



# Uttlesford District Council

Chief Executive: Dawn French

## Museum Management Working Group

**Date:** Wednesday, 30th October, 2019

**Time:** 6.00 pm

**Venue:** Committee Room - Council Offices, London Road, Saffron Walden,  
Essex CB11 4ER

**Chair:** Councillor G Sell

**Members:** Councillors N Gregory, P Lavelle and B Light  
K Eden, R Priestley, P Walker and T Watson (Museum Society)

### AGENDA

**1 Apologies for Absence and Declarations of Interest**

To receive any apologies for absence and declarations of interest.

**2 Minutes of the Previous Meeting** 5 - 8

To consider the minutes of the previous meeting.

**3 Museum Society Chairman's report** 9 - 10

To consider the Museum Society Chairman's report.

**4 Q2 Museum Quarterly Report July-Sept 2019** 11 - 24

To consider the Curator's quarterly report.

**5 Collections Care and Conservation Policy** 25 - 34

To consider the Collections Care and Conservation Policy.

**6 Access Policy Statement** 35 - 42

To consider the Access Policy Statement.

**7 Update on Museum developments (Resilient Heritage project funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund)**

Verbal update from the Curator

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

To receive any items that the Chairman considers to be urgent

**9 Date & time of next meeting.**

To consider the date and time of the next meeting.

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

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# Agenda Item 2

**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)

## 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 Museum, 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 5<sup>th</sup> 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*

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**Museum Management Working Group  
Meeting 30th October 2019  
Museum Society Chairman's Report**

During the last month the scaffolding around the Museum has at last come down. It has revealed a very impressive upgrade to the condition of the exterior frontage. Excellent paint on repaired windows and a re-pointed brickwork. Well done to both Council officers and contractors for a job well done.

Following the changes in Councillors at Uttlesford District Council Society Directors were pleased to join Council officers and staff to meet new councillors at the Museum on the 23rd August. Richard Auty and I presented details of the running of the museum jointly by the Society and the Council, and also a brief history of the Museum and in particular the arrangements for its joint management since 1974. Councillors visited and received an update of the developments at the Castle prior to the Museum presentations.

The Development Committee met on the 2<sup>nd</sup> October to receive information relating to the current consultations and to receive details of the first workshop meeting on the 21<sup>st</sup> October. A report of this meeting by the Curator and I will be given at the MMWG meeting

The Museum and the Society held its second "Bake Off" on the 9<sup>th</sup> August. Its main object was to celebrate the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Wallace the Lion. Owing to the weather this event took place in the Great Hall and elsewhere in the Museum. Wallace received a deep clean. There were numerous cake submitted to the Judges which had to take place in full view of the visitors! The Judges were able to survive the samples of some 20 cakes before providing the results of the two classes for Adults and Children. I even managed to win one of these in the draw which followed. Our winter series of talks commenced on the 9<sup>th</sup> September.

I reported last meeting on the excellent support for donations to our recent request for funds to acquire further treasure. I am pleased to say that all these items have now been received and are on display in the treasure cabinet in the Great Hall.

*Tony Watson*

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## 1 Museum Management and Staff

### 1.1 Management

#### **Museum Service**

In anticipation of our Accreditation review in 2020, the Collections Development Policy compiled by Jenny Oxley has been reviewed, approved by the Museum Society Board and recommended to Cabinet by the Museums Management Working Group. Other policy documents which need the Council's approval have been tabled for the appropriate Cabinet meetings 2019-20. Staff are meanwhile working on two other policies – the Access Policy and Conservation & Care of Collections Policy – and their associated plans, for the next round of Museum Society Board, MMWG and Cabinet meetings in October – November.

An introductory tour of the Castle and Museum was provided for new Uttlesford councillors on the evening of 21 August, with refreshments provided by the Museum Society. A selection of dates into October have also been offered for informal tours of the Shirehill store.

The Museum has participated in the annual SHARE Benchmarking survey for museums in the East of England, and will receive a copy of the report for 2018-19 early next year. We are also participating in another SHARE initiative, Visitor Insight East (VIE) which will analyse a sample of 300 visitor surveys, to be completed by the end of December, and generate some useful data on our current visitor profile.

#### **Forward Plan: NHLF Resilient Heritage project**

The consultancy opportunities for the Audience Development Study and the Options Appraisal & Feasibility Study were advertised in early July and attracted a large response. Due Diligence Reviews were held with the top three contenders in September and resulted in the acceptance of the quotation from Julia Holberry Associates (Audience Development) and Fourth Street (Options Appraisal & Feasibility Study). These two consultants frequently work in partnership and offered a well-integrated proposal, covering all aspects of the brief. We look forward to getting work underway in October with the project inception meeting and exchange of information.

### 1.2 Staff, Volunteers and Work Experience

#### **Staff**

Two new casual museum assistants, Francesco Maione and Victoria Mansfield, have been recruited to join the team, subject to reference and DBS checking.

#### **Volunteers**

#### **Welcome Desk Volunteers**

We extend a warm welcome to Sue Donelan and Jo Crabb who have joined our team of Welcome Desk volunteers.

Our grateful thanks go to:

- June Baker for conducting the Induction Training for our new recruits, Bridie, Sue and Jo

- Jeanette Flucher who provided much needed Welcome Desk shift cover and Museums at Night event over the Heritage Open Day weekend
- Angela Jones who covered the Welcome Desk over the August Bank Holiday
- Barbara Mensforth who retired from her regular shift but we are grateful to say, has kindly offered to remain 'on call' should we need Welcome Desk cover.
- Bridie Heath, who joined us for the summer period, prior to taking up permanent employment

We bid a fond farewell to Jean Peat who has retired from her Welcome Desk duties.

**Collections Volunteers**

Thanks go to Sean Todd for his help documenting the Museum’s archive collections over the summer. He has now left us to return to the University of Warwick to continue studying politics. Considerable progress is being made in cataloguing and auditing the Museum’s photograph, document and art collections. We also have several new additions to the human history collections volunteer team: Lillie Weston, Charles Welham and Graham White.

**Wildlife Garden volunteers**

Welcome to Issa Cochran who is helping with watering and general upkeep of the new planters and sunflower beds. Thanks to Ann Bannister, an existing Learning & Outreach volunteer, who has also taken on these garden duties. Issa and Ann are also contributing ideas for improvement and expansion to the wildlife areas.

<b>Volunteers</b>	<b>Estimated Hours</b>
<b>Collections volunteers</b>	
Hamish McIlwrick - inventory of the photograph collection (4hrs p. week)	48
Ian adding accession register entries to Excel spreadsheet & begun work on SWMS minutes (6 hrs per week)	72
Len Pole adding detail to Modes records for World Cultures collection (3 hrs per wk)	36
Jane and David Laing inventorying the Document Archive (3 hours per week x 2 people)	72
Sean Todd – inventorying the Document Archive over Summer holidays (4 hrs per week)	48
Charles Welham – inventorying the ceramic store collections (4 hrs per week)	48
Archaeology volunteers Joanne Pegrum, Peter Morrissey, Peter Stribling	15
<b>Natural Sciences volunteers</b>	
Heather Douglas updating location records in Modes Complete	8
Gerald Lucy assisting with identification of specimens	1
Peter Hanson, Tony Morton, Ken Rivett, Heather and Paul Salvidge completing ecological surveys of 23 special roadside verges	31

