

Committee: Community Committee

Agenda Item

Date: 22 January 2009

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Title: GRANT REQUEST FROM GREAT
DUNMOW MUSEUM

Author: Carolyn Wingfield, Curator Saffron Walden Museum, 01799 510640 & Richard Auty, Head of Community Engagement, 01799 510500 Item for decision

Summary

- 1 Great Dunmow Museum Society, which runs the Great Dunmow Museum in the ground floor of the Maltings, has requested an increase in its annual grant from the Council for the three-year period 2009 – 2012, from £2,750 per year to £3,050 per year.
- 2 However, the draft budget figure for 2009/10 is £2,750. Full Council agreed on 16 December 2008 that there would be no increases in budgets unless they were self funding. Therefore if the committee does wish to increase the grant to £3,050 per year, corresponding savings from other grants will have to be identified.
- 3 The committee should be aware that in addition to the grant, the Council also grants discretionary charitable relief on Business Rates to Great Dunmow Museum Society which will cost the Council £942 in 2009/10 and will increase year-on-year.
- 4 The grant from the Council is critical in allowing the Society to meet the running costs of the Great Dunmow Museum, which provides a cultural and local history facility for the town and its environs. The grant is conditional upon Great Dunmow Museum continuing to work towards the national Accreditation standard for museums as defined by the Museums Libraries Archives Council (MLA).

Recommendations

- 5 That the Community Committee approves a grant of £2,750 per year for the next three financial years, subject to final budget approval in February.
- 6 The grant is conditional on working towards the accreditation standard for museums, and specifically on producing a draft Acquisition & Disposal Policy for the Great Dunmow Museum Society's AGM by 31 March 2009.

Background Papers

- 7 Letter requesting grant dated 7 August 2008 from Mr S P Schorah, Treasurer of Great Dunmow Museum Society, with copy of Dunmow Museum's Accounts and Balance Sheet for 2007 (see Appendix I).

Impact

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Communication/Consultation	No implications identified
Community Safety	No implications identified
Equalities	No implications identified
Finance	Grant of £2,750 per year for three years plus discretionary charitable Business Rates relief which equates to £942 for 2009/10 and increasing year-on-year. This is already built in to the draft budget for 20-09/10
Human Rights	No implications identified
Legal implications	No implications identified
Sustainability	Essential for sustainability of Great Dunmow Museum, and of The Maltings of which Dunmow Museum is a tenant
Ward-specific impacts	Great Dunmow and surrounding wards
Workforce/Workplace	Volunteer workforce at Great Dunmow Museum, The Maltings, Great Dunmow

Situation

- 9 Great Dunmow is an independent, volunteer-run museum covering the local history of Great Dunmow and its environs. The Museum occupies the ground floor of The Maltings in the town centre of Great Dunmow and is instrumental in attracting visitors (around 2,000 per year) to this historic building. The Museum is run and supported by a dedicated team of volunteers from Great Dunmow Museum Society (registered charity 1080286), with assistance of the Museum Support Group, Collectors Club and Historical Society. The number of volunteer-hours spent in running the Museum is estimated to be in excess of 1,700 per year. It provides a mixture of permanent and changing exhibits and is a useful educational resource for local schools, as well as an attraction for local residents and tourists, and welcomes many schoolchildren and adult groups for booked sessions.

- 10 Great Dunmow Museum was opened in February 2001 as part of the refurbishment of the Maltings. Under the management arrangements with the Maltings Trustees the Museum pays an annual service charge (currently around £5,000 per year) as its contribution to maintenance of the Maltings; other necessary expenditure, as itemised on the balance sheet, brings its annual expenditure to around £7,500 (2007 figures). Sale of souvenirs, entry fees and donations contribute about £1,500 per year towards this. Since the Museum's inception, both Uttlesford District Council and Great Dunmow Town Council have made annual and equal grants to enable the Museum to meet its running costs, and grants have been agreed on a three-yearly cycle. Both Councils have paid Great Dunmow Museum an annual grant of £2,750 from 2006/07 to 2008/09. In addition to the annual service charge, Dunmow Museum would also be liable for 50% of the costs of any other work necessary on the Maltings building such as emergency or major repairs, or redecoration. To meet such eventualities, a contingency sum has been set aside in the Museum's SWBS account, which also provides funds for buying or commissioning souvenirs for sale. About £3,000 was spent in 2008 on stocking up with souvenirs, therefore the SWBS account is now a little over £8,000 which is earmarked for redecoration and repairs.
- 11 Great Dunmow Museum has requested renewal of the Council's grant for the next three years, 2009/10, 2010/11 and 2011/12, at £3,050 per year. The increase is due to inflation and particularly rising costs of energy and insurance. Great Dunmow Town Council has been asked to renew their grant at the same increased rate, and has already confirmed that it will do so.
- 12 Full Council agreed on 16 December 2008 that any increases in budgets must be self-funding; therefore an amount of £2,750 has been put in for 2009/10. If the committee wishes to meet the full grant request of £3,050 per year, then officers will have to cut another grant or grants to compensate for the additional expenditure.
- 13 As a registered charity, Great Dunmow Museum Society is eligible for charitable relief on Business Rates. This means that it automatically qualifies for 80% relief (i.e. the Society does not have to pay 80% of the Business Rates). It can then apply for discretionary relief on the remaining 20%, which it has done and which has been granted by the Council. This in effect means that the Council is subsidising the Business Rates for the Museum to the sum of £942 for 2009/10. This figure will rise year-on-year.
- 14 Great Dunmow Museum is reliant on the grants from both Uttlesford District Council and Great Dunmow Town Council to meet its operating costs. As there is no other identifiable source of income to cover museum revenue costs, withdrawal of the Council's grant could effectively force the Museum to close, and present a difficulty for The Maltings in finding another tenant for the ground floor.
- 15 The grant to Great Dunmow Museum has always been made on condition that the Museum works towards the standards set for public museums by the MLA's (Museums Libraries Archives Council) accreditation scheme (formerly

