

1 Museum Management and Staff

DRAFT at 14/07/2021 awaiting visitor figures from Art Tickets on-line fro pre-booked visits

1.1 Management

Museum Service: Covid 19 pandemic and re-opening

The Museum re-opened to the public on Thursday 20 May, following the lifting of restrictions on indoor venues, however there are still Covid safety measures in force until mid-July. Our current opening hours of Thursday – Saturday 11.00 – 4.30 and Sunday 2.30 – 4.30 reflect the continuing need for additional cleaning, assisting visitors with Covid safety measures and an ongoing programme of training volunteers as well as staff on the new cashless payments system and trouble-shooting issues arising from that. The Museum offers advance booking online through Art Tickets (a free service provided by the Art Fund). Visitors have been returning in small numbers but have been appreciative of the measures in place; this is typical of the experience of the museum sector in the region.

The new cashless payments system (till, card reader and barcode scanner) continues to have connectivity issues, which are being energetically pursued with the till and card reader providers and with the assistance of IT staff. The Front-of-House & Admin Officer has been working considerably over her part-time hours to address all these issues, produce and update an in-house manual for the till and card reader and oversee the training and recruitment of volunteers, ably assisted by senior Welcome Desk volunteer June Baker.

Museum Developments: NHLF Resilient Heritage project and next steps

The Resilient Heritage project, funded by the National Lottery heritage Fund (NLHF) with £10,000 matching funding from Saffron Walden Museum Society Ltd, concluded in May with the end of the fundraising consultancy and project evaluation. The project was completed on schedule and on budget, and has prepared the way for progressing a substantial redevelopment of the Museum, to increase public engagement, income and long-term sustainability.

The Museum Development Committee and Museum staff have been considering the reports and data produced, and the outline timetable for the whole project which is likely to extend into 2026, subject to raising the funding. The immediate actions taken this quarter have been to open negotiations with digital survey contractors and Historic England. Work is in hand to obtain quotations for a comprehensive laser survey of the museum building and also the grounds and the Castle. This will initially provide comprehensive digital data for architects and designers, but also facilitate a range of predicted future uses, including monitoring of the condition of the Castle fabric and production of digital interpretation and marketing materials. An informal meeting on 30 June with the new Historic England Inspector of Monuments for Essex & Herts provided some valuable guidance and a further meeting will be arranged later this year.

1.2 Staff, Volunteers and Work Experience

Staff

Staff working in isolation at Shirehill Museum Store, or homeworking, returned to the Museum to prepare for re-opening and provide staffing when the Museum opened to visitors again.

The process of recruiting additional casual front of house staff has begun to enable us to effectively cover the additional shifts needed during the week and also make it easier to cover the standard weekend shifts.

Volunteers

Most Welcome Desk volunteers returned to the Museum from May onwards and have been undertaking till and card reader training. Inevitably, a number of volunteers decided not to return due to changes to their lives and priorities during the pandemic, or because the change to a touchscreen till and card reader was challenging for some who were unused to digital technology. A recruitment drive has resulted in several new volunteers coming forward, however at present there are not quite enough new volunteers to fill all shifts. The return to the Museum's full opening hours will therefore take place only when there are enough volunteers, trained and sufficiently competent with the cashless payments system, to extend opening hours to pre-Covid times (Tuesday-Saturday and Sunday / Bank Holiday afternoons).

Other volunteers have started work back at the Museum on documentation or continue to volunteer remotely.

Volunteers – remote / outdoors support in Q1	Est Hours
Natural Sciences Volunteers	
Verge volunteers helped check 46 special roadside verges to check they had full width cuts in April 2021. Peter Hanson, Ken Rivett, Tony Morton, Michael Rowley, Margaret Rufus, Heather and Paul Salvidge,	20
A volunteer who wishes to remain anonymous is documenting information about projector slides in the Barry Kaufmann-Wright archive.	24
Gerald Lucy assisted with a public geology enquiry	0.5
Welcome Desk volunteers	
Trainer and Trainee hours for Welcome Desk Covid procedures and cashless payment facilities	300
Performing Welcome role	78
Human History Volunteers – David & Jane Laing (listing archive records ahead of accession/transfer decisions)	10
TOTAL volunteer hours	432.5

