

# MUSEUMS COMMITTEE

12 JANUARY 2015

Present: Councillors Poole (Chair), Howard (Vice-Chair), Charlesworth, Charman, Edwards, Hodges, Sinden, Street,

Museum Association Representatives: Mrs Hawkins, Mrs Purdey, Mrs Barrett, Mr Peak and Mr Palfrey-Martin

## 22. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Mr Adams and noted for Councillor Lock.

## 23. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 15 SEPTEMBER 2014

**RESOLVED** – that the minutes of the meeting held on 15 September 2014 be approved and signed by the Chair as a true record.

The Chair said that she had received a request to move the date of this meeting back until after the budget meeting. She advised the committee that until the budget had been set, matters could still change. The meeting therefore remained as scheduled. She said she would forward a copy of the budget consultation to the committee with a link to the council's website. This information would be available from Friday 16 January 2015. She went on to say that Councillor Birch had agreed to speak with members of the committee to discuss matters after they had the opportunity to view the plans. The meeting will be arranged early February 2015.

## 24. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following Museum Association Member declared their interest in the minutes as indicated:

<u>Museum Association Member</u>	<u>Minute</u>	<u>Interest</u>
Mr Palfrey-Martin	Item 29 – Museum Events & Activities.	Personal – a member of Shaping Voices

## 25. NOTIFICATION OF ANY ADDITIONAL URGENT ITEMS

None.

## 26. CURATOR'S REPORT

Cathy Walling, Museum Curator, presented a report to provide an update on issues arising from previous meetings and confirmation of Curator's actions.

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1. Packing of archives, watercolours and other works on paper is underway, the first batch of items have left the store for the Keep for conservation. The items included priority listings on the Burton Archive and the Brassey archive. Archive material housed in the store has not been available to researchers since 1 November because of the possibility of cross-contamination with mould spores. It is therefore necessary to close the Local Studies Room for a temporary period to provide storage. Officers will identify ways to facilitate this, so material is available for researchers during this time.

Mr Peak asked if the museum archives were available for the pier as they would need to be accessible in the spring. The Curator said she would check and get back to him.

2. Volunteers of the 'Hastings Remembers...' project had spoken with over 40 members of the public who have stories to tell. The exhibition has attracted 14,445 visitors during the course of the exhibition.

3. The application to the Esmee Fairbairn Collections Fund for research and public engagement with Native American material was unsuccessful. This also included the Colin Taylor Exhibition. Feedback has been received and a reapplication will be made in April 2015.

4. Permission has been given for the following requests for reproduction of images:-

- a) Three George Woods photographs for Jamie Oliver TV show on Fresh TV. The photographs contain pictures of fishing boats.
- b) Fifty images of Hastings Pier for use by the Pier Charity in archive and education projects.
- c) Image of Queen Victoria Jubilee portrait for Korean Broadcasting System documentary 'Food Odyssey'. The picture is located at the bottom of the main staircase in the Town Hall.

**RESOLVED – that the Committee accepts the report and are satisfied with the comments in the report.**

### **27. MUSEUM ACCREDITATION UPDATE**

Cathy Walling, Museum Curator, presented a report to provide an update on the Accreditation application for the Hastings Museum and Art Gallery and the Old Town Hall Museums. Appended to the report was the Environment Policy Statement 2015; Collections Development Policy (previously Acquisitions and Disposals); Collections Management Policy – combining documentation and care and conservation, and Access Policy Statement.

The Accreditation Scheme for Museums and Galleries in the United Kingdom defines what is good practice and identifies agreed standards, thereby encouraging development. It also provides quality standards to ensure museums are working to the best they can be. Both museums were previously accredited in 2009-10 under the scheme and have been invited to reapply. The return completion date is 28 February

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2015 for both museums. The documents covered the individual differences between the museums.

The committee were informed of a number of amendments to the Collections Management Policy and asked questions of the Curator.

