



Saffron Walden Museum



Museum Service Interim Forward Plan 2020-21

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Due for Review in December 2020 on completion of Resilient Heritage project, which will inform a full Forward Plan for 2021-25



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:

11 March 2020

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

April 2020

Policy review procedure:

The Interim Forward Plan will be reviewed on completion of the Museum's Resilient Heritage project in December 2020 in the light of reports received for development of the Museum building, displays and services. At this stage a full Forward Plan for 2021-2025 will be produced.

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

Date at which this policy is due for review:

April 2025

Introduction

During 2020 Saffron Walden Museum is undergoing a thorough review through a Resilient Heritage grant from the National Lottery heritage Fund (NLHF). The outcome of this project by the end of 2020 will be a Development Plan for the Museum and a fund-raising strategy to resource it. These will enable a fully-developed Forward Plan 2021-25 to be produced at the end of 2020, co-ordinating the development plans with main elements of other plans, chiefly the Documentation Policy & Plan and the Collections Care & Conservation Policy & Plan, which will need to support re-display of the collections and development of a new activity programme in an extended and re-displayed Museum.

The Interim Forward Plan 2020-21 outlines the Museum's current position and statement of intent, for Accreditation Review which falls in 2020 before the resilient heritage project and full forward Plan can be completed.

Executive Summary

1. Saffron Walden Museum is the accredited public museum service for Uttlesford District, north-west Essex. It is operated by Uttlesford District Council under the terms of a lease and a management agreement with Saffron Walden Museum Society Ltd (charity 1123209) which owns the buildings on the Museum Street site and the collections.
2. Stage 1 of the previous Forward Plan (2013-18) has been completed as far as improvements to collections care are concerned: the new purpose-built store at Shirehill, Saffron Walden now houses upwards of 100,000 objects and specimens of local archaeology, social history, natural history and geology with much improved facilities for staff, volunteers, visiting researchers and small group visits.
3. Also from Stage 1, digitising the collections and updating the Museum's collections database remains a priority especially for the growing archaeology collections and also for geology and some elements of social history. Lack of curatorial staff time to dedicate to this work and restrictions on staff leaving the Museum to work at the store during the week need to be addressed with the support of external funding. Documentation and digitisation projects would also offer the opportunity to explore on-line searching of collections, and research story -lines which can be told with collections in outreach and new displays.
4. The leasing of the former Museum Schoolroom building (currently to the Fry Art Gallery) is providing an income of £16,000 per year to stabilise the museum budget. The Museum building lacks dedicated space for learning and activities, which restricts its offer to schools and the public, and for meetings, potentially another source of income generation and community engagement.
5. The Museum building and its site in grounds next to Walden Castle (Norman keep) are ripe for improvement to increase public engagement with the heritage and museum collections, and ensure the long-term future of the Museum (and also the Castle ruins) through greater income-generation. Income could be improved in an extended and refurbished Museum building through such means as a better shop; hiring out a proposed new learning & activity room and a new special exhibitions gallery. The right combination of facilities, heritage interpretation and activities on the site could boost its potential as a 'heritage hub' for Saffron Walden, north-west Essex and beyond.

6. The Museum galleries are due for re-display and a general review and renewal of décor, use of spaces (storage, office and work areas) and services is needed. This would also help to improve energy-efficiency and environmental control. Visitor numbers have been gradually declining although the range and quality of the collections, and potential for the historic site, should be capable of attracting more people and generating more income for the sustainability of the Museum.
7. Pursuing a development project while maintaining a full service with a small team of staff (6 FTEs) presents a challenge if a basic service is to be maintained while undertaking improvements. The Museum Society already contributes towards costs, principally those relating to collections, and as a charity provides a means of fund-raising. Assisting the Society to increase its fund-raising ability and community links is integral to any development plan for the Museum
8. The Museum can enhance people's 'sense of place' and community identity in Uttlesford and its activities can contribute to the Council's Corporate Plan and to community health and well-being. It can also help draw visitors to the area and contribute to the general economy of the town and district.
9. The Interim Forward Plan outlines addresses this through 6 key aims, built around a succession of applications to the National Lottery Heritage Fund and other funding providers:
 - (1) Preparing for Transformation – NLHF project 2019-20
 - (2) Stage 1 application for NLHF Heritage Grant –development phase
 - (3) Stage 2 applications for NLHF Heritage Grant – delivery phaseApplications to other funding providers will also be made. Parallel to these, work to improve digitisation of and access to the collections needs to be undertaken, and archaeological work in advance of development of the museum building will be required to fulfil planning and SMC obligations and improve interpretation of the Castle.
10. The Key Aims are:
 1. Complete NLHF Resilient Heritage project to scope Museum Development plans and produce a long-term Forward Plan by end of 2020. Work with consultants for Options Appraisal & Feasibility Study and Audience Development Study in 2020.
 2. Assess staffing capacity for documentation & digitisation of collections and for delivery of the Museum Development project, and potential external funding for any additional hours or posts (fixed term) required. 2020-21
 3. Work with the Museum Society on a fund-raising strategy for the Museum Development plans. Plan in autumn 2020 and action in 2021
 4. Pursue plans to develop the Museum and site as a 'heritage hub'. From 2021 onwards subject to fund-raising and consents from planning and Historic England
 5. Introduce EPOS till with card payment facility for the Welcome Desk, and on-line booking for activities and events. 2020
 6. Improve knowledge and interpretation of the Castle site and its use by visitors and the local community. From 2020 onwards

