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MUSEUM COMMITTEE

7 SEPTEMBER 2020

Present: Councillors Fitzgerald (Chair), S Beaney (as a substitute for Cllr O'Callaghan), K Beaney, Bishop, Levane, Sinden, Patmore and Barnett. Museum Association Members Ms Farley-Green, Mr Peak and Mr Street.

6. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies received from Cllr O'Callaghan and Mr Palfrey-Martin. Cllr S Beaney was present as a substitute for Cllr O'Callaghan.

7. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

8. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 9th March 2020 be approved as a true record.

9. MUSEUM UPDATE REPORT

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

Prior to lockdown the museum had seen a 40% increase in visitors. Since reopening the museum is operating ticketed entry.

During lockdown Hastings Digital Museum was launched with the aim of creating opportunities for people to engage in cultural activities on social media. The Museum and Cultural Development Manager thanked the Chalk Cliff Trust for their funding which supported the digital museum project. Hastings Digital Museum reached nearly 1.45m devices. Average digital reach during lockdown was 340,000 per month, compared to 30-40,000 per month pre lockdown.

Work has been undertaken to make the museum building Covid secure and to support social distancing. A number of measures, informed by government and industry guidance, have been introduced to mitigate against the transmission of Covid-19. These include timed visits, compulsory face masks and hand sanitiser stations.

The Chair thanked the museum staff for their work.

In response to a question regarding the Museums & Schools programme it was confirmed that funding for the programme is in place until March 2021. Museum staff are working to engage schools in a Covid secure way. The Committee asked for further details on which schools had visited the museum. The Museum and Cultural

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Development Manager confirmed that all schools in the borough had had some form of engagement with the museum and further details could be provided.

Action: Museum and Cultural Development Manager to share a breakdown of school visits

Councillor Fitzgerald proposed approval of the recommendations, seconded by Councillor Sinden.

RESOLVED (unanimously):

To accept this report and recommend approval by Cabinet

10. COLLECTIONS REPORT

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

There have been further improvements made to the museum's environmental control measures. A new Dehumidifier and Relative Humidity controlled heater were installed in the Bungalow in May. Comparable time periods from last year show this has made a significant improvement to the environment, making it a much better storage area for collections.

The Wunderkammer project has seen 2,550 objects documented, repacked and stored. This comprised 1460 Natural Science objects, 562 art works, and 527 objects from the social history and world culture collections.

Over the past year the museum has been working with researchers from the Universities of East Anglia and Kent on their Arts & Humanities Research Council-funded project, 'Beyond the Spectacle' to develop an Indigenous Engagement Policy. The policy sets out the principles the museum will follow when dealing with Indigenous people and will allow work with source communities and a better understanding of the collections.

Councillor Fitzgerald proposed approval of the recommendations, seconded by Councillor Levane.

RESOLVED (unanimously):

To accept this report and recommend approval by Cabinet

(The Chair declared the meeting closed at 3.07 pm)