Steve Peak questioned how much storage space was left in the museum for new items. The Curator stated that space was limited and that it was necessary to consider the size and relevance of any newly acquired items. Mr Palfrey-Martin said he felt the transfer of records to the Keep needed to be addressed carefully because of their significance and rarity as well as access issues. The Curator advised him that the Keep was better equipped to look after the records.

Councillor Howard asked if there was a complete set of Hastings Borough Council minutes available. The Curator confirmed there was a set of printed minutes available dating from 19 Century.

Mrs Purdey asked for an update on the status of the store room. The Curator advised her that the store room had been stabilised and that a new system had been installed to check the stability of the environment in the store, it provides officers with regular temperature readings. She confirmed the room had dried out and was fully waterproof. Works to empty the room of items was ongoing.

Mr Peak asked what would happen to items that were owned by the museum if the museum were to dissolve. The Curator confirmed this was covered in the museums Collections Development Policy.

Mrs Barrett assured the committee the accreditation policy document concerning disposals was very detailed. Items could only be disposed of in a limited way and that it was beyond the committee's remit to alter it.

**RESOLVED - that the committee accepts the report and are satisfied with the report, and recommends approval of the policies.**

### **28. MUSEUM ATTENDANCE FIGURES**

Cathy Walling, Museum Curator, presented a report to inform members of figures for attendances, educational activities and use of the Museum's website for the second quarter of 2014-15. Figures for July to September 2013 were submitted for comparison.

It was noted that the attendance figures for Hastings Museum and Art Gallery had increased when compared with the previous year, particularly during the summer due to the children's events. However, numbers of pupils in organised groups had dropped slightly during July and August. The total number of visits combined for Quarter 2 had increased by 583.

Attendances to the Old Town Hall Museum had decreased in addition to a reduction of pupils in organised groups due to the opening of the information centre at Aquila House. The total number of visits combined for Quarter 2 had decreased by 3,318 when compared to the previous year.

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The number of website visits had increased significantly by 19,082. At the time of the meeting, the number of followers on Twitter had increased to 452, as well as regular Facebook visits of between 2-3,000 people.

The number of weddings and civil ceremonies had decreased by 3 compared to quarter 2 last year. At the time of the meeting, a total of 24 bookings had been made for 2015 and several for 2016.

The next Wedding Fair will take place in April 2015.

Councillor Poole asked if anyone had approached the language schools? Mrs Barrett said she had looked at the Hastings Museum webpage, and felt there was a lack of information available for language school groups. She recommended that a dedicated page be provided specifically for foreign schools and English foreign language schools. The Curator stated that work on the website was ongoing and confirmed they intended to update the education pages. Mrs Barrett asked if the website could be adjusted to provide an automated email response to enquiries made by the foreign language schools. Councillor Street added that it would be helpful if schools could be notified when the webpage had been updated.

Mrs Barrett wished to compliment the work of the individual responsible for the Facebook page, as she felt the snippets of information were enough to keep her interested but not overwhelmed.

Mrs Purdey referred to the increase in wedding bookings which she believed was due to the registry office moving to Claremont. She highlighted the fact that HMAG was a unique venue with parking and offered a great deal more than other venues. It was one of two venues in the British Isles where couples could get married in a Durbar Hall.

**RESOLVED - that the Committee accepts the report and are satisfied with the comments in the report.**

### **29. MUSEUM EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES**

Cathy Walling, Museum Curator, presented a report to inform Members of forthcoming events and educational activities at the Hastings Museum and Art Gallery and the Old Town Hall Museum during January to March 2015, for Quarter 4, 2014-15.

These included:-

#### **Exhibitions**

10 January 2015 to 3 January 2016: 'All at Sea'. Maritime paintings from the Museum collection.

Until 22 February: 'The Eyes are Listening'. Paintings by 6 Sussex contemporary artists

Until 1 February: 'Tangible keepsakes from a Dream'. Photographs of Hastings by Hans van Erp.

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14 February to 19 April: 'Uncovering Africa'. Objects from the collection uncovered as part of regional partnership project.