11. The principle resources required will be:

1. Freeing of professional staff time to pursue developments and funding applications, especially the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF). This may include project-funded fixed-term staff to ensure all the necessary work on digitisation and preparation of the collections takes place to enable display briefs for the galleries and interactives to be produced.
2. Support required from other sections and senior officers of the Council.
3. Time and support required from the directors and officers of Saffron Walden Museum Society Ltd who are all volunteers.
4. Matching funding from the Museum Society for capital developments (funds raised from sale of the curator's house).
5. External Funding. Significant grants will need to be obtained, principally, but not exclusively, from the National Lottery Heritage Fund. Other grants and donations will be needed, using the Museum Society's charitable status.
6. Support-in-kind could be sought from local businesses, e.g. for donation of materials for construction work.

These resources will be quantified for each stage as the Forward Plan is developed and revised.

1 Statement of Purpose

The Museum Service's aim as the public museum service for Uttlesford district 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

The key purpose of the 2020 – 2021 Interim Forward Plan is

To plan a development project to increase people's engagement with the Museum collections and the Museum and Castle site as a 'heritage hub' for NW Essex and beyond, through development of the Museum building, displays, activities and site interpretation, in order to contribute to the Museum's long-term sustainability and development through increased use, income and public support.

2 A Brief History of the Museum and a Review of the Previous Forward Plan

2.1 Brief History of the Museum

a) Origins

The Museum was founded by Saffron Walden Natural History Society and opened in 1835 in the Museum building, which is among the earliest purpose-built local museums and is a grade II listed building. It belongs to the earliest generation of local museums and from the beginning its collections reflected the wide-ranging ambitions of its original trustees and benefactors to 'bring the world to Walden' and showcase the diversity of the natural and human world, as well as collections of local origin from north-west Essex and the surrounding region. The collections were curated by Society members until the appointment of the first salaried curator in 1880.

b) Collections

Today, the Museum has a dual focus in its collections: to present the human history and natural environment of north-west Essex (Uttlesford district) and to present important specific non-local collections which are a legacy of its founders' vision – principally world cultures, ceramics & glass and Egyptology, and some significant non-local and non-British specimens in the natural science collections. These collections are estimated at over 170,000 objects and specimens minimum; the archaeology collections are increasing extensively due to planning and development in the district.

c) Site and Buildings

The site on which the Museum is located is a scheduled ancient monument, being the former bailey area of Walden Castle, of which the ruined Norman keep survives nearby. The Museum stands on a strip of land along the north side of the site which is owned by Saffron Walden Museum Society Ltd but leased to Uttlesford District Council. The Castle and surrounding grass area are owned and managed separately by Uttlesford District Council. The tennis courts opposite the Museum are on land owned by Audley End Estate but leased to the Castle Hill Tennis Club.

The **Castle keep**, constructed around 1140, has recently benefitted from an extensive conservation programme funded by the Council and Historic England. The keep will be accessible to the public again, for the first time in several decades from the summer of 2020. The Museum and Castle site sits within the conservation area of Saffron Walden's historic town centre.

Other buildings on site which belong to the Museum are the single-storey **Museum Street Schoolroom** building by the gateway onto Museum Street, and a Workshop in a small fenced yard north of the Castle. The former Museum Schoolroom, which used to house a conservation laboratory, small teaching and meeting room and a storeroom for collections, has been leased out commercially since 2016 to provide income for the Museum budget. It is currently leased to the Fry Art Gallery Society and known as Fry Art Gallery Too, The **Museum Workshop** is an old prefabricated garage used for storing tools, paints and materials; showcases for temporary exhibitions and two chest freezers for conservation and natural history deadstock. This building is becoming dilapidated and with the adjoining fenced compound (former oil tank compound) and self-sown sycamore trees, this area is an eyesore since the Castle and its surrounds have been cleared and improved..

As with many museums, the collections outgrew the storage space available in the Museum building many decades ago, the problem exacerbated in recent times by the growth in the volume of archaeological finds and records from planning and development. For many years the Museum used the Town Hall attics and the stable block at Audley End House for storage of collections, including horse-drawn vehicles. In the early 1990s these premises had to be vacated, so a small unit at the Council's Newport Depot was fitted out as an interim storage facility. Four horse-drawn vehicles were stored for many years at a farm in Hempstead by a member of the Museum Society, because they could not be accommodated at the Museum or in the Newport store.

