

**MUSEUM MANAGEMENT WORKING GROUP held at COUNCIL OFFICES  
LONDON ROAD SAFFRON WALDEN at 6pm on 28 JUNE 2017**

Present: Councillor R Chambers (Chairman)  
Councillor L Wells.

Also present: A Watson, P Walker (Museum Society  
Representatives)

Officers in attendance: B Ferguson (Democratic Services Officer), A Webb  
(Director of Finance and Corporate Services) and C Wingfield (Curator).

**MMWG1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Councillor Sell, P Salvidge, R Auty and R Priestly.

**MMWG2 MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 1 March 2017 were received and signed by the Chairman as a correct record subject to the following amendments:

**MMWG11 - REPORT OF CURATOR**

In the final paragraph of the first page, the '*Outreach Officer*' to be replaced with the '*Learning Officer*'.

**MMWG13 - MUSEUM DEVELOPMENT UPDATE/RENTAL OF SCHOOL ROOM**

In the first paragraph of the third page, the '*Fry art gallery*' to be replaced with the '*School Room*'.

**MMWG3 THE MUSEUM SOCIETY'S CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

Members considered the report of the Chairman of the Museum Society.

Members were updated on the Heritage Development Team meeting which occurred on 21 June and included representatives from the museum, St. Mary's Church, the castle, the Fry Art Gallery and the Town Library Society. Co-operation between Saffron Walden's historical institutions had led to interesting opportunities, such as the event marking Oliver Cromwell's time in the town, due to be held by St. Mary's Church in December 2017. Both the museum and library had offered their support for the event.

The Director of Finance and Corporate Services asked if historical assets were being promoted across the district. The Curator of Saffron Walden museum said there were schemes across the district, such as the medieval broach being

displayed in Great Dunmow, and the lending of museum items to the Great Chesterford archaeological society to encourage local participation. She said the museum worked with other organisations across the district whenever an opportunity arose.

#### **MMWG4 QUATERLY REPORT JANUARY – MARCH 2017**

The Curator presented her quarterly report, detailing events from January to March 2017. Specifically, she drew attention to the successful lease of the Schoolroom by the Fry Art Gallery; the two donations made towards the conservation of a silk reticule; and the partnership project between the museum and the Royal College of Music, who were in the process of establishing a national database of historic musical instruments in UK museums.

The Curator said visitor figures for this quarter were disappointing, although in the same quarter last year the Easter holidays had been included and therefore this was not a surprise. School visits were also down, and this was mainly attributed to the absence of a Learning Officer. More positive trends included the rise of adult visitors during the quarter, and the increase in internet traffic both on the website and with social media, which was due to the work of the museum's Administration Officer. The Chairman said social media provided a great opportunity for the museum and it was good to see them engaging with the public in this way.

The Curator told members that the museum would be taking on an intern this summer and expenses would be paid. The intern would assist the Administration Officer in maintaining the museum's social media presence.

#### **MMWG5 APPROACH TO THE HERITAGE LOTTERY FUND (HLF) FOR TWO APPLICATIONS**

The Curator presented her report on the museum's approach to two HLF applications.

The Curator told members that the HLF document was not a formal document but it would move the dialogue for potential funding forward. She said it was exciting and a big step to take for the museum. The 'ball park' figure was in the region of £2 million, the most an institution could bid for at the regional level.

The Chairman said it was a promising development and the Council needed to cope with the progress being made.

The Curator gave an overview of the district's place in the Heritage Index. Uttlesford was 67<sup>th</sup> out of over 370 districts. She hoped that with the promise of improving access to the district's rich heritage, the HLF applications would be taken seriously and the museum would be in a prime position to benefit from funding.

## **MMWG6      LEGAL AND ACCREDITATION ITEMS**

### **a) Asbestos in collections**

The Curator informed members of the corrective action taken in relation to asbestos in collections, and for the museum to ensure it has addressed all legal responsibilities. The Curator stated that its collection would be properly assessed by a specialist contractor, and that the museum was waiting on the procurement process before going ahead with the assessment.

### **b) Firearms: change in the museum's license**

Members were told that there had been a change in the museum's firearm license. Previously, it was the responsibility of the Curator to apply for a personal license to ensure the museum was covered, as per the instructions of Essex police. However, problems had been identified with this method and a museum specific license had been applied for. This had been supported by a senior licensing officer at Essex Police.

### **c) Disposals agreed and anticipated by the Museum Society Board**

The Curator updated members on the rationalisation process being undertaken at the museum, with disposals including a shell dressing and pamphlet from WWII. The museum would also be distributing mixed pottery boxes from past field work, which would be better utilised by institutions in Cambridgeshire.

Councillor Wells asked if the museum liaised with village historians. She was told that details of local historians were recorded, and were notified if items were found which may be relevant to them.

## **MMWG7      OTHER ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

### **a) Learning and Outreach Officer recruitment**

Twenty-one applications had been received for the Learning and Outreach Officer role and the Curator was pleased with the large number of strong candidates. Six had been selected for interview, and she hoped to appoint someone as soon as possible to begin the work of contacting schools before the autumn term began.

There would be an emphasis on visiting schools remotely, due to the recognition that smaller primary schools could not afford the transport costs. Visits from the Learning and Outreach Officer would be more affordable for such schools.

### **b) Museum Building: plans to tackle Ivy Growth**

Members were told of the ivy growth problem on the North West side of the museum building, which emanated from properties on an adjacent street.

Historic England had advised the ground maintenance team on how to tackle the ivy and they would be contacting residents to ensure the affected area could be accessed.

**c) Potential closure of the museum for a day: removal of gas boilers**

The Curator told members that the museum was in the planning stage of replacing a number of ageing gas boilers, and if necessary to ensure safety, would close the museum for the day to facilitate this. In agreement with the Chairman, the Curator said the museum was thinking ahead and that a comprehensive review of the heating system would be undertaken if the museum was extended.

**MMWG8 ANY OTHER ITEMS WHICH THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS TO BE URGENT**

The Director of Finance and Corporate Services made members aware of the Open Heritage Weekend event hosted by the museum on Saturday 9 and Sunday 10 September. Members of the public would enjoy free admission to the museum for the duration of the weekend.

**MMWG9 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

It was agreed the next meeting would take place on 4 October 2017.

The meeting ended at 7.00pm.