

Joint Museums Committee

Thursday, 16 November 2017, The Commandery, Worcester
- 2.00 pm

Present:

Minutes

Mr M Johnson (Chairman), Mr A T Amos, Mrs L Denham,
and Mr A C Roberts

Officers:

Philippa Tinsley, Interim Museums General Manager
(Museums Worcestershire)

Helen Large, Marketing and Events Manager (Museums
Worcestershire)

Philippa Smith, Deputy Director for Economic
Development and Planning (Worcester City Council)

Sonia Matthews, Principal Accountant (Worcestershire
County Council)

Gemma Dhami, Learning Volunteering and Partnerships
Manager (Museums Worcestershire)

Hannah Needham, Assistant Director of Children,
Families and Communities (Worcestershire County
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 22 September
2017 (previously circulated).

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

Mr A C Roberts for Mrs L C Hodgson and Mr A T Amos
for Mrs K J May.

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

Apologies were received from Mrs L C Hodgson and Ms
K J May.

Mrs L Denham declared an interest as Chair of the
Friends of Fort Royal Hill and Commandery Gardens.

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

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held
on 22 September 2017 be confirmed as a correct
record and signed by the Chairman subject to an
amendment to Minute no. 325 that Mrs L Denham

**335 Commandery
Development
Future Phases
(Agenda item 4)**

**declared an Interest as the Chair of the Friends of
Fort Royal Hill and Commandery Gardens.**

The Joint Committee considered the Commandery development future phases.

The Joint Committee received a presentation by Gemma Dhmi, Learning Volunteering and Partnerships Manager on the learning programme for schools at the Commandery.

At the conclusion of the presentation, the following principal points were raised:

- Was the project aimed at any particular age group? Gemma Dhmi indicated that the programme was aimed at children between the ages of 11 and 16 however there were some creative aspects of the programme that could be beneficial to younger children. It could also be used for adult learning
- In response to a query, Gemma Dhmi indicated that the project had been funded for current academic year only
- Had any thought been given to rolling the project forward for future learning and seeking other potential forms of funding? Gemma Dhmi commented that it was possible that certain element of the programme could be retained for example the theatre piece which schools could book and fund with their sessions
- Was the English Civil War part of the national curriculum? Gemma Dhmi indicated that it was taught as part of Hey Stage 3 history, dependent upon the approach taken by the relevant teacher
- Had other schools from outside the county participated in the educational programme? Gemma Dhmi commented that schools from South Wales and Gloucestershire had accessed the facilities available at the Commandery.

The Joint Committee considered each of the themes of the Commandery future development phases and the following principal points were raised:

Learning

- In response to a query, Gemma Dhmi stated that the number of school visits had increased since the refurbishment of the Commandery. The joint service was also looking to expand its adult

education programme. Philippa Tinsley added that the joint service had been particularly successful in developing a family audience but would also wish to increase the historical interest audience. The success of funding for partnerships with universities at Newark had showed the benefits of the provision of a strong popular offer grounded in an authentic historical context

- Did the joint service know its target market for the Commandery? Helen Large commented that the joint service aimed to attract customers from within a 45 minute drive time radius who would purchase the highest ticket price (the family market target). However there was capacity to consider targeting an older market as well as a more specialist market
- Was the Tickenhill Trust being used to its full potential as an additional source of funding for the joint service? Hannah Needham indicated that there were plans to more fully maximise the potential of the Trust as a form of Charitable Trust that could access funds that would not normally be available to council-run organisations.

Income Generation

- Philippa Tinsley explained that a part-time wedding co-ordinator had been employed for one year as part of the development funding by Worcester City Council. The Café at the Commandery had been particularly successful since the redevelopment, making the most from the space available and improving access to the gardens which increased its potential to link with Fort Royal Hill Park
- The Café was now accessible from the canal side which provided a different and more appropriate target market
- In response to a query, Philippa Tinsley explained that the joint service received a percentage of the profits from the Café. The Café had already performed better since its re-opening than for the whole of the previous year
- Subject to discussions with Conservation Officer, there might be potential to re-arrange the fabric of the building to provide better access to the gardens to attract passing trade
- Concern was expressed that Worcester City Council's income generation and masterplan funds had been included as a source of income for the development of the Commandery, as there

could be no guarantee that this funding would be available. Philippa Tinsley would liaise with the City Council to ascertain whether this remained a viable source of capital funding.

