

18 February 2014

Dear Councillor

MUSEUM MANAGEMENT WORKING GROUP

A meeting of the Museum Management Working Group will be held at the School Room, Saffron Walden Museum on **Wednesday 26 February 2014 at 6.00 pm.**

Yours faithfully

JOHN MITCHELL

Chief Executive

A G E N D A

1	Apologies for absence and declarations of interest.	
2	Minutes of the meeting held on 27 November 2013.	2
3	Curator's quarterly report (October - December).	5
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5	Store update (verbal report)	
6	Museum and castle site update (verbal update)	
7	Date of next meeting.	
8	Any other items that the Chairman considers to be urgent.	

To: Councillors R Chambers, K Eden, D Morson and H Rolfe (Uttlesford District Council members) and to D Laing, R Priestley, P Salvidge and A Watson (Museum Society Limited members).

Lead Officer: Carolyn Wingfield (01799 510640)
Democratic Services Officer: Adam Rees (01799 510548)

MUSEUM MANAGEMENT WORKING GROUP held at the SCHOOL ROOM, SAFFRON WALDEN MUSEUM at 6pm on 27 NOVEMBER 2013

Present: Councillor D Morson – Vice Chairman in the Chair
Councillors R Chambers and H Rolfe (Uttlesford Members)
P Salvage and A Watson (Museum Society Limited).

Officers in attendance: R Auty (Assistant Director Corporate Services),
P Snow (Democratic and Electoral Services Manager), A Webb (Director of Corporate Services), N Wittman (ICT and Corporate Support Team Manager) and C Wingfield (Curator).

MM10 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor Eden (Uttlesford) and D Laing (Museum Society).

MM11 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 14 August 2013 were received and signed as a correct record.

MM12 MATTERS ARISING

(i) Minute MM7 – Museum Access Policy

The Director of Corporate Services confirmed that the Cabinet had approved the Museum Access Policy.

MM13 CURATOR'S QUARTERLY REPORT

The Curator presented her report for July to September 2013 and highlighted the points noted below.

Staffing – The redundancy of the Conservation Officer would take effect in January 2014 and this post would then be deleted. The post of Collections Officer (Human History) had been advertised. A number of assistants had now been employed on casual contracts.

Buildings and Site – The building contractor had now commenced work in the Museum. Weather proofing work was underway to deal with dampness. She was expecting to vacate the Curator's house in Castle Street by the end of January

Collections and Research – The horse-drawn vehicles in temporary accommodation at Whitensmere Farm had been cleaned and must be removed from the existing barn when the agreement expired in March. Various options were explained for the storage of these vehicles. The

options included a possible loan or transfer arrangement with a willing museum or, as a last resort, outright disposal.

Members asked a number of questions about whether it would be possible to retain these historic vehicles or to ensure they were placed on exhibition somewhere locally, possibly within the Castle grounds as previously discussed. The Curator agreed to explore all possible options and would then report the outcome.

The Curator said that Newport Grammar School had taken part in the dig on the Common and this had given pupils at the school the opportunity to undertake project work.

MM14 MUSEUM SOCIETY REPORT

Tony Watson reported that work was proceeding on the preparation of a revised lease for the Curator's House and there would be an updated management agreement.

MM15 STORE UPDATE

The ICT and Corporate Support Team Manager gave an update on the provision of the store for the Museum's collections. The contract had been awarded in November on the basis of the tenders received. Work on the store would start on 6 January and be completed by 30 June 2014.

She explained the detailed checking procedures followed by officers in discussing the scheduled work with the contractor which had resulted in some significant savings in cost. It was clarified that racking was not included in the work to be completed as part of the contract but that lottery funding would be sought for the provision of suitable racking for the storage of items within the collection.

The Curator explained the process for the submission of an application to the Heritage Lottery Fund. This would be for a sum in the region of £100k. She had been advised to apply for funding in April rather than at the end of the current lottery funding period. Some match funding would probably be required as part of the application.

There was a deadline to vacate the store at Newport to coincide with the facility at Shire Hill.

Councillor Rolfe asked whether racking had been included in the original budget. The Director of Corporate Services said that racking had been removed from the specification as well as a number of other items and this had resulted in cost reductions of £175k. He said that he would provide a breakdown of the relevant contract sums for the benefit of members and Museum Society representatives.

MM16 **MUSEUM AND CASTLE UPDATE**

The Director of Corporate Services updated the working group with information about work on the Castle which was being led by Andrew Taylor. A meeting on the whole site had taken place earlier in the week and clarification was being sought from the HLF as to whether they would require a single bid.

