

10. HERITAGE MARKETING REPORT

Recommendation

1. The Museums General Manager recommends that the progress made in delivering museums and heritage marketing projects be noted.

Background Information

2. The final reports have been received from the Arts Council-funded project **Strengthening Museums and the Visitor Economy in Worcester**. These include a focus on Heritage Product Development and in particular looking at themed heritage itineraries and what could be developed for the city and marketed domestically and overseas.
3. A Marketing Strategy for The Commandery sets out the priorities for positioning and promoting the Commandery once product development has taken place, and in particular looks to strengthen marketing to visitors beyond Worcester in order to benefit from economic additionally that visitors from further afield bring. Once the improved interpretation and Civil War strand is in place the aim is to increase audiences by 20% year on year.
4. The Fundraising Strategy created by Swift sets out a new approach to fundraising for Museums Worcestershire over a short, medium and longer term period to support both capital and revenue streams. The strategy recognises that Fundraising is a role for all staff and early actions include creation of an audit of support, ensuring systems and procedures are in place to enable a consistent approach to fundraising, and working with the Friends of Museums Worcestershire to support the new focus.
5. Arts Council England has used the Museums on the High Street (MOTHS) project as a best practice case study for bringing museum collections to the wider public. The case study features on the Arts Council England website <http://bit.ly/1pzT8rw>
6. The Civil War related studies were the focus of a Civic Presentation at the Guildhall in April. On the whole the audience were very supportive of a city-wide focus on the English Civil War. We are now in discussion with the City Council, the Battle of Worcester Society, Battle of Worcester Partnership and the LEP regarding the wider issues.
7. Discussions have taken place with the Chamber of Commerce and Destination Worcestershire regarding staging a further MOTHS parade, with the possibility of incorporating it into the Severn Festival in August. However the Chamber of Commerce have indicated that it is unlikely

they will be able to commit to the funding of the parade this year.

8. We emerge from the Arts Council-funded programme a stronger and repositioned service which has taken centre stage in the discussions of the future of tourism and cultural provision in the City. We have benefited from working with renowned tourism and audience development consultants and a world-famous events company. Working with partners across the city on the various project strands has established Museums Worcestershire as an ambitious organisation willing to lead the way. Our work has stimulated discussions about Worcester's own ambitions and position as a heritage destination. Importantly the work from the project builds on the **Museums Futures** programme that we as an organisation have been following for the past 2 years.

9. Meanwhile service marketing has focussed on promoting our venues as destinations on a national and regional level. Nationally we are working with the Worcester Heritage Partnership Group and Destination Worcestershire to build the profile of the heritage and cultural offer of the city and county. Combined advertisements have been taken in key b2c tourism publications such as the Visit Britain Attractions Guide. More locally we advertised in the Worcestershire County Cricket Club magazine County365 which is distributed to Worcestershire County Cricket Club members and is available in the new Premier Inn hotel on New Road.

10. The continuation of the inclusion of 'destination' exhibitions in the programme at the Art Gallery allows us to focus on bringing a wider audience to the City Art Gallery & Museum, with the most recent exhibition of this type 'Song of the Sea' attracting over 17,000 visitors, 57% of these being from outside the city. Retail sales also benefitted from this wider marketing with income increasing over the period of the exhibition.

11. 89% of visitors came specifically to visit the exhibition (rather than being on a general visit or for any other purpose), their comments include the following:

"Outdoes Tate St Ives"

"Privileged to see it in Worcester"

"The most enjoyable visit I have made to an art gallery"

"Well worth the journey from Petersfield"

"So glad to have caught this un-missable exhibition"

"Came last month, had to come back – would come every month to see these pictures".

12. This focus on marketing our venues as destinations is increasing our economic impact. The Strengthening Museums and the Visitor Economy report by TSE research indicated that Museums Worcestershire brings in £1.1m of *additional* economic impact and direct and indirect/induced turnover is estimated to support 17.9 jobs.

13. Destination marketing features strongly in the Marketing Strategies commissioned for The Commandery and for Hartlebury as part of the HLF Round 2 application.

14. In terms of supporting the heritage offer in Worcester we are working with the Worcester BID on the creation of Heritage Information Points to be sited at key historic locations around the city. Museums Worcestershire is also working with the County Transport Systems Team to supply content for new electronic interpretation panels to appear in bus shelters and at Crowngate Bus Station.

15. In order to cross-fertilise museum audiences, for the second year we are running the **Summer Fun** promotion which includes a leaflet listing the summer events at all three museums and advertising in family-focussed local and regional publications. We are trialling different distribution mechanisms this year with 25% of the leaflets being distributed to targeted postcode sectors.

16. Finally, we are working with Modus print and design to create a brand for the new Commandery pop-up Café which launches on 11 July. The brand is being created to appeal not only to museum visitors but also those enjoying the new play facilities in Fort Royal Park, canal walkers and boaters. The Café will run for an 8-week period and if successful will 'pop up' at future Commandery events and at holiday times.

Contact Points

Specific Contact Point for this report:

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Background Papers

In the opinion of the Museums General Manager the following are the background papers relating to the subject matter of this report:

Arts Council bid – Strengthening Museums and the Visitor Economy

The English Civil War in Worcester – a report by TSE Research

Strengthening Museums and the Visitor Economy in Worcester - a report by TSE Research with the Audience Agency

Heritage Product Development - a report by TSE Research

It Happened Here – audience research and evaluation of pilot interpretation at The Commandery – a report by Morris, Hargreaves, McIntyre

The Commandery Marketing Strategy - a report by Blue Sail Marketing.

Museums Worcestershire Fundraising Plan – a report by Swift consultancy.