

**Committee:** Community Committee

**Agenda Item**

**Date:** 14 September 2006

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**Title:** Grant to Great Dunmow Museum

**Author:** Carolyn Wingfield, Museum Curator, 01799 510333 Item for decision

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### Summary

1. Great Dunmow Museum Society has requested a renewal of their previous grant from the Council for 2006/07 and the next two years, at £2,750 per year. The grant is essential to enable them to meet their share of the running costs of The Maltings, Great Dunmow, as required by their lease agreement. A small earmarked reserve has been found which can fund the current year's application, pending consideration during the forthcoming budget process of the longer term request.

### Recommendations

2. That Operations Committee is requested to approve the grant of £2,750 to Great Dunmow Museum Society for 2006/07, funded from the earmarked reserve for Promotion of Local Centres.
3. That the Community Committee approve the funding request for the years 2007/08 and 2008/09 be added to the draft budget, with final decisions to be taken during the January /February 2007 committee cycle.

### Background Papers

4. The following papers were referred to by the author in the preparation of this report and are available for inspection from the author of the report.
  - Letter and Accounts & Balance Sheet from Great Dunmow Museum Society sent to Museum Curator.

### Impact

5.

Communication/Consultation	N/A
Community Safety	N/A
Equalities	Enables Dunmow community to have access to local history heritage in Great Dunmow
Finance	An appropriate earmarked reserve has been identified in conjunction with the Financial Services Unit

Human Rights	N/A
Legal implications	N/A
Ward-specific impacts	Great Dunmow
Workforce/Workplace	Great Dunmow Museum is staffed entirely by volunteers (Great Dunmow Museum Society and associated groups)

## Situation

6. For the past six years, the Council has supported the Great Dunmow Museum, which is housed in the ground floor of Dunmow Maltings, with a small annual grant, renewed on a three-yearly basis. Previous grants have been:

- 2000/01 – 2002/03 £2,000 per year
- 2003/04 – 2005/06 £2,250 per year

This grant is essential to help Great Dunmow Museum meet its costs and keep the Museum open.

7. The last three-year grant having expired in March 2006, Great Dunmow Museum Society has requested that the grant is renewed for another three years, from 2006/07, at £2,750 per year. The increase is necessary to meet rises in utility services (gas, electricity) and insurance premiums. In the past three years since Great Dunmow Museum last applied, grant schemes have changed within the Council and there is currently no surplus resource in the appropriate revenue budgets. However, officers have identified that an earmarked reserve called Promotion of Local Centres could provide funding for the current year pending consideration of Great Dunmow Museum's request for future years. This reserve was set up many years ago to fund various one-off developments in the main population centres of the district. It now stands at only £7,750 but with no planned use identified. It would appear that Great Dunmow Museum's request can be justified as falling within the very wide criteria for use of this reserve.
8. To meet its costs, Great Dunmow Museum relies on both Great Dunmow Town Council and Uttlesford District Council grants. Great Dunmow Town Council have been contributing a similar grant towards Great Dunmow Museum and have already agreed to £2,750 for three years.
9. The Great Dunmow Museum Society makes a small annual income from sales of souvenirs, subscriptions, a share of admission charges to The Maltings, donations, sponsorship and fund-raising. This income is used to pay collections insurance, publicity, purchase of shop stock and consumables, acquisitions for the collection and display materials. The Museum is run

entirely by volunteers, who contribute many hours of their time in preparing exhibitions, invigilation, publicity and work on the collections etc.

10. Great Dunmow Museum provides an important local service for the Great Dunmow community, school parties and visitors to the area, attracting around 2,000 visitors per year. They provided regularly-changing exhibitions on local history, encouraging repeat visits to The Maltings, and a much-appreciated heritage focus for the town and immediate area.
11. Previously, the Council grant has carried the condition that Great Dunmow Museum works towards the standard for the Registration Scheme (government minimum standard for public museums). This scheme has now been revised as the Accreditation scheme for museums. The Curator of Saffron Walden Museum, Uttlesford Museum Service, acts as curatorial adviser to Great Dunmow Museum, as required by the scheme. It is therefore recommended that the grant carries the following condition:

“The grant is conditional on the Great Dunmow Museum working towards the Accreditation Standard for museums, and continuing to invite the Curator, Saffron Walden Museum / Uttlesford Museum Service, to attend their AGM and committee meetings on a regular basis.”

### Risk Analysis

<b>Risk</b>	<b>Likelihood</b>	<b>Impact</b>	<b>Mitigating actions</b>
Museum in Great Dunmow Maltings will cease to operate without grant for the current year	High	High	Securing grant of £2,750 for the current year will enable Museum to meet its operating costs