<b>Volunteers continued</b>	<b>Estimated Hours</b>
<b>Wildlife Garden Volunteers</b>	
Issa Cochran and Ann Bannister had carried out regular watering and light maintenance duties.	4
<b>Learning &amp; Outreach Volunteers</b>	
Jane Evans, Chris Phillips, Jeanette Fulcher, Ann Banister and Sue Cockerell helped to deliver a very full program of summer activities	90
<b>Admin volunteers</b>	
Mary Adams provides invaluable support with the financial administration	65
<b>Welcome Desk volunteers</b>	
The Welcome Desk volunteers are the 'Face of the Museum', providing friendly welcome for visitors; selling tickets and merchandise, and providing information about the Museum. Tuesday-Friday (10am-5pm, 7 hours, 4 days per week) and Sunday / Bank Holiday (2-5pm, 3 hours) {(13 x (7x4)) + (13 x 3) + (1 x3)}	406
June Baker conducted induction training for new recruits (SD and BH)	18
Jeanette Fulcher Heritage Weekend Museums at Night event (14 September, 5-9pm)	4
<b>Total hours contributed by all volunteers for this quarter</b> Equivalent to 26 weeks of full-time work	<b>966</b>

### **1.3 Training and Seminars Attended**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Course and Staff</b>
17/07/19	SHARE Museum Managers Network: Small Museums with Big Ideas, Cambridge, Carolyn
22/07/19	Retail Essentials 1: Finance for Retailers, Front of House and Admin Officer, Wendy-Jo Atter
23/07/19	Retail Essentials 2: Buying, Front of House and Admin Officer, Wendy-Jo Atter
24/07/19	First Aid Training Level 3 (1 day training), Jenny Oxley
24/07/2019	First Aid (full 3 day training), Jamie Milne
15&16 /08	Independent internship at Calke Abbey learning about cleaning and conservation of natural history specimens with Simon Moore Charlotte Pratt
10/07/2019	V&A Designs Skills conference – Teaching STEAM with schools

### **1.4 Health & Safety**

An external fire risk assessment was carried out at the Museum in early September (the last one was done in 2017). Allowing for the limitations imposed by a historic building, the report was good, with just three minor recommendations, two of which have already been rectified.

## **2 Buildings and Site**

### **2.1 Museum Building**

#### **External works**

The scaffolding that has surrounded the building for so many months was finally dismantled and removed at the end of August and the restoration work undertaken during this quarter is now clearly visible.

The final stage of this process has concentrated on extensive repointing, replacement of some badly eroded bricks and repair/replacement of buttress caps and coping stones. When combined with earlier work on window frames and the replacement of an area of flat roof, the building should be more watertight and better equipped to withstand adverse weather than has been the case for some time.

Rotted weatherboarding and broken guttering at the far end of the 'back passage' were replaced in August.

#### **Internal work**

The faulty security camera covering the Museum front desk and foyer was replaced in August.

### **2.2 Museum Site**

Unfortunately, due to heavy lorries delivering materials for the Castle floor, some damage has occurred to the brick borders lining the drive. It is expected that the contractors will pay for repairs.

During high winds in early August, a relatively small dead branch from one of two tall mature sycamores bordering the Museum driveway, fell on the kitchen roof of a property in Museum Yard. It did no damage, but after the trees were inspected by UDC Landscape Officer, Ben Smeeden, he has recommended that both be felled, subject to approval by the Planning Committee. The trees are very much alive, but possibly in a state of slow decline.

### **2.3 Shirehill Store**

Lewis Merle, Property Surveyor has arranged the cleaning out of the ground level water channels and guttering surrounding the store, to be undertaken at regular intervals by UDC contractors. Lewis Merle viewed cracks in the floors at the store caused by the building settling, and they will be filled if practical.

### **2.4 Grounds and Castle Site**

September has seen renewed activity on the Castle and surrounding grounds. This is a Council project, overseen by the Council's Property Surveyor Lewis Merle.

Extensive removal of vegetation within the Castle site has been followed by the levelling and covering of the floor within its walls, using a medium weight gravel held within an interlocking grid framework. Blacksmiths are currently constructing a wrought iron gate for the main entrance plus bars to secure the smaller 'entrance' at the back. The perimeter fence has been removed, although it is thought that a new gated fence will be erected to enclose the back wall of the Castle and the conservation area containing the Stag Beetle sanctuary.

The electrical cable trench to supply power to the (shortly to be installed) spotlights surrounding the Castle, has been excavated, the cable has been laid as far as the Museum back gate and most of this trench has been infilled. It is thought that the lighting will be functional by the end of October.

Discussions have taken place between UDC surveyor Lewis Merle and contractors, to make good the area of damage to the perimeter flint and brick wall on the Castle Hill / Church Street corner. The proposal is to replace most of the fallen wall with a wrought iron gate, improving pedestrian access from the Common.

### 3 Collections and Research

#### 3.1 Acquisitions and Disposals

**Acquisitions this quarter have included:** (Archaeology: 22; Human History: 75; Natural Sciences: 2; Learning: 5)

- Gold medieval reliquary pendant from Farnham, Bronze Age gold-plated bronze open ring from Great Dunmow and gold posy ring from Lindsell, all acquired under the Treasure Act 1996. The reliquary pendant was grant-aided by the Art Fund, the ACE / V&A Purchase Grant Fund and the Headley Trust
- Silver penny of Harold II, 1066, from Ugley (private treaty sale)
- Archaeological excavation archives from Stansted Airport Mid Term Car Park site 1999-2001, by Framework Archaeology, the third and final deposition organised by Oxford Archaeology, although there are still some boxes of worked flint and other miscellaneous finds from the Airport to come. Excavations at the MTCP site revealed a Bronze Age settlement within a ditched enclosure, and a sarsen stone which is now displayed at the green in Takeley.
- Suits and archive photographs related to Saffron Sound, Barbershop Group c. 1970s-1980s
- Archive material and photographs from Saffron Walden Cricket Club
- An oxygen tank trolley and baby weighing scales which originated from SW Hospital (now the UDC council offices)
- Nursing uniform and archival material related to a nurse who worked at Thaxted Surgery and Saffron Walden Hospital in the 1930s-40s.
- Collection of pargetting stamps and tools.
- A blanket and Royal Academy disc associated with local artists Ruth and Barbara Hurlle.

One disposal was agreed this quarter by the Museum Society Board meeting on 30 July:

- Two carved but worn medieval stones from Hadstock, which have been on loan to St Botolph's Church, Hadstock for many years, have been de-accessioned and gifted to the Parochial Church Council, Hadstock.

#### 3.2 Collections Care and Conservation

- Additional items on display in the Furniture gallery and local history gallery have been conservation cleaned (Jenny)
- Document archive and photograph collections re-packed as part of the collections inventorying and auditing being undertaken with volunteers on Mondays at Shirehill (Jenny)
- Wallace the Lion was cleaned for his 200<sup>th</sup> birthday

**3.3 Documentation**

Backlog / updates	New Acquisitions	Backlog (existing collections not previously catalogued on Modes)	Edits and Updates to existing records
Human history collections <i>(local &amp; social history, decorative &amp; fine art, costume &amp; textile, world cultures)</i>	50	400 (photos, document archive, prints, watercolours & drawings, ceramics)	500 (photos, document archive, Prints, watercolours & drawings, ceramics)
Archaeology			
Natural Sciences	2		424
<b>Total</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>924</b>

**3.4 Loans In**

- Collections material from SW Horticultural Society for the co-curated *Your Stories* display (finished August 2019) was returned, and material from Saffron Players (theatre group) has been loaned in for their *Your Stories* display until January 2020.
- The ceremonial mace on display in the Local History Gallery went out on temporary loan for ceremonial duties to Saffron Walden Town Council.

