

Joint Museums Committee**Wednesday, 15 March 2017, The Commandery, Worcester -
2.00 pm**

Minutes	
Present:	Mrs L C Hodgson (Chairman), Mr R Berry, Mr A N Blagg and Mr G Williams
Also attended:	Iain Rutherford, Museums General Manager (Museums Worcestershire) Helen Large, Marketing and Events Manager (Museums Worcestershire) Phillipa Tinsley, Senior Curator - Collections and Interpretation (Museums Worcestershire) Hannah Needham, Assistant Director of Children. Families and Communities (Worcestershire County Council) Philippa Smith, Deputy Director for Economic Development and Planning (Worcester City Council) 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 9 November 2016 (previously circulated).
301 Named Substitutes (Agenda item 1)	None. The Joint Committee expressed their gratitude to Anthony Blagg for his contribution to the work of the Joint Committee since its inception in 2010.
302 Apologies/ Declarations of Interest (Agenda item 2)	None.
303 Confirmation of Minutes (Agenda item 3)	RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 9 November 2016 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.
304 Commandery	The Joint Committee received an update on the Commandery Business Plan.

Business Plan Update (Agenda item 4)

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

- The public needed to be informed of the significance of the changes being made to the visitor offer at the Commandery
- Phillipa Tinsley advised that a number of blacksmiths had been asked to submit designs for the iron gates for the entrance to the Commandery. One of the entries would be selected as the final design. In response to a query, she confirmed that it would no longer be necessary for the gates to include anti-climb features
- Had any insulation measures been included in the maintenance work for the Commandery? Phillipa Tinsley commented that previous efforts to improve accessibility had made the building colder. As part of the refurbishment, amendments were proposed for the wheelchair users route and as a result, a number of doors that had had to be kept open could be closed and therefore more heat would be retained in the building
- Had user groups and in particular local groups been consulted on the plans for the Commandery? Phillipa Tinsley commented that user groups had been consulted at every stage of the design process, particularly the Museums Officer Group who had paid for an access audit. There was a period up to the grand opening that would provide an opportunity to review the proposed changes and involve local user groups
- Consideration should be given to making a reference to the history of by-elections in the proposed displays
- In response to a suggestion, Phillipa Tinsley agreed to contact colleagues in Worcester, Massachusetts to see if they were in possession of any of artefacts that belonged to the Museums Service that could be put on display
- In response to a query, Helen Large indicated that the public opening of the Commandery would be on 1 July 2017 with a VIP opening on 29 July to coincide with the opening of the Cathedral Square
- Iain Rutherford commented that a branding exercise had been undertaken and shared with the public. Helen Large was working with the site manager to devise an events programme. The target was to increase the number of visits to the building

- Iain Rutherford indicated that further funding would be sought from the Arts Council to support the learning and community links. A limited amount of funds had been set aside to improve the retail offer at the Commandery, in particular looking at introducing new stock and improving the layout
- Iain Rutherford stated that it was anticipated that the wedding hire business would out-perform the four year projection by DCA Consultants. In response to a query, he indicated that there would be a menu which would outline the different wedding packages available to customers. It was difficult to incorporate a wedding hire facility without any impact on the museum service however he believed that it was possible for the two income streams to co-exist
- Was the intention still to keep the building closed during January? Iain Rutherford confirmed that that was the intention particularly given the state of the heating system in the building. However, should school visitor numbers increase to a significant extent, this approach might be reviewed
- In response to a query, Iain Rutherford confirmed that links would be established with the Guildhall with respect to improvements to the marketing of the wedding hire offer. Hartlebury Museum would also be contacted but this would take longer due to progress with the redevelopment work at Hartlebury
- Were potential customers being given an impression of how the Commandery might look like for a wedding? Iain Rutherford indicated that a local florist had offered to dress the room for pictures to be included in the wedding hire brochure for the Commandery
- Iain Rutherford undertook to arrange a trip for members of the Joint Committee to visit the Commandery in due course when the displays were completed.

