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MUSEUM COMMITTEE

13 MARCH 2023

Present: Councillors Batsford (Chair), Sinden, Evans (from 2.49pm) and Patmore. Museum Association members Richard Street, Susannah Farley-Green, Andre Palfrey-Martin, Steve Peak and Hilda Kean.

In attendance: Alice Roberts-Pratt (Senior Curator) and Kevin Boorman (Marketing and Major Projects Manager).

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies received from Councillors Pragnell and Rankin.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor	Item	Interest
Evans	All items	Personal – Volunteer Buddy refugee project, Trustee Idolrich Theatre Rotto, lives near to Bob Mazzer

3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the meeting held on 6th September 2022 be approved as a true record.

4. MUSEUM UPDATE REPORT

The Chair welcomed Alice Roberts-Pratt, Senior Curator, to the committee, who presented a report to update on the museum's work since the last formal meeting.

Visitor numbers and income has exceeded targets, with 25,166 visitors this year to date, and total income of £33,000.

The Jason & His Argonauts, and Hastings Open exhibitions have now closed, and the Donations: The Went Tree Trust exhibition opened in January. There has been a full events programme since September with Hastings Week talks, Family Trails, Lego Labs, Christmas Fair and ghost hunting, amongst others, all proving popular.

Targets for school engagement have been exceeded, with 1300 children reached by the museum last quarter. Seventeen loan boxes are available for schools and these are already booked out for coming months.

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Since September volunteers have completed 681 hours of volunteering. An increase in volunteers will be needed for the National Portfolio Organisation (NPO) programme to support front of house and outside spaces.

There are water ingress issues with the roof of the Durbar Hall and these have been raised with the building surveyor team.

The Chair congratulated the museum team on the programme of work and said he had confidence in them to continue pushing the museum forward.

A question was raised regarding the day-to-day management and staff structure of the museum. The Chair agreed that a report could be brought to the next formal meeting once the new structure of the museum team has been finalised.

RESOLVED:

To accept this report and recommend approval by Cabinet.

Reasons:

So cabinet understands and endorses the updates on the museum's work

5. COLLECTIONS REPORT

The Senior Curator presented a report to update the committee on collections care, access, acquisitions, loans, and objects being considered for disposal.

There are issues in the Durbar Hall with woodlice and other pests entering displays. Traps have been put in place, as has silica gel to keep the relative humidity at 50%. However, this is unlikely to be resolved until the roof has been taken care of. Damp has also been noted in the bone store due to a hole in the wall which has now been sealed. Work has been undertaken to seal the cloak display case in the Durbar Hall to stop pests entering.

There have been 61 inquiries related to the collection since September and the local studies room has been open every Wednesday for bookings. There are also drop-in sessions on Saturdays to allow access to the collections for those who cannot attend mid-week.

The website is also a key enabler for collections access, allowing for blogs and videos to compliment, and expand on, exhibitions. The museum's social media presence is getting more traction and it has proved a good way to engage with people about the collections.

Various disposals are proposed as listed in the report and staff will look to offer these to other museums/organisations.

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RESOLVED:

To accept this report and recommend approval by Cabinet.

Reasons:

So cabinet understands and endorses the updates on the museum's work

6. MUSEUM ASSOCIATION UPDATE

Since the last formal meeting the Museum Association held its AGM in December at which Dr Hilda Kean was added to the committee representation and £2,000 was allocated to the museum, which has been used to purchase preservation and protection equipment.

Upcoming events include a Rye Harbour walk in April, a Robert Tressell walk in May, and a Rye Town walk in June.

(The Chair declared the meeting closed at 3.20pm)

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