**3.5 Loans Out**

- The loan of 7 treasure items to Colchester Castle for *Adorn: Jewellery – the Human Story* was completed. The Curator and Museum Society director Paul Salvidge attended the opening on 25 July and the Curator has supplied text for a 'guest blog' on the exhibition website.
- An Astbury Ware ceramic figure went out on loan for conservation work by Emma Bradshaw Ceramic Restoration and is now back on display after several years in the museum's ceramic gallery.
- Renewal of the loan with English Heritage regarding the Cipriani friezes, now on display at Audley End, formerly on display in the Ceramic gallery at the Museum.

**3.6 Object Identification and Enquiries**

**Object identifications this quarter: 8** (Archaeology: 4 ; Human History : 1; Natural Sciences: 3)

**Collections Enquiries this quarter: 43** (Archaeology: 3 ; Human History : 31; Natural Sciences: 9 ) topics included:

- Toi Moko (Tattooed heads)
- Chinookan Elk Antler Adze Handles from the Lower Columbia River
- Myths and Legends : the Cockatrice of Saffron Walden
- Local Artist - John (Jack) Milne Winter
- Second World War Evacuees
- Turner Collin, Wendens Ambo
- The former Rose & Crown hotel (architecture)
- Co-Operatives

- Association for the Suppression of Seditious Libel 1792
- Victorian Linens
- Limeworks nr. Farnham
- Special roadside verges
- Great auk eggs
- Birds
- Suffolk crag and ice age fossils

### **3.7 Research**

**Research visits this quarter: 4** (2 archaeology + 2 human history + )

Topics included:

- Medieval sites in the Canfields
- Wendens Ambo Roman villa site
- Early Aboriginal collections (British Museum Photographer Kevin Lovelock for publication)
- Henry Winstanley and Audley End (Martin Rose for book publication)

## **4 Displays and Visitor Services**

### **4.1 Permanent Galleries**

- Continuing minor improvements to labelling, paintwork and layouts – Furniture Gallery (bay window), Local History gallery (saffron display and building displays) and Costume gallery (jewellery case interpretation) (Jenny Oxley)
- Paintwork and improvements to Great Hall and Reception Area (Charlotte Pratt)
- Updated signage to all galleries (Charlotte Pratt) designed with needs of all users in mind

### **4.2 Temporary Exhibitions**

**Object of the Month** featured:

- July: Arrowheads from medieval hunting lodge, Stansted Airport Car Park (Carolyn)
- August: Victorian Ice-Cream making equipment (Jenny)
- September: Fungus Model (Sarah)

**Curiosity Corner** (Charlotte) :

- July: Wallace is 200
- August: Butterflies
- September: Moulds and Casting (Portrait project)

**Your Stories:** (Jenny):

- New co-curated display about the local theatre group, Saffron Players has opened and will run until January 2020.

**Take Away the Walls** (James): an exhibition for health, happiness and wildlife, continues till 3 November. It features a fortnightly changing display of butterflies throughout the exhibition to show range of

butterflies currently and formerly living in Uttlesford.

**4.3 Visitor Services**

	Public		Schools incl. adults		Total	
	2019	2018	2019	2018	2019	2018
<b>July</b>	<b>843</b>	652	<b>0</b>	123	<b>843</b>	775
<b>August</b>	<b>1477</b>	1718	<b>0</b>	0	<b>1477</b>	1718
<b>September</b>	<b>554</b>	822	<b>33</b>	0	<b>587</b>	822
<b>Total</b>	<b>2874</b>	3192	<b>33</b>	123	<b>2907</b>	3315

**Income**

**Shop**

	2019	2018
<b>July</b>	<b>420.64</b>	485.85
<b>August</b>	<b>694.06</b>	810.61
<b>September</b>	<b>208.69</b>	357.68
<b>Total £</b>	<b>1323.39</b>	1654.14

**Tickets**

	2019	2018
<b>July</b>	<b>982.50</b>	814.75
<b>August</b>	<b>1623.00</b>	1878.75
<b>September</b>	<b>625.25</b>	915.50
<b>Total £</b>	<b>3230.75</b>	3609.00

**Donations**

	2019	2018
<b>July</b>	<b>110.36</b>	63.88
<b>August</b>		
<b>September*</b>	<b>0</b>	65.62
<b>Total £</b>	<b>110.36</b>	129.50

**Learning & Outreach Services**

	Schools Sessions & outreach	Activities & Events	School Loan & Reminiscence Boxes
<b>July</b>	visit to care home (Falcon House)	1 holiday activity	
<b>August</b>	n/a	Wallace's Bake Off 3 holiday activities	2 Reminiscence boxes (free loan box to Dementia Café)
<b>September</b>	2 Museum sessions and 1 outreach	Open heritage weekend (free)	8 loan boxes
<b>Total £</b>	<b>£450</b>	<b>£398</b>	<b>£192</b>

**Donations**

Despite visitor numbers being lower than those for the same period in 2018, total donations for July and August almost doubled. Monies received in September 2019 have been left in the donation box to encourage more donations during October.

**Shop**

The shop is kept fully stocked during peak periods such as school holidays and displays continue to reflect current exhibitions and activities. Work is in progress to launch a bespoke Saffron Walden Museum jigsaw

in readiness for the Christmas period.

**Visitor Attraction Quality Assurance Scheme (VAQAS)**

During July we had our 'mystery shopper' assessment visit from VAQAS, when we were very busy with activities. On this occasion, the assessor brought a father with two young children along to assess us from a family's point-of-view too. We are delighted to say that we have successfully renewed our VAQAS accreditation, and this time with slightly higher marks (77%) than last time in 2017.

**4.4 Publicity, Marketing, Social Media and New Website**

The Museum has a publicity strategy, which includes planned paid for and free advertising.

A publicity banner for the Museum with Wallace's 200<sup>th</sup> birthday theme was put up on the railings of the playground on the Common for the duration of the school summer holidays.

**Publicity and Marketing:**

Publication	Advert	Date
East of England GROUP visitor guide	Museum Advert	2019 issue
East of England Visitor guide	Museum Advert	2019 issue
SW Town Council Official Guide and Map	Museum Advert and full page editorial	2018-19 issue
<a href="http://www.visitsaffronwalden.gov.uk">www.visitsaffronwalden.gov.uk</a>	Museum information and what's on listing	ongoing
Eastlife Magazine	Museum advert, what's on listing (and online too)	summer issue
Newport News	Free editorial and ¼ page advert	Ongoing, Dec and June editions

**Published Articles (in print and on-line)**

Date	Publication	Subject	Additional Information	Photo
Summer issue	Essex Life Article	A-Z bucket list of things to do in Essex this summer	Plus celebrating '101' quirky facts from around the county	N
03/7/2019	Walden Local	Museum Thanks It's Volunteers	National Volunteer Week celebration	Y
17/07/2019	Walden Local	Wallace Great Big Bake Off (pre-event)	200 <sup>th</sup> Birthday of Wallace the Lion	Y
18/07/2019	SW Reporter	Volunteers are thanked	National Volunteer Week celebration	Y
24/07/2019	Walden Local	Trip Advisor Award		Y
24/07/2019	SW Reporter	Wallace Great Big Bake Off		Y
25/07/2019	SW Reporter	Summer holiday craft activities		Y
07/08/2019	Walden Local	Wonderful Wednesday Buzz	Summer holiday craft activities	Y
08/08/2019	SW Reporter	Wallace Great Big Bake Off		Y
14/08/2019	Walden Local	Wallace Great Big Bake Off		