RESOLVED that:

- a) the progress made in preparing the Commandery for the relaunch of the building's visitor offer following the capital investment be noted; and**
- b) the update to the business plan for the**

**305 Museums
Worcestershire
Service Plan
2017-18
(Agenda item 5)**

Commandery for 2017-18 be authorised and the revisions to the detailed Commandery budget as set out in the report be authorised.

The Joint Committee considered approving the Museums Worcestershire Service Plan 2017/18.

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

- How successful had the service been in establishing relations with the University of Worcester? Phillipa Tinsley commented that links had been established with the University particularly in respect of lectures on Archaeology and the Arts as well as other partnership projects. In addition, partnership work had taken place in relation to learning for example with Alzheimer's research. Establishing closer links with the University would be beneficial for the marketing of the City of Worcester
- In response to a query, Phillipa Tinsley indicated that a good relationship had been established with University in relation to the Digital Media Centre at Castle Street, Worcester. However the exhibition space at Castle Street was not available for external use
- In response to a query, Phillipa Tinsley commented that links had not yet been established with the Heart of Worcestershire College but she would look at the possibility in the future.

RESOLVED that the Service Plan for 2017-18 be approved.

**306 Heritage
Marketing
(Agenda item 6)**

The Joint Committee considered the progress made in delivering museums and heritage marketing projects.

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

- In response to a query about the lack of information about visitors under the age of 16, Helen Large commented that the service was not permitted to survey visitors under the age of 16
- The Worcester News had been very supportive with its coverage of the service, would it be possible to improve links with other newspapers in the county. Helen Large responded that there was room for working with other media outlets but

this needed to be done sensitively to avoid any impact on the good relationship established with the Worcester News.

RESOLVED that the progress made in delivering museums and heritage marketing projects be noted.

**307 Membership Scheme
(Agenda item 7)**

The Joint Committee considered the pilot testing of a new membership scheme.

In the ensuing debate and in response to a query, Helen Large indicated that the membership fee would be established as an annual fee and would be reviewed after a year.

RESOLVED that the pilot testing of a new membership scheme be authorised.

**308 Performance and Planning Report - 3rd Quarter
(Agenda item 8)**

The Joint Committee considered the performance and planning information provided for the 3rd quarter 2016-17.

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

- In response to a query, Helen Large indicated that there had been a really positive response from the public to the exhibition programme with an average gallery time visit of one hour
- Iain Rutherford stated that a review of the Strategic Plan would be undertaken and an item would be brought to the next Joint Committee meeting. In addition, performance indicators would be updated to better reflect the targets in the Plan. The Civic Museums Network was in the process of providing helpful comparator data
- In response to a query about the Ashmolean Museum, Iain Rutherford commented that the Museum was attempting to gain accreditation from the Arts Council. To achieve this, the Museum was becoming a more community based museum with a more varied collection. There was a possibility for a loan agreement to be reached in the future with the Museum
- What was the reason for the static heritage information points project no longer going ahead? Helen Large indicated that the funding had been withdrawn by the County Council partly due to the length of time the project was taking and partly to avoid duplication of the real time display information which contained heritage information.

It was felt that compared to real time displays, static displays could not be updated and were liable to become out of date.

RESOLVED that the performance and planning information provided for the 3rd quarter 2016-17 be noted.

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

The Joint Committee considered the Finance Report.

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

- Iain Rutherford commented that a slight underspend had been projected for 2016/17 and it was anticipated that all projects would be delivered on time
- In response to a query, Iain Rutherford confirmed that failure to create extra income for the service would have a significant impact on the budget for 2017/18.

RESOLVED that the financial position of the Joint Museums Service as detailed in the report be noted.

**310 Work
Programme
(Agenda item
10)**

The Joint Committee considered its work programme.

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

- Iain Rutherford indicated that the Museums Hosting report would be considered at the meeting on 21 June 2017 rather than the September meeting
- It was requested that the Joint Committee receive an update report on Hartlebury Museum project at its meeting on 21 June 2017. Also a tour of the Museum be arranged for members after the meeting if possible.

RESOLVED that the work programme be noted subject to the following changes:

- a) Museums Hosting to be considered at the meeting on 21 June 2017; and
- b) An update on the Hartlebury Museum project to be considered at the meeting on 21 June 2017.

The meeting ended at 3.40pm.

Chairman