In 2008, the museum was awarded a major grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund to construct a resource centre on a site off the Thaxted Road, Saffron Walden to store collections in a building which would also provide for a measure of public access and improve facilities and opportunities for working on the collections, as well as additional staff to run digitisation and outreach projects. When multiple complications with the site led to this project being abandoned, the Museum Society and Council were nevertheless able to retain enough of the monies raised to eventually provide a new purpose-built store on the Council's Depot site at Shirehill, Saffron Walden. Meanwhile, rationalisation of the horse-drawn vehicle collection (most of which had no Uttlesford connection) removed the need for additional off-site storage in barns.

The **Shirehill Store**, as the new off-site store is known, was completed in July 2014, fitted out in 2014-15 and the collections from the Newport store together with some social history and natural history from the museum and former Schoolroom, were packed and moved between late 2015 and early 2017. The new store occupies land leased by Uttlesford District Council to Saffron Walden Museum Society Ltd for 999 years; the Museum Society owns the building, and it is leased to Uttlesford District Council to operate as part of the Museum service, thus putting all the museum buildings under the same lease agreement between the Museum Society and Council. Most importantly, it provides a quality storage facility with improved access and care for the collections and a greatly improved working environment for staff, volunteers and all who come by appointment to use the collections.

d) Governance

Saffron Walden Museum Society Ltd is the direct successor of Saffron Walden Natural History Society and is a registered charity. It owns the Museum buildings and the collections, and ran the Museum Service with the aid of various grants until the 1970s when the newly-formed Uttlesford District Council took over responsibility for running the Museum Service, with the buildings and collections on lease to the Council. Under the current management agreement for the Service, the Council is responsible for providing staff and revenue budgets, while the Society uses its charitable status to help raise funds for capital projects, and applies interest from invested funds to purchases and other special projects for the collections.

In recent years, with public service budgets under pressure, the Museum service has sustained some cuts, including loss of its in-house conservation laboratory and conservator. For a time, visitor and learning services had to be combined into one post and then from October 2015 to September 2017 there was no Learning Officer in post, resulting in loss of visitors and income. The Museum Society supplemented its financial support for several years as an interim measure, before the Schoolroom could be leased out to provide a new income stream. The core staff team has now been stabilised with a part-time Admin Officer (16 hours per week), 4 full-time professional posts (Curator, Collections Officer (Human History); Natural Sciences Officer; Learning & Outreach Officer) and Security Officer (4 days per week). For Weekend and Bank Holiday staffing there are two permanent Visitor Services Assistant posts and a small team of casual-contract Museum Assistants, supplemented on Saturdays by a rota for curatorial staff. There are approximately 60 volunteers, operating the Welcome Desk and helping with collections and administrative tasks, and with learning activities and events.

Other ways of increasing income are under constant scrutiny, however within the restrictions imposed by the current buildings and resources, only modest progress can be made without some fundamental investment and changes. In particular there is a need to install an EPOS till and card payment at the Welcome Desk (operated by a rota of volunteers) and introduce card payments, with online booking option for bookable activities and events.

2.2 Review of Previous Forward Plan 2013 - 2018

The Museum Service Forward Plan 2013 – 2018 sought to address issues restricting service capacity and use in 2 stages:

Review of 2013 – 2018 Key Aims

The two-stage plan was the framework for realising six key aims:

1. [Improve and rationalise the storage of collections off-site and in the Museum, through the construction of a new off-site store and a revised collections policy.](#) The new store at Shirehill is now in operation and collections have been moved in. The collections development policy was to be reviewed in 2019.
2. [Improve management, accessibility and display of collections by developing the collections database.](#) While some progress has been made with the social history and natural history collections, much work remains to be done digitising the collections and editing

existing records. The critical factor is lack of curatorial staff-time to undertake this work and run more extensive documentation projects with volunteers. The lack of a dedicated curatorial post for archaeology is an issue, and the geological collections require specialist identification and description for documentation to be effective.

3. **Extend and reorganise the Museum building to improve its displays and facilities for visitors, staff and volunteers, researchers and visiting groups (school and other).**
In 2015-17 the Curator and members of the Museum Society Board attended various seminars run by SHARE on fund-raising, making major grant applications and capital projects. The Museum Society Chairman and Curator held a series of informal meetings with representatives of other heritage and community organisations in Saffron Walden, to make them aware of long-term plans for the Museum and to explore any scope for partnership or support. Discussions with the Heritage Lottery Fund opened in October 2017 to seek guidance on potential grant applications. This culminated in an application to the National Lottery heritage Fund in early 2019 under the Resilient Heritage programme and an award of a grant of £51,200 for a £61,200 project (with £10,000 from Saffron Walden Museum Society Ltd) to scope options for development, undertake an audience development study and produce a feasibility study on the preferred option to develop the museum and increase its long-term resilience. Consultants Fourth Street (Options Appraisal & Feasibility Study) and Julia Holberry Associates (Audience Development study) were appointed in September 2019 and their work is scheduled to finish in summer 2020. This will be followed by a phase of work with the Museum Society and a funding researcher to prepare a fund-raising strategy, the project to finish in December 2020.
4. **Improve interpretation and use of the Museum and Castle site.**
The analysis and report on the geophysical survey of the Museum and Castle site, undertaken in 2012 by Dr Tim Dennis and Ralph Potter, has been completed with a grant from the Essex Heritage Trust. The archaeological mitigation strategy resulting from this work (ECC Place Services) is now completed and forms an important part of submissions to Historic England (HE) and the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF).

