

Report To: Museum Committee

Date of Meeting:

Report Title: Museum Update Report

Report By: Alice Roberts-Pratt

Key Decision: N

Classification:

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

1. Your report must clearly present reasons for all the recommendations so that these can formally be published as a matter of public record. This is a statutory requirement.

Introduction

1. This report summaries the work of the museum since the last formal Museum Committee meeting. It includes an update from the last informal meeting in November.

Informal Meeting Update

2. A need to look at how we create Community members panel, how do we go about doing this?
Concerns from Museum Association Members at lack of attendance for informal meeting
Collections Access Officer and Project Officer (NPO Funded posts) were introduced to the committee. Talked about the disposals that were on the list at the previous meeting which we had question marks over but decided we could move on with the disposal.

Visitors and income

3. The museum's visitor figures.

Visitors	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total
Actual	10,977	4,791*	-	-	15,768*
Target	5,500	6,500	5,000	4,000	21,000
Previous Year	6,711	7,548	6,019	7,178	27,556

* = As of 25/08/23

4. The museum shop, hires and weddings Income figures year to date:

Shop: £10,261.33 (target £13,500)

Events (Hires & Weddings): £6,694 (target £8,000)

Please note this does not include any balance payments due.

Weddings: 14 booked this financial year (8 past and 6 upcoming). This will be a total value of £8,475 when all payments are received.

Hires: 26 booked this financial year. This will be a total value of £2,896.50 when all payments are received.

Stripe Payments (event tickets sold via website): £1,478.93

Loan Boxes: £842.55

TOTAL £19,276.81

Projects

5. Esmée Fairbairn Collections Fund project. The project comes to a conclusion at the end of September and so the Curators are starting to wrap up their current projects. However, NPO allows us to continue the great work we've begun, and we are currently reviewing who we will be working with and how for NPO.
6. Home education

Following the success of the Digging for Hastings resource, the home education group have been involved in the development of an improved handling area in the Before Hastings Gallery using objects documented during the audit work. Workshops are currently being advertised in September to trial additional new loans and outreach resources. A consultation workshop and online survey have been arranged for September to inform the development of the NPO programme for Home Education.

7. Queer Heritage Collective

The Queer History Collective gave guided tours of the museum on 19 August for Hastings Pride 2023. This was the final output funded by Esmée Fairbairn Collections Fund. The Collective will resume regular meetings in September and continue their research into LGBTQIA+ history in Hastings, now funded by NPO and supported by Home Live Art. The output for the first year is TBC.

8. People seeking sanctuary

Portraits of the Dove Café is now closing on 24 September 2023. It received approximately 2300 visitors during Refugee Week in June. We are hosting a closing celebration with the Refugee Buddy Project on 7 September. This is the final strand output funded by Esmée Fairbairn. Strand work will continue under NPO; the output for the first year is TBC with project partners.

9. Curating for Change

D/deaf, Disabled and Neurodivergent Co-production group.

The group project is in the final stages. The group members have completed their oral history interviews, transcripts have been written, and they have created labels for the exhibition. All this work will be on show starting 16th of September with the exhibition opening of Stored Out of Sight. The exhibition is a combination of all the work throughout the year, from finding objects hidden in the store to researching them to writing a label for the exhibition.

The group will be meeting up on 29th of August just to do some evaluation for the project and to discuss what we would like to do next year regarding the NPO funding.

10. NPO UPDATE

Hastings Museum and Art Gallery achieved NPO status in April 2023. In May 2023, Caf Fean, Projects Officer was appointed. In June Ori Calman joined the team as Collections Access Officer.

Project Officer has been getting to know the various stakeholders and participants of the groups, organising the budgets divisions, the groups we may wish to work with, resources available. Attending open days and training and working closely with our Arts Council Liaison officer to understand where we can make changes to the budgets and groups. There is a lot of work involved in the beginnings to understand how we wish to proceed.

Participant groups

Group
Hastings Queer History Collective
People Seeking Sanctuary
Home Education Group
Disability Group/ Curating for Change
People from areas of deprivation – Hollington
People from areas of deprivation – Broomgrove

Exhibitions and events

11. Long gallery exhibitions – previous and current

Two loaned-in touring exhibitions were held over the summer which were Brick by Brick and Mythomania.

Brick by Brick featured work by international artists, designers and photographers who use LEGO® bricks as their medium. This family friendly exhibition offered a range of opportunities for visitors to get creative with construction bricks and includes a LEGO® wall.

This exhibition as well as the mini figure trail attracted 500 people per day during the Easter Holidays.

Mythomania, featured works by Canadian artist Ian Kirkpatrick who uses graphic design software to produce intricate 2D and 3D artworks out of materials including stainless steel, vinyl, corrugated cardboard, Perspex and Dibond. The surfaces of his pieces are filled with complex iconographies drawn from past and present, remixed into commentaries about pressing social themes such as war, climate change and migration.

Coming up in 2024

The Ellen Prebble Exhibition

The Ellen Prebble Exhibition is the first solo exhibition of work by Hastings-based artist, Ellen Prebble. The unique collection of works illuminates this emerging artist's passion for the natural world and new perspectives on the Museum's own natural history collections. Curated in partnership with Project Art Works, a supported studio based in Hastings.

Playing the Race Card

This exhibition is a highly anticipated follow up to the original *Playing the Race Card* exhibition at Greenhalf Studio in 2022. This open-call exhibition will be accompanied by a vibrant programme of talks, performances and workshops across Hastings, celebrating Black culture, resilience, resistance and happiness. Artists are currently being invited to respond to the theme of 'Black Joy'. Submissions close on 29 September; works will be curated externally with support from Home Live Art and the Hastings Museum & Art Gallery team.

