015. The Accreditation Scheme is run by Arts Council England and sets national standards for Museums in the UK. The policy updates reflect on changes to national standards and the resilience review.

The policy statements are initially reviewed by the Museum Committee and then Cabinet. The Curator highlighted the updates to the Environmental Statement and Collections Management Policy.

Marion Purdey referred to para 3.5 of the Collections Management Policy. She said that the museum needed another building to accommodate a restaurant/café to provide food and drink. She suggested that this could be applied for in the next lottery bid.

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Nick Sangster stressed the important of Accreditation; he said the last round of grant funding was entirely dependent on the museum receiving accreditation. There was a discussion about the benefits of Museum Accreditation.

Councillor Bacon enquired about LED lighting in the museum. Nick Sangster said the lighting will be changed. The energy was supplied by Laser who have provided an audit of all Council buildings. Councillor Bacon went on to ask if the Statement of Purpose is reviewed annually. The Curator advised him that the statement is now a few years old and will be re-assessed at the same time as the Forward Plan.

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

70. MUSEUM ATTENDANCE FIGURES

Cathy Walling, Museum Curator, presented a report to inform members of figures for attendances and educational activities for the second quarter of 2016-17. Figures for July to September 2015 were submitted for comparison.

It was noted that the attendance figures for Hastings Museum and Art Gallery had increased by 531 for Quarter 2 when compared with the previous year.

Numbers of pupils in organised groups had increased by 228.

Participants in non-education provider sessions have increased by 611.

The Curator said the museum had been extremely busy during the summer, owing to a big increase in foreign language students.

At the time of the meeting, the number of followers on Twitter had increased to 1,197 and Facebook to 1,209. A Facebook post of photographs showing Hastings Town Centre in 1990 reached 17,187 people.

The number of weddings and civil ceremonies had reached 8, compared to 10 for the same quarter last year. Two bookings had moved to the Town Hall.

Councillor Poole said that competition had increased given that the Pier and The White Rock Theatre were both wedding venues. Councillor Howard suggested that the museum needed to provide a bigger offer.

Councillor Turner raised concern at the lack of attendance by West St. Leonards School to the museum. The Curator advised him that Quarter 2 covered the school summer holidays and therefore schools did not visit during this time.

Marion Purdey asked who was issuing consent for alternate venues to hold weddings and civil ceremonies in Hastings. She was informed that East Sussex County Council was the authority for this.

Councillor Bacon asked if officers looked at 'likes' on social media. The Curator advised that social media is constantly reviewed and they will be taking on a marketing intern. Councillor Street reflected on the benefits of followers sharing posts on social media.

Steve Peak queried whether a video of Hastings Town Centre was a remake of his film. The Curator advised him that a number of photos were taken by the Borough

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Engineer, not stills from a video. A film of Hastings, taken by Sussex University in 1989 is available to view on YouTube.

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

71. MUSEUM EVENTS & ACTIVITIES

Cathy Walling, Museum Curator, presented a report to inform Members of forthcoming events and educational activities taking place at the Hastings Museum and Art Gallery during January to March 2017, for Quarter 4. These included:-

Exhibitions

17 September to 8 January: 'A Taste of Honeysett: The cartoons of Martin Honeysett', part of Hastings & 1066 Country Cartoon Festival.

17 September to 8 January: 1066 -themed cartoons from Hastings & 1066 Country Cartoon Festival participants.

14 January to 19 February 2017: 'Alternate Legacies', a collaboration between Christine Gist, Sharon Haward and Leonie Young.

20 January to 7 May: 'George Graham: The Creation Paintings'.

11 February to 2 April: 'In with the Old', ceramics by Scott Garrett.

4 March to 30 April: 'Spring Selection', seasonal works from the Museum collection.

Events

14 February: We Love Dinosaurs: Family Activity Day.

26 February: 'Gone and Nearly Forgotten - a history of St Leonards Pier', Museum Association Talk by Steve Peak.

Steve Peak asked if an information board could be erected at St. Leonards Pier, similar to Bottle Alley. Nick Sangster said that a small plaque was difficult to read and there would be challenges with the logistics and time spent installing panels. He said this type of work relies heavily on volunteers.

19 March: Lunchtime Concert by Michael Short, pianist. Museum Association Event. Marion Purdey advised that this concert was to raise funds for the museum. Wine and light refreshments will be available.

Mrs Barrett reminded members of the coach excursion to the V&A Museum on 29/01/2017. She agreed to liaise with the curator regarding the arrangements of

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future excursion dates to ensure they do not conflict with events being held at the museum.

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

72. MUSEUM ACQUISITIONS

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

1. Painting of Winchelsea by W H Borrow
Donor: Mr D Padgham
2. George V Silver Jubilee Commemorative spoon
Donor: Mr J Buss
3. WWI cigarette cards and postcards
Donor: Mrs L Allum
4. Grey owl postage stamp from Canada
Donor: Mrs Larsen
5. WWII household ARP First Aid kit
Donor: Mrs J Race
6. Printing block with Hastings crest
Donor: Mrs C Cooper
7. Leather belt and picnic rug handles, from house in St Leonards
Donor: Mrs D Rolls
8. St Clement's Church Appeal booklet, 1961
Donor: Mrs D Mitchell

Steve Peak asked the Curator if there was much space left in the storage rooms. The Curator advised him that there was a limited amount of space left and therefore large items could no longer be accepted. The Collection Management Policy which is under review will address storage at the museum.

Members discussed the importance of items that were relevant and had a connection with Hastings. The Curator said that the policy was less clear regarding social history items eg items which had been used in the town. Refused items were offered to other museums or returned to the donor.

Steve Peak asked if an extension to the museum could be considered. Members discussed the benefits of providing a café on site.

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

73. ADDITIONAL URGENT ITEMS (IF ANY)

None.

(The Chair declared the meeting closed at. 3.33 pm)