

Joint Museums Committee
Wednesday, 13 June 2018, Committee Room, Museum and
Art Gallery, Worcester - 10.00 am

Present:

Minutes

Mr A Gregson, Mrs L C Hodgson, Mr M Johnson and
Ms K J May

Officers:

Phillipa Tinsley, Interim Museums General Manager
(Museums Worcestershire)

Helen Large, Marketing and Events Manager (Museums
Worcestershire)

Andrew Round, Director of Place (Worcester City
Council)

Hannah Needham, Assistant Director of Children.
Families and Communities (Worcestershire County
Council)

Caroline Brand, Finance Manager (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 23 March
2018 (previously circulated).

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

Mr A Gregson substituted for Mrs L Denham.

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

An apology was received from Mrs L Denham.

**357 Election of
 Chairman
 (Agenda item 3)**

RESOLVED that Mrs L C Hodgson be elected
Chairman for the ensuing year.

**358 Appointment of
 Vice-Chairman**

RESOLVED that the appointment of the Vice-
Chairman be deferred to the next meeting of the Joint
Committee.

(Agenda item 4)

359 Confirmation of Minutes (Agenda item 5)

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting on 23 March 2018 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

360 Annual Review (Agenda item 6)

The Joint Committee received a presentation on the Museums Worcestershire Annual Review for 2017-18.

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

- In response to a concern about the number of visitors attending Museums Service venues from outside the Worcester City, Helen Large explained that certain exhibitions attracted around 46% of visitors from outside the city which gave the local economy a boost of approximately £1.5m
- Were any items available in storage that could fill some of the display voids at the Commandery? Philippa Tinsley advised that efforts would be made to find exhibits to fill display areas. However, there was an expense to bringing stored artefacts up to the necessary display quality. A decision would need to be made as to whether to make funds available for this purpose at the Commandery or refurbish the Art Gallery and Museum
- Who had responsibility for the maintenance of the green spaces at Hartlebury Museum? Philippa Tinsley advised that apart from an orchard area that was leased to the Museums Service, the grounds of the Castle were now the responsibility of Hartlebury Castle Preservation Trust
- In response to a query, Philippa Tinsley advised that the Annual Review would be published on the museums service web site, and circulated to key partners and stakeholders as well as all members of the City and County Council.

RESOLVED that the Museums Worcestershire Annual Review for 2017-18 be approved.

361 Finance Report (Agenda item 7)

The Joint Committee considered the financial position of the Joint Museums Service.

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

- Caroline Brand notified the Joint Committee of a

362 Performance and Planning 4th Quarter (Agenda item 8)

correction in the report to Table 1: 2017/18 Outturn that the Variance for Worcestershire County Council which should read minus £3k

- Had admissions income for Hartlebury and the Commandery been under budget as a result of the periods of closure? Philippa Tinsley explained that the admissions income for Hartlebury Museum had particularly suffered from the period of closure but also due to ongoing building work taking place during opening hours. In addition budgets had not been structured correctly which had impacted on both sites
- Was the Joint Museums Service Reserve capped? Philippa Tinsley explained that 5% of the budget had been set aside as a Reserve on an annual basis. There was no cap. Presently, the Reserve totalled £70k of which £20k had already been allocated by the Joint Committee. Work would take place over the next 12 months to examine how the remaining funds in the Reserve could be allocated
- In response to a query, Philippa Tinsley explained that following the switch of hosting arrangements, Hartlebury Museum would continue to be overseen by the Joint Committee but administered by the County Council. The Joint Committee would receive a combined City/County Council Finance report for Hartlebury Museum in the future
- How deliverable was the projected income from sales? Philippa Tinsley stated that there was a great variance between the standard of the budget headings between the various museums sites. It was intended to bring a report to the next Joint Committee meeting to review budget headings to ensure that income aligned with expenditure.

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

The Joint Committee considered the performance and planning information for the 4th Quarter.