12. **Next long gallery exhibition opening 16th September**

Stored Out of Sight is an exhibition focused on revealing hidden disability history from the collection. The exhibition has been co-produced by seven people who are D/deaf, Disabled or Neurodivergent. These group members have researched and discussed objects from the collection throughout the year, and their work has culminated in the exhibition that highlights disabled people, although often not thought of, have always been part of history.

The exhibition also highlights disability activism in the 90s and the importance of fairer representation today. Without this movement, Disability would still be seen in the medical model, and change would not have been as fast-moving or as impactful as it has.

13. **Walkway past, current and next.**

18 March – Thom Kofoed 'Why I long to be a Sex Symbol'

18 June – Photographs by Nour Al Din Al Azou – Portraits of the Dove Café

Oneiropraxis

22 September – 29 October

ONEIROPRAXIS is an exhibition of recent oil paintings and drawings by the visionary artists Melissa Artemis Shemanna and Orryelle Defenestrade-Bascule. Their works combine

the surreal, the abstract, and imagery drawn from ancient civilisations and esoteric traditions to create unique visual dreamscapes.

Suitable for ages 16+

Fossil Finder in Us All

7 November – 7 January

ExploreTheArch invites you to explore our relationship with natural history and winter beachcombing for fossils. Hastings is overlooked in terms of its significant palaeontological heritage. Until now!

Logos – EXPLORE THE ARCH

Suitable for all ages

Sinéid Codd

26 January – 24 March

Through photographs, paintings, and drawings, interdisciplinary artist, Sinéid Codd, invites you to explore an archipelago – a series of sculpted islands made from lost and found objects that elicit reflections on community and climate change.

14. Events programme

We've had a varied and fun events programme since March. Hastings Traditional Jack in the Green's 40th Anniversary saw 3 talks, may pole dancing and a giant building workshop take place as well as an exhibition. The African Caribbean Seaside Memories workshop in June proved to be very popular and is going to become a regular workshop with an aim to create an exhibition for Black History month in October 2024. Other events include talks by Ken Brooks, the Queer History Tour, Room 101, sound baths, and of course the Sanctuary Festival. Sanctuary Festival was extremely popular this year and we will continue to work with Hastings Welcomes Refugees to continue this amazing event.

Schools and learning

15. Museum & Schools programme, in July our Learning Officer, Foteini, sadly left the museum for another role, we are grateful for the huge amount of work she did in developing our museum learning offer. We have recruited for her role and had a huge amount of applications. We appointed Asten Holmes-Elliott who started on 4th September, we wish her the best of luck. Prior to Foteini leaving we met and exceeded all of our targets with the Museum and schools project. Lego labs continue to be extremely popular with families and we hope that with Asten's appointment we can start to look at trying to target the secondary schools and older children to engage with the museum. We continue our partnership with the National Literacy Trust and will be looking to explore new partnerships including one with University of Sussex.

Other learning activities The Curator of Natural Sciences and Outgoing Schools and Learning Officer secured £2,470 of funding for a new schools and family engagement resource as part of the Art Fund's Wild Escape project. As part of this objects from the osteology collection were repaired and mounted so they could be used in the workshops.

The Outgoing Schools and Learning Officer secured £2000 from SEMD for a going green project

New schools workshops developed include Rocks and Minerals and Dinosaurs. A placement student (Josh) developed a new WW1 workshop

Volunteering

16. Since March our volunteers have completed 303.5 hours of volunteering. Sadly, two of our regular volunteers moved away which is why our hours are down on our previous report. Tasks being undertaken include completing inventory of various collections including the ceramics, the main stores, photographs, paintings, and postcards. They have been sorting through the archaeology collections ready for disposal, helping to man events such as Lego Labs and invigilate gallery spaces. Our learning volunteer helped to deliver school sessions in Foteini's absence and did a really great job. Local studies volunteers have been essential in helping with research and enquiries. The NPO will see an increase in our volunteers to help with visitor services, collections and the outside spaces and we are currently looking at how we will begin to implement new ways of volunteer working. We continue to be grateful to our volunteers for all their help.

17. Building

The building planned & unplanned maintenance

Jobs completed:

- Southern Lightning system upgrade works
- Security bars added to upper windows of Durbar Hall
- Digilock added to ground floor kitchen door
- Main front staircase stair tread strips replaced
- Grounds maintenance – thorough vegetation clearance
- Vegetation cleared from Durbar and flat roofs

Jobs booked:

- Replacement or reinforcement of Store, Education Office, Roof and Ceramics Balcony doors
- Extension of disabled access ramp at front of museum kerbside
- Remedial electrical works to bring current install up to standard based on Electrical Installation Condition report – quote agreed, forthcoming (November planned)
- Repairs to roof of Upper Durbar

Recommendations:

To accept this report and recommend approval by Cabinet.

Timetable of Next Steps

39. Please include a list of key actions and the scheduled dates for these:

Action	Key milestone	Due date (provisional)	Responsible
	Museum Committee	11/09/23	
	Cabinet		

Wards Affected

All

Policy Implications

Reading Ease Score: 43

Have you used relevant project tools?: Y

Please identify if this report contains any implications for the following:

Equalities and Community Cohesiveness	Y
Crime and Fear of Crime (Section 17)	N
Risk Management	Y
Environmental Issues & Climate Change	N
Economic/Financial Implications	N
Human Rights Act	N
Organisational Consequences	N
Local People's Views	Y
Anti-Poverty	Y
Legal	N

Additional Information

Officer to Contact

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