1.3 Training and Seminars Attended (all online)

Date	Course and Staff
Multiple dates	Fundraising training (Resilient Heritage Project), Fundraising Committee: inc Carolyn Wingfield Curator and Jenny Oxley, Collections Officer, Human History
04 April	SHARE Natural History Subject Specialist Network quarterly meeting delayed from previous quarter. Regional updates. (Natural Sciences officers)
09 June	SHARE – Research and Retell, working with researchers (Learning & Outreach and Natural Sciences Officers)
21 June	SHARE Resilience and Wellbeing in Museum Seminar (Jenny Oxley, Collections Officer, Human History)
29 June	SHARE Natural History Subject Specialist Network quarterly meeting and regional updates (natural Sciences Officers)
Ongoing	SHARE Rising Leader’s Programme (Jenny Oxley, Collections Officer, Human History)
Ongoing	EpoS Now and RMS – cashless payments (Wendy-Jo Atter, Front of House and Admin Officer)

1.4 Health & Safety

One ‘Near Miss’ incident was reported in June the IT switch box became detached from the Workroom wall while BT engineers were completing installation of a new wi-fi network. Fortunately no one was injured and no equipment was damaged apart from some displaced cables and short-term disruption to network access for some Museum staff. The switch has now been more securely mounted on the wall by Uttlesford Norse.

2 Buildings and Site

2.1 Museum Building

No works on the Museum building this quarter. The Curator and Property Surveyor have met on site with a contractor to discuss the possibility of a laser survey for the Museum and Castle, to provide up-to-date accurate digital data which can be used to generate architects’ plans, monitor fabric condition and meet a wide range of other uses for the Museum’s development project.

2.2 Museum Site and Castle Grounds

Walden Castle was opened to the public by the Chairman of the Council on 18 June with a short ceremony for invited stakeholders, organised by Lewis Merle, Property Surveyor with other Council and Museum staff. The Museum is now responsible for opening and closing the Castle Tuesdays – Sundays when Museum staff are on site. The Museum will also be promoting and handling bookings for hire of the Castle and surrounding grass area for independent public or private events, subject to Covid restrictions and licensing requirements and Scheduled Monument Consent where these are applicable. Income raised from hire of the Castle will be equally divided between the Museum and Castle.

A local resident in Castle Street reported a corroded and damaged drain cover in Museum Court, the alleyway leading to garages and land to the immediate east of the Museum building. The Property surveyor is working with the local resident to resolve this.

2.3 Shirehill Store

In May the discovery of some live carpet beetles and moths led to insecticide being sprayed in the entrance area and kitchen. So far there has been no recurrence of beetles or moths but a watch is being kept.

3 Collections and Research

3.1 Acquisitions and Disposals

10 new acquisitions received this quarter (3 Human History; 7 Archaeology ; Natural Sciences 0 JL 0 SK)

These included

- Photos and ephemera relating to Hempstead and Great Sampford
- Film DVD and booklets produced by young artists and writers, Fairycroft House, Saffron Walden
- Romano-British skeletal remains from a burial discovered during building alterations in Great Chesterford
- Archaeological finds from farmland in Tilty parish, including a Romano-British bronze skillet

The remainder were advance allocation of accession numbers to archaeological contractors undertaking fieldwork in mitigation of planning conditions

3.2 Collections Care & Conservation

Insect pest traps were monitored in April 2021 at the Museum and Shirehill store.

Natural History historic taxidermy and “Lost Language of Nature” project

This project started in May (James Lumbar, Natural Sciences officer working one extra day per week, funded by Saffron Walden Museum Society Ltd). Cleaning and conservation of some bird specimens has been undertaken, with some filming and photography to generate records and material for use on social media and the website in due course.

3.3 Documentation

Backlog / updates	New Acquisitions	Backlog (existing collections not previously catalogued on Modes)	Edits and Updates to existing records
Human history collections	3	500 (inc map collection)	500 (inc map collection)
Archaeology	0	0	0
Natural Sciences	0	0	54
Total	3	500	554

Other collection records	Excel records
Birds eggs	171
Projector slides	2835 at 29/6
Total	

Eggs: Birds eggs counted and recorded on Excel spreadsheet by Support Worker including details of location, Common and Latin bird names, number of eggs present and missing, the determiner and reference number.
Projector Slides: Another volunteer is documenting information in Excel about the projector slides in the Barry Kauffmann Wright photographic archive.