Meanwhile, conservation of the Castle, funded by the Council and Historic England, is due for completion in 2020 when the ruins of the keep will open for public access. This presents new opportunities for heritage interpretation and community use of the site, and also for income generation. Meanwhile Museum staff have participated in the Saffron Walden Heritage Development Group's project to interpret and promote another medieval monument, the so-called 'Battle Ditches' and this work is to be followed up in 2020 with public activities to raise awareness of the town's medieval heritage including the Castle.

5. **Maximise community involvement through appropriate opportunities to contribute to the Museum Service.**
Community participation has been encouraged as part of the Museum's special exhibitions programme (e.g. *Uttlesford – A Community of Collectors*) and the new Community Case, funded by the Museum Society, which provides local people and societies with a showcase (Saffron Walden Cricket Club anniversary display, Saffron Walden Football Club). The Museum's new website and social media reach an increasing audience on-line. Services to schools were re-established after a 2-

year gap in learning provision when a new Learning & Outreach Officer was appointed in September 2017, but because the Schoolroom's teaching space has been lost, the size of groups visiting the Museum for taught sessions has to be restricted. The Learning & Outreach Officer now undertakes visits to schools and care homes, and has revised and extended the Schools Loan boxes which are proving very popular with schools which cannot visit for logistical and financial reasons.

6. **Develop a marketing policy for the Museum and site as a local amenity and heritage destination to local and wider audiences, to increase community use and income**
The establishment of a part-time Admin & Front-of-House Officer post, permanent since 2016, has helped to establish and extend regular publicity for the museum programme, but with a budget of only £2,000 p.a. More extensive, strategic and ambitious marketing will require an increased budget, and more staff resource. Visitor information and consultation has previously been low-key with very little staff-time available to effectively analyse and make use of data. Participation in a Visitor Insight East project (SHARE) in 2019 has provided a data and analysis of a sample of around 300 visitors, and this will be supplemented in 2020 by the Audience Development Study commissioned from Julia Holberry Associates, which will include views on potential visitors as well as actual visitors and stakeholders.

3 Analysis of the Environment

This section summarises the main challenges and opportunities facing the Museum Service.

3.1 A Brief Appraisal of the Museum Service (SWOT)

Strengths

- Collections: range, size and quality exceptional for a district museum service, as highlighted by consultants (Resilient Heritage project)
- New purpose-built off-site store at Shirehill, Saffron Walden has improved care of and access to collections, and deposition of archaeological archives has resumed
- Heritage amenity: Museum building grade II listed, historic interest as an early purpose-built museum (constructed 1834)
- Castle site: ruined keep conserved and accessible, potential for more archaeological discoveries and interpretation of site history (geophysical survey results) and green space for outdoor activities
- 'Family friendly' museum with learning opportunities, especially through sessions for schools and family activities, VAQAS accredited
- Community links: volunteers, community partnership exhibitions, local support
- Museum website and social media have increased virtual visits and engagement with the Museum on-line
- Support of Museum Society and District Council, providing a mix of public and charitable funding
- Accredited Status under the government's national Accreditation Scheme for public museums and galleries. This confirms that the Museum adheres to a minimum standard in all aspects of its service. It is necessary or desirable for obtaining grant-aid and public confidence. The Museum's Accredited status is due for review in 2020

Weaknesses

- Visitor figures declining gradually in recent years from around 14,000 to 16,000 for several years, falling with increasing pressure on staff (no education officer in post for 2 years 2015-17, coinciding with move to new off-site store). General trend has been downward: 12,816 in 2017/18 and 11,132 in 2018/19,
- Site is uphill from the town centre, vehicular access via one-way streets, drive poorly lit after dark and in winter – this does not attract casual footfall.
- Museum galleries are ageing and need comprehensive re-display, with clear visitor route, new ways of telling stories and engaging visitors, and space to include the recent history of the district
- Special exhibitions gallery is small and awkwardly situated between the foyer and ground floor Great Hall gallery, making it impossible to close off while exhibitions are changed; exhibitions could be more ambitious in a better space.
- Museum building has multiple problems behind-the-scenes: cramped storage, offices and work spaces, ageing décor and equipment
- Museum needs to improve its energy-efficiency and control of the internal environment for people and collections, with a rationalisation and modernisation of heating, electrical services and plumbing, and 'green' agenda
- Lack of dedicated teaching, activity and meeting space restricts all sorts of activities and income-generating services, including school visits
- Lack of modern visitor facilities (proper shop, refreshments, WCs)
- Lack of card payment facility is impacting on income and visitors, as some visitors do not carry cash and uptake of tickets for bookable events is poor because there has been no on-line booking option.
- Small Staff resource: core team of 4 f/t posts (one of which is job-shaed, Natural Sciences Officer) with p/t Admin & Front-of-House Officer and Security & Premises Officer, all have to juggle multiple roles.
- Pressure on curatorial posts to cover all collections, deal with documentation backlogs and undertake major gallery redisplays while maintaining special exhibitions programme and other services
- Lack of staff and financial resources to dedicate to long-term marketing strategy
- Looking to the future, with pressures on public funding, the museum needs to diversify and increase its income streams to survive and grow.