15/08/2019	SW Reporter	Wallace Great Big Bake Off (post-event)	Birthday bath for Wallace! Also covered development work on the castle and the opening of the Paul Daw Memorial Museum at the Football Club (Nb. Previous <i>Your Stories</i> display)	Y
21/08/2019	Walden Local	Local Museum, National Treasure	New treasure acquisitions (crowd-funding)	Y
29/08/2019	Walden Local	Museum Society talks		Y
29/08/2019	Walden Local	Wonderful Wednesday Peg Insects	Summer holiday craft activities	Y
Sept 2019		Heritage Open Day – Roald Dahl Day and Wildlife event		N
Sept 2019		Portrait Project		N
July, Aug & Sep edition	SW Flyer	Event listings, Object of the Month		N

**Exhibition and Events listings**

Exhibition and Events are advertised on many ‘What’s On’ listings (in print and online) including:

- Saffron Walden TIC
- Bishops Stortford TIC
- Saffron Walden Flyer Online
- Net Mums
- Salad Days
- EastLife
- The Listing, Royston

**Social Media and Email Newsletter**

Twitter	Followers: 2059
Facebook	Followers: 1261
Instagram	Followers : 589
Email Newsletter	Followers: 1041

**Saffron Walden Museum Website – Statistics for this quarter**

	Visits	Unique Visitors
<b>July</b>	2,849	2,165
<b>August</b>	2,992	2,262
<b>September</b>	3,016	2,060
<b>TOTAL for Q3</b>	<b>8,857</b>	<b>6,487</b>

**Visits:** the number of visits made by all visitors. (This could be described as the number of "sessions", implying the possibility of multiple pages per visit and multiple visits per unique visitor).

**Unique Visitor:** the number of persons or computers (hosts) that have made at least 1 hit on 1 page of the website during the current period. If a user makes several visits during this period, it is counted only once. Visitors are tracked by IP address, so if multiple users are accessing the website from the same IP (such as a home or office network), they will be counted as a single unique visitor.

**Trip Advisor**

Out of 139 reviews, on this travel and tourism review website, 71% rate the Museum as ‘Excellent’ (as at 12 September, figure to be confirmed at the end of the month)

**5 Education, Events and Outreach**

**5.1 Education**

**Loan and Reminiscence boxes:**

Box	Borrowers	Purpose	Users		
			Children	Adults	Total
Reminiscence 1930-1940s	Moat House care home	Reminiscence	n/a	40	40
Reminiscence 1950s	Saffron Walden Dementia Cafe	Reminiscence	n/a	Not yet returned	
Local History	SWCH	Teaching		Not yet returned	
Egypt -Writing	RAB	Teaching	96	6	102
Fossils	RAB	Teaching	96	6	102
WW2	Jill Knight	Assembly for British Legion	96	11	107
Victorians	Debden Primary	Teaching	<i>To be returned</i>		
Pre History	All Saints School	Teaching	<i>To be returned</i>		
<b>Totals</b>			<b>288</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>351</b>

**Analysis of use of Learning Services and Pupil Numbers**

	Children	Adults
No. learning in sessions taught by Learning Officer in Museum (1 session)	30	3
No. in independent visits to Museum	26	3
Nos. reached in visits to schools, care homes or other venues by Learning Officer	196	31
Nos. benefiting from loan and reminiscence boxes (details in table above)	288	63
<b>Total users of Museum Learning Services</b>	<b>540</b>	<b>100</b>

**5.2 Events on-site (in Museum and grounds and at Shire Hill Store)**

Date	Event	Visitors
31 July	Embossed Pinch Pots	188
9 August	Wallace's Great Big Birthday Bake-off	139
14 August	Peg Insects	149
21 August	Paper Cone Animals	66
28 August	Cardboard Cactus	87
30 August	SW Museum Society AGM (Talks by Jenny & Sarah, brainstorming for development ideas)	26
14 Sept	Roald Dahl Day / Wildlife Event (evening) and Open Heritage Weekend	47
15 Sept	Open Heritage Weekend (free admission to Museum)	14
21 August	New Councillors' Museum tours	15
<b>Total</b>		<b>731</b>

**5.3 Outreach** (Museum activities, talks and lectures at other venues)

The Museum is also one of the locations featured in an independent Saffron Walden Treasure Hunt (proceeds to the Mayor's charities).

**Other Museums and Local Groups: support and liaison (Uttlesford)** 18 groups engaged with, at least, 4 meetings involving Museum staff

Museum staff have attended meetings, site visits, undertaken work or given advice to:

- Heritage Development Group, 1 meeting, supplied text for Battle Ditches panel and advice on tenders for production of panel (SWTC NLHF-funded project), Carolyn Wingfield
- Gibson Library, 28<sup>th</sup> August, Jenny Oxley
- Book launch - *History of Wendons Ambo*, 10<sup>th</sup> September, Carolyn Wingfield
- STEM Ambassadors meeting at UDC council offices, 19<sup>th</sup> September, Jenny Oxley & Charlotte Pratt.
- Local History Recorders and Historical Journal – liaise re. human history research enquiries and publicity
- ERO Archive point at Saffron Walden Library – liaise re. human history research enquiries
- Saffron Walden TIC – re. engravings of the town for publicity
- Together in Sound, Lost letters project to discuss input to next exhibition 15<sup>th</sup> Sept Charlotte
- Creative Walden to discuss input to next exhibition 27<sup>th</sup> Sept Charlotte
- Special Roadside Verges project – Ridgeons site mitigation, checking replacement of missing posts, processing 2019 ecological survey forms, 4 planning application responses (Natural Sciences Officer, S Kenyon)
- *Taking Away the Walls*, talk delivered to Saffron Walden Museum Society, Monday 9<sup>th</sup> September. (Natural Sciences Officer, James Lumbard).
- Saffron Walden Community Shed making bird boxes, insect houses and planters for *Take Away the Walls* outreach. (Natural Sciences Officer, James Lumbard).
- Jubilee Allotment Group, Great Dunmow, for people living with dementia received 5 insect houses made by Saffron Walden Community Shed. (Natural Sciences Officer, James Lumbard).
- The Gardens of Easton Lodge hosted a visiting community support group during one of their regular volunteer open days, as part of *Take Away the Walls* outreach project. Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> August. (Natural Sciences Officer, James Lumbard).
- Essex Field Club carried out wildlife surveys in the Museum grounds and at Bridge End Garden Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> September. (Natural Sciences Officer, James Lumbard).
- Bridge End Garden co-hosted wildlife surveys with Essex Field Club Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> September. (Natural Sciences Officer, James Lumbard).
- Thaxted Centre for the Disabled received a wooden planter bird box to improve their grounds, made by Saffron Walden Community Shed, part of *Take Away the Walls* outreach. (Natural Sciences Officer, James Lumbard).
- Molehill Green, Takeley, Residents' Group involved in installing and maintaining insect houses and planters donated through *Take Away the Walls* outreach.

These activities extended the Museum's range of users as follows:

Jubilee Allotment Group	10
Saffron Walden Community Shed	10
Molehill Green residents	8
Thaxted Centre	20
Essex Field Club	2

Bridge End Gardens	1
Easton Lodge	1
Grapevine Essex	30
<b>Total</b>	<b>82</b>

**Meetings, Support and Involvement in professional and other organisations outside Uttlesford**

- Historical Pageant, Royston Town Council, 7<sup>th</sup> July, Jenny Oxley
- Museums Essex – members meeting, Essex Record Office Chelmsford, 6 September, Carolyn Wingfield
- Museums Association regional meeting, Norwich Castle. 6 September, Carolyn Wingfield
- University of Cambridge Museums, Museum Remix Project (Change Makers Group/ University of Cambridge Diversity Fund)-24th & 25th September, Jenny Oxley
- Mentor two volunteer run museums, one in Hertfordshire and one in Bedfordshire, Jenny Oxley
- University of Essex, proposed project regarding local suffragette, Jenny Oxley
- Museums Essex, application for proposed project, phase 2 of Snapping the Stiletto, Jenny Oxley
- Internship at Calk Abbey with Simon Moore on care and conservation of Natural history collections Charlotte Pratt
- Chelmsford charity Grapevine Essex attended a volunteer open day at the Gardens of Easton Lodge as part of *Take Away the Walls* outreach. (Natural Sciences Officer, James Lumbard).