7 March to 7 June: 'Voyage, Paintings by Louis Dodd'.

### Events

22 January: 'Dora v Picasso': A multi-media live literature presentation on the relationship between Picasso and his muse Dora Maar, Written by award-winning poet Grace Nichols, includes live music and flamenco dance.

7 February: 'The Munitionettes': A look at the women who worked in WWI munitions factories, with Shaping Voices.

17 February: 'Uncovering Africa'. Drop-in family activity day.

8 March: 'The Golden Age of Sail and Maritime Hastings'. Talk by Steve Peak.

28 March to 12 April: Easter Egg Hunt.

Weekly term-time pre-school sessions – Book Bugs and In2Play.

The Curator confirmed she had dispatched the events leaflets for 2015.

In addition to the above programme, the Curator informed the committee of a number of additional events that had been scheduled.

April-June: Sussex in 16<sup>th</sup> 17<sup>th</sup> Century.

20 June-13 September: Cabinets of Curiosities

27 June-6 September: Textiles by Caroline Richards

26 September: Colour Wood prints

September: WWI exhibition focusing on women

September: Display of instagram photos by local people

It was confirmed that the invitations for the 'Voyage' exhibition – paintings by Louis Dodd, will be sent out in February 2015.

Councillor Hodges asked if an exhibition would be organised for the 200<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Battle of Waterloo in June 2015. The Curator advised the Museum's Waterloo medals will be put on display as will the portrait of Henry Webster. Brion Purdey will be giving a talk on 'Wellington and Hastings' on 21 June 2015.

**RESOLVED - that the Committee accepts the report and are satisfied with the comments in the report.**

### 30. MUSEUM ACQUISITIONS

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Cathy Walling, Museum Curator, presented a report informing members of eighteen items acquired by the Museum in the last quarter and the names of donors. The items included: -

1. Mayoral Brooch. Donor: Cllr M. Charlesworth
2. Notebook of local bird sightings 1893-1932, by Walter Field, Hastings Cemetery Superintendent. Donor: Mrs K Jury
3. Bacon's 'large-scale plan of Hastings'. Postcard of 'The Aristocrats' at Hastings Pier. Donor: Mr G. Kelly
4. Photograph on glass of Hastings Pier. Donor: Mr M. Lawrence
5. Collection of local guide books. Donor: Mr A. Palfrey-Martin
6. Collection of documents from 1940s. Donor: Mrs P. Verrall
7. Collection of WW2 cookery books, 'utility blouse' and darning wool. Donor: Mrs P. Filmer
8. Two censored AA route maps to Hastings, 1940. Donor: Mr G. Sudbury
9. Three medals from Hastings & District Roller Hockey League. Donor: Mr D. Holdstock
10. 'Half-Breed', Story of Grey Owl, by Lovat Dickson. Donor: Mrs L. Bryant
11. Collection of local papers and booklets, property of Henry Sargent. Donor: Mrs M. Sargent
12. Painting 'The Hop-pickers' by David Hobbs. Bundle of Haberdashery. Donor: Estate of Pauline Leach
13. Collection of Parish Magazines from St Andrews and Christ Church, Blacklands. Donor: Mr R. Kemble
14. Collection of letters, photographs etc. relating to WW1 and Joan Howell. Donor: Mr and Mrs Reeves
15. Two WW1 campaign medals. Donor: Mr B. Porter
16. Pamphlet in Sussex vernacular: 'Jan Cladpole's Trip to Merricur', 1878 (?). Donor: Mr & Mrs R. Taylor
17. Programme for White Rock Pavilion, 1948. Donor: Mrs Opie
18. Book of illustrations by Guy Mannering, 2 watercolour/pen and ink sketches. Donor: Mrs J Kent

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The Curator informed the committee that item 18, book of illustrations by Guy Mannering and 2 watercolour/pen and ink sketches was in poor condition and of no relevance to Hastings, so should not be accepted into the collection.

**RESOLVED - that the Committee accepts the report and are satisfied with the comments in the report and that item 18 be declined.**

(The Chair declared the meeting closed at 3.30pm)