It was hoped that bids could be submitted in either two or three phases. If so, the first bid was expected to be ready for submission by the summer. He explained how the HLF's likely preference for a single bid could be met in more than one phase.

Councillor Rolfe asked whether the display of the horse-drawn vehicles could be accommodated within the remodelled site.

In summary, the Assistant Director Corporate Services said that he would confirm by email the outcome of the meeting with representatives of the HLF.

MM17 **CONTINGENCY PLANS FOR THE MUSEUM**

The Curator explained the changes needed to the Museum service to take account of current levels of staffing. It was proposed to suspend some services temporarily during January and February.

Once the Conservation Officer post became vacant in early January, due to a combination of staff leave and time taken to recruit to the Collections Officer post, the service would temporarily be reduced to one full time officer and the security officer post only. There would accordingly be no resource available to deal with a number of aspects of the service. As a result, there would be a temporary suspension of work in connection with research enquiries and new collections. In addition there were no school visits scheduled in January.

Members noted this information.

MM18 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The date of the next meeting would be Wednesday 26 February 2014 at 6pm. Working Group members expressed a wish to meet together at some suitable point to view the changes taking place on the Museum and Castle site and this would be arranged as appropriate.

The meeting ended at 6.45pm.

SAFFRON WALDEN MUSEUM

CURATOR'S QUARTERLY REPORT October - December 2013

1 Museum Management and Staff

1.1 Management

Forward Plan 2013-2018 and Museum Development

Groundworks for the new store at Shirehill have been completed and outline plans agreed, for construction to start in the New Year. Consultants Purcell continue work for the Council's Planning department on a site management plan for the Castle and Museum site.

Accreditation

The Arts Council have delayed the current round of Accreditation due to workload and the Museum has now been invited to submit its return by June 2014. Remaining work to be done concerns collections care and documentation, to be completed as soon as the new Collections Officer (Human History) is in post.

1.2 Staff

The Conservation Officer was made redundant and will be leaving on 10th January 2014, after over 26 years of service caring for the Museum's collections. The post of Collections Officer (Human History) – replacing the Documentation & Exhibitions Officer post – has been advertised and interviews will take place in mid-January. The post of Security Officer (2.5 days per week) has been revised and from January Stefan Shambrook will be working 4 days per week as Security & Premises Officer (Tue-Fri alternating with Tue + Thur-Sat).

Congratulations to Libby Gibsone (Museum Assistant) on the birth of her son Thomas in November.

1.3 Volunteers and Work Experience

Our regular team of volunteers at the desk and behind-the-scenes continues to flourish and provide vital support and skills during the current staff shortage.

1.4 Training and Seminars Attended

29 Nov	SHARE Natural History network meeting in Cambridge attended by Natural Sciences Officer
3 Dec	Training meeting for Bishop's Stortford Museum volunteers held at Saffron Walden Museum by Curator and Conservation Officer
5 Dec	SHARE workshop on museum storage hosted by Saffron Walden Museum, Curator and Conservation Officer
6 Dec	Packaging workshop for Local History Recorders held at SWM by Conservation Officer
19 Dec	Manual Handling Course given to all new Casual staff by Conservation Officer

1.5 Health & Safety

A meeting with David Cottrell, Health & Safety Officer in December raised continuing issues over the Fall Arrest system on the roof, which still requires modification to reach the corner hoppers. (Total Access due to undertake annual statutory inspection in early 2014). Council officers involved in working at height issues have been informed of the situation.

Fire evacuation drill undertaken in the Museum.

2 Buildings and Site

2.1 Museum Building

A building survey was carried out by Council contractors. Between Times (contractors specializing in work on historic buildings) carried out work to clear downpipes and re-point brickwork on the Museum, to reduce or eliminate the problems with damp in some areas. Sunfish have taken over the Council contract (formerly with Chubb) for fire alarms, detectors and extinguishers and carried out an inspection of the Museum and schoolroom buildings.

2.2 Laboratory/Schoolroom

Downpipes and gutters cleared by Between Times.

Conservation equipment now surplus to requirements, lab tools and some supplies were donated to the Conservation Department, University of Lincoln with whom we have had a 25-year association. Other items went to local conservators via the East Anglian Conservation Forum, and a Lincoln textile conservation studio took the tapestry frame ends bought by the Museum Society some 15 years ago.

2.3 Newport Store

Sunfish inspected fire alarms, detectors and extinguishers.

2.4 40 Castle Street

The Curator's house is due to be vacated by the Curator in January, to allow the Council to rent out the property on the commercial market. The additional income which this will produce is needed to maintain Museum budgets and staffing at a viable level in the face of cuts.

