

Report to: Museum Committee

Date of Meeting: 9th September

Report Title: Museum Update Report

Report By: Damian Etherington, Museum and Cultural Development
Manager

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

Introduction

1. 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 July 2019.

Informal Meeting Update

2. The most recent informal meeting of the Museum Committee took place on 22nd July 2019, at Hastings Museum & Art Gallery. The committee met with members of the museum team and were given reports on their work
3. The Committee discussed a loan request from Tate Britain for HASMG:2006.17 *Hastings; Fishmarket on the Sands, Early Morning* by JMW Turner (1775-1851). The Committee decided that the loan request should be declined because of the potential light damage a prolonged period of public display could cause to the watercolour.
4. The Operations Coordinator updated the Committee on building works that have taken place over the past year. This included the clearing of the walled garden by a local community payback group and the refurbishment of the seating in the Upper and Lower Durbar Hall. The Operations Coordinator also outlined some of the work that will be undertaken over the course of this financial year with the aim of achieving Government Indemnity Scheme standard by 2020.
5. The Museums and Schools Programme Officer introduced the Committee to the new LEGO Education Innovation Studio materials. LEGO[®] Education is a hands-on learning approach that actively involves pupils in their own learning process. The core range of products is focused on supporting computing, science, technology, engineering, maths and art, but can also be used across other areas of the curriculum. The Innovation Studio is proving popular with schools and session during the summer holidays are sold out.
6. Two of the new Collections and Engagements Curators were introduced to the Committee.

Performance

7. The museum enjoyed a good first quarter in 2019. The Easter Holiday period was very busy, with the 'Chick Trail' proving especially popular with families. The LEGO[®] events over the summer have been extremely popular. The bookable events, LEGO[®] Museum Minis and LEGO[®] Makers, were all fully booked and additional sessions were added because of the demand. The LEGO[®] Explorers Trail has been extremely well received by families.

Visitors	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total
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Actual	12,485				
Target	11,000	14,000	9,500	11,000	45,000
Previous Year	10,457	13,764	8,757	12,627	45,605

8. The museum has earned £9,500 of its target from Quarters 1 & 2. We are currently on track to achieve our income target for this financial year. However, we are likely to be impacted by the warm weather drawing people away from the museum to the beach.
9. There have been four wedding ceremonies from the beginning of April and we have hosted a wedding fair as well. Changes to the pricing structure for wedding packages are intended to help boost the number of weddings taking place at the museum from 2020 onwards.
10. The museum has been shortlisted for two national awards this year. The first shortlisting was by Kids in Museums for their Family Friendly Museum Award 2019 in the small museum category; this is a tremendous achievement and was the result of visitors nominating the museum for the award. Some of the nominations have been shared with us and included comments such as:

“This museum has gone above and beyond to make real access and facilities for all types of families. They have provided and run mornings for families with children of special needs to discuss how to make their space more family friendly. They have run coffee and community mornings for families to access. They have run fun and friendly family sessions that engage all learners. The staff have been amazing at working with and families and implementing their ideas to make it a truly inclusive and welcoming community space.”
11. The second award is from Days Out With The Kids for their 2019 Family Favourites Award for Best Educational Day Out in London & South East. The shortlist was chosen by industry experts from a list of nominations. The winner is chosen by the public from a public vote. The winners for both awards will be announced in October.
12. In addition to the shortlisting, the museum has continued to perform well on review sites. This year the museum received a ‘Hall of Fame’ certificate from TripAdvisor for being a top attraction for the past five years. The dwell time for people visiting the museum has also increased from 1-1.5 to 2 hours.
13. The Museums Association has added an excursion to Hastings to their Annual Conference programme. The visit includes time at the museum to see the work that has been happening at the museum over the past year. This is good recognition from within the museum sector and a sign that the museum’s profile is rising.

14. Hastings Museum & Art Gallery is now a partner in the British Museum's Museum Futures programme. Museum Futures is a partnership of museums across the UK working together to support new entrants into the museum sector who are interested in gaining digital skills and broader heritage experience. Through this partnership Hastings Museum will offer a year-long paid traineeship to a local young person aged 18-24. The trainee will complete an accredited Level 3 diploma in Cultural Heritage and gain in-work skills training and experiences to add to their CV and further their career opportunities. They will also receive a bursary of £13,350 (tax free) and will attend monthly training sessions at partner museums across the UK (travel expenses paid). The trainee will be involved in recording the museum's collections using photography and sharing information about them through social media and the museum's website.

Programming

15. The *Tom Hunter / A Journey Home* (9 February – 2 June) exhibition was a critical and visitor success for the museum. It drew many new visitors into the museum during its run 14,252 people visited the museum. It featured 11 original photographs, seven paintings from the collections and an audio installation of the drivers' verbal histories and reflections.
16. *The Art of Life on the Stade* (15 June – 27 October) is a collaboration between the museum and Hastings Fishermen's Protection Society. The exhibition features 59 artworks including HASMG:2006.17 *Hastings; Fishmarket on the Sands, Early Morning'* by JMW Turner (1775-1851), and 12 photographs and objects. The exhibition has been supplemented with a loan of fishing paraphernalia and a model from the fleet.
17. Our next exhibition *Wunderkammer: Hastings Curiosities* will cut across collection areas and will include specimens of natural history, archaeological artefacts, local and social history objects and works of fine and decorative arts. It will also include volunteers and community and school groups working in situ in the gallery alongside curators and museum colleagues on collections care and documentation work.
18. On the walkway we have shown three exhibitions since April. *Spirit of the May Day Run* (6 April – 12 May) celebrated the 40th anniversary of the May Day run through photographs and video. *#HMAGHunter* (18 May – 2 June) was in association with Lucy Bell Gallery and featured competition responses to *Tom Hunter / A Journey Home*. John Cole's *Fishing For Generations* (15 June – 27 October) is proving popular due to its striking images of local fishing families over the past thirty years.
19. Our next walkway exhibitions are *Peace Project* (November 2019 – February 2020) in partnership with Historic England and local schools and *Hop, Skip & a Jump* (March – April 2020). *Hop, Skip & a Jump* is a partnership project between HMAG, East Sussex County Council, De La Warr Pavilion, Towner Gallery and local