3.4 Loans In

An Iron Age bronze and iron linch pin from a chariot wheel, found in Radwinter parish, has been kindly loaned for display by a local detectorist.

3.5 Loans Out

Wampum beads and belts have continued on their touring loan to The Box in Plymouth for a commemorative Mayflower exhibition.

3.6 Object Identification and Enquiries

Object identifications this quarter: 10 (Human History: 0 ; 4 Archaeology; Natural Sciences 6)

- Flints Surrey, including Cretaceous sponge fossilised in flint nodule
- Mount Etna rock – actually a piece of dried fruit
- Belemnite & siltstone
- Conglomerate sandstone rock
- Flint nodules from Southern England and Israel
- Flint and stone objects submitted as potential prehistoric implements but actually natural
- Broomrape plant

Collections Enquiries this quarter: 37 (Human History: 26 ; Archaeology 4: ; Natural Sciences : 7)

Topics included:

- Walden Abbey enquiry to support a student with a history project.
- Birds enquiry about specimens of cuckoo, grey partridge, water rail, tree sparrow, green woodpecker, male sparrowhawk in order to arrange for visiting research in second quarter.
- Elderflowers in museum grounds
- Special roadside verges biological records (4)
- Conservation of fluid preserved mammal specimen
- Latin Psalter
- Water company records (SW Town Council) re. water softening
- Elmdon Lea
- Saffron production
- Calculating machines
- British Legion Centenary
- Rail-bus
- Egyptology collections
- Miniature chair in the furniture gallery
- Quakers and the abolition of slavery
- long case clocks

3.7 Research

Three short visits were arranged in compliance with Covid safety measures, for viewing the gold Bronze Age bracelets (one visit for two donors to the appeal, two visits for small family groups of the finder / landowner). Additional family heirloom and costume themed research visit by a local family.

4 Displays and Visitor Services

4.1 Permanent Galleries

In the Early History gallery (Great Hall) the early prehistory cases have been cleaned, re-labelled and some additions have been made. The treasure case has been rearranged to accommodate recent acquisitions (coins, ring and bronze age bracelets).

4.2 Temporary Exhibitions

The new special exhibition *Man and Beast: A cultural History of animals* awaits visitors on re-opening.

Object of the Month has continued online and in the Saffron Walden Flyer:

April: Tapa, Barkcloths from the World Cultures collection.

May: shed skin of a Grass Snake, *Natrix helvetica*, found at Wimbish Green in July 2001. This has remained on display throughout June following re-opening on 20th May.

June: A Collaboration with Curiosity Corner. Humpback whales: photos by Barry Kauffman-Wright, audio, whale model and whale ear bone (James Lombard, Natural Sciences Officer and Learning & Outreach Officer)

Curiosity Corner :

May: 'Party Kiwi': information on Kiwis +and a mini party balloon to celebrate re-opening

June: see Object of the Month above

Your Stories: Sawdust Hearts exhibition remains on display for re-opening.

4.3 Visitor Services

4.3.1 Visitors

Since re-opening on 20 May, as the number of pre-booked tickets has not exceeded the Covid permitted numbers daily, the Museum has also accepted 'walk-up' visitors.

Visitor Figures – Pre-booked figures awaited from Art Tickets

Admission Category	Walk-up Visitors		Pre-booked Visitors (Art Tickets on-line)		Total
	May	June	May	June	
Annual Season Ticket - Adult	2	4			
Annual Season Ticket - Concession	0	0			
Child Admission	14	30			
DAILY Adult Full Price	58	101			
DAILY Concession	11	33			
Disabled Admission	0	2			
Free Admission	1	17			
Upgrade Daily to Season Ticket Adult	1	0			
Total:	87	187			*

The June figures include visitors to the Museum site for Fete de la Musique on Father's Day, 20 June.

*** Anticipated total between 400 and 500 visitors**

4.3.2 Income

The Museum re-opened to the public on Thursday 20 May.