2.5 Grounds and Castle Site

A bat survey was carried out in the grounds, including the castle site, by Purcell (consultants for the Planning Department) and the hedge around the castle was cut in October. The protective frost cover was placed over the cracked glacial erratic boulder in November.

3 Collections and Research

3.1 Acquisitions and Disposals

Of 62 acquisitions entered in the register this quarter, 30 entries were for Greek and Roman coins and historic OS maps 'found in stores' with no recorded accession number. Of new acquisitions, the most significant was the hoard of medieval silver coins from Farnham (treasure 2011 T242 purchased by the Society), finds and records from 15 sites in SE Uttlesford detected by M Cuddeford, and a number of donations of Victorian – 20th century costume and textiles.

The Treasure Appeal launched to raise funds for purchase of 5 treasure finds has resulted in a number of donations to the Society, meanwhile applications for grant-aid from various organisations have resulted in substantial grants towards one outstanding item and an announcement on treasure acquired by the Museum is expected in early 2014.

3.2 Collections Care and Conservation

The Horse-drawn vehicles are now all together in a barn near Saffron Walden, where they were cleaned and photographed. Options for their future retention or disposal are being assessed because when the current rental agreement for the barn ends in March, the Museum will be unable to house and care for all of these vehicles. An illustrated report has been produced and circulated to appropriate rural life museums in the region, also a notice has been placed in the *Museums Journal* on-line *Find an Object* section advertising intent to dispose; so far only one expression of interest has been received.

A circular map in the Organics store was investigated and found to be a Wind Dial possibly dating from the late 18th century and quite rare, albeit in a poor condition. Research on a mysterious cased scientific instrument or technical model in the same store has not yielded any results so far.

3.3 Documentation

0 new acquisitions catalogued this quarter (12 textiles were accessioned but no Documentation & Exhibitions Officer in post to document them on computer) and backlog / updates for

	New Acquisitions	Backlog (existing collections not previously catalogued on Modes)	Edits and Updates to existing records
Human history colln.s	0	0	0
Natural history colln.s	0	0	1779
Total	0	0	1779

Effective Collections (World Cultures project)

Records for the website are now edited and the next step is to get quotes from website designers. It remains a struggle to bring this project to a satisfactory conclusion due to lack of curatorial staff.

Essex Numismatics Society

Roger Barrett, working with the Curator, has identified and sorted a large number of ‘miscellaneous’ Roman and other coins. Some have been accessioned, added to coin trays and location cards completed; others which are duplicates and/or poor or illegible coins, have been set aside for educational use or disposal.

3.4 Loans In

The Fitzwilliam Museum kindly loaned a number of Egyptian objects for the *Re-Imagining Egypt* exhibition.

3.5 Loans Out

The watercolour of *The Almshouses* by Edward Bawden has been safely returned from exhibition at the First Site gallery in Colchester and re-hung in the Local History gallery. Costume has been returned from loan to the *China in the East* touring exhibition.

3.6 Object Identification and Enquiries

Object identifications this quarter: **8**

Collection Enquiries this quarter: **33**

3.7 Research

7 research visits in person, in addition to regular collections volunteers, including:

- An ecologist from Greengage to obtain biological records for the Museum grounds and castle site and to discuss ideas for an environmental management plan for the site.
- Fijian objects (Dr A Mills)
- Annotated books of Gabriel Harvey.
- World War 1 documents.
- John Helder Wedge collection (Australia / Aborigine artefacts) by Kimberley Benton

4 Displays and Visitor Services

4.1 Permanent Galleries

The **17th Essex Rifle Volunteers “colour”** or flag was collected from the textile conservation studio and put on display with other objects belonging to the Volunteers that were previously on exhibition in the Military case, and the flag adds a touch of colour. An article on the project was written for the grant giving body, the Essex Heritage Trust, and will appear in their Newsletter

The **studio pottery** loaned by the Keatley Trust was re-displayed in the Ceramics Gallery but requires new object labels to complete it. Work on these displays has stalled while the post of Documentation & Exhibitions Officer has remained vacant. An **updated dolls and toys display** was mounted in the Costume Gallery under new, brighter LED lighting that is not harmful to textiles. A new, secure display case with internal lighting was ordered from Mayvaert in Belgium for treasure acquisitions and coins (Art Fund Treasure Plus grant) to replace the Roman Potter’s workshop in 2014.

