

**MUSEUM MANAGEMENT WORKING GROUP held at COMMITTEE ROOM - COUNCIL OFFICES, LONDON ROAD, SAFFRON WALDEN, ESSEX CB11 4ER, on MONDAY, 10 SEPTEMBER 2018 at 6.00 pm**

Present: Councillor R Chambers (Chairman)  
Councillors G Sell and L Wells

Also present: T Watson, R Priestley and P Walker (Museum Society Representatives)

Officers in attendance: R Auty (Assistant Director - Corporate Services), A Mawson (Democratic Services Officer) and C Wingfield (Curator - Saffron Walden Museum)

**1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Ranger and Light, the Director of Finance and Corporate Services and Paul Salvidge

**2 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the meeting held on 8 May were approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record, subject to amending 'Paul' to 'Peter' in Minute MMG22.

**3 MUSEUM SOCIETY CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

The Working Group considered the report from the Chairman of the Museum Society.

**4 QUARTERLY REPORT: APRIL - JUNE 2018**

The Working Group considered the quarterly report from the Curator. The Curator drew to the Group's attention the following specific points.

**Staffing**

The Learning Officer, Charlotte Pratt, had settled in. James Lumbard started in April as a job share with Sarah Kenyon in the Natural Sciences Officer post, and already has ideas for exhibitions next year. The new Collections Officer (Human History), Jennifer Oxley, is now in post following the departure of Leah Mellors.

**Volunteers**

A special thank you had been given to all the volunteers for their hard work.

## **Buildings and site**

The air conditioning unit in the Museum's natural history store had broken down in April but had been repaired. The store had had an outbreak of moths, which was directly attributed to the failure of the air conditioning unit. The appropriate pest control measures had been taken.

The cleaning schedule had been revised and hard floors had been given a deep clean and buff to keep them in good condition. This amounted to an additional one hour of cleaning time per week.

The newly-formed Saffron Walden Heritage Development Group was looking to raise funds for re interpretation boards at the 'Battle Ditches', offering scope for promotion in partnership with the Castle and Museum site in 2019.

## **Collections**

The Curator gave an update regarding the 'Piano Hoard' the piano had been purchased and moved. The Museum was working towards display and launch. The curator said it was a good and interesting unsolved local story.

There had been no items loaned out during the period of the report.

The railway sign had been returned to its owner. However the Museum had other signs that could fill the space.

The taxidermy exhibition had proved popular and had received mentions in the *Guardian Guide* and two London area art scene apps.

## **Income**

Income from Learning and Outreach services totalled £1066.66.

New product lines had been added to the shop and visitor spending per head has increased by 4p.

## **Education, events and outreach**

School visits and loan boxes were going well. Some year groups had been too large to accommodate hence the requirement to extend.

The Curator thanked Councillor Wells for her support with the 'Bake Off' event.

Discussion took place about the reminiscence boxes. These could be loaned out to homes, carers and families. They were created in 'decades' and the 1940's box had been very well received.

## **Visitor figures**

The Museum had been quiet in the heatwave. This had been a common experience for a lot of museums across the region.

The Museum would be focusing on social media now that it had its full complement of staff.

Members praised the work of the Museum and volunteers. Cllr Sell offered up some ideas for promotion of the museum with schools, local groups and care homes, and the Curator was invited to approach him outside the meeting to discuss further.

## 5 **MUSEUM'S FORWARD PLAN, HERITAGE LOTTERY FUND AND ACCREDITATION (VERBAL UPDATE)**

The Curator said that The Museum had not yet heard anything relating to the timetable for accreditation. However the delay gave a good opportunity to settle in the new staff. There is a 6-month wait from when the letter is received.

The Museum had received some confusing feedback in relation to its initial submission to the Resilient Heritage Lottery Fund. It appeared they might view the Museum as an independent rather than a local authority museum. Now that vacant posts had been filled the Curator would take this matter up with the Lottery Fund.

There was a very clear correlation between school visits and visitor numbers. This correlation related to capacity. The visits had declined with the loss of the previous Learning Officer. Now there was a new officer in post it was expected that there would be an increase in numbers again.

Income at the shop had increased, possibly due to the fact that the new Admin Officer had a background in finance. The initiatives taken had included tailoring displays to exhibitions, and securing some excellent supplier deals.

The Curator said that there would be greater potential for the Museum with the planned extension.

Some schools no longer allowed their pupils to buy souvenirs on school visits; therefore there had been a change in the profile of customers. Some work would be carried out to identify different items available for sale in order to target a different audience.

Councillor Chambers thanked Museum staff and volunteers.

## 6 **DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

The date of the next meeting would be decided once the Democratic Services Officer had been able to investigate room availability.

The meeting ended at 6.40pm.