Opportunities

- The Museum and Castle site has potential for promotion as a heritage amenity with improved public access to the Castle and interpretation, hiring opportunities and events, providing more visitors and income-generation to maintain the Castle and Museum.
- The Shirehill store and wi-fi provide opportunities for additional staff, volunteers and others to work on the collections, adding records to the database and researching new displays
- Museum Society's charitable status and capital funds (from sale of the former Curator's House) provide a good foundation for capital development of the Museum
- Scope for making applications to National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) and other funding organisations for improvements
- Extension of the Museum building to the east would be possible and also improve an untidy area (old oil tank compound and workshop, overgrown sycamore trees).

- Update and extend permanent displays and special exhibitions, attracting more visits
- Re-establishment of Learning & Outreach Officer post (September 2017) allows the Museum to encourage schools and all forms of learning
- Development in the district increases the need and opportunities for outreach to new and established communities in the district, especially in areas further from Saffron Walden and new communities arising from the implementation of the Local Plan

Threats

- Increasing competition for people's attention from other cultural and heritage attractions and services in the locality, region and on-line
- Continuing pressures on public funding for local authority services (Council)
- Increase in museum development trusts and other charities all looking for volunteers and new sources of funding (Museum Society)
- Stability of Museum staffing essential to manage a large development project successfully, and may need to be supplemented with project-funded staffing to deliver a successful development project
- Maintenance of historic Museum building, especially with problems of damp, energy costs and accessibility to some areas

4 Consultation and Analysis

4.1 Visitor figures in recent years dropped from around 14,000 – 16,000 per year, with fluctuations, to 12,816 in 2017/18 and 11,132 in 2018/19. Variations on numbers visiting are due to a range of factors, but periods when no learning officer has been in post e.g. Nov 2015 – Sept 2017) are linked to drops in visitor numbers especially school visits. According to data from our 2019 Visitor Insight East survey (SHARE initiative) about 55% of visitors came from within 0-9 miles of the Museum (Saffron Walden and immediate area) and a further 17% were from 10-19 miles away. The Museum scored highly in meeting visitors' expectations. The Audience Development Study due to be completed in the summer of 2020 (NLHF Resilient Heritage project) will provide a wider ranging and in-depth analysis of actual and potential audiences, and factors which influence their engagement with the Museum.

4.2 In 2017 the Museum Society Chairman and Curator held informal meetings with local heritage and community groups, including the Castle Hill Tennis Club, Fry Art Gallery, Saffron Walden Initiative and Town Library Society, to open a dialogue about the Museum's potential development and any opportunities for partnership working or mutual support. These and representatives from other local 'stakeholder' organisations participated in consultations for the Audience Development Study (Julia Holberry Associates) in November 2019.

4.3 In 2017 a Heritage Development Forum for Saffron Walden was initiated to bring representatives of different heritage interests within the town together for liaison and joint working. This Forum is still in its early stages as a community organisation, but present another channel through which ideas can be communicated.

4.4 Uttlesford District Council's Local Plan (in progress, 2020) will be important for the Museum's future plans. New developments have the potential to bring in new audiences.

The Museum will need to take account of changes in the district's population and the most effective way to reach both traditional and new communities. An in-depth audience development study should help to address these wider issues.

5 Key Aims

1. **Complete NLHF Resilient Heritage project to scope Museum Development plans and produce a long-term Forward Plan by end of 2020.** Work with consultants for Options Appraisal & Feasibility Study and Audience Development Study in progress 2020.
2. **Assess staffing capacity for documentation & digitisation of collections and for delivery of the Museum Development project, and potential external funding for any additional hours or posts (fixed term) required.** The projects identified in the Documentation Policy and Plan 2020-25 and Collections Care & Conservation Policy & Plan 2020-25 will be assessed in conjunction with the staffing resource needed for the development project (to be identified with consultants as part of Resilient Heritage project, 2020)
3. **Work with the Museum Society on a fund-raising strategy** for capital developments and other projects. This will be final phase of Resilient Heritage project in late 2020, with appointment of a fund-raising researcher to assist the Museum Society.
4. **Pursue plans to develop the Museum and site as a 'heritage hub'**, with particular regard to improving audiences and their engagement with the heritage and the long-term sustainability of the museum service through enhanced services, facilities and new income streams. This will include: re-display the galleries and provide a new learning & activities room; a new special exhibitions gallery and a larger reception area with shop, will be critical elements. Dependent on outcome of resilient Heritage project and fund-raising from 2021 onwards
5. **Increase income and accounting for transactions and stock-taking, by introducing an EPOS till with card payment facility and on-line booking for activities and events**, to capture income from visitors or would-be visitors who do not carry cash. Museum activities and events will be bookable through the free on-line service provided by the Art Fund from spring 2020 onwards.
6. **Improve knowledge and interpretation of the Castle site and its use by visitors and the local community** through archaeological investigation with community involvement (subject to planning and SMC conditions) and contribute to promotion of site as an outdoor venue, to help the Council maintain the Castle keep and ground in excellent condition.

