



# Uttlesford District Council

Chief Executive: Dawn French

## Museum Management Working Group

**Date:** Wednesday, 4th October, 2017

**Time:** 6.00 pm

**Venue:** Chairman's Office - Uttlesford District Council, Council Offices, London Road, Saffron Walden, Essex CB11 4ER

**Chairman:** Councillor R Chambers

**Members:** Councillors B Light, V Ranger, G Sell and L Wells

### AGENDA PART 1

#### Open to Public and Press

- 1 Apologies for absence and declarations of interest
- 2 Minutes of the meeting held on the 28 June 2017 1 - 4
- 3 Curator's Quarterly Report July - September 2017 (Verbal)
- 4 Approach to the Heritage Lottery Fund (Verbal)
- 5 Learning and Outreach Officer (Verbal)
- 6 Revision to Museum Fees and Charges 5 - 10

**7 Any other items which the Chairman considers to be urgent**

**8 Date of next meeting**

**For information about this meeting please contact Democratic Services**

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# Agenda Item 2

## **MUSEUM MANAGEMENT WORKING GROUP held at COUNCIL OFFICES LONDON ROAD SAFFRON WALDEN at 6pm on 28 JUNE 2017**

Present: Councillor R Chambers (Chairman)  
Councillor L Wells.

Also present: A Watson, P Walker (Museum Society  
Representatives)

Officers in attendance: B Ferguson (Democratic Services Officer), A Webb  
(Director of Finance and Corporate Services) and C Wingfield (Curator).

### **MMWG1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Councillor Sell, P Salvidge, R Auty and R Priestly.

### **MMWG2 MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 1 March 2017 were received and signed by the Chairman as a correct record subject to the following amendments:

#### **MMWG11 - REPORT OF CURATOR**

In the final paragraph of the first page, the '*Outreach Officer*' to be replaced with the '*Learning Officer*'.

#### **MMWG13 - MUSEUM DEVELOPMENT UPDATE/RENTAL OF SCHOOL ROOM**

In the first paragraph of the third page, the '*Fry art gallery*' to be replaced with the '*School Room*'.

### **MMWG3 THE MUSEUM SOCIETY'S CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

Members considered the report of the Chairman of the Museum Society.

Members were updated on the Heritage Development Team meeting which occurred on 21 June and included representatives from the museum, St. Mary's Church, the castle, the Fry Art Gallery and the Town Library Society. Co-operation between Saffron Walden's historical institutions had led to interesting opportunities, such as the event marking Oliver Cromwell's time in the town, due to be held by St. Mary's Church in December 2017. Both the museum and library had offered their support for the event.

The Director of Finance and Corporate Services asked if historical assets were being promoted across the district. The Curator of Saffron Walden museum said there were schemes across the district, such as the medieval broach being

displayed in Great Dunmow, and the lending of museum items to the Great Chesterford archaeological society to encourage local participation. She said the museum worked with other organisations across the district whenever an opportunity arose.

#### **MMWG4 QUATERLY REPORT JANUARY – MARCH 2017**

The Curator presented her quarterly report, detailing events from January to March 2017. Specifically, she drew attention to the successful lease of the Schoolroom by the Fry Art Gallery; the two donations made towards the conservation of a silk reticule; and the partnership project between the museum and the Royal College of Music, who were in the process of establishing a national database of historic musical instruments in UK museums.

The Curator said visitor figures for this quarter were disappointing, although in the same quarter last year the Easter holidays had been included and therefore this was not a surprise. School visits were also down, and this was mainly attributed to the absence of a Learning Officer. More positive trends included the rise of adult visitors during the quarter, and the increase in internet traffic both on the website and with social media, which was due to the work of the museum's Administration Officer. The Chairman said social media provided a great opportunity for the museum and it was good to see them engaging with the public in this way.

The Curator told members that the museum would be taking on an intern this summer and expenses would be paid. The intern would assist the Administration Officer in maintaining the museum's social media presence.

#### **MMWG5 APPROACH TO THE HERITAGE LOTTERY FUND (HLF) FOR TWO APPLICATIONS**

The Curator presented her report on the museum's approach to two HLF applications.

The Curator told members that the HLF document was not a formal document but it would move the dialogue for potential funding forward. She said it was exciting and a big step to take for the museum. The 'ball park' figure was in the region of £2 million, the most an institution could bid for at the regional level.

The Chairman said it was a promising development and the Council needed to cope with the progress being made.

The Curator gave an overview of the district's place in the Heritage Index. Uttlesford was 67<sup>th</sup> out of over 370 districts. She hoped that with the promise of improving access to the district's rich heritage, the HLF applications would be taken seriously and the museum would be in a prime position to benefit from funding.

