

**MUSEUM MANAGEMENT WORKING GROUP held at COMMITTEE ROOM -
COUNCIL OFFICES, LONDON ROAD, SAFFRON WALDEN, ESSEX CB11
4ER, on WEDNESDAY, 24 APRIL 2019 at 6.00 pm**

Present: Councillor R Chambers (Chairman)
Councillors B Light and G Sell

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

Also Present: K Eden, R Priestley, P Walker and T Watson (Museum Society)

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Apologies were received from Councillor Ranger.

The Museum Society advised that Keith Eden would be attending in place of Paul Salvidge.

2 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the previous meeting were signed as an accurate record.

3 MUSEUM SOCIETY CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The Museum Society Chairman delivered his report making reference to the following items.

Keith Eden has been co-opted to the Board as a Director in the place of Paul Salvidge. He will be proposed for a term of three years.

Special mention was made and respects paid to Brian Newman, MBE, who died on Saturday 9th March 2019, in recognition of his long service.

4 MUSEUM QUARTERLY REPORT Q4 2018/19

The Museum Curator delivered her report highlighting the following points;

An electronic till has been purchased for the shop; it is yet to be installed and will be set up when the Admin Officer (16 hrs per week) has had time to master it and arrange training for all the Welcome Desk volunteers before it transfers to the Desk and goes 'live'. A card reader will be added later in the year.

The Museum's WIFI issues have been fully remedied.

Scaffolding is still in place which was longer than originally intended, the pointing is to take place in May.

A quote for the replacement of the Museum's hearing loop has been obtained. The Museum Curator advised that the quote was outside of the Museum's scope of affordability. The group discussed sourcing non-museum specific grants for covering the costs citing the importance of accessibility for all.

The Ceramics Gallery was redecorated and displays reinstalled.

An activity programme to encourage wildlife into the Museum grounds was occurring in conjunction with the 'Take Away the Walls' exhibition. Subject to Scheduled Monument Consent from Historic England, a small area of amenity grass would be replaced with a wildflower meadow area. Other work (not requiring SMC) included infilling gaps along existing planted borders along the front of the Museum, and installing planters with pollinator-friendly plant species and sensory plants for use in Learning Sessions.

Following the delivery of 165 boxes of excavation archives from Stansted Airport excavations undertaken since 1999 two further depositions are planned for May and September.

The Curator took the group through the visitor figures in the report and the desire to push the visitor figures up.

Councillor Sell said that the Museum was a jewel in Uttlesford's crown. He praised the work of the volunteers and staff and said that he was very pleased with the outreach work even to schools outside Uttlesford.

In response to a Member question in relation to the significance of 'Evelyn Coleman' in the Collections, the Curator said that she was an Uttlesford resident who kept diaries from her teenage years, through the war and into later life. She was in the women's' land army of which the Museum have her uniform.

Councillor Sell and the Curator discussed the fall in visitor figures and the possibility that these are linked to size of school groups (too big to be accommodated at the Museum), pressures of staffing and budgets.

Councillor Sell suggested that the Curator use the network of parish clerks to advertise collections and events across the district. Using the parish magazines and newsletters to engage the new residents in the new developments in the districts, as well as informing existing residents what the Museum could provide.

5

LOTTERY GRANT, MUSEUM DEVELOPMENT PLAN AND HERITAGE FUND GRANT - VERBAL UPDATE

The Curator said that the National Lottery Heritage Fund application had been successful and the Museum had been awarded the full £51,200, with a further £10,000 of matching funding to be drawn down from the Museum Society when needed.

In response to a Member question the Director of Finance and Corporate Services said that he had been in discussions with the Curator.

6 **MUSEUM PROGRAMME MAY TO AUGUST- VERBAL UPDATE**

The Curator advised the group of the following upcoming events;

May

- May Celebration: Saturday 11th
- Museums at Night: Fri 17 May

May Half Term: 27 May - 2 June

- Wed 29: Build a bug hotel
- Thu 30: Build a birdhouse
- Fri 31: Help plant our nature gardens

June

- 12th Century Live! Saturday 1 June, 10-3.30pm
- Saffron Screen at the Museum, Sunday 2 June, outdoor screening of The Princess Bride

Schools

May 3rd – Hutton All saints – Fantastic Fossils

7th of May – Chrishall Primary – Romans “Going Potty”

23rd May- La Salette School

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

The Chairman offered thanks to the Museum’s Staff and recognised that museums are often taken for granted and operate in difficult financial conditions, and recognised that without the volunteers it would be even harder. He said that Saffron Walden is very lucky to have the Museum.

Councillor Sell echoed the Chairman’s words and asked that new members (and returning members) be taken on a tour of the Museum as part of their induction, as well as a visit to the Castle.

The Chairman agreed and said that was an excellent idea.

8 **DATE & TIME OF NEXT MEETING.**

The next meeting was due to be held on 22 July 2019 at 6pm

The meeting closed at 6.35pm