6 Objectives and additional resources for each Key Aim

Museum budgets for the period of this Interim Forward Plan:

2019/20	Direct expenditure	£253, 510	Net direct total	£214,580
2020/21	not available but at this stage anticipated to continue at similar level			

Source: Uttlesford District Council Budget Book 2019/20

https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/media/9048/2019-20-Budget-Book/pdf/Budget_Book_2019-20_1.pdf?m=637184049308800000

Additional resources refers to resources (budgets, staff time, volunteers and expertise) which cannot be met within the Museum's budget and current staff resource, and will require external funding or help-in-kind.

Key Aim 1 Complete NLHF Resilient Heritage project to scope Museum Development plans and produce a long-term Forward Plan by end of 2020

Objectives

- 1.1 Completion of Audience Development Study to provide evidence-based approach to planning development of Museum to increase audiences and income.
- 1.2 Completion of Options Appraisal & Feasibility Study with outline of costs and resources needed for selected development option

Additional Resources

£61,200 project costs met by NLHF grant of £51,200 (50% received in 2019, 50% to be drawn down by January 2021) and £10,000 matching funding from Saffron Walden Museum Society Ltd.

Key Aim 2 Assess staffing capacity for documentation & digitisation of collections and for delivery of the Museum Development project, and potential external funding for any additional hours or posts (fixed term) required

- 2.1 With consultants, assess staff resource needed to deliver the Museum Development Plan arising out of the Resilient Heritage project, and subsequent staff resource needed to operate the extended and redisplayed Museum.
- 2.2 Plan priorities and targets for curatorial staff for 2020/21 onwards, co-ordinating needs of documentation & digitisation, collections care and Museum Development Plan, and identifying any shortfalls in staff resource to address priorities especially for re-display.
- 2.3 Identify additional resources from external sources needed to achieve targets

Additional resources

Assessing staffing capacity needed for delivering the Museum Development project and subsequent operation of the Museum will be dealt with as part of the Resilient Heritage project (NLHF grant) during 2020. Any short-term additional staff required to deliver the Development project and digitisation of collections for display briefs, will need to be financed by external project funding.

Geology priority documentation 2020/21 (specimens on display) is being funded by Saffron Walden Museum Society Ltd (£1,800 grant for additional hours for one of the p/t Natural Sciences Officers).

Deposition grants accrued from archaeological contractors depositing finds and records with the Museum will be used to fund a fixed-term contract in 2021 for transfer of metal and other 'small finds' from the Museum to Shirehill store with audit and basic documentation of that collection.

Recruitment of suitable volunteers to assist staff will continue where possible, however this is restricted by lack of staff time to work in stores and supervise volunteers.

Key Aim 3 Work with the Museum Society on a fund-raising strategy

Objectives

- 3.1 Completion of Fund-Raising Strategy with Museum Society and fund-raising researcher by end of 2020
- 3.2 Shortlist produced of grant-aiding organisations, foundation and charitable trusts who could be approached for funding
- 3.3 Fund-raising Advocacy document produced for Museum Development project

Additional Resources

Included in Resilient Heritage project (as Key Aim 1 above: NLHF and Museum Society funding).

Key Aim 4 Pursue plans to develop the Museum and site as a 'heritage hub'

- 4.1 Produce revised Forward Plan for 2021-25 from the results of the Resilient Heritage studies, setting out the business case for the selected development option.
- 4.2 Plan and undertake any further public consultation required.
- 4.3 Open discussions with NLHF and other potential funders willing to receive applications.
- 4.4 Apply for Heritage Development grant for developing project (stage 1) in 2021

Additional resources

The application for a Stage 1 Heritage Development grant and other fund-raising work will need to be completed within existing resources, therefore staff time may need to be freed from other service activities to concentrate on grant applications and fund-raising. This could potentially affect some of the activity, event and outreach programme, and therefore service user figures, in the short-term in order to achieve greater long-term gains.