**Local Performance Indicator**

<b>Performance Indicator</b> <b>PI 49</b>	<b>Q2 Actual</b>	<b>Q2 Target</b>	<b>Annual (Cumulative)</b>	<b>Annual Target 2019-20</b>
<b>Users of the Museum Service</b>	3,387	3,600	7,616	13,200

**Notes on Performance Indicators**

**Users** are all those engaging with the Museum Service in person or through other media, and include:

- those visiting the Museum site and Museum outdoor events on site (visitors, table 4.3)
- those attending off-site events or benefitting from outreach services (e.g. learning and reminiscence work in schools and care homes; pupils using school loan boxes in the classroom; audience for a talk, store tour or other off-site activity by Museum staff)
- those using the Museum service 'remotely' (enquiries, research and services by phone, email and post)

This definition of Users excludes website visits and social media followers, but these figures are reported separately in 4.4 above as a measure of the Museum's on-line profile

**Comments on this quarter's figures:**

Slightly below target by 6%, despite a busy quarter with holiday activities and good local publicity. Visitors to the Museum were 2,907. We remain on target overall due to user numbers in Q1 exceeding target (big event in Q1 this year)

**Main Museum activities and items to note for Q3 (October-December) 2019-20****1 Museum Management and Staff**

Project Inception meeting 21 October with consultants for Resilient Heritage project, followed by programme of work on audience development study and options appraisal with stakeholders, including representatives of the Council and Museum Society.

**2 Buildings and Site**

Development work on the Castle expected to be completed, with connection of lighting to Museum's electricity supply.

**3 Collections and Research**

Background research and site visit to the Essex Fire Museum for the upcoming temporary exhibition, *All Fired Up*, opening March 2020 (Jenny)  
Contractors to seal Natural Sciences store at Museum site and provides an opportunity to conservation clean and audit the Natural History Collection.

**4 Displays and Visitor Services**

**Temporary Exhibitions:** *From Death Masks to Diaries – The Many Faces of Portraiture* opens on 16 November. The project has been accompanied by a project to collect the imprints of local residents' fingers, a photo of them and oral history recording.

**Object of the Month** will feature:

- October: Butterflies (James)
- November: Medieval Reliquary Pendant (Carolyn)
- December: Victorian Christmas Doll's house scene (Jenny)

**Curiosity Corner** (Charlotte) will feature:

- October: Moulds and Casting
- November: Bones (up for half term and Halloween)
- December: something festive

**Your Stories** (Jenny) co-curated display with Saffron Players until January 2020 (will receive promotion due to the group's pantomime (Nov-Jan).

**5 Education, Events and Outreach****October Half-term:**

- *Spooky Forest Mobile* –Wednesday 30<sup>th</sup> October
- *Ghost in a Jar* – Thursday 31<sup>st</sup> October
- *Museums at Night* - Friday 1<sup>st</sup> November
- **Christmas Activities:** Perfect Portraits and Christmas wreath hand-prints.
- Outreach for *From Death Masks to Diaries* includes pen portrait brief for young writers club.
- In-house oral history recording, finger casting, portrait photographs for exhibition on 3 and 9 Oct



## SAFFRON WALDEN MUSEUM

Uttlesford District Council &  
Saffron Walden Museum Society Ltd



### COLLECTIONS CARE & CONSERVATION POLICY 2020-2025

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**Name of museum:** *Saffron Walden Museum*

**Name of governing body:**

*Uttlesford District Council & Saffron Walden Museum Society Ltd*

**Date on which this policy was approved by Museum Management Working Group for recommendation to Cabinet:**

30 October 2019

**Date on which this policy was approved by Cabinet of Uttlesford District Council:**

November 2019

**Policy review procedure:**

The collections development policy will be published and reviewed from time to time, at least once every five years.

**Date at which this policy is due for review:**

July 2025

## Introduction: ethical, legal and professional framework

- 1.1 The Museum's statement of purpose is to give people inspiration and a sense of place in Uttlesford district / north-west Essex, through exploration of our wide-ranging collections and the histories they represent. High standards of care and long-term preservation of the collections and associated information are therefore essential to achieving this aim.
- 1.2 The collections and buildings (Museum and Shirehill store) are owned by Saffron Walden Museum Society Ltd and leased to Uttlesford District Council which operates the museum service under the Management Agreement 2014 between the Museum Society and Council. The Council is responsible for maintaining the buildings and contents, including the collections.
- 1.3 The Museum undertakes to fulfil its legal responsibilities to protect collections and the people handling them or working in proximity to them. These include the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974, COSHH regulations, and other specific issues such as presence of asbestos, radioactive specimens, drugs and firearms. (See Section 4 Specific needs of collections).
- 1.4 The Museum will act in accordance with the Museums Association's *Code of Ethics* and ethical guidance for collections, including issues of particular sensitivity, such as cultural and interpretative issues associated with world cultures (ethnography) and human remains (archaeological collections). It will use *Benchmarks in Collections Care* 2.1 and other professional guidance for specific types of collection in the care and conservation of objects and specimens. In the case of human remains, this includes *Guidance for best practice for treatment of human remains excavated from Christian burial grounds in England*, The Church of England and English Heritage, 2005; *Guidance for the care of human remains in museums*, DCMS, 2005; Human Tissue Act 2004 and appropriate sources of advice such as subject specialist networks.
- 1.5 This policy covers both preventative conservation, which aims to minimise damage to or deterioration of collections, and remedial conservation, which aims to stabilise or improve the condition of collections, or enhance its significance through extraction of additional information.

## Standards of Care

Saffron Walden Museum strives to provide appropriate levels of care for the wide-ranging collections which it holds.

### Preventative Conservation

- 2.1** The Museum will ensure that a stable physical environment is maintained for the collections and regularly monitored, with appropriate levels of temperature and relative humidity (RH) for the materials in question, protection from particulate pollution, insect pests and other physical damage, and from potentially harmful light (including UV) for light-sensitive specimens and materials.
- 2.2** The Museum buildings where collections are housed must be maintained and equipped to foster stable environments and appropriate standards of collections care. Regular inspection, maintenance and repairs are undertaken by the Council's Property Surveyor in collaboration with the Museum Security & Premises Officer and other Museum staff. The Museum is a historic grade II listed brick building constructed in 1834 and requires special attention to its condition, internal environment and ingress of insect pests. The Council's Property Surveyor manages a programme of work which since 2018 has been addressing issues with the building and maintaining the fabric into best possible condition. The Shirehill store is a new purpose-built store in 2014, fitted out 2015 and collections have been moved in from 2016 onwards. It is of steel and masonry construction with high-level floor loading (for mobile racking) on both floors, and is insulated to provide a buffered and windowless secure environment for collections in storage areas. It will however need routine inspections and maintenance in the long-term.
- 2.3** Security of collections (in store, on display, in research rooms or in transit) will be maintained at all times through:
  - Intruder and fire alarm systems with dedicated phone lines to the monitoring station, for out-of-hours emergencies
  - Additional alarms on sensitive display cases and fire exits
  - CCTV to record people entering and leaving Museum buildings, track routes through the galleries and cover exhibits which could be high-risk targets for theft
  - Control of keys, which are to be kept in a locked cabinet and accessed only by Museum staff
  - Supervision of volunteers, researchers and contractors in all storage and research areas by Museum staff