4.2 Temporary Exhibitions

The *1950s - Having it so Good* exhibition closed and it was returned to Rutland, with many loaned objects that augmented the show returned to their owners.

Re-Imagining Egypt, an exhibition exploring 300,000 years of Egyptian history alongside contemporary art by the Egyptian artists Khaled Hafez and school children from the local community, opened on 16 November. The two private views for *Re-Imagining Egypt* were very well attended by the children who had participated and their families, and later by local dignitaries, Museum Society members and friends.

4.3 Visitor Services

	Public		Schools incl. adults		Total	
	2013	2012	2013	2012	2013	2012
October	1516	1119	421	331	1937	1450
November	860	783	412	286	1272	1069
December	876	687	213	225	1091	912
Totals	3252	2589	1046	842	4298	3431

Shop

	2013	2012

Tickets

	2013	2012
October	985.50	746.00
November	479.75	499.75
December	528.50	529.00
Totals £	1993.75	1774.75

October	713.08	451.22
November	411.18	877.35
December	476.51	141.25
Totals	1600.77	1469.82

Donations

	2013	2012
October	136.29	121.16
November	57.17	119.70
December	64.93	89.70
Total £	258.39	330.56

Publicity, Marketing and Website

We now have Facebook ‘likes’ 252 and 567 ‘Followers’ on Twitter. The Council website including the Museum pages is being rebuilt and Museum pages have received **????** page-views this quarter.

5 Education, Events and Outreach

5.1 Education

No. of sessions taken by Learning Officer: 29 paying sessions (including one taught at a school, total of adults 120 children 662) and **9 free sessions** for the *Re-imagining Egypt* project (199 children and 31 adults), **2 independent visits** (55 children 5 adults), **2 loan boxes** were taken out (Local history and Victorians). Taking into consideration the Egyptian workshops, **this quarter represents record educational benefit with 38 sessions taught to 840 children from 21 different schools and community groups since the Learning post was made part-time.**

Analysis of School Visits and Pupil Numbers

No. of pupils in sessions taught by Learning Officer in Museum *	641
No. of pupils taught in visits out to schools by Learning Officer	21
No. of pupils in independent visits to Museum *	55
No. of pupils benefiting from schools loan boxes in classroom	65
Total no. of pupils benefiting educationally from Museum Service	782

* These figures, plus the 199 children and 31 adults who took part in the Egyptian workshops, plus 120 teachers/adults accompanying paying school groups provide total school visits in Visitor table in 4.3.

5.2 Events on-site (in Museum and grounds)

Date	Event and Staff	No. Attending
1 Oct	Saffron Walden Initiative event Museum Society directors, CW, GT, SK objects)	25
5 Oct	Big Draw (GT and AG)	91
30 and 31 Oct	Space Race half-term events (GT and AG) (136 + 178)	314
31 Oct	Halloween with St Clare's Hospice (GT and AG)	123
15 Nov	Private Views for Re-imagining Egypt (GT and CW)	210
3 Dec	Training meeting, Bishop's Stortford Museum vols (CW, LM)	15
5 Dec	SHARE seminar on museum storage (CW, LM)	20
6 Dec	Workshop on packaging for Local History recorders (LM)	6
7 Dec	Xmas tree decorations (GT and AG)	107
9 Dec	Museum Society Xmas Party	97
19 Dec	Meeting and Christmas party of the East Anglian Conservators Forum in Schoolroom (LM)	15
	TOTAL	1023

5.3 Outreach (Museum activities, talks and lectures at other venues)

Date	Event and Staff	No. Attending
9 Oct	GT talk to Littlebury Ladies	32
11 Nov	GT and Khaled Hafez talk to Museum Society	68
	Total	100

Other Museums and Local Groups supported (Uttlesford) groups, meetings

Museum staff have attended meetings, site visits, undertaken work or given advice to:

- Essex Field Club (1 meeting, treasurer work, Natural Sciences Officer)
- Essex Wildlife Trust Uttlesford Local Group (1 meeting, Natural Sciences Officer)
- Special Roadside Verges project (2 meetings, 2 planning applications, annual reports, winter cut, Natural Sciences Officer)
- Sustainable Uttlesford (1 meeting, 3 planning applications, 1 comment on Local Plan sites, Natural Sciences Officer)
- Fry Art Gallery (marking objects and light reducing film for skylights, Conservation Officer; 1 committee meeting, Curator)
- Thaxted parish councillor – informal meeting and advice on potential heritage project (Curator)
- Searchers Metal Detecting Club (2 meetings, Curator)

Attendance of meetings, advice, support or involvement in organisations outside Uttlesford

None this quarter

Local Performance Indicators

Definition	This Quarter actual Q3	This Quarter target Q3	Annual Total 2013-14	Annual Target 2013-14
Visitors SI 12c	4,298	3,400		15,000
Users CI 39	7,222	5,200		22,000

Targets are based on average of previous three years' figures, including regular activities and events but excluding special and extra events which may be incorporated according to external circumstances.

