

MUSEUM MANAGEMENT WORKING GROUP held at THE GROUND FLOOR GALLERY - SAFFRON WALDEN MUSEUM, on WEDNESDAY, 31 JULY 2019 at 6.00 pm

Present: Councillor G Sell (Chair)

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 and T Watson (Museum Society)

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Gregory, Lavelle and Light.

Apologies were also received from R Priestley and P Walker of the Museum Society.

The Chair said that with the group's agreement he would like to send a communication to Ex Councillor Robert Chambers thanking him for his time as Chair of the Museum Management Working Group.

The Democratic Services Officer said that they could arrange for something be drafted and sent to the Chair for approval.

All were in agreement.

2 ELECTION OF A VICE CHAIR

The Chair deferred the item due to the other committee members being absent.

3 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the previous meeting were received and signed as an accurate record.

4 MUSEUM SOCIETY CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The Museum Society Chairman delivered his report to the working group; he said that the Society had held their board meeting the previous evening and that he and the secretary would be dealing with the lighting contract for the Castle.

There was a new meter to be installed and some legal documents were required and that the work was in hand.

5 **MUSEUM CURATOR'S QUARTERLY REPORT Q1 APRIL-JUNE 2019**

The Museum Curator presented her quarterly report to the group, making special mention of the following points;

- Thanking the volunteers for their continued work.
- The near completion of the external works meaning the scaffolding could come down soon it was hoped.
- Display of new acquisitions and 'treasure'. Explaining how new acquisitions were promoted in the museum and the definition and display of 'Treasure'. It was planned to put the latest treasure acquisitions on display on Saturday 24 August with publicity, social media and website features planned. In reply to a comment about a 'finders' evening' held some years ago at the Musuem, the Curator explained that with the summer holiday period and time available, it would be impossible to set up such an event at this time, but it could be considered in the winter months for a wider range of finders and landowners associated with recent archaeological acquisitions.
- Object of the month; the rotation and promotion of the display item.
- Income, visitor figures, summer events on-site and outreach activities; the June outdoor event and the Saffron Screen event brought in approximately 600 visitors.
- Mix of researchers used the museum in the quarter.
- Connections with other museums in the district. In reply to a question about working with other museums in the district, the Curator confirmed that she attends the Dunmow Museum Committee and AGM and provides occasional advice and assistance; she also acts as museums mentor to the Fry Art Gallery for Accreditation purposes. The Ashdon Museum is very independent but the Saffron Walden Museum has had occasional contact with them. They took up the offer of a free table at the Local History Marquee day at the 1 June event to advertise Ashdon Museum.
- That The Museum is a museum for North West Essex in Saffron Walden not just a museum about or for Saffron Walden.

6 **ACCREDITATION STANDARD NOV 2018**

The Museum Curator referred the group to the Accreditation Standard document in the agenda pack. She advised that as part of the Accreditation process there would be a number of documents passing through the working group to Cabinet.

In response to a question from the Chair, the Museum Curator advised that the accreditation lasts for 4-5 years.

The Assistant Director of Corporate Services advised that the reports would be presented to Cabinet by Councillor Light.

7 **SAFFRON WALDEN MUSEUM COLLECTIONS DEVELOPMENT POLICY 2020-2025**

The Museum Curator presented the Collections Development Policy 2020-2025. The document format and wording was dictated by the Arts Council and the document as a result was fairly lengthy.

The Chair of the Museum Society advised that the Board had approved the Policy. It would be going to Cabinet for the 5th September.

The Museum Curator advised that the changes to the previous policy were minimal.

In response to a question from the Chair the Curator advised that this was the document that was referred to when the Museum was offered items, it was important to note that the Museum didn't simply collect for display.

8 **MUSEUM DEVELOPMENTS - NATIONAL LOTTERY HERITAGE FUND PROJECT**

The Museum Curator advised the group that the invitation to quote is on the government contract finder website and that there have been approximately 60 expressions of interest, some mainstream and some are not, currently it is not known how many of those are viable. The deadline is 12 August. Decisions are to be made in September.

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

None

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

There was some group discussion about the rescheduling of the October meeting and the requirement of the meetings to fall before Cabinet for the reports to go on to Cabinet once seen by the working group.

The Director of Finance and Corporate Services asked the Curator to provide a briefing note to the portfolio holder in preparation for the documents' to be presented at Cabinet meetings.

Meeting End 7pm