Additional budget will need to be identified in 2021 (from the Museum Society and/or Council) for necessary work towards the Stage 1 NLHF grant application:

- Topographical survey (digital 3D plan) of Museum building and Castle site (pre-requisite for architects and highly desirable for archaeological works)
- Architect to prepare RIBA Stage 1 plan of proposed extension and alterations

These costs could not be included in the Resilient Heritage project but will have to be met to prepare the application for a Stage 1 Development Grant.

Key Aim 5 Introduce EPOS till with card payment facility for the Welcome Desk, and on-line booking for activities and events

- 5.1 Set-up on-line booking for events and activities with the Art Fund (free service for museums and galleries) allowing people to book Museum workshops and events on-line and pay by card (live by April 2020)
- 5.2 Set up EPOS till and train Welcome Desk volunteers in Admin & Front-of-House Officer's office, before transferring EPOS till to Welcome Desk and going live, in 2020-21.
- 5.3 When EPOS till is working satisfactorily, introduce card reader for card payments at the Welcome Desk.
- 5.4 Develop use of EPOS till for stock-taking
(5.2-4 also recommended by Internal Audit Report 2020)

Additional Resources

Admin & Front-of-House Officer needs support of volunteer (identified) and other Council staff to achieve this as she has very few hours per week to allocate to this project. Under discussion for best solution, 2020.

Key Aim 6 Improve knowledge and interpretation of the Castle site and its use by visitors and the local community

- 6.1 Museum to manage bookings on behalf of Council for use of Castle and surrounding grass area for community and private events (2020 trial year)
- 6.2 Work with Heritage Development Group to produce a leaflet (printed and on-line) in 2020 about medieval Saffron Walden, highlighting the Castle and other surviving medieval buildings and features.
- 6.3 Discuss feasibility of archaeological excavation project on the Castle site with NLHF and Historic England (HE), following on from the geophysical survey and archaeological strategy for the site. Aims would be (1) work in mitigation of consents for Museum extension (2) research key features to extend knowledge and interpretation of Castle's history and (3) provide opportunity for community involvement in uncovering local heritage.

Additional Resources

This would require external funding, possibly a small community project grant from NLHF and/or other sources. Clarification with NLHF and HE would be needed about timing for this project in relation to the main development plan and applications for planning and Scheduled Monument consents.

7 Phased Plan for Achieving Objectives

2020-21

Aim / Objective		Phased Actions	Lead Person	Resources needed	Estimated Additional Cost £	End Date	Risk Assessment	Performance Measurement
1	1.1 and 1.2	Audience Development Study (Julia Holberry Associates)	JO	NLHF grant obtained	19,950	June 2020	Low – on target	Completion of report acc. to brief
		Options Appraisal & Feasibility Study (Fourth Street)	CW	NLHF grant obtained	30,000	June 2020	Low – on target	Completion of report acc. to brief
2	2.1	Identify staff resources needed to development project	CW	Included in above			High risk to development project if we do not have appropriate staff resource to deliver the project	Completion of report acc. to brief
2	2.2 Documentation & Digitisation and Collections Care priorities and targets to be set with staff through U-Perform March/April 2020 and in light of development plans	Collections Care and Documentation targets – Archaeology	CW	Staff time and volunteer support		By Mach 2021	High risk if not undertaken to meeting min. management standards for collections High risk to re-display of galleries if accurate digital information on collections is not available	Meeting targets on time and with sufficient quality and accuracy of information (as far as records permit)
		Archaeology metal work and small finds project – transfer and inventory of finds to Shirehill, and setting up low-humidity store at Shirehill with dehumidifier	CW	Fixed-term archaeology post to be funded by deposition grants Dehumidifier costs may need some Museum budget or Museum Society assistance with cost	Tbc (will be within funds available)	Set up and start by March 2021 (continues in 2021/22)	As above	Appointment of person with archaeological and IT expertise

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		Collections Care and Documentation targets – Human History (social history, decorative arts, world cultures)	JO	Staff time and volunteer support			As above	
		Collections Care and Documentation targets – Geology	JL	Museum Society funding agreed for additional hours to complete documentation of displays	1,800 from Museum Society	By Dec 2020	Low – funding secured	Completion on time according to project proposal
		Geology care of collections – elimination of potential hazard posed by asbestos-containing mineral specimens	JL, SK	KADEC to seal or dispose of asbestos minerals safely (specimens currently identified and isolated pending further work)	tbc	By March 2021	Low long-term health risk if handled without H&S measures being taken	Minerals containing asbestos to be sealed and labelled as H&S precaution Specimens without data to be disposed of safely by KADEC
		Collections Care and Documentation targets – Natural History	SK, JL	Staff time and volunteer support			Risks to collections management and development project as above	
		Documentation targets – Education & Loan Boxes	CP	Staff time and volunteer support			Medium risk to efficient operation of Learning Services if not undertaken	
3	3.1	Fund-raising Strategy with Museum Society	CW, JO	NLHF grant	4,500		High risk to development project if fund-raising not in place	
	3.2							
	3.3	Shortlist of potential funding organisations	Fund-raising researcher	NLHF grant	Incl in above		High risk to development project if fund-raising not in place	
		Advocacy document for fund-raising for development project	Staff and Mus Soc with fund-raising researcher	NLHF grant	Incl in above		High risk to development project if fund-raising not in place	
4	4.1	Produce revised Forward	CW and	Staff time (based on			Low risk of not	Completion of full