secondary schools. It is funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund and aims to work with young LGBTQ+ people in exploring their community's history and making connections with their current community in East Sussex. Activities include film-making, oral history interviews and investigating archives.

20. The museum has held 117 events since April which have been attended by over 4000 people. Events have ranged from early years groups led by Starlings Music Group for babies and toddlers through to Qi Gong and Yoga and talks by Edward Preston. The programme has, so far, been a success in drawing people into the museum. The next programme will run from October-March.

Schools and Learning

21. Over the past six months the Museum & Schools Programme has worked with over 2000 young people from 46 schools. This puts us on track to exceed our targets for 2019/2020; to work with 2178 students from 26 schools and deliver 40 arts awards.

22. Through funding from Hastings Borough Council and the Museums and Schools Programme, HMAG has invested in LEGO® Education resources. These include 15 tablet computers and charging trolley, We Do 2.0, Simple and Powered Machine kits, Coding Express, STEAM Park and standard LEGO®.

23. During June and July the Museums and Schools Programme Officer ran trial workshops, working with 200 students from five different local schools. Topics covered ranged from the life cycle of the frog to flooding prevention. In September the museum will be going to Hollington Primary with LEGO® Education. This will mark the date that the museum has worked with every school in the borough over the course of the Museums and Schools Programme.

24. In evaluations, teachers have expressed interest in receiving more training in using the resources. A professional development session is being organised for October. The museum has been approached by Christchurch Primary who will be bringing one class a week to the museum for the entire academic year.

25. Schools and community groups were invited to participate a project to commemorate the Peace celebrations held in Hastings & St Leonards in July 1919. Resources from Hastings Museum & Art Gallery and Historic England were shared with participating schools who attended workshops at the museum about the local impact of the war and the events held across the district on 19th July, 1919. Teachers and group leaders attended banner making workshops led by local artist Sheridan Quigley. Inspired by the peace celebrations banner from the museum collection, and with Sheridan's guidance, they produced banners to reflect peace in 1919 and 2019.

26. Helen Spencer, Local Heritage Education Manager for Historic England, delivered workshops in Guestling Bradshaw CEP to Year 1 and Year 4 pupils, who made

bunting to welcome home the troops and peace doves filled with words the children felt best represented peace. These were turned into word cloud doves. Christ Church CE Primary took inspiration from the learning resources to hold their own 'Peace Tea' in the playground and to write poetry on the theme of 'Peace'. The best entries received prizes and certificates from Historic England at a special Citizenship assembly held on 19th July, 100 years to the day since national Peace Day. This project will form the basis of a community exhibition in the walkway exhibition space.

27. Hastings Museum worked with Dens and Signals theatre company to develop a trial project supporting Year 6 students with their transition to secondary school. 'Transformations' was devised to be a day of curiosity and creativity to kindle new friendships, build confidence and resilience, and encourage exploration. This engaging workshop used historic objects from the museum focusing on the life of Grey Owl, the natural environment of the woods, and the ideas and creativity of the children to help prepare a year 6 class for the transition to secondary school. Feedback from students included "we found out amazing things", "it was unique and made me feel part of a group" and "the day was one of the best trips I've been on ... art, history and adventuring are all my favourite!"
28. The museum welcomed three work experience students in May for a week of activities. During the week they worked on a range of activities which included collections documentation, administration tasks, social media marketing, retail and visitor services. The feedback was positive with one parent writing to thank us, "very much for the extremely useful and enjoyable week".
29. We have continued to work with the supported education team at East Sussex College Hastings and hosted a further work placement in May. In April and July we hosted two Art History students from the University of Sussex who worked on some Brassey related prints and our Islamic collections. We currently have three students from the University of Leicester's Museum Studies course. They are each working on discrete projects including documentation, learning and exhibition planning.

Volunteering

30. Additional volunteers joined in April and we have benefited from 120 hours of volunteer time since then. We now have volunteers not only supporting access to our local history collections, but also helping with our education programme and on invigilation and visitor experience. There will be a new round of volunteer recruitment in September to support collections work and the *Wunderkammer* exhibition.

Building

31. The building continues to undergo a number of planned maintenance projects. Those include painting of the toilets and improvements to the internal décor.

Recently we have been getting nightly visits from a couple of badgers that have been foraging in the grounds. They do not appear to have been put off by the new picnic benches at we have added. The benches have been a good addition and are getting good use by families picnicking after a visit to the museum.

Timetable of Next Steps

Action	Key milestone	Due date (provisional)	Responsible
Discussion by Museum Committee	Museum Committee	September 2019	Museum and Cultural Development Manager
Approval by Cabinet	Cabinet	October 2019	Museum and Cultural Development Manager

Wards Affected

All wards

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

HMAG Exhibition Strategy
 HMAG Event Leaflet (April – October 2019)
 HMAG Learning Policy
 HMAG Volunteer Policy

Officer to Contact

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