

### **JOINT MUSEUMS COMMITTEE 15 MARCH 2017**

### **MEMBERSHIP SCHEME**

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#### **Recommendation**

**1. The Museums General Manager recommends that the Joint Committee**

**a) Authorise the pilot testing of a new membership scheme**

#### **Background**

2. In September 2016 the Joint Museum Committee authorised the development of a new Membership Scheme as part of a fundraising strategy to seek alternative sources of income, contributing towards a more resilient and viable service, and as a mechanism to build relationships with our loyal visitors and develop new supporters and audiences.

3. A new Membership Scheme was first recommended in a Fundraising strategy produced by Swift consultants, which set out the groundwork for a new focus on sustainable fundraising. The fundraising strategy supports the following Museums Worcestershire strategic priorities:

- To secure a viable future for our museum sites through new ways of working.

4. The current consultants (funded by Arts Council England Museum Resilience Fund) have created the new scheme following extensive desk research into other membership schemes regionally and nationally, a survey of current visitors, a focus group and 1:1 consultations.

5. Research indicates that there is support for a new Membership Scheme, primarily based on offering a package of exclusive member benefits including some financial rewards. It also indicates that a low to mid-level pricing structure would be most appealing.

6. The Membership Scheme proposal is for:

- a) A simple flat scheme, with individual or family membership on offer; this will make it easy to market and administer in the initial roll out period.
- b) Unique membership for each venue, with relevant benefits; this echoes supporters' requests to be affiliated to a specific museum.
- c) A scheme which is flexible and easy to build on; a premium or even a low-cost layer could be added in the future.
- d) A scheme that can be administered and tracked through the new CRM system.

- e) A cost of £20 per individual and £40 for a family (up to two adults and three children).
- f) A discounted rate if a membership is purchased for two venues, of £35 for individuals and £70 for family Memberships.
- g) A scheme which offers attractive and tangible benefits: for example if Commandery membership is purchased by a Worcester resident at the same time as an entry ticket to the Commandery, the entry cost is refunded.
- h) A scheme which is cost effective and will generate revenues longer term.
- i) A scheme which will develop current relationships with supporters and generate new ones, encouraging donations and longer term support.

7. A Membership Scheme is a mutual relationship between a venue and a supporter, with benefits on either side. The suggested package of benefits to those purchasing the Membership scheme is:

- a) 10% discount at the Art Gallery & Museum and Commandery shops
- b) Priority booking for some events
- c) Member-only events
- d) Exclusive members section on museums Worcestershire.org.uk
- e) Free tour of Museums Worcestershire Collections Centre
- f) 10% discount on entry to The Commandery
- g) Exclusive members' e-newsletter
- h) A supporter's name in Museums Worcestershire public promotions

8. It is recommended that the Membership Scheme be piloted at the Art Gallery & Museum and subsequently at The Commandery, and reviewed after one year of operation. In future it could be extended to Hartlebury in association with HCPT, or opened up to other partners.

9. It is suggested that Museums Worcestershire income from the Membership Scheme is divided as follows:

- a) 20% to cover costs of benefits provided and further marketing of the Scheme
- b) 40% to the core budget of the venue to which the Member affiliates
- c) 40% towards projects / acquisitions

10. The launch of the new Membership Scheme is funded from the Arts Council England Museum Resilience Fund.

11. The target for first year of operating is 100 new members across two Schemes, with a 20% increase year on year.

## **Contact Points**

### County Council Contact Points

County Council: 01905 763763

Worcestershire Hub: 01905 765765

### Specific Contact Points for this report

Helen Large, Marketing & Events Manager, Museums Worcestershire

Tel: 01905 25371

Email: [HLarge@worcestershire.gov.uk](mailto:HLarge@worcestershire.gov.uk)

## **Background Papers**

In the opinion of the proper officer (in this case 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

Joint Museum Committee minute 266b, Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> March 2016

Joint Museum Committee minute 284, Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> September 2016