

**JOINT MUSEUMS COMMITTEE
23 MARCH 2018**

HERITAGE MARKETING REPORT

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 developments at The Commandery and our individual museums events and exhibitions programme.
3. Since the visitor experience improvements at The Commandery and launch of the new permanent exhibition Worcester's Civil War Story, marketing has focused on attracting visitors from a wider, 45-minute drive time and positioning The Commandery as a major visitor attraction at the heart of Worcester's heritage offer; attracting new visitors to Worcester and contributing to the City's visitor economy.
4. Since the opening, for every resident's ticket sold four tickets were sold to visitors from further afield. We have also seen over 10% of previous local Commandery card holders return to purchase a new annual ticket. Admissions and shop income have increased by a total of 61% on the previous year since the launch.
5. Visitors have given high praise to the new exhibition. Since the launch, 96% of Tripadvisor reviews have been positive, 64% have been 'excellent', giving a five-star rating to The Commandery. One visitor described it as, "a story told with imagination and insight!"
6. There has been a considerable increase in dwell time: taken from the Audience Finder research the proportion of visitors staying between 1 – 2.5 hours increased from 79% to 94% after the opening and 3% stayed more than 4 hours which was previously unheard of. A change in primary visitor motivation from 'visiting as a way to spend time with friends and family', to the 'desire to learn something' shows its reputation as an informative historic experience.
7. 'Destination' exhibitions at the Art Gallery & Museum continue to bring in visitors from outside of the WR postcode, resulting in a positive impact on the city's visitor economy.
8. The big name artists featured in the Warhol to Walker exhibition plus the impact of a high profile national partner meant the exhibition attracted 14,000 visitors, a reach of 61,000 on social media and coverage in the Times newspaper. The current exhibition Benjamin Williams Leader: Blest by the Suns of Home has already been well received with more than 3,000 visitors in the first three weeks of opening.

9. The annual Living History event at The Commandery received slightly reduced visitor numbers in 2018, an affect that had been anticipated as a result of the new charging policy, however income from paid admissions increased by 29% on the previous year.

10. Living History is a key part of the Love Worcester Heritage Festival, which has drawn large numbers to heritage events across the city with events at the Art Gallery & Museum also benefitting from being part of the packaging. A new initiative this year was the inclusion of a Love Worcester Christmas tree at the Cathedral's annual Christmas Tree Festival, which helped to promote the Love Worcester week.

11. The marketing team is supporting Hartlebury Castle Preservation Trust with the destination marketing and PR for the launch of the unified site in May. The marketing strategy is targeting families, active seniors and active empty-nesters within 60 minutes travel time.

12. Our digital strategy has focused on channels that will attract as many visitors as possible to venues and events. The Commandery Facebook reach increased by 80% in 2017 compared to 2016, thanks to frequently posting engaging content as well as some paid event promotions. In a survey, just under 10% of visitors to Commandery events said that they saw it on Facebook.

13. All social media has focused on channelling visitors to the website and we have been making sure that our digital presence and back-links across the web are up-to-date, resulting in a 25% average monthly increase in page views on last year.

14. We have been staying on top of digital trends by creating video content, posting a total of 50 videos on our Facebook, Twitter and Instagram channels over the past year. We have also been building up a new Museums Worcestershire Instagram profile, which has now reached over 1,000 followers.

15. 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 Visit Worcestershire feature in 'Britain' magazine, and were extremely pleased to have one of our museums chosen for the front cover of the Worcester City guide.

16. In September The Commandery linked up with the Tour of Britain (ToB) promotion to be a key part of the city's visitor offer on the Sunday. Extended opening to coincide with the ToB start brought in 300 visitors compared to 55 in the previous year, with 26% of visitors taking advantage of the morning opening.

17. 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.

18. Museums Worcestershire buildings, curators and collections had wide media coverage in 2017, appearing on Midlands Today, Bargain Hunt, Radio 4's The Kitchen Cabinet, BBC Hereford & Worcester, and in The Times and Military History Magazine.

Contact Points

County Council Contact Points

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Background Papers

In the opinion of the Museums General Manager there are no background papers relating to the subject matter of this report.