

**MUSEUM MANAGEMENT WORKING GROUP held at ZOOM on  
WEDNESDAY 19 OCTOBER 2022 at 6.00 pm**

Present: Councillor G Sell (Chair)  
Councillors A Armstrong, R Freeman and B Light

Museum Society: K Eden (Chair of the Museum Society), R Priestley and T Watson

Officers in attendance: 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 Councillor Gregory, Christine Sharpe and Douglas Kent.

**2 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 13<sup>th</sup> July 2022 were approved as an accurate record.

**3 MUSEUM SOCIETY CHAIR'S REPORT**

The Museum Society Chair said that there had been a meeting between the Museum, Uttlesford District Council, Bruce Tice, Principal Website Officer and Alan Mose, ICT Services Delivery Manager. He said that the meeting had been set up to discuss the implications for IT and the website due to the delay to the National Heritage Lottery Fund (NHLF) project. He said that the meeting had concluded that a strategy was needed now and therefore a proposal was being prepared to look at what systems, protocol and architecture were required including the replacement of the website. He said that this would then feed into the NHLF project as and when that went ahead.

The Museum Society Chair said that this would incur two costs, one for the investigation which would include advice and consultancy and one for the implementation. He said he would bring the proposal to the next meeting with costings, but he was unable to give any idea of costs at this time.

In response to a question from the Chair, the Curator said that this proposal would make sure that systems were aligned, the website easier to use and update and it would be a platform for fundraising. She said that the rebranding, marketing and design overhaul for the website would still go ahead within the project.

In response to comments from Councillor Freeman, the Museum Society Chair agreed that the website looked good but he said it was fragile in the background, and there was only one person who understood how to manipulate and update the website meaning that there was not sufficient security to ensure that it did not fail.

The Curator added that she had received feedback that the website did not successfully reflect the Museum, and that it needed to be updated and better content added.

## 4

### **MUSEUM CURATOR'S REPORT**

The Curator presented her report and highlighted the following: -

- User figures had been good this quarter, helped by the summer outdoor activities, which included the hire of the site three times by Little Learners.
- Schools had used the loan boxes but were still not booking to visit.
- On going problems with the heating had been investigated and Contractors had succeeded in finding the necessary parts. The work would be carried out in the first week of November and the safety certificate would then be reissued.
- Energy bills were a concern and Monarch had been looking at how they could be reduced.
- The Castle had been fenced off due to accelerated flint fall. An inspection and work was due through Historic England.
- A history of the building was being collated, following on from Historic England's questions raised regarding the application to the NHLF.
- The grant application would not proceed until the spring and would be dependent on the impact assessment and the review of costs being carried out.

Councillor Freeman offered to help look over the plans for the heating system to give a second point of view and contribute in any way he could. He said that he had put heating systems into both the Town Hall and St Mary's Church.

The Chair said that the former school room had been vacated by the Fry Art Gallery and asked whether this would be easy to rent out again. The Curator said that she was confident that a new tenant would be found but was not involved in the process. She said the rent was currently £16k per annum and was an important income stream for the Museum.

In response to a suggestion from Councillor Light that the Museum retained the space to use as an extension to the main Museum building. The Curator said that the school room building split the staff and resources due to its location and therefore did not work with the rest of the Museum. She said that there would be a temporary use for the school room when the Museum was closed for refurbishment, in order to keep a site presence and an interest within the Town.

She said that the position of the new learning and outreach extension was critical, as it would service the Castle site and provide much better lighting and electrical power facilities. It also provided the Castle site with an indoor and outdoor facility which would help with rental opportunities.

Councillor Freeman asked that the three sunken LED lights which illuminate the monument, be cleared of grass as they were currently blocked and could set on fire which would damage the lights.

**5            DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting was confirmed as Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> January 2023 at 6.00pm.

*The meeting ended at 6.38pm*