

MUSEUM MANAGEMENT TASK GROUP held at SAFFRON WALDEN MUSEUM at 7.30 pm on 9 FEBRUARY 2006

Present:- Councillor D J Morson – Chairman.
Councillor J I Loughlin (Uttlesford District Council) and J Bullen and R Wallace (Museum Society).

Officers in attendance:- D Burrige, M T Purkiss and C Wingfield.

MM25 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors R P Chambers and V Pedder and from D Laing, E Planterose and A Watson.

MM26 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 31 October 2005 were received, confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

MM27 BUSINESS ARISING

(i) Minute MM19 – Signage

It was noted that an order had been placed for new directional signs to the Museum and these would be in place by the end of March 2006.

(ii) Minute MM20 – Resource Centre Project

It was noted that the Council's Legal Section had advised that forming a charitable trust might not be the best option and other ideas were being investigated. A report would be submitted to the next meeting of the Resource Centre Task Group.

MM28 DRAFT ACQUISITION AND DISPOSAL POLICY

The Curator had circulated a copy of the draft acquisition and disposal policy prior to the meeting. The policy set out what and how the Museum collected and under what circumstances it might dispose of items from the collections within the constraints of the accreditation scheme for museums and the Museum Associations Code of Ethics and Ethical Guidelines on Acquisition.

She said that the policy was fundamental to the work of the Museum and its involvement with the Government's accreditation scheme. She added that the draft policy reflected the Museum's dual role of providing global and local collections. The policy would be submitted to the Council's Community Committee on 16 March 2006.

The Chairman thanked the Curator for a thorough and interesting report and the Curator also expressed her thanks to Sue Hollingworth for the work which she had put in on behalf of the Museum Society.

MM29 **FORWARD PLAN AND FEASIBILITY STUDY ON INCOME GENERATION**

The Curator reported that, following an advertisement for a consultant to undertake a feasibility study on income generation, 18 expressions of interest had been made and eight quotations submitted.

Following an assessment of the quotations, PHT Consultants had been selected and this company had experience in the financial, retail and heritage environments. Work was already in progress and representatives of the company would report to the next meeting of the Resource Centre Project Team.

The consultant's fees amounted to £4,650 and they would be concentrating on the following four areas:-

- potential for improving income generation from the shop;
- feasibility of providing a refreshment outlet;
- hiring of premises;
- reproduction of collections.

It was intended that the final report would be submitted at the end of March/beginning of April and would include costed options. The Curator concluded that she would be meeting with representatives of English Heritage at the Museum on 3 March for an informal discussion with Museum Society Officers on ideas for the future extension of the Museum building and improvement of the castle ruins and grounds. These discussions and the feasibility study on income generation would then guide the Museum Society in briefing an architect to assess the potential for extending the Museum and the approximate cost of such a scheme.

MM30 **REPORT OF THE SAFFRON WALDEN MUSEUM SOCIETY**

Mr Wallace submitted the report of the Museum Society and drew particular attention to the successful "call my bluff" event and a recent bequest of £11,000.

MM31 **CURATOR'S REPORT**

The Task Group considered the Curator's Report for the period from October – December 2005.

The Curator had said that donations amounting to nearly £20,000 had so far been received towards the Heritage Quest Centre and a further £10,000 was

available from the Museum's Society sale of land at 50 Castle Street. Together with the £32,000 previously agreed from BAA, this meant that over £50,000 had now been secured.

She reported that the toilets had now been refurbished and the feedback from the public was very positive.

She said that the two Toi moko (Maori tattooed and preserved heads) had been repatriated to the Museum of New Zealand.

It was noted that visitor numbers and shop takings were slightly down in 2005 compared to 2004. It was also noted that the BBC would shortly be filming at the Museum for the Inside Out programme which would be focussing on issues behind the scenes at museums.

The meeting ended at 8.25 pm.