Wellbeing

- The joint service could establish whether there would be any benefit from establishing links with the Infirmary Museum in Castle Street, Worcester
- The potential impact of a successful museum and gardens to the health and well-being of its customers should not be underestimated
- Had data been accumulated about which other venues customers had visited? Helen Large indicated that the data available only related to the type of venue visited
- Had any data been accumulated on the dwell-time of visitors at the Commandery? Helen Large indicated that since its re-opening dwell time had increased as follows: dwell time of less than an hour down from 27% to 3%, dwell time of more than an hour had increased from 47% to 55%, dwell time of 1 to 1.5 hours had increased from 79% to 94% and people staying over 3 hours - 3%. The dwell time included time spent by visitors in the Café and the shop
- Was the history of the building as a printing facility a viable option for a future display at the Commandery? Philippa Tinsley commented that the Civil War was, and should remain the main focus of the building however there was space available to display other stories associated with the use of the building
- It was requested that an update report on the future development of the Commandery be brought to a future meeting.

RESOLVED; that

- a) The successful grant applications to fund the new education initiatives at The Commandery be noted;**
- b) The proposed future developments as set out in the Appendix be approved;**
- c) The Interim General Museums Manager be authorised to start discussions on future development with partners and with funding**

**336 Finance Report
(Agenda item 5)**

bodies; and

- d) An update report on the development of the Commandery be brought to a future meeting of the Joint Committee.**

The Joint Committee considered the Finance Report.

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

- In response to a query, Sonia Matthews explained that the budget had been prepared taking into account the inflation costs of the County Council. The contribution from the City to the Council was £493k in 2017/18 this would be uplifted by inflation in 2018/19
- In response to a query, Philippa Tinsley commented that property costs were the responsibility of the individual councils who had a different approaches to managing them
- How confident were officers about the financial information available to them bearing in mind the difficulties experienced with the Mercury system? Hannah Needham explained that the financial information could also be accessed manually if necessary so there was confidence that the information was accurate.

RESOLVED that:

- a) the financial position of the Joint Museums Committee as detailed in the report be noted; and**
- b) an item on budget setting be brought to the meeting of the Joint Committee on 24 January 2018.**

Exclusion of Public and Press

RESOLVED that pursuant to Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public shall be excluded from the meeting during item 6 on the grounds that there would be disclosure to them of information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding the information) and the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

Summary of the proceedings of the meeting during

337 Joint Service Partnership Contributions 2017-21 (Agenda item 6)

which the press and public were excluded.

The Committee considered the Joint Service contributions 2017-21.

RESOLVED: that

- a) the reductions in contribution to the joint service proposed by the two partner councils be noted and the approach for reducing the budget to meet these reductions as set out in the exempt Appendix to the report be approved; and
- b) A report on Hartlebury Castle's business plan and staff restructure be brought to the meeting of the Joint Museums Committee on 24 January 2018.

338 Performance and Planning 2nd Quarter 2017-18 (Agenda item 7)

The Joint Committee considered the performance and planning information for the 2nd quarter 2017-18.

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

- Was anything being done at the Guildhall to promote the Commandery and vice-versa? Helen Large indicated that links on weddings and events with the Guildhall were being discussed
- In response to a query about the Worcestershire Volunteer Portal, Gemma Dhimi explained that the Portal provided a website for the sharing of volunteers and best practice. She confirmed that the University of Worcester had not been involved but discussions were taking place with them on ways of communicating opportunities to their students
- In response to a query, Philippa Tinsley commented that the forecast target for the income from weddings at the Commandery was £10k for the present year rising to £23k for next year and £32k for the following year.

RESOLVED that the performance and planning information provided for the 2nd quarter 2017-18 be noted.

339 Work programme

The Joint Committee considered its work programme.

(Agenda item 8)

In the ensuing debate, Philippa Tinsley confirmed that a Members' Seminar was being arranged in February 2018 and it was agreed to open the seminar to all members from both councils.

RESOLVED that the work programme be noted subject to the addition of an item on budget setting to the agenda for the meeting of the Joint Committee on 24 January 2018.

The meeting ended at 3.30pm.

Chairman