Income

Shop

	2021
April	0
May	167.35
June	348.27
Total £	515.62

Tickets

	2021
April	0
May	290
June	447
Total £	737

Donations

	2021
April	
May	37.94
June	
Total £	37.94

Fees

	Premises Hire	Talks	Reproduction of images
April	0	60	0
May	0	0	0
June	0	0	0
Total £		60	

Learning & Outreach services user numbers and income are reported under 5.1

4.3.3 Shop

Shop Showcase:

- April– new soaps, topical (covid) and an alternative to chocolate eggs for Easter
- May – new greeting cards – featured Hedgehog one as these emerge from hibernation this month
- June – annual season ticket (Father’s Day gift)

Cashless payments

As noted at the opening of this report, continuing connectivity issues between the card reader and till, reconciliation and training and recruiting of volunteers is making considerable demands on staff time and energy, and may do so for some time until the system is embedded and we have enough volunteers, who are sufficiently practiced to use the system consistently and confidently.

4.4 Publicity, Marketing

The Museum has a publicity strategy, which includes planned paid for and free advertising. Publicity and marketing activities have been resumed with re-opening.

During this quarter, the Museum has maintained its monthly feature in the Saffron Walden Flyer (Object of the Month and news update) and the new Learning Hub website has been publicised in the Saffron Walden Reporter. In addition, the Museum is listed on 48 other websites, covering a diverse range of local, regional and national interests.

Published Articles (in print and online)

Date	Publication	Subject	Additional Information	Photo
April	Saffron Reporter and Walden Local	Bollards	Various articles in both paper + online	Y
April	Visit Saffron Walden page	Bollards	Online webpage for the painted bollards.	Y
28 April	Walden Local	Bollards	Bollard Painting Project – Page 5	Y
19 May	Walden Local	News	Cycle dumped in castle grounds – Page 13	N
3 June	Walden Local	Medieval Walden	Launch of Medieval initiatives (leaflet and video) – Pages 1 and 3	Y
9 June	Walden Local	Museum news	Unveiling of prehistoric gold treasure – Page 3	Y
9 June	Walden Local	Events	Fete de la Musique – Page 5	N
10 June	Saffron Walden Reporter	Events	Fete de la Musique – Page 3	Y
10 June	Saffron Walden Reporter	Events	Things to do in June – Page 19	Y
16 June	Walden Local	Events	Fete de la Musique – Pages 9-11	Y
17 June	Saffron Walden Reporter	Museum News	Bronze Age gold bracelets going on display – Page 5	Y
23 June	Walden Local	News	Completion of Castle restoration project – Back page	Y
24 June	Saffron Walden Reporter	News	Completion of Castle restoration project – Pages 1 and 2	Y
30 June	Walden Local	Medieval Walden	Success of Medieval Walden video – Page 18	Y
June	Visit Essex Summer 'Locals' campaign - Nostalgia press release	Photograph collection	Nostalgic pictures of Saffron Walden supplied by email (Collections Officer, Human History).	N

4.5 Online, Website and Social Media

Social Media and Email Newsletter

Twitter	Followers: 2236
Facebook	Followers: 1518
Instagram	Followers : 1043
Email Newsletter	Followers: 1364

Saffron Walden Museum Website

	Visits	Unique Visitors
April	3,964	3,194
May	4,340	3,474
June	5,645	3,948
TOTAL for Q1	13,949	10,616

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

The Museum ranks number 3 out of 18 things to do in Saffron Walden on this travel and tourism review website; of the 141 reviews, 97 rate the Museum as 'Excellent' and 39 rate the Museum as 'Very Good'.

Good To Go industry standard

The Museum has been successful in applying for the Visit England, "We're Good to Go" scheme which is being run in partnership with the national tourist organisations to provide a 'ring of confidence' for all sectors of the tourism industry, as well as reassurance to visitors that businesses have clear processes in place and are following industry and Government COVID-19 guidance on cleanliness and social distancing. <https://www.visitengland.com/know-before-you-go-map>

5 Education, Events and Outreach

5.1 Learning

Education and outreach figures for this quarter

Activity or Service	No.	Users	Income £	
Loan boxes	6	121 children 20 adults 2 boxes yet to report nos.	£108	including the creation of one new loan box <i>Seaside Holidays</i>
Taught Session- outreach	1	26 children 2 adults	£120	
Taught session onsite	1	50 children 10 adults	£150	
Self guided	2	42 children 6 adults		Included in Art Tickets visitor figures (pre-booked on-line)
Total		277 users	£ 378	
Learning website		126 unique visitors		