Notes on Performance Indicators

Visitors are all those visiting the Museum in person, including activities and events in the grounds

Users are all those using the Museum Service, including those on-site (visitors, as above); those off-site (attending talk, display or other off-site activity by Museum staff) and those using the Museum 'remotely' (information, research enquiries and services by phone, fax, email, letter and website visits or 'Pageviews'). There were 2,719 Pageviews this quarter.

Comment on this quarter's results

Visitor figures are. 26% over target due to strong performance by school visits, *Re-Imagining Egypt* exhibition and its associated activities, but a range of other activities and events offered by the Museum have contributed.

User figures are. 34% over target, due partly to strong performance of visitors figures and also to the continuing high number of pageviews on website, although most website visits are of very short duration.

Future Programme, Jan – March 2014

1 Museum Management and Staff

Conservation Officer, Lynn Morrison, takes redundancy in January as the post has been deleted.

Recruitment of a Collections Officer (Human History).

Security and Premises Officer, Stefan Shambrook, now working 4 days per week.

2 Buildings and Site

Curator's house vacated for work by Council prior to re-letting.

3 Collections and Research

Work continues on a project to document the presence of protected species of animals and plants in the Natural History collections (Support Worker Madeleine Fanthorpe and Natural Sciences Officer Sarah Kenyon).

Work continues to re-house the horse-drawn vehicles and to assess, cost and apply for grants towards racking for the new Shire Hill store.

4 Displays and Visitor Services

Re-Imagining Egypt to continue until 23rd February 2014. *Secrets from the Stores* opening 8 March.

Visitors are being informed of new opening hours from January via notices, website, Twitter, Facebook and the local media.

Announcement and publicity for anticipated treasure acquisitions to accompany a new display in the archaeology gallery.

5 Education, Events and Outreach

School visits commence again in February once the Visitor & Learning Services Officer returns from Sudan (8 visits are already booked for the period). Events from Jan-March include: February half-term family activities *Ancient Egyptian Magic*, creating a magical Shabti.

**Museum Management Working Group
Meeting 26th February 2014
Museum Society Chairman's Report**

The Highlight of last autumn was the opening of the "Re-Imagining Egypt" exhibition. We were very fortunate to have the active support of the artist Khalid Hafez with Gemma Tully in the curation of the Exhibits. The support of two local schools that produced work for display together with new work created by Khalid especially for this Exhibition has been appreciated both by members and by the public visitors.

The Appeal for the Treasure items has been very successful and we have been able to raise sufficient funds to add to the grants obtained by the Curator to secure all the items we wanted. The Society will host an evening to thank both "Finders and Funders" in April. The Board will be considering the details of this meeting and also a further evening for members tomorrow evening. Some will be sorry to see the departure of our "Roman Potter" from the Great Hall but he had served his time! His place is to be taken by a new display which will be enhanced by the removal of the large table to give greater access. It will also have the benefit of giving a larger space for our social activities.

The Chairman and Vice-Chairman signed off the plans for the new store last month. The agreed Programme provides for "handover" on the 30th June. Subject to the raising of funds the installation of racking will be followed by the transfer of the contents from Newport to the new store. The Support Committee is now helping the Museum staff with the planning for the move of the contents from the Newport store in early July. The next Exhibition (opens 8 March) "Secrets from the Stores" will elicit public support and volunteers for the storage project. The Board will be considering the planning for the re-development of the Museum site and will take account of the work to be carried out on the Castle.

The Support Committee undertook a skills audit of members to promote volunteering. As a result we have appointed a new web master and an up-date of the web site is in progress. The Support Committee would like to link this to the Council's web site to enhance the information available on the web and to raise the profile of the Museum. A further appointment is Judith Rodden who will help with publicity. Further volunteers are being recruited.

Finally the Board will be asked to agree to donate the Jobmaster's wagon to the Burwell Museum. This wagon was owned by J.Carter of Burwell and some of his descendants remember riding on this! We are considering a visit to this Museum later this year. We have also obtained the possibility of an extension of the tenancy of the Barn and the Board will be asked to approve this extension for a further six months tomorrow. The future of the remaining vehicles must now be considered.

Tony Watson
17th February 2014.