

**MUSEUM MANAGEMENT WORKING GROUP held at Zoom on
WEDNESDAY, 27 APRIL 2022 at 6.00 pm**

Present: T Watson – Museum Society (Chair)
Councillor R Freeman, K Eden (Chair of the Museum Society),
C Sharpe (Museum Society).

Officers in attendance: R Auty (Assistant Director - Corporate Services), C Edwards
(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 Armstrong, Gregory, Light and Sell and Richard Priestley from the Museum Society. In the absence of Councillor Sell, it was agreed that Tony Watson would stand in as Chair for this meeting.

2 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 26th January 2022 were approved as an accurate record.

3 MUSEUM SOCIETY CHAIR'S REPORT

The Museum Society Chair thanked the Curator, her team and volunteers for all their hard work on the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) bid.

He said that they were strengthening the Museum Society board with the announcement of a new president yesterday and a new Director, Douglas Kent, who had experience in the historical building sector.

He said that the process of finding a new Treasurer was in progress.

He said that once confirmation had been received from the NLHF in September they would start the process of finding a director to manage the fund-raising task.

MUSEUM CURATOR'S REPORT FOR QUARTER 4 - JANUARY TO MARCH 2022

The Curator presented her report and highlighted the following: -

- The Stage 1 Development Grant Application for the NLHF was due to be submitted by 26 May. This was a complicated application process and a substantial amount of time was being spent on the production of the bid. Once it had been submitted there would be a 3 month wait until the decision was made whether to award the grant.
- Part of the work for the NLHF bid was looking at environmental sustainability and carbon literacy which would also form part of the Museum's Service Plan. A number of these measures would be dependent on the capital development going ahead. The Museum's procedures were being evaluated and there had been some public consultation with visitors about what potential exhibition subjects around climate change could be included and would be of interest.
- The current projects at the Museum included the Lost Language of Nature and the new World Cultures project.
- A grant of £5k had been awarded from Cultural Engine for a community led art installation which would extend the outreach of the Lost Language of Nature project.
- The pilot for the efficient monitoring of the environment of the collections store at Shirehill had worked well and the Museum Society had agreed to fund an extra three units. There had been problems with the new Wi-Fi in the Museum building which had slowed progress for the same environmental monitoring system to be introduced throughout.
- The new exhibition 'All Fired Up' went ahead after it was delayed due to Covid.
- User figures for this quarter had exceeded the target with over 3,000 service users. The year 2021/22 had a total of 8,627 service users.
- The learning services were performing well in terms of engagement and income.
- Small adult workshops had taken place, including the Bronze and Bubbles Workshop. These had been extremely popular and would be useful for the winter months if Covid numbers started to rise again.
- Income from sales continued to be good with the sale of books, souvenirs and donations providing a gross 91p per person figure.
- Donations had improved since the option to use payment cards through the till system had been introduced.

5 **MUSEUM DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE UPDATE**

The next meeting of the Committee would be in early June to consider how to respond to the September decision and the possible risk of the funding not being given.

The Curator said there was a critical meeting on site next week with the Pre-application Planning Advice Case Officer who had been allocated from Uttlesford District Council's Planning department. The meeting would also include two Officers from Essex County Council's Place Services team who would provide specialist advice on archaeology and historic buildings for planning purposes and the Inspector of Ancient Monuments from Historic England. The meeting would seek advice and views on how to proceed with both the inside and outside of the Museum. She said that the results of this meeting would be included in the bid documentation.

She said that letters of support were being collated, with only six in total being allowed in the bid documentation.

She said that the Museum would put forward a convincing case to the NLHF but that quite a few projects got an initial rejection, with an invitation to submit further details on certain aspects of the project. She said that she hoped the bid would be accepted the first time.

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

The next meeting was agreed for Wednesday 13th July at 6.00pm.

The meeting ended at 6.30pm