- Collections in transit to be accompanied by Museum staff, in keeping with insurance requirements (exceptions may occur when an approved carrier is used to transport loans between museums, provided that insurance cover is maintained)
  - Opening, closing and lone working procedures, which require a minimum of 2 staff for opening, closing and working in the Museum, and lone working procedures to safeguard staff working at the Shirehill store and those undertaking outreach work.
- 2.4** For incoming objects and specimens, there will be a visual inspection and quarantine period in the conservation freezer for all organic objects and specimens to eliminate risk of insect pests. For large items unable to fit in the freezer, a COSHH-approved woodworm or other approved form of treatment should be used and advice sought from conservators at appropriate museums. In the event of emergencies or major projects, the Museum would consult with conservators, other museum facilities in the region and specialist contractors to identify suitable options such as large walk-in freezers, thermal treatment or fumigation, depending on the problem and the materials to be treated.
- 2.5** Areas where collections are kept (stores and galleries) will be monitored regularly to check that temperature and RH are within the appropriate parameters, to check for insect pests, and identify areas where further action is needed. Manual equipment for monitoring the environment will be upgraded, subject to resources, to a digital system for greater accuracy and efficiency.
- 2.6** Display cases are to be of appropriate construction to provide secure and stable environment for collections, using conservation-approved materials. The proposed development of the Museum (2020-25) will provide an opportunity to improve climate control and security in cases where necessary. Additional security measures e.g. internal alarms, high-grade locks and construction materials) will be considered for exhibits assessed at especially high risk of theft, damage or deterioration. The Museum's CCTV network is maintained, reviewed and updated, to cover all actual and potential exits to the Museum and galleries, collections at highest risk of theft and visitor reception/shop.
- 2.7** Light is excluded from stores or controlled by blinds. The Museum development plan will investigate measures for UV and reducing unwanted heat, and reducing environmental impact for instance by greater use of LED lighting, and use of timers to allow viewing of sensitive displays. Light-sensitive materials e.g. costume, tapestries, important and irreplaceable natural history specimens, it is policy to rotate exhibits every 5 years.

- 2.8** Cleaning of stores and gallery displays will take place regularly, aiming to cover all area annually (more frequently if a particular need arises), subject to availability of staff and volunteers. Storage areas display a notice stating parameters for environmental control, specific collection risks and a checklist for regular monitoring and cleaning.
- 2.9** Pest management: there is regular (quarterly) monitoring and reporting of potential pests trapped or found. Vulnerable areas are sprayed with a COSHH-approved insecticide in to reduce the risk of infestation.
- 2.10** Condition checking of collections is undertaken in conjunction with repacking, audits and documentation. Cleaning of displays and stores is to be regularised as far as circumstances permit. Work on the Museum's development plan 2020-25 will increase this as we move from basic storage and documentation work towards redisplay of galleries.
- 2.11** Use of photography and scanners is controlled to prevent potentially harmful exposure to light for light-sensitive objects and specimens, especially documents, photographs and artworks. Scanning should be done once at high resolution, to provide an archive digital copy. Photography should be done without flash if possible for light-sensitive objects, or use of lights and strong daylight kept to the minimum necessary.
- 2.12** The Museum will provide and use surrogate digital copies of fragile, light-sensitive and / or frequently-used items, including accession registers and other historic records, wherever possible, to reduce unnecessary risks from handling originals. It is accepted that sometimes originals need to be inspected but unnecessary handling will be avoided. We will seek to extend the availability of digital copies in tandem with documentation.
- 2.13** Digital media (CDs, DVDs) acquired as part of archives (e.g. oral history projects, archaeological fieldwork) will be appropriately stored with records of software and file formats, and location of duplicate or printed copies. The Museum is unable to take on the task of continually migrating digital media to new formats and applications, therefore steps should be taken to ensure that significant files are either uploaded and attached to the collections database (Modes Complete) so that they will be regularly backed-up and incorporated in future upgrades, or are preserved through other organisations and/or by printed hard copy. For local and social history, the Essex Record Office and East Anglian Film archive are appropriate sources of advice. For archaeological archives, excavators are expected to have deposited digital records with the Archaeological Data Service (ADS) as stated in the *Guidelines for Deposition of Archaeological Archives in Essex* (2015).

## Remedial Conservation

- 2.14** For basic cleaning of common types of object and specimens, curatorial staff have a professional grounding in day-to-day collections care in their specialist area but must be aware of the limitations of their expertise. Light conservation cleaning is undertaken where no risk is posed to the object or specimen, or to the person undertaking the cleaning. Specialist advice and services will be sought for all other situations (see section 3).
- 2.15** Plans for prioritising objects and specimens for assessment and treatment will be drawn up by curatorial staff as needs are identified, prioritised by urgency and potential impact on use (e.g. required for display, identified during research or documentation audits in store).
- 2.16** The Museum maintains an Emergency Plan for salvaging collections and business continuity in the event of a disaster at the Museum or Shirehill store. Copies will be kept in both locations and off-site with key staff for instant reference in the event of an emergency.

## Investigative Techniques

- 2.17** Occasionally items from the collection may be considered for other forms of scientific treatment, for instance chemical analysis, radio carbon dating or DNA testing. In assessing the case for any such treatment, and especially if the technique involves destroying or altering a sample from the object or specimen, the Museum will consider each on a case-by-case basis against two criteria:
- That the technique itself is appropriate and viable for the object in question, and
  - That there is sufficient reason to indicate that meaningful and significant information would be gained

The use of destructive techniques and sampling will be referred to the Board of Saffron Walden Museum Society Ltd (owners of the collections) for approval.

## 3

### Expertise & Advice

- 3.1** As the Museum does not have conservation facilities or employ a conservator, it will seek expertise and advice from appropriately-qualified specialists in the remedial and preventative treatment of collections. Advice will be sought from appropriately qualified specialists, SHARE, Subject Specialist Networks, ICON and large regional museum services with conservation departments.
- 3.2** Museum staff responsible for collections will undertake training to

develop and update their essential knowledge and skills in handling and care of collections as appropriate, and recognition of issues which require expert intervention.

- 3.3** Museum volunteers who work with collections will receive in-house training in essentials for handling and checking collections, and work under supervision of the appropriate member of curatorial staff.

## 4

### Collection-specific Needs

- 4.1 Archaeology** mainly of local provenance (but also including small collections of Ancient Egyptian and Classical Antiquities)

**4.1.1** Human remains received from archaeological contractors will be acquired if prepared and packed to appropriate standards for long-term storage in secure static storage units dedicated to human remains. Human remains from historic excavation archives should be assessed and improvements made to their packing and storage to comply with modern standards as far as possible.

**4.1.2** Where asbestos is proven or suspected of being present in exhibits, specialist services will be sought to assess and seal displays. In archaeology, this currently applies only to the Roman-period Egyptian mummy of a boy, where naturally-occurring asbestos is present in some wrappings.

**4.1.3** Metalwork, especially ironwork, requires a low-humidity environment and a small store equipped with a dehumidifier will be provided for this purpose. Collections currently held in the very small metalwork store in the Museum will be moved to a more spacious storage area at Shirehill when this has been equipped and a low-humidity environment will be maintained (<45% RH).

**4.1.4** Archaeological 'treasure' (objects acquired under the Treasure Act 1996) and coins are at relatively high risk of theft being small, portable and often desirable to collectors (though not all treasure is necessarily of high financial value). Additional security measures on display should include high-specification cases, internal case alarms and location within range of a CCTV camera as appropriate.