## **MMWG6 LEGAL AND ACCREDITATION ITEMS**

### **a) Asbestos in collections**

The Curator informed members of the corrective action taken in relation to asbestos in collections, and for the museum to ensure it has addressed all legal responsibilities. The Curator stated that its collection would be properly assessed by a specialist contractor, and that the museum was waiting on the procurement process before going ahead with the assessment.

### **b) Firearms: change in the museum's license**

Members were told that there had been a change in the museum's firearm license. Previously, it was the responsibility of the Curator to apply for a personal license to ensure the museum was covered, as per the instructions of Essex police. However, problems had been identified with this method and a museum specific license had been applied for. This had been supported by a senior licensing officer at Essex Police.

### **c) Disposals agreed and anticipated by the Museum Society Board**

The Curator updated members on the rationalisation process being undertaken at the museum, with disposals including a shell dressing and pamphlet from WWII. The museum would also be distributing mixed pottery boxes from past field work, which would be better utilised by institutions in Cambridgeshire.

Councillor Wells asked if the museum liaised with village historians. She was told that details of local historians were recorded, and were notified if items were found which may be relevant to them.

## **MMWG7 OTHER ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

### **a) Learning and Outreach Officer recruitment**

Twenty-one applications had been received for the Learning and Outreach Officer role and the Curator was pleased with the large number of strong candidates. Six had been selected for interview, and she hoped to appoint someone as soon as possible to begin the work of contacting schools before the autumn term began.

There would be an emphasis on visiting schools remotely, due to the recognition that smaller primary schools could not afford the transport costs. Visits from the Learning and Outreach Officer would be more affordable for such schools.

### **b) Museum Building: plans to tackle Ivy Growth**

Members were told of the ivy growth problem on the North West side of the museum building, which emanated from properties on an adjacent street.

Historic England had advised the ground maintenance team on how to tackle the ivy and they would be contacting residents to ensure the affected area could be accessed.

**c) Potential closure of the museum for a day: removal of gas boilers**

The Curator told members that the museum was in the planning stage of replacing a number of ageing gas boilers, and if necessary to ensure safety, would close the museum for the day to facilitate this. In agreement with the Chairman, the Curator said the museum was thinking ahead and that a comprehensive review of the heating system would be undertaken if the museum was extended.

**MMWG8 ANY OTHER ITEMS WHICH THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS TO BE URGENT**

The Director of Finance and Corporate Services made members aware of the Open Heritage Weekend event hosted by the museum on Saturday 9 and Sunday 10 September. Members of the public would enjoy free admission to the museum for the duration of the weekend.

**MMWG9 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

It was agreed the next meeting would take place on 4 October 2017.

The meeting ended at 7.00pm.

**Committee:** Museum Management Working Group

**Agenda Item**

**Date:** 4 October 2017

**6**

**Title:** Revision to Museum Fees & Charges

**Author:** Richard Auty, Assistant Director Corporate Services

Item for decision:  
yes

Carolyn Wingfield, Curator

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## Summary

1. After a break of two years, Saffron Walden Museum is re-launching its services to schools during the autumn term 2017 now there is a new Learning & Outreach Officer in post. Due to restrictions of teaching space in the Museum, it is intended to offer taught session in schools and a new charge for this needs to be introduced. Schools Loans boxes are also being revised and improved. The Museum's fees and charges as approved with the 2017/18 budget, do not contain these charges.
2. In addition the Museum from time-to-time is offered the opportunity to participate in marketing initiatives which can mean one-off or ongoing variations to published fees and charges.
3. This report seeks permission to revise the published fees and charges for 2017/18 to account for the above issues and seek delegated authority to approve marketing initiatives.

## Recommendations

4. The Museum Management Working Group recommends to Cabinet:
  - The fees for schools as set out in paragraph 12
  - The revised loan box charge as set out in paragraph 13
  - That delegated authority be given to the Section 151 Officer to approve variations to published entrance fees, in consultation with the Curator.

## Financial Implications

5. Once the Museum's learning service is fully re-established, it is estimated that in a full year taught sessions will generate £5,600. Currently the income target for taught sessions is £2,000.
6. Participation in marketing offers as outlined in the report may have some impact on ticket sales, but as the aim of such initiatives is to attract people who would not otherwise have visited the Museum, this is likely to be low. Conversely, souvenir sales from school visits and ticket and souvenir sales

due to an improved holiday activity programme designed and run by the Learning and Outreach Officer is estimated to generate an additional £2,500 pa.

### Background Papers

7. The following papers were referred to by the author in the preparation of this report and are available for inspection from the author of the report.
8. None

### Impact

9.