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

- Philippa Tinsley commented that the Joint Service was on target to achieve the change of hosting arrangements albeit with a few remaining logistical difficulties to be resolved. The key element was that there had been no impact on service users

- In response to a query, Philippa Tinsley acknowledged that visitor numbers had not significantly increased at the Commandery since the alterations to the building. However the aim of the project was to increase visitor numbers from outside the City. It was very difficult to increase income at the same time as increasing visitor numbers. She emphasised the challenging nature of the business plan for the Commandery. She suggested that it would be appropriate to revisit the business plan targets after 12 months. She also proposed a members workshop be arranged in the Autumn to consider issues associated with the Commandery
- It was important that future performance indicators were consistent with those of the City and County Councils
- The City Council had requested that the joint service's performance information be made available to it before consideration by the Joint Committee. If this approach was agreed, the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Joint Committee should have sight of the information in advance. Philippa Tinsley responded that wherever possible she would meet this request but it depended upon whether the requisite performance information would be available in time
- Philippa Tinsley acknowledged that the performance of the Art Gallery and Museum had deteriorated but this should be seen in the context of a lack of serious investment in the building over a number of years. In particular the welcome to the building was not good and should be the next priority for the joint service
- There were a number of ways of improving the performance of the Art Gallery and Museum including the better use of space and Sunday opening. In addition, the Regimental Museum had expressed an interest in using space in the building
- The improvement of the entrance to the Art Gallery and Museum was important but the public needed to know about the building in the first place. It was not helped by visitors having to go upstairs to access the museum. It might be worth revisiting the feasibility study to see if anything was worth pursuing albeit acknowledging that there was no possibility of City Council staff moving out of the building in the foreseeable future. The perception of the building being at the

wrong end of the City was not helpful in this respect

- It was possible that the Art Gallery and Museum could be included in the City Council's Tourism Strategy
- Proposals were being drawn up to improve the office accommodation and consideration should be given in these plans to the impact on and possible improvement of the Art Gallery and Museum space. Andrew Round added that whatever proposals were forthcoming there should not be an impact on the visitor experience
- Were there any plans to improve the Café at the Commandery? Philippa Tinsley advised that funds had already been used to smarten up the Café. In the longer term it was proposed to increase its size and possibly open up a frontage to the canal
- It should be remembered that the role of the Joint Service was to provide support to all museums in the county. Had the Joint Service provided any support to the Worcester Porcelain Museum? Philippa Tinsley responded that the Joint Service had committed a day a week of her time to provide to support to the Museum
- Had any consideration been given to a joint promotion of the Porcelain Museum and the Commandery? Philippa Tinsley advised that conversations had been held regarding joint promotion with the Porcelain Museum. As part of these plans, the Tourist Information Centre would be selling joint tickets for the venues.

RESOLVED that the performance and planning information provided for the 4th quarter 2017-18 be noted.

363 Work Programme (Agenda item 9)

The Joint Committee considered its work programme.

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

- Philippa Tinsley indicated that this was the last meeting of the Joint Committee with the County Council as the host. For future meetings of the Joint Committee, officers from the City Council would be acting as Treasurer and Secretary
- It was agreed that future meetings of the Joint Committee be held at the Art Gallery and Museum, the Guildhall, the Commandery and Hartlebury Museum

- The next meeting of the Joint Committee on 11 October would be held at the Guildhall not County Hall. The venue for the November meeting would be determined in due course
- A review of the impact of the work carried out at the Commandery should be brought to the Joint Committee after 12 months
- A date should be arranged in September for a workshop for members of the Joint Committee to consider issues associated with the Commandery
- It was suggested that to increase footfall, reference to the free admission to the Art Gallery and Museum be included on the ticket issued for admission to the Commandery.

RESOLVED that:

- a) **The work programme be noted;**
- b) **Future meetings of the Joint Committee be held at the Commandery, the Guildhall, the Art Gallery and Museum and Hartlebury Museum;**
- c) **The meeting of the Joint Committee on 11 October be held at the Guldhall, Worcester;**
- d) **A report be brought to the Joint Committee on the impact of the improvements at the Commandery after 12 months; and**
- e) **A workshop be arranged in September 2018 for members of the Joint Committee to consider issues associated with the Commandery.**

The meeting ended at 11.10am.

Chairman