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MUSEUM COMMITTEE

9 MARCH 2020

Present: Councillors Forward (Chair), Beaney, Levane, Sinden, Patmore, and Barnett. Mr Peak, Mrs Farley-Green and Mr Street.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillor O'Callaghan sent her apologies and Councillor Cox is present as substitute. Apologies were also received from Councillor Bishop and Mrs Palfrey-Martin.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the previous meeting held on the 25th November 2019 be approved as a true record.

4. MUSEUM UPDATE REPORT

The Museum and Cultural Development Manager presented a report to update museum committee on the museum's work since the last formal meeting.

He started by confirming in paragraph 2 of the report, the decision is because the painting has been recently on show and now needs to rest or it will suffer long term damage.

On paragraph 5, the schools project fund has been confirmed at £62,000 for the year which is the same as the past two years. The Art Fund Conservation Grant scheme had been withdrawn by the funders.

As of the end of February, we have had 61,779 visitors since the end of April last year which is up 65%. This is most likely because of a change in programming, being shortlisted for national awards. In 2017/18, the reported figures for school pupils visiting the museum were 500. This year it's 4182. The museum ended up having to turn schools away. Every school in the borough has visited this year.

The committee thanked the Museum and Cultural Development Manager for putting together such a comprehensive report and was pleased by the positive news that the museum is doing better than previous years.

The committee asked about the proposed reduction in opening hours as stated in the budget for 2020/21.

ACTION: The Museum and Cultural Development manager to share with the committee the end of programme report for the two year education programme.

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RESOLVED (unanimously):

To accept this report and recommend approval by Cabinet.

5. COLLECTIONS REPORT

Museum and Cultural Development Manager presented a report to update museum committee on collections care, access, acquisitions, loans and objects being considered for rationalisation.

Since the beginning of the 'Wunderkammer: Hastings Curiosities' exhibition and collections project over 1300 objects have been cleaned, repacked, photographed and recorded.

The museum stores are at capacity and there is no further space to expand into. The museum's offsite store still needs to be closed. Due to the budget pressures the council cannot invest in new storage buildings. The lack of storage space is the main collections challenge the museum is facing.

There have been five acquisitions since the last meeting. The objects listed in the report for rationalisation were approved for ethical disposal.

Councillor Sinden relayed thanks from a couple who got married at the museum and expressed how great of an experience it was for them.

RESOLVED (unanimously):

To accept this report and recommend approval by cabinet.

(The Chair declared the meeting closed at. 3.15 pm)