

**MUSEUM MANAGEMENT WORKING GROUP held at SAFFRON
WALDEN MUSEUM at 6.00pm on 26 NOVEMBER 2014**

Present: Councillor K Eden (Chairman)
Councillors R Chambers and V Ranger (Uttlesford Members)
D Laing and A Watson (Museum Society Limited)

Officers present: R Auty (Assistant Director Corporate Services), A Rees
(Democratic and Electoral Services Officer), A Webb (Director
of Finance and Corporate Services) and C Wingfield (Curator)

MM17 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Morson and from R Priestley (Museum Society).

MM18 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 September 2014 were signed by the Chairman as a correct record, subject to the amendment in MM13 of “broom” for “brougham”.

MM19 CHAIRMAN’S REPORT

Mr Watson said the main points of his report would be dealt with under the other items of the meeting. He added that the training of volunteers for the relocation of the store from Newport to Shirehill was progressing well.

MM20 MUSEUM QUARTERLY REPORT JULY-SEPTEMBER 2014

The Curator highlighted the key points of her report. Visitor and user figures for the quarter had exceeded their respective targets of 4,000 and 5,700. The North West Essex at War exhibition had opened on 2 August and had so far proven successful at attracting visitors. The Museum’s social media presence continued to grow.

MM21 MUSEUM WEBSITE

The Assistant Director Corporate Services said officers had met with Mr Morton (Museum Society) and discussed the new museum website he had designed. Following some changes the council’s web team wished to make, it was anticipated that the new website would go live in the New Year.

MM22 ACCREDITATION UPDATE

Members received an update from the Curator about the Museum's accreditation submission. The Arts Council had granted the Museum provisional accreditation for three months from 30 September. Before the Arts Council could grant full accreditation, it had asked the Museum to submit published Cabinet minutes showing Cabinet had approved the Museum's accreditation policies, and signed copies of the revised management agreement, lease and sub-lease between the Council and Museum Society. This had now been done.

The Arts Council had noted the submission was highly detailed but, as was the case with all submissions, had suggested some areas for improvement when the return for accreditation was made in the future concerning collections care and documentation. The Museum was already making these suggested improvements.

MM23

SUMMARY OF STAGE 2 OF THE MUSEUM FORWARD PLAN

Members received a draft summary of the proposed museum extension and improvements programme. The Curator said the proposed extension to the museum could be split into three main areas, providing a new special exhibitions gallery, a new reception area with a larger shop and additional office space, and finally an activity and functions room.

Mr Watson said once construction was in a position to begin, a group comprising members of the Council and the Society should be formed to act as a monitoring body. It had been agreed that the Society would not provide any funding for redevelopment until 2018.

The Assistant Director Corporate Services said due to the work involved in the museum store move, it was highly unlikely that much detailed work could be done on stage 2 until at least the end of 2015. The Curator added that it could be possible to start some of the minor renovations earlier than 2018, but all works would require Scheduled Monument Consent and/or Listed Buildings Consent.

The Director of Finance and Corporate Services said English Heritage had been impressed by the works that had taken place on the castle and had encouraged the Council to apply for a grant in order to help fund further restoration works.

MM24

MUSEUM CERAMICS GALLERY REPAIRS AND REDECORATION

The Curator said the ceramics gallery required some re-plastering, followed by redecoration, as a result of leaks and wet weather during the last few years. The gallery would have to be closed for a few months whilst reparation works took place. Items from the gallery would have to be moved out and the schedule for the move from Newport to Shirehill would have to be amended to allow for this.

MM25

SHIREHILL STORE AND MOVING COLLECTIONS

The Assistant Director Corporate Services said the installation of Phase 1 racking was almost complete. Although the final designs for the remainder of the racking were not currently agreed, the designs were expected to be signed off within the next couple of weeks with installation starting at the beginning of 2015 and taking between four and eight weeks to complete, depending on whether installation for the remaining two phases was run concurrently or consecutively.

The Curator said once the racking had been installed, the Store would require a deep clean before any items could be moved in.

MM26

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Councillor Eden welcomed Councillor Ranger to his first working group meeting.

MM27

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was agreed the next meeting would be held on 18 March 2015 at 6pm.

The meeting ended at 6.30pm.