

Joint Museums Committee
Wednesday, 14 September 2016, Council Chamber, The
Guildhall, Worcester - 2.00 pm

Present:

Minutes

Mrs L C Hodgson (Chairman), Mr R Berry, Mr A N Blagg
and Mr G Williams

Officers

Iain Rutherford, Museums General Manager (Museums
Worcestershire)
Helen Large, Marketing and Events Manager (Museums
Worcestershire)
Neil Anderson, Held of Community and Environment
(Worcestershire County Council)
Charlie Fothergill, Digital Marketing Assistant (Museums
Worcestershire)
Manda Graham – Fundraiser
Lucy Wells - Fundraiser
Simon Lewis, Committee Officer (Worcestershire County
Council)

Available papers

The Members had before them:

- A. The Agenda papers (previously circulated); and
- B. The Minutes of the meeting held on 7 June 2016
(previously circulated).

A copy of document A will be attached to the signed
Minutes.

**281 Named
 Substitutes
 (Agenda item 1)**

None.

**282 Apologies/
 Declarations of
 Interest
 (Agenda item 2)**

None.

**283 Confirmation of
 Minutes
 (Agenda item 3)**

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held
on 7 June 2016 be confirmed as a correct record and
signed by the Chairman.

284 Fundraising Report (agenda item 4)

The Joint Committee considered a fundraising report and presentation by Manda Graham and Lucy Wells, fundraisers.

In the ensuing debate, the following principal points were raised:

- Reference was made in the presentation to 10% of the annual income target of £320,000 being achieved – was this in line with the fundraising target? Manda Graham responded that she considered performance to be slightly ahead of expectation at this stage. The work undertaken to date was building on an effective strategy
- What encouragement would be given to people who did not live in the City of Worcester to take part in the new membership scheme? Lucy Wells stated that it was important to create the right package that provided membership benefits for attending not only the key venues but also secondary venues
- Was it a disadvantage in terms of the ability to raise funds to be a local authority rather than a Trust? Helen Large advised that it was a disadvantage on the basis that there were less opportunities to apply for funds as a local authority however Manda Graham and Lucy Wells had found other ways to seek funding. Corporate sponsorship was particularly important. Iain Rutherford added that the establishment of a dormant Trust was being examined to enable its use as a development vehicle
- Were there any examples of local authorities being successful with fundraising? Lucy Wells commented that there had been successful local authority schemes. The key was to provide the right message and building the right partnerships. It was important that the public perceived that they were donating to a venue and the activities taking place in that venue rather to a local authority
- In response to a query, Lucy Wells indicated that European funding was beaurocratic in nature and was no longer available post Brexit
- Neil Anderson indicated that the Hartlebury Trustees needed to be convinced about the added value of corporate sponsorship
- Helen Large commented that part of the problem with fundraising for the Commandery was understanding the types of projects that would be eligible for funding
- Was there any merit in contacting companies such

as Aviva for community project funding? Manda Graham indicated that the key to establishing corporate sponsorship was matching the aims of the project with their corporate priorities.

RESOLVED that:

- a) **the ongoing work to develop a fundraising strategy to contribute towards a more resilient service be noted;**
- b) **the development of a new membership scheme and a corporate sponsorship campaign be authorised; and**
- c) **an update report be brought to a future meeting.**

285 Digital Marketing Report (Agenda item 5)

The Joint Committee considered the digital marketing report and received a presentation from Charlie Fothergill, Digital Marketing Assistant.

In the ensuing debate, the following principal points were raised:

- The Communications unit at the County Council felt that Facebook was a strong platform and should have time invested in it as well as Twitter as it was a particularly effective means of communicating with the public. In response, Charlie Fothergill commented that she found that Twitter was useful for building up reputation, interacting with visitors and everyday behind-the-scenes updates, but Facebook posts and promotion brought more visitors into the venues. Helen Large added that it was good to use a variety of social media platforms to publicise the work of the Joint Service
- In response to a query, Charlie Fothergill commented that Pinterest could be a good vehicle for adding information but it was difficult to build a large following or drive visitors to venue websites from it
- The e-newsletters should be sent to all district and county councillors
- It was important that all the heritage bodies in the County were working together effectively. For example was the Service linking in with the work of the Battle of Worcester Society? Helen Large commented that wherever possible, links were maintained with heritage bodies within the county

286 **Commandery
Refurbishment
Progress
Report (Agenda
item 6)**

to share information

- Helen Large commented that the Heritage Trail had been included in the Pokémon computer game. People were asked to tweet to the service when they found a Pokémon character
- In response to a query, Charlie Fothergill indicated that marketing departments at Museums Worcestershire and National Trust Croome Court have communicated about the possibility of working together in future and some reciprocal marketing agreements have been made.