known as the Registration scheme). Great Dunmow Museum works to a commendable standard in its displays and collections care, and although storage of the collections (at present in private premises due to lack of a proper storage facility) needs a long-term solution, they are currently investigating a potential local solution. The Museum has access to professional advice and assistance from Saffron Walden Museum and from the Essex Museum Development Officers based at the Essex Record Office. Foremost of the immediate improvements which Great Dunmow Museum needs to undertake is adoption of a formal Acquisition & Disposal Policy for its collections. The Curator, Saffron Walden Museum has advised officers of Great Dunmow Museum Society on the format and contents of this essential policy document and it is therefore recommended that renewal of the grant should be conditional on production of a draft Acquisition & Disposal Policy for Great Dunmow Museum Society's AGM by 31 March 2009 and continuing to work towards accreditation standards as agreed with the Essex Museum Development Officer and the Curator, Saffron Walden Museum.

Risk Analysis

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Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
Great Dunmow Museum being unable to meet its running costs and eventually closing if grant is not continued	3	4	Renewing grant for next three years, 2009 - 12

- 1 = Little or no risk or impact
- 2 = Some risk or impact – action may be necessary.
- 3 = Significant risk or impact – action required
- 4 = Near certainty of risk occurring, catastrophic effect or failure of project.

17 The risk assessment is made because Dunmow Museum relies on grants from both Uttlesford District Council and Great Dunmow Town Council to meet its routine running costs (annual service charge for the Maltings). No other sources of income or grants are available which could enable the Museum to meet these costs without the Council grants. The contingency sum held in the Museum's building society account, as explained above, is essentially for repairs and redecoration of the Maltings, and would quickly be exhausted if it had to be used to meet running costs. Cessation or significant reduction in the Council's grant would therefore make it impossible for Dunmow Museum to meet its running costs within the next couple of years.



Great Dunmow Museum
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CM6 1HH

Telephone: 01371 873162

7th August 2008.

Carolyn Wingfield
Curator
Saffron Walden Museum
Museum Street
Saffron Walden
Essex

Dear Carolyn,

GREAT DUNMOW MUSEUM GRANT FUNDING

We are now in the last year of our third phase of three year block grant funding arrangements with Uttlesford District Council, and wish to request further funding for 2009/10, 2010/11, and 2011/12.

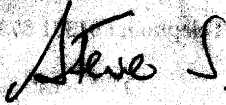
Our Museum continues to be run totally by volunteers, with first class professional support from yourself and your staff at the Saffron Walden Museum, as well as practical help and stewarding from our Museum Support Group, the Collectors Club and the Historical Society. When we were applying for our previous three year financial backing to establish our Museum in the Maltings, we stated as our intention that: *'This will not only contribute to the regeneration of the town centre in Great Dunmow, it will encourage tourism, as well as extend the Museum Service District-wide.'* We continue to endeavour to provide an excellent tourist attraction, with numbers around 2000 per annum, and the comments in the Visitors Book confirm that we are achieving this aim. With the necessary financial assistance from your Council we will continue to do so. In order to maintain this facility, we are requesting that the District Council's financial support be extended for a further three year period, in the sum of £3,050 each year. This figure is the result of the recent large increases in the cost of utility services of gas and electricity and insurance charges.

I am enclosing a copy of our Financial Statement for 2007. These show that we receive a small income from a share of the admission charge to the building, annual subscription fees to the Museum Support Group, sales of souvenirs, sponsorship, donations and some fund raising. This income is used to pay for our insurance, publicity, replacing souvenirs, purchasing consumables, artefacts and display materials for the exhibitions.

Supported by Great Dunmow Town Council and Uttlesford District Council.

We are extremely grateful to Uttlesford District Council for all the support they have given us, and trust that they will continue to include the finance for our Museum in their budget, as without this grant aid in conjunction with Great Dunmow Town Council, we will be unable to continue our project, and would be forced to close.
Please contact me if you require any further information:

Yours sincerely,



S.P. Schorah. Treasurer.

cc. Owen Wilson, Clerk – Great Dunmow Town Council

Supported by Great Dunmow Town Council and Uttlesford District Council.

Great Dunmow Museum Society

Accounts and balance Sheet for 2007

Income

Income		Expenditure	
Bank balances @ 31.12.06			611.08
Museum Acc	602.85	Artefacts	
Museum Acc No. 2	3255.47	Consumables	114.65
SWBS	4285.44	Displays	192.43
	8143.76	Functions	65.43
		Prof Fees	71.00
		Insurance	787.50
Donations	788.15	Publicity/Advertising	189.00
Entry Fees	333.20	Service Charge	4804.21
Functions/fundraising		Souvenirs	
Grants		VAT	632.80
Town Council -Service charge	2750.00		7468.10
Uttlesford' DC -Service charge	5500.00		
Uttlesford DC clock grant	1200.00		
HM Cust & Ex - VAT Credit	499.85		
Interest	150.64	Bank balances @31.12.07	
Souvenirs	465.87	Museum Acc	970.62
Subscriptions	226.39	Museum Acc No. 2	569.60
VAT	136.54	SWBS	11186.08
	12050.64		20194.40
	20194.40		

I certify to the best of my knowledge that this is a true record of the Museum Society's accounts.

Signed *S.P. Schorah* S.P. Schorah Treasurer.

Date *20.03.08*

Checked and agreed
Michael Davey
20.3.08
MICHAEL DAVEY