

JOINT MUSEUMS COMMITTEE 15 MARCH 2017

HERITAGE MARKETING

Recommendation

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

Background

2. Service marketing has focussed on our individual venues' events and exhibitions programme. 'Destination' exhibitions at the Art Gallery & Museum continue to bring in record visitor numbers with large percentages coming from outside of the WR postcode, resulting in a positive impact on the city's visitor economy. 'This Green Earth' in spring 2016 welcomed 42% of its visitors from outside the city. The Jeremy Deller exhibition exceeded visitor targets by 15%; 49% of visitors were visiting the Art Gallery & Museum for the first time, and 11% of visitors were aged 16 – 24. The current exhibition David Cox and his Contemporaries has already been well received with almost 3,000 visitors in the first two weeks of opening. Through Arts Council England funding we were able to extend marketing to in-train advertising, widening our geographic reach.

3. The annual Living History event at The Commandery continues to be popular seeing a 12% increase in the number of visitors in 2017 and achieving an increase in admissions of 41% up from 2016.

4. Living History is a key part of the Love Worcester Heritage Festival, which has drawn large numbers to heritage events across the city with two events at the Art Gallery & Museum also benefitting from being part of the packaging. Museums Worcestershire supported Love Worcester this year by providing marketing expertise. All venues are reporting a successful week.

5. We continue to build our on-line presence: We have improved the way we are managing Trip Advisor and ensuring we respond to all comments, good and bad. As a result The Commandery has climbed the rankings from #18 to #9 out of 48 things to do in Worcester, and has had a 30% increase in reviews. In response to research findings that Commandery audiences wish to access events information via Facebook we have increased our presence on Facebook, resulting in a much higher reach and engagement:

- Total reach 2015: 90,000
- Total reach 2016: 229,000

6. Nationally, we continue to work with Visit Worcestershire to build the profile of the heritage and cultural offer of the city and county and have contributed advertising to the

official Visit Worcestershire guides. We also supported the recent City Council tourism feature in the GWR 'Escape' magazine.

7. The £136k award from Arts Council England Museum Resilience has funded two major marketing campaigns and the largest programme of visitor research ever carried out by Museums Worcestershire. County Treasures celebrates the County collections and through a county-wide advertising programme links the collections to the new Hartlebury destination. City Treasures has seen the city collections appear on billboard advertising and on the side of buses on ten Worcester routes. Innovative digital screen advertising has also reunited objects from the collection with their place of origin or source of inspiration.

8. Museums Worcestershire is working with the Audience Agency on the programme of research, with surveys being conducted on and off-site. Conclusions will include mapping where visitors are coming from, benchmarking against national and regional data and exploring barriers to non-attendance.

9. The Worcester News continues to be incredibly supportive through their coverage of exhibitions and events and the 'Museum object of the week' which appears each Saturday.

Contact Points

County Council Contact Points

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Specific Contact Points 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 Resilience Fund application 2015-17