RESOLVED that the progress made in digital marketing be noted.

The Joint Committee considered the Commandery refurbishment progress report.

In the ensuing debate, the following principal points were raised:

- Iain Rutherford explained that the inspection of the fabric of the Commandery building by Purcells had highlighted issues with heating of the building and damp. Linked to the damp, it was discovered that there was evidence of deathwatch beetle activity in the building and particularly the joists. It was difficult to determine the extent of the damage caused therefore Purcells had recommended more investigations. Further investigations had been carried out by the City Council's Property Department and issues had been discovered with the roof and further damage to the building as a result of squirrels. The Property Department had proposed a programme of repairs totalling £120,000 which had been considered at Worcester City Council Cabinet meeting. He emphasised the importance of addressing these issues at this stage
- Would the cost of the repairs to the building impact upon the Heritage Lottery Bid? Iain Rutherford stated that there would be no impact on the bid funds. However if HLF decided not to support Phase 2 of the project then a new plan for funding would need to be devised. This would be separate from any issues relating to the fabric of the building
- Was it possible to spray the affected timber? Iain Rutherford indicated that it was difficult to access the timber therefore it was important to use the most appropriate methods to treat them properly

and at the same time address any damp issues.

RESOLVED that the progress made in developing the Commandery refurbishment project be noted.

287 Shared Service Hosting - Progress Report (Agenda item 7)

The Joint Committee considered the progress report on the Shared Service hosting arrangements.

In the ensuing debate, the following principal points were raised:

- Iain Rutherford indicated that there would be costs associated with the change of hosting arrangements. There would be a cost for the change of the IT system and an annual revenue shortfall. The County Council had emphasised that the change of hosting should be cost neutral therefore the steering group had asked for guidance on the matter from the Joint Committee
- The budget at the County Council was restricted and there was no new money to support any additional costs associated with the change of hosting arrangements
- Neil Anderson explained that cost neutral meant that no further costs would be borne by either authority than at present as a result of the change. He would not be able to recommend any change to the County Council Cabinet on any other basis
- The problem was that when the proposal was put forward to change the hosting arrangements, members were not aware of the complications and resulting costs. The process had taken up a lot of officer time and therefore it would be better to defer consideration until next year to allow officers to concentrate on the other important projects currently underway
- In response to a query, it was commented that the proposed change of hosting arrangements would make the relationship with the Hartlebury Museum Trust more complicated.

RESOLVED that consideration of the change of shared services hosting arrangements be deferred for a year.

288 Performance and Planning 1st Quarter 2016/17

The Joint Committee considered the performance and planning for the 1st quarter 2016/17.

In the ensuing debate, the following principal points were raised:

(Agenda item 8)

- How long did the joint service need to plan ahead for the display of exhibitions? Iain Rutherford replied that it very much depended upon whether the exhibitions were internal, national or international but plans were made 2-3 years ahead
- Some of the KPIs should be shared for consideration by the City Council
- Had the construction work at Hartlebury Museum impacted upon visitor numbers and had arrangements been made for the access and egress of construction vehicles? Iain Rutherford explained that a construction compound had been created at the site however he acknowledged that there had been an impact on business
- A sign should be put up outside the entrance to Hartlebury Museum to emphasise that it was business as usual.

RESOLVED that the performance and planning information provided for the 1st quarter 2016-17 be noted.

**289 Finance Report
(Agenda item 9)**

The Joint Committee considered the finance report.

In the ensuing debate, the following principal points were raised:

- Iain Rutherford stated that the performance of the service in September was crucial in determining how well overall performance would be for the quarter. A clearer picture would emerge in the next finance report to the Joint Committee
- When would proposals for changes to the charging policy at the Commandery be brought to this Joint Committee or was it a matter for the City Council? Iain Rutherford explained the Joint Committee could recommend changes to charging policy but the City Council had ultimate responsibility for agreeing changes. Work was underway to update the business plan for the Commandery which included reviewing charges for weddings and retailing. The timing of the introduction of the charges to the public was key. An options paper would be brought to the Joint Committee in November.

290 Work Programme (Agenda item 10)

RESOLVED that:

- a) the financial position of the Joint Museums Service as detailed on the report be noted; and
- b) an options paper for the charging policy at the Commandery be brought to the Joint Museums Committee meeting on 9 November 2016.

The Joint Committee considered its future work programme.

RESOLVED that the work programme be noted.

The meeting ended at 3.40pm.

Chairman