**4.2 Social & Local History, World Cultures, Fine & Decorative Arts, Costume & Textiles**

**4.2.1** Collections Items containing hazards, such as asbestos, radioactivity or pharmaceutical products will be assessed by a specialist and measures taken to ensure they are either disposed of or, stored or displayed in a safe and legal manner, with appropriate precautions

and hazard labelling.

- 4.2.2 Particular care will be taken with handling, displaying and storing fragile materials such as works on paper and textiles, as well as organic material (e.g. animal glue, bark cloths, animal hair and teeth in the World Cultures collections).
- 4.2.3 Collections are packed and supported with appropriate types of racking and conservation grade packing materials, and open storage items are raised off the floor to protect them from flooding (with the exception of the hand-drawn and horse-drawn vehicles which cannot be palletted).
- 4.2.4 Surrogate and digital copies of fragile, light-sensitive and/or heavily used collections (e.g. local history photos) and historic records (e.g. registers) will be provided wherever possible to reduce unnecessary handling. For local and social history, the Essex Record Office and East Anglian Film archive may be appropriate sources of advice or repositories.

#### **4.3 Geology** (Rocks, minerals and fossils mainly of East Anglian and British origin, with some specimens from across the world)

- 4.3.1 Specimens containing asbestos or radioactive material will be assessed by specialists and measures taken to ensure they are either disposed of, or stored or displayed in a safe and legal manner, with appropriate precautions and hazard labelling.
- 4.3.2 All geology specimens are handled with gloves to prevent damage from skin contact and to protect people from the specimens.
- 4.3.3 Ferrous geology requires a low-humidity environment (see archaeological metalwork above).
- 4.3.4 Geological material at the Shirehill store is kept in a humidity-controlled environment between 45% and 55% relative humidity. Temperature is maintained above a 15°C minimum. These limits may be amended to reflect modern best practice guidelines, energy efficiency considerations and legal workspace requirements.

#### **4.4 Natural History** (Plant and animal specimens from Britain and around the world)

- 4.4.1 Type Specimens are securely stored to minimise the risk of theft or damage by disaster incidents such as fire or flood.
- 4.4.2 Natural history items entering the Museum for any reason are to undergo freezing and quarantine as part of Integrated Pest Management procedures. Separate freezers are used for deadstock

storage and conservation purposes to minimise the risk of pest transferal to Museum objects.

4.4.3 The Natural Sciences store at the Museum is a temperature- and humidity-controlled environment. Temperature is maintained below 19°C, and humidity is maintained below 59% relative humidity. These limits may be amended to reflect modern best practice guidelines, energy efficiency considerations and legal workspace requirements.

4.3.4 All biological specimens are handled with gloves to prevent damage from skin contact and to protect people from any hazards in the specimens.

## 5

### Communicating Collections Care

- 5.1** Collections care policy and procedures are communicated and shared through a variety of channels and different means, appropriate to the audience:
- With Museum staff, through monthly staff meeting agendas, notices in stores, the procedures manual, provision of PPE and by sharing best practice and updates from training and Subject Specialist Networks.
  - With volunteers and researchers, through induction and supervision for volunteers, supervision and guidance, and by providing appropriate PPE. Volunteers can assist staff in basic housekeeping and cleaning tasks.
  - With Museum Society and the Council, through the Quarterly report to the Museum Society Board and the Museum Management Working Group, and through the Newsletter, talks and presentations to Society members.
  - With visitors and other service users, and the public at large, through a variety of media, and wherever possible demonstrating a positive and proactive approach in explaining and sharing good practice with the public.
- 5.2** Signage and labelling in galleries will aim to engage visitors and explain rather than being purely prohibitive. 'Good practice' examples of collections care can be good subjects for newsletters, social media and website, talks and workshops.
- 5.3** Demonstrations and behind-the-scenes tours to small groups include reference to the importance of collections care and conservation.



## SAFFRON WALDEN MUSEUM

Uttlesford District Council &  
Saffron Walden Museum Society Ltd



## ACCESS POLICY 2020-2025

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Saffron Walden Museum is operated by Uttlesford District Council under a joint management agreement between Uttlesford District Council & Saffron Walden Museum Society Ltd (charity 1123209).

**Date on which this policy was approved by Museum Management Working Group for recommendation to Cabinet:**

30 October 2019

**Date on which this policy was approved by Cabinet of Uttlesford District Council:**

November 2019

**Policy review procedure:**

The Access policy will be published and reviewed from time to time, at least once every five years.

**Date at which this policy is due for review:**

October 2024

## 1 Introduction

We believe that everyone has the right to access Saffron Walden Museum, whether they are a visitor, remote user, volunteer or member of staff and regardless of ability, age, gender, cultural or social background, sexual orientation, faith, language, location or wealth. It is important that our Museum and store are welcoming and inclusive to all.

We are committed to removing barriers that prevent people from accessing our sites, collections, events and services so that we can share our collections and histories of North West Essex as widely as possible. The Museum strives, within the limitations of the sites and other resources, to offer the widest, richest, most engaging access for all users. Saffron Walden Museum recognises that access is a complex issue that must be addressed through the actions of the organisation as a whole. At the heart of our Access Policy is our belief that everyone benefits when barriers to access are removed.

## 2 Scope

This policy covers provision at Saffron Walden Museum and the Museum Store at Shirehill, Saffron Walden as well as our website, social media and other online activities, and our outreach programme at other venues.

## 3 Responsibilities

The Curator and Museum team and Uttlesford District Council are responsible for ensuring that the museum service meets its obligations under the Public Sector Equality Duty and the Equality Act (2010) and the Museums Association's *Code of Ethics* by doing everything reasonably possible to make the Museum accessible to the widest range of people. Managers are responsible for ensuring that the work of their staff and volunteers takes into account the need to maximise access by addressing the barriers outlined in this policy.

Everyone involved in developing, delivering or maintaining spaces, activities, resources and other services for our users at Saffron Walden Museum are responsible for making them as accessible as possible. This includes contractors employed by Saffron Walden Museum (e.g. designers, artists, session leaders) and volunteers.

## 4

# Identifying potential barriers to access

**When we refer to access we mean the opportunity to engage with our buildings, collections, content and expertise. There are a number of key barriers to access:**

- 4.1 Attitudinal – e.g. some people may have a lack of interest in, or awareness of, the Museum and the subjects and issues it deals with, or our programmes and services.
- 4.2 Intellectual – e.g. some people may find the museum too specialist in its approach to subjects and how they are presented; some may have learning disabilities which affect their ability to engage with the Museum; and some may not be able to read or speak English.
- 4.3 Economic – e.g. some people may not be able to afford to visit the Museum or take part in our programme.
- 4.4 Geographic – e.g. some people will live too far away to visit the Museum, or have difficulty travelling to the museum.
- 4.5 Physical/sensory – e.g. people with physical disabilities, limited mobility, or hearing or visual impairments may not be able to access the Museum, our website, social media channels or programmes.
- 4.6 Technological – e.g. some people may not have access to the internet at home or use a mobile phone.

## 5

# Physical access

**The Museum seeks to**

- 5.1 Uphold the statutory requirements of the Equality Act (2010) by taking reasonable steps to ensure that policies, practices and procedures do not discriminate against disabled people; by provide auxiliary aids and services which enable disabled people to use the Museum; and by removing, altering or circumventing physical barriers within our buildings. The Feasibility Study & Options Appraisal to be undertaken in 2020 (National Heritage Lottery Fund project) and subsequent development plans for the Museum will be an opportunity to address issues and design new facilities and displays for improved accessibility.
- 5.2 Work with Council colleagues and other organisations to review and improve signage and access to the Museum and Castle site, especially following the opening of the recently-conserved Castle keep to the public (2019-20).