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

No events this quarter due to closure April-20 May and continuing Covid restrictions after 20 May

5.3 Outreach (Museum activities, talks and lectures at other venues or remotely via Zoom)

Date	Event	No. Attending
	Online talk for Epping Forest District Festival of Culture: "Barry Kauffman-Wright: The Wildlife Man". James Lombard, Natural Sciences Officer.	11
	Total	11

Museums and Local Groups: support and liaison (Uttlesford) 7 local groups supported, 6 meetings

- Heritage Development Group – 2 meetings, completion of Medieval Walden project with publication of Medieval Walden leaflet and the Medieval Walden film, which features the Museum Curator)
- Hadstock Society – advisory visit to help sort pottery for retention from community archaeology projects in the parish Curator)
- Fry Art Gallery – liaison on various matters (Curator)
- Essex Record Office (Access Point, Saffron Walden Library) – liaison on enquiries, research and acquisitions (Collections Officer, Human History)
- Local History Readers – liaison on enquiries, research and acquisitions (Collections Officer, Human History)
- Saffron Walden Library – liaison on enquiries and research (Collections Officer, Human History)
- Gibson Library – liaison on enquiries, research and acquisitions (Collections Officer, Human History)
- Special Roadside Verges – 2 meetings, check of March 2021 cut and posts, 4 planning application comments., review of UDC planning validation checklists, volunteers for ecological surveys and registration with Essex Wildlife Trust, print and deliver survey forms to volunteers, 1 ecological survey, liaise with Essex County Council over GIS -3 verge extensions and supplying a current verge GIS layer to UDC (Natural Sciences Officers).
- Climate Change Group - 1 meeting, query over grass cutting regime in Museum and Castle grounds, supplying 74 special roadside verge maps for public biodiversity survey app (Natural Sciences Officers).

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

- Museums Essex: presentation by Learning & Outreach Officer on initiatives during lockdown
- Museums Essex – Snapping the Stiletto Project
- Epping Forest Museum – Anglo-Ethiopian co-curated collections project
- Museums East of England
- SHARE Natural History Curators Group Eastern Region – 2 meetings (Natural Sciences Officers)
- SHARE Rising Leader’s Programme Group (Collections Officer, Human History)

Local Performance Indicator

Performance Indicator PI 49	Q1 Actual	Q1 Target	Annual (Cumulative)	Annual Target 2021-22
Users of the Museum Service		500		6,000

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:

Final User figure waiting for Art Tickets admission figures, but will exceed 500 target, as users will include 288 users of learning and outreach services this quarter. plus 274 total 'walk-up' visitors plus pre-booked visits tbc from Art Tickets.

Main Museum activities and items to note for Q2 2021-22 July - September 2021

1 Museum Management

- Museum Development Project – planning and organizing laser survey and outline brief with the Museum Development Committee, preparing to submit expression of interest to the National Lottery Heritage Fund.
- This will trigger revision of the Museum's Forward Plan (to come to MMWG and then Cabinet later in the year)
- IT: continuing work to get casual museum assistants and volunteers set up with individual log ins to access the Council IT system
- Monitoring take-up of services after re-opening, adjusting to visitors' expectations and preferences as far as possible and planning future programme and marketing in the light of this

2 Buildings and Site

- Promoting the Castle for community use and hire for appropriate events (subject to Covid restrictions being eased)
- Setting up arrangements for taking bookings for use of the Castle

3 Collections

- Collection / Documentation projects continue, including *Lost Language of Nature*

4 Visitor Services and Galleries

- Cashless Payments – continue to work to resolve the connectivity issues and train the volunteers
- Welcome Volunteers – ongoing recruitment and induction for new welcome volunteers

5 Learning, Outreach and Events

- Public Holiday Activity sessions resume in the Museum grounds – Crafts at the Castle.
- Snapping the Stiletto Project – events and artist in residence
- Application submitted to Arts Council for Anglo-Ethiopian project (partner ship led by Epping Forest District Museum)
- Ecological surveys of special roadside verges sites.
- Museum taking part in an Open Day at the Gardens of Easton Lodge to mark the Gardens' connections to WW1 and WW2, on 25 July