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	4.2	Plan for 2021-25	team	Fourth Street report)			completing on time	Forward Plan on time
	4.3	Any further public consultation needed	CW, JO and team	Staff time			Medium risk of we do not present evidence fo all consultation needed to funders	
		Approach NLHF and other potential funders	CW, JO, Mus Soc	Staff time			High risk of we do not engage enough support to make development project viable	Sufficient potential funding identified to proceed with applications
5	5.1	On-line booking for activities and events via Art Fund website	JO	Staff time	Free service	Live from April 2020	Low Art Fund well-established and used by other museums Council checks undertaken	Increased uptake in bookable events, leading to increase in income and community engagement (likely to be small steps in first year as it becomes established)
	5.2, 5.4	EPOS Till, sales and stock-taking functions	WA	Staff time and Volunteer support Additional Council support or casual staff hours may be needed (Audit Report 2020 has highlighted lack of staff time as issue). Stock-taking may be a later phase, to be discussed with Audit	Possible small additional staff costs to help set up	Set up and train volunteers early 2020-21 Go live at Desk later in 2020-21	Medium risk of not achieving consistency of use with large team of volunteers Medium risk of disruption to staff work because some volunteers will need regular assistance	Achieving set-up and training of volunteers in agreed time-scale Achieving improvements to recording of ticket and souvenir sales and stock-taking
	5.3	Card Reader for taking card payments at Welcome Desk	WA	Staff time and Volunteer support		Set-up and train volunteers once Till is established	High risk of losing visitors and income of we do not introduce this facility Medium risks with Volunteers as above for Till	Achieving set-up of card payments by end of 2020-21 Some increase of income from souvenir and ticket sales
6	6.1	Castle bookings – trial year	CW	Information from Council on terms &	-	Ongoing from spring	Low risk of clashes of use with	Workable system in place and trialled by

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				conditions and opening of Castle to public in 2020		2020	Museum events if not monitored Low risk of inappropriate or unauthorised use of site if not monitored	end of 2020, feedback to Council by Nov 2020 for consideration in Fees & Charges for Castle site hire 2021
6	6.2	Medieval Walden leaflet with Heritage Development Group (printed and on-line)	CW	Staff time Costs covered by grant obtained by Heritage Development Group	N/A	By summer 2020	Medium risk of insufficient staff time to deliver (additional to Museum service priorities) Low risk to effective promotion of medieval town and Castle if leaflet is not produced	Leaflet produced in summer 2020 Quality, accuracy and relevance of information for general public consumption

2021-22

Aim / Objective		Phased Actions	Lead Person	Resources needed	Estimated Additional Cost £	End Date	Risk Assessment	Performance Measurement
4	4.4	Prepare and submit application NLHF Stage 1 Heritage Development grant, and any other funding applications at this first stage	CW, JO	Staff time, with some Museum Society and Council officer input Additional funds for RIBA Stage 1 plan and topographical survey of Museum and Castle grounds	Tbc Possibly £5,000 - 10,000?	2021 (as early in year as feasible)	Medium risk of not having time to complete work for application quickly Medium risk of not getting Stage 1 pass from NLHF immediately	Submitting application within reasonable time scale Success of applications in raising funds for development stage
6	6.3	Pursue feasibility and timing of archaeological project on Castle site with HE and NLHF	CW	Staff time	-	2021 (as early in year as feasible)	High risk of developments not going ahead if archaeological mitigation work not undertaken Medium risk of loss	Produce costed plan for archaeological work and identify funding sources

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							of opportunities for community engagement and improving heritage interpretation	
2	2.3 Documentation & Digitisation and Collections Care priorities and targets to be set with staff through U-Perform March/April 2021 and in light of development plans	Collections Care and Documentation targets – Archaeology	CW	Staff time and volunteer support		By March 2022	Risks to collections management and development project as above	
		Collections Care and Documentation targets – Human History (social history, decorative arts, world cultures)	JO	Staff time and volunteer support		By March 2022	Risks to collections management and development project as above	
		Collections Care and Documentation targets – Geology	JL	Staff time and volunteer support		By March 2022	Risks to collections management and development project as above	
		Collections Care and Documentation targets – Natural History	SK, JL	Staff time and volunteer support		By March 2022	Risks to collections management and development project as above	
		Collections Care and Documentation targets – Education & Loan Boxes	CP	Staff time and volunteer support		By March 2022	Risks to collections management and development project as above	

8 Review of Interim Forward Plan

This Interim Forward Plan will be reviewed and extended by the end of 2020 to become a full Forward Plan 2021-25. This will focus on the development plan for the Museum which is expected to be undertaken within that period.

The Forward Plan will be due for review again in 2025.