- 5.3** Provide dedicated disabled parking space on the Museum forecourt, near the entrance, and a manual wheelchair for visitors who require one (e.g. if they need to transfer from a large mobility scooter).
- 5.4** Ensure that all our galleries, exhibitions and learning activities are accessible for wheelchair users.
- 5.5** Ensure that if any service user cannot access a specific display or exhibit, we will provide an alternative way to access the information wherever possible (e.g. through images or written interpretation).
- 5.6** Provide an accessible toilet and baby-changing facilities.
- 5.7** Provide seating with armrests throughout the Museum building.
- 5.8** Maintain opening hours throughout the year (Tuesday – Sunday and Bank Holidays) to maximise visiting opportunities for people to visit regardless of their working pattern. The Museum will review these periodically, in the light of the planned Audience Development Study (2019-20) and public consultations for future developments, and respond to requests for evening events (e.g. booked group visit) subject to staff resources available.
- 5.9** Maintain affordable prices for admission tickets (currently £2.50 adults, £1.25 concessions, free for under 18s), with Annual Season Ticket offers (currently £8 and £4) and free admission for carers accompanying disabled visitors. The Museum offers free access to all for the annual nationwide Heritage Weekend in September and occasionally participates in other special promotional free / reduced admission events at the Council's discretion (e.g. Big Essex Weekend), to encourage visits by all regardless of income.
- 5.10** Provide appropriate aids for visitors with sensory impairments, within limitations of resources and the historic nature of the Museum building, e.g. provision of a hearing loop at the Welcome Desk and in the Special Exhibitions Gallery and Great Hall.
- 5.11** Provide and improve internal signage and information to enable all visitors to explore the Museum and locate facilities easily.
- 5.12** Provide a basic guide (leaflet) to the Museum in a range of languages for visitors from overseas (around 13-14% of Museum visitors). We will use information from visitor surveys, Audience Development Study (2019-20), front-of-house volunteers and Council sources to review the range of languages to match our actual and potential visitor communities, including any ethnic community groups identified in the north-west Essex area (traditionally an area with very little ethnic diversity in the population).

### The Museum seeks to

- 6.1** Work with groups and advisors to develop our activities and aids for people with sensory impairments and special needs, to continually update our Access Audit and inform our Access Policy and Plan (e.g. Support4Sight, Uttlesford Dementia Friends, with whom the Museum has been working 2018-19).
- 6.2** Display exhibits which reflect the range and diversity of the Museum's collections, and engage with the diversity of our users and their needs. This supports our core aim of inspiring people and providing a sense of place in Uttlesford district / north-west Essex, through exploration of our wide-ranging collections and the histories they represent.
- 6.3** Provide access to all collections and appropriate associated information, to meet the needs of all researchers and different cultures and communities. This includes direct physical access and provision of information in a suitable and accessible format to users who cannot visit, e.g. by email or letter. We seek to be sensitive to the nature of requests and to users, e.g. in providing full information on items in our world cultures collection to enquirers from first nation communities, or to local community groups in Uttlesford exploring their local heritage. Information given out will be subject to legal and ethical constraints, e.g. data protection legislation, or the need to protect sensitive archaeological and environmental site locations.
- 6.4** Access to study objects and specimens in the collections will be supervised at all times by a member of Museum staff, to assist the researcher, ensure the security of the collections, and provide guidance in handling where necessary. Wherever possible, items will be made available in a wheelchair-accessible research area (Museum Workroom, Shirehill store Research Room) unless the size, weight or other aspects of the objects or specimens make it necessary to view in store, accompanied by Museum staff.
- 6.5** Promote public awareness of the full extent of the collections through special features in the Museum (e.g. Object of the Month display), on-line (website blogs, social media) and through other remote means (e.g. talks by staff). Store tours for small groups, supervised by Museum staff, will be offered at Shirehill by appointment subject to staff availability. Museum development plans (2020-25) will seek to redress limitations placed on access to stores and collections by the nature of the building (narrow staircase access and cramped space currently make group tours behind-the-scenes in the Museum untenable for the safety of people and collections). Potential improvements for access, to be considered in development plans, include changes to stores or developing a 'virtual tour' (linked to the Documentation Plan and digitisation of collections).
- 6.6** Differentiate between commercial reproduction requests for images of the collection, and non-commercial / not-for-profit requests from local communities,

researchers, students and educational, academic or charitable organisations, for fees & charges and conditions. This is to foster knowledge and use of the collections through their wider study and publication, and maintain a balance between legitimate income generation and access for non-commercial users.

- 6.7** Incorporate multisensory exhibits (e.g. to touch, smell, listen to), and tactile objects into exhibitions and galleries where appropriate.
- 6.8** Ensure that video-based exhibits have subtitles if they use the spoken word, and/or printed copies of the script for reference.
- 6.9** Write text for use in our galleries, exhibitions, educational resources, publications, website and social media channels which is carefully tailored to the needs of their intended audiences, in line with the Museum's style guide.
- 6.10** Provide appropriate aids and options to enhance exploration of the Museum and collections by all, e.g. tactile toys and ear defenders in our "Explorer Backpacks" to assist young visitors in general, and especially those on the autism spectrum.
- 6.11** Offer outreach visits to schools, care homes and community groups who have difficulty in visiting the Museum.
- 6.12** Ensure that the content and delivery of our learning programmes and activities are tailored to the learning needs of their audiences.
- 6.13** Provide tailored session options for special schools and Special Educational Needs (SEN) units in schools and colleges.

## **7 Marketing and publicity**

### **The Museum will**

- 7.1** Ensure that our promotional activities present the Museum as a welcoming, non-threatening, inclusive and family-friendly destination.
- 7.2** Promote the Museum to a broad range of users through a variety of media, printed and on-line, for local and target audiences, within the restrictions of budget and staff resources. This will be reflected in the marketing strategy to be produced after the Audience Development Study 2019-20. Essential information on accessibility will be included on the Museum's website and programme leaflet, and wherever possible or practical to do so.

## 8

## Staffing and training

### The Museum will

- 8.1 Ensure that visitors are made to feel welcome on arrival and are put at their ease. Our Welcome Desk volunteers are trained to offer a guide of what to expect inside the Museum, answer visitor questions and provide guidance and reassurance about navigation, how to move around the Museum and where to find key exhibits and points of interest.
- 8.2 Staff and volunteers are Dementia Friends trained.
- 8.3 The Learning & Outreach Officer advises staff and volunteers on giving accessible access for those with Special Educational Needs and Autistic Spectrum Disorders (ASD).
- 8.4 Museum staffs attend appropriate training by SHARE and other providers on Museum accessibility for a range of users with different access needs.

## 9

## Partnerships and networking

### To extend access to collections further, the Museum will

- 9.1 Provide loans to other museums nationally and internationally, subject to our conditions of loan and to approval by the Board of Saffron Walden Museum Society Ltd (owners of the collections).
- 9.2 Provide loan boxes for schools and community groups, and maintain an education & handling collection specifically for this purpose and for taught sessions, to encourage interaction with collections while preserving the main Museum collections from undue risks (Collections Development Policy).
- 9.3 Actively develop partnerships in the community for exhibitions and the activities programme (e.g. co-curated Community Case, use of Museum & Castle grounds for wildlife surveys). In developing plans for the improvement of the Museum and re-display of the collections (2020-25) the Museum will consult and involve local communities through appropriate means such as co-curation projects, focus groups and workshops.

## 10

## Review

Policy review date: October 2024