

MUSEUM MANAGEMENT JOINT WORKING PARTY held at SAFFRON WALDEN MUSEUM at 7.00 pm on 10 FEBRUARY 2003

Present:- Councillors Mrs J E Menell, D M Miller and D J Morson (Uttlesford Members), N B Newman, D Laing, and E Planterose (Museum Society Representatives).

Officers in attendance:- Mrs S McLagan, M T Purkiss and Ms C Wingfield.

MM14 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN FOR THE MEETING

It was agreed that Councillor Mrs J E Menell be appointed Chairman for the meeting.

MM15 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor A R Row and Mr A Watson. The Chairman welcomed to the meeting Mr David Laing, the Museum Society's Treasurer.

MM16 NOTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The notes of the meeting held on 31 October 2002 were received, confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

MM17 BUSINESS ARISING

(i) Minute MM11(iii) - 50 Castle Street

It was reported that the extent of the parcel of land concerned had now been clarified and a valuation would be obtained for the rent of this land for use as garden purposes. An approach would be made to a local valuer to provide an appropriate valuation.

(ii) Minute MM12 - Museum Storage

Mr Newman said that he would like an early response concerning the possible use of the cellars at the King Edward VI Almshouses for the storage of museum artefacts. The Curator agreed to inspect the cellar as soon as possible.

(iii) Minute MM13 – Dunmow Museum and Maltings

It was noted that the Community and Leisure Committee had decided to make grants to the Dunmow Museum and the Maltings.

MM18

REPORT OF THE CHAIRMAN OF THE MUSEUM SOCIETY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Mr Newman reported that the Museum Society Management Committee had considered the report of the Best Value Reference Group and, in particular, had examined the items for improvement. In order to achieve the improvements identified the Society would like to appoint a membership secretary, a volunteer organiser and an events organiser and to attract volunteers with time and skills. The Society would also look at ways of improving publicity. Mr Planterose said that he would speak to the Uttlesford Volunteer Bureau to see whether they could assist in providing suitable volunteers. Mr Newman said that the Society had now appointed a Secretary. The Society had also looked at the issue of corporate membership with a possible minimum annual corporate subscription of £100.

MM19

CURATOR'S REPORT

The Curator submitted her quarterly report for the period October-December 2002. It was noted that in pursuit of one of the Best Value Review's recommendations, the Museum had appointed local management consultants, Campaign One, to organise an evening reception on 27 March 2003 to promote the Museum among the local business community. She said that the invitations for this would be going out on 14 February.

In relation to the electronic till, Mr Newman expressed his concern that this had still not been implemented and said that the Museum needed to be more business like. The Curator said that work was now in hand and the till would be trialled during April.

The Curator reported that the Museum had been successful in obtaining an HLF Your Heritage Award of £28,500 for tapestries which would go to two specialist textile conservationists early in 2003 for 1-2 year treatment and subsequent storage and display. Once repaired, cleaned and backed, the fragments would be displayed in turn in the furniture gallery. This had been a highly satisfactory outcome for this long-term project. It was noted that the application had been prepared by the Conservation Officer with assistance from the Curator and the Working Party expressed their thanks and congratulations to all involved.

It was noted that shop income had dropped dramatically during December each year due mainly to the small number of school visits during that period and the demands of Christmas shopping.

The Working Party received details of recent events at the Museum and noted that the Moon Rock Day on 23 November had been particularly successful with 578 members of the public attending.

MM20

THE BEST VALUE IMPROVEMENT PLAN

The Head of Community and Leisure reported that the Leisure and Cultural Services Best Value Review Final Report and Improvement Plan had been approved by the Community and Leisure Committee at its meeting on 7 January 2003.

The Improvement Plan contained the following actions which were relevant to the Museum:-

- The Museum Joint Working Party to have an executive role
- The Working Party to pursue the action plan agreed with the Museum Society
- Review all entry charges
- Provide a new store for the Museum's reserve collection
- Make more effective use of the reception area, the local history and temporary exhibition galleries. Seek to increase retail sales.
- Explore the value and interest in other Uttlesford museums (including the Fry Art Gallery) attending an annual meeting of the Working Party.

MM21

TERMS OF REFERENCE

As reported in the previous Minute, one of the recommendations of the Best Value Review was for the terms of reference of the Museum Management Joint Working Party to be amended, to give it an executive role as the focus for practical collaboration between the Council and the Society.

The Memorandum of Agreement between the Council and the Museum Society stated that the Working Party was set up as a consultative body. Therefore, both the Community and Leisure Committee and the Museum Society would need to approve any change in approach and then the Memorandum itself would have to be changed. This would also need the approval of both parties.

The Working Party then considered the following draft terms of reference and felt these provided a positive way forward which would enable closer co-operation between the Council and the Museum Society:

NAME:

MUSEUM MANAGEMENT JOINT COMMITTEE – Uttlesford Museum Service and Saffron Walden Museum

MEMBERSHIP:

Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the District Council's Community and Leisure Committee and two other Members together with four members appointed by the Saffron Walden Museum Society. The Chairman or Vice-Chairman of the Community and Leisure Committee and Chairman or Vice-Chairman of the Museum Society to attend the meetings of each other's committee.

TERMS OF REFERENCE:

The Committee is to meet a minimum of four times a year, where possible, between meetings of the Museum Society and the Community and Leisure Committee to:-

- Agree and recommend to the Community and Leisure Committee the Uttlesford Museum Service and Saffron Walden Museum strategic objectives and long term plans.
- Discuss matters relating to the management of the Service and Museum.
- Receive a quarterly report from the Museum Curator about the Service and Museum.
- Act as the Service and Museum's Governing Body for the purposes of Registration and implementation of appropriate codes of practice.
- Appoint from the Committee the District Council's representative to attend at and report back on meetings of the Museums in Essex (MIE) Committee and any other relevant meetings as determined by the Committee.
- Invite representatives of other Uttlesford museums and public galleries to attend annually at one of the meetings of the Committee.
- Recommend to the Community and Leisure Committee charges to be levied on all users of the Service and Museum having regard to promoting the accessibility of the service and social inclusion.
- Where appropriate, make recommendations to the Community and Leisure Committee, concerning major projects, capital developments and any other significant proposals affecting the Service and Museum.
- Generally promote and act as advocates for the Service and Museum.

In relation to the appointment of a representative on the Museums in Essex Committee, the Curator would ascertain whether it was possible to appoint two representatives and, if so, this paragraph would be amended accordingly.

RECOMMENDED that

- 1 the above terms of reference for the Museum Management Joint Committee be approved and recommended to the Community and Leisure Committee and the Saffron Walden Museum Society and
- 2 subject to their approval the necessary changes be made to the Memorandum of Agreement.