

Report to: Museums Committee

Date of Meeting: 12 March 2018

Report Title: Current Projects

Report By: Cathy Walling
Museum Curator

Purpose of Report

to provide an update on the progress of the ACE-funded Resilience Project and HLF-funded First World War Project

Recommendation(s)

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

Reasons for Recommendations

Finding our Place: Resilience Project for Hastings Museum and Art Gallery

1. As part of the collections review, a consultation day, INSIDE OUT, was held at the museum on 25 November. Museum staff and the young curators were supported by Catherine Orbach and Sharon Haward in an event aimed at raising awareness of the extent of the Museum's collections and to identify ways to provide visitors with greater access to collections in store.

2. In addition, an online survey was produced and a version adapted by the young curators to gather responses from their peers.

3. Some of the conclusions are shown below. These will all be incorporated into the final Collections Review report which will be produced at the conclusion of the project at the end of March 2018.

"Visitors enjoyed greatly the access to a random collection from the store. The display generated wide ranging conversations which touched on the objects, their history and their provenance. Visitors connected through this very tangibly with the objects and the role of the museum."

"This was echoed on the local studies room where people enjoyed access to the books and quality black and white photos of Hastings' past. Some enjoyed researching their street name; others enjoyed evoking memories of places. These were people who wouldn't normally book into a Wednesday in the Local Studies room."

"People enjoyed a personal way in, whether that be a member of staff's favourite object, talking to someone about their work in the museum or meeting someone with a story to tell. People enjoyed the direct connection with staff at the museum and the invitation to discuss the museum and access and requested more events like this. It brought the museum to life."

4. A full report on Finding our Place 2 will be brought to the June 2018 meeting of the Museum Committee, following the conclusion of the project.

Hastings Remembers: Stories of the First World War

5. The fourth year of the HLF-funded First World War Anniversary project has seen renewed focus on volunteers, with a group now researching names on the War Memorial, and the experiences of Hastings's Twin Towns.

6. Three community events were held in 2017: As part of our 125th birthday celebration day in August, we setup a 'recruiting station' in our Local Studies Room and ran object handling sessions. To explore this year's theme of 'Beyond the Western Front', historian Stephen Bourne gave a talk called 'Black Poppies', which detailed the black community's experience of the war, both in combat and at home. We held a family

activity day in the October half term on the First World War. Activities included object handling, learning songs of the period and a number of different craft stations.

7. This year's exhibition ran from 7 October 2017 - 8 January 2018. Entitled 'Beyond the Western Front', this exhibition aimed to illustrate how the war touched over 40% of the world's population and so why it can be considered as the first true 'world war'. The exhibition was able to include a number of local stories of men who fought in Africa and Asia, as well as the impact of Empire troops on the town.

8. In 2018 we will be holding another drop-in session to collect local stories. The final exhibition of the project will run from 13 October 2018 to 29 January 2019 and will reflect on local lives lost and families affected by the horrors of the conflict, and the importance of remembrance.

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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