Communication/Consultation	Educational opportunities through the museum, either on site or at schools, will be promoted
Community Safety	None
Equalities	None
Health and Safety	Risk Assessments are undertaken for visits by schools to the museum and a new Risk Assessment for visits to schools will be produced. The Education & Handling collection contains objects and specimens, including replicas, which are suitable for handling and surplus to the main collections.
Human Rights/Legal Implications	None
Sustainability	None
Ward-specific impacts	None
Workforce/Workplace	None

### Situation

#### Taught Sessions

10. During the two years since the departure of the previous Learning Officer, the Museum has been unable to offer taught sessions to schools, and the former Museum Schoolroom has been leased out to provide income of £16,000 per year to the service. Plans for a major development project, which include a

new educational facility in a proposed extension to the Museum, will take a few years to achieve and is subject to funding awards from external sources.

11. Gallery space for teaching groups in the Museum is restricted and only single classes of 30 pupils can be accommodated. However, a significant number of schools want to bring two or three classes on a visit, and the cost and logistics of travel by coach mean they cannot make separate visits for each class. There may also be some smaller schools in the district which find it difficult to travel to Saffron Walden but could be engaged through a visit to their own site.
12. Therefore the Museum proposes to offer schools the option of booking a visit from the Learning & Outreach Officer, who would take objects and specimens from the education & handling collection to the school and deliver a taught session in the school classroom. A new charge to cover this is proposed at £120 (£100 + £20 VAT) for a morning and £210 (£175 + £35 VAT) for a full day. These rates are competitive compared to other comparable services but would cover staff costs (time and mileage) and generate income towards our target for education fees. Take-up is difficult to predict, but we anticipate the rate should be affordable and attractive to potential new users. An additional income figure for visits from and to schools has been estimated, which is detailed in paragraph 5 above. These charges would apply to schools in Uttlesford and/or within 20 miles of Saffron Walden by road. Special requests would be priced according to costs of travel and staff-time.
13. Visits by single classes (up to 30 pupils) to the Museum for taught sessions will continue and the current charge of £3 per pupil (£2.50 + 50p VAT) with a minimum fee of £48 (£40 + VAT) per group, remains unchanged this financial year.

### **Schools Loan Boxes**

14. The Schools Loans Boxes are being revised in line with the National Curriculum and requests from local schools, with significant improvements to contents, presentation and packaging. Saffron Walden Museum Society Ltd has funded the cost of new boxes and replicas from an educational grant which it received. Our current loan box charge is £12 per half-term but we intend to raise this to £18 (£15 + £3 VAT) to reflect these improvements and investment of staff-time, and generate an appropriate level of income for the service. A charge of £18 for Schools Loans and reminiscence boxes would still be competitive compared to other museum services in Essex, and should remain affordable for our local village schools. The museum plans to roll out the new loan boxes from autumn 2017 onwards as they are completed.

### **Delegated authority to the Section 151 Officer**

15. Currently, the Museum offers free admission during the National Heritage Open Weekend in September, a long-standing arrangement.
16. To extend the range of its marketing, the Museum takes advantage of selected free or low-cost promotional campaigns. However, some of these campaigns

require participation in a 'special offer' on admission tickets which fall outside the published fees and charges.

17. In order to address this issue, it is recommended that the Section 151 Officer is given delegated authority to approve involvement in such initiatives, in consultation with the Curator.
18. An example of such an initiative is the Essex Big Weekend. This is a new event, held for the first time this year (in April), and organised by Visit Essex. Saffron Walden Museum did not take part this year, but if it becomes an annual event then there is benefit to being involved. The Museum would be free to determine its offer which would likely be either 2 for 1 entry or free entry.
19. In 2016, 71% of Kent Big Weekend survey participants stated that they would visit the attraction they went to again and 85% would recommend the attraction to family and friends.
20. The new Essex Pass is a second example of a marketing initiative which the Museum could take advantage of. This annual pass, purchased for £9.99 gives discounted entry on dozens of Essex visitor attractions. Heritage attractions already signed up include the Museum of Maldon, Havering Museum and Hedingham Castle.
21. More locally, the Museum is planning an event with Saffron Screen, through which a family film screening will be linked to the Museum's current temporary exhibition. Attendees at Saffron Screen will then be able to show their cinema ticket to gain entry to the Museum, see the exhibition and take part in an activity.
22. Such initiatives are aimed at broadening the Museum's audience, bringing in people who might not otherwise visit and then encouraging repeat visits. These visits would also generate income through souvenir sales and donations.

## Risk Analysis

23.

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
Schools do not book visits to their sites	2 – even during the absence of a Learning Officer, the Museum was regularly	2 – Education fee income targets would not be met	Effective marketing to schools and via Museum website and social media  Learning Officer will apportion time between schools

	contacted by schools		visiting the Museum and visits out to schools according to demand, so income will be maximised in either event
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- 1 = Little or no risk or impact
- 2 = Some risk or impact – action may be necessary.
- 3 = Significant risk or impact – action required
- 4 = Near certainty of risk occurring, catastrophic effect or failure of project.

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