

**MUSEUM MANAGEMENT WORKING GROUP held at COUNCIL OFFICES
LONDON ROAD SAFFRON WALDEN at 6pm on 1 MARCH 2017**

Present: Councillor R Chambers (Chairman)
Councillors B Light, G Sell and S Wells.

Also present: ****Tony Watson (Museum Society
Representatives)

Officers in attendance: R Auty (Assistant Director Corporate Services), R Dobson (Principal Democratic Services Officer), A Webb (Director of Finance and Corporate Services) and Carolyn Wingfield (Curator).

MMWG APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

MMWG MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 October 2016 were received and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

MMWG

MMWG REPORT OF CURATOR

Members considered the report of the Curator for the quarter October to December 2016.

The Curator gave a brief update on activities since the report had been prepared. She said archiving of the archaeological collections had now started. Applications for grants had been made and were continuing. There would be match funding for the first of the Lottery applications which would support a fixed term curatorial archaeological post. Regarding two Lottery applications underway, the draft application questionnaire for one had been completed and the initial round of consultation was taking place, as detailed in the Society Chairman's report. Work would start soon on the second application.

The Curator highlighted several areas of her quarterly report. Regarding visitor numbers, she said there had been a reduction in school visits because the previous Outreach Officer had tried to fit in as many visits as possible before she left, which meant the successive period had fewer visits by comparison. The intake from the shop was not as good as in the previous quarter, but this could be attributed to the fact that season ticket sales had increased and that there was a greater proportion of adults paying full price during half term.

Councillor Light joined the meeting at this point.

The Curator concluded with reference to the Museum's performance indicators which reflected the challenge of meeting visitor targets whilst there was no Learning Officer in post, but which indicated the engagement with the Museum of users generally was over the notional target. The reason for this could be the new email newsletter and growth of social media followers.

Councillor Sell congratulated the Curator on the half term visitor figures. He said the Lottery funding once achieved would make a considerable difference, and asked how competitive regional grants were. He asked whether there had been any indications of sympathy towards the grant.

The Curator said until the Museum was in a position to send in the two project enquiry forms and had met with Lottery officers, it was difficult to answer this question. In reply to a further question, she said the intention was to submit applications for both projects by Easter. The second would be in outline, but it was important that both should go together, and as soon as possible in the financial year.

Councillor Chambers said the establishment of the store at Shirehill would help demonstrate that the Museum's plans were serious.

The Curator agreed with this point. She said the Museum Society had further agreed to contribute £7,500 as match funding to the first project and the Museum could also use the archaeological deposition grants, so it was in a strong position.

MMWG

REPORT OF CHAIRMAN OF THE MUSEUM SOCIETY

Members considered the report of the Chairman of the Museum Society. The report detailed various events including a celebration to thank the Museum's volunteers, attended by approximately 40 volunteers. A Heritage Development Team had been established to coordinate the approach taken to Saffron Walden's heritage assets, comprising representatives of the Museum Society, Saffron Walden Town Team and the Church, who, with the Curator, intended to meet the Leader of the District Council to discuss the possible inclusion of the Castle within the group.

Councillor Chambers thanked Tony Watson.

MMWG

MUSEUM DEVELOPMENT UPDATE/RENTAL OF SCHOOL ROOM

Members received a verbal update on Museum development from the Assistant Director Corporate Services. Following the conclusion of works at the Fry art gallery, completion had been due to take place yesterday. However due to the contractors having passed the wrong keys to the surveyor, it had not been possible to access the building. Sign off had not yet taken place but would do so at the earliest opportunity. The Fry representatives had seen the interior however, and were very pleased with it. Work on the lease was being finalised

and it was anticipated it would be signed shortly. The start date for opening the gallery would then need to be agreed.

Councillor Sell asked what the term of the lease was.

The Assistant Director Corporate Services said it was four years, with a break clause after two years. In reply to a question from Councillor Light, he said income for the Museum Society was projected to be £16,000 per year, with utilities paid.

The Director Corporate Services said the cost of preparing the School Room to the necessary standard had been over £50,000, in order to ensure it could be transformed into an asset suitable for letting out.

MMWG REPORT ON LEARNING AND OUTREACH OFFICER

The Assistant Director Corporate Services gave a verbal report on the bid for funding for a learning and outreach post. He said the budget for this post had been approved and money would be available from April. The Curator was preparing a job description.

Councillor Sell asked whether the job would be full time or part time, and what difference it would make.

The Assistant Director Corporate Services said the post would be full time.

The Curator said the post would allow various community groups and schools to engage with the Museum and would facilitate more visits and therefore would increase income. As there was relatively little space for school groups in the building, the emphasis would be on visiting schools and doing other outreach work around the district.

The Assistant Director Corporate Services said the post would also provide resilience for the team and would reduce reliance upon casual staff.

Councillor Sell said this investment in the Museum was good news. As a governor of Foresthall School he was sure children would be very interested in the outreach programme, which would be not just entertaining but educational. He asked how the new post would be publicised once the officer had been recruited.

The Curator said she would communicate this news via the website and local media.

Paul Salvidge said the new post would be a great bonus in supporting the Lottery funding bids as it would show the aim was to provide a benefit to the whole community.

MMWG DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was agreed the next meeting would take place in early June.
The date was subsequently agreed to be

The meeting ended at 6.30pm.