

Museum Management Report September 2016

Museum Management Committee

Following the Council Consultation report, the Museum Management Committee will now be a stand-alone committee responsible for running the museum to accreditation standards. This Committee is responsible to Liskeard Town Council, reporting directly to the Communications & Engagement Committee (C&E). As well as maintaining Accreditation Standards set by the Arts Council, it needs to reflect Council aims and objectives.

Currently the Museum Management Committee is made up of 5 active museum Volunteers and 2 Councillors and meets on a regular monthly basis – 3rd Wednesday of the month. The committee recommends that Councillors are either volunteers for the museum or commit to attending at least 4 of their committee meetings per year. Councillors should be interested and understand the running of the museum. It has been suggested that the Chair and Finance Officer attend C&E meetings to answer questions if necessary. Proposal: That this structure of the Museum Management Committee be accepted by the Town Council

General Office/Admin

Thanks, as usual must be given to all volunteers for their contribution to running of museum.

Volunteer Activity

At present the museum currently has 25 active volunteers, 16 of whom work in the museum every week. 3 more new volunteer applications have also been received through the Do-It Cornwall Volunteer service.

A student of Liskeard Community College, is proving a great asset to the museum. She will be interviewed for a film on Young Volunteers organised by the CMG (Cornwall Museums Group) and this will give the museum more exposure.

Another new volunteer will join in November. His passion for Liskeard local history will be an asset. He has also offered to do regular guided town walks next year.

Volunteer procedures are being updated, ensuring we are on track for accreditation.

Finances & Accreditation Documentation

The Finance Officer liaises with the Council Offices, and at present the museum is well within budget! Naturally, with new displays coming up, this is likely to change at the end of the year.

The need to be cost aware is recognised and where volunteers are doing professional work, and estimate of the cost will be recorded. For example, the notices and story boards currently in place would have cost at least £500 (even at a charitable status rate!). This will ensure a sensible budget can be set in future, should these services fall away. The question needs to be asked “What would you have been paid if you had done this for another organisation?”

As far as progress with re-accreditation, the Finance Officer is currently liaising with our MDO. The invite to apply for re-accreditation is not expected until May 2017.

Website Development, Social Media, Community Liaison

A museum website is being developed – a meeting is planned with outside consultant volunteers in September. It is intended to follow the “Agile” Development method – starting with small, bite-sized chunks and building up as bits work. The aim is to be up and fully functional by February. The aim is for quality, not quantity!

A free Social Media training (provided by CMG) proved extremely useful, and forward planning is a key element. A resource file of postings is being built up for future use and special national events. Only selected volunteers on Management Committee will be responsible for posting!

The museum is a supporter of “Kids in Museums”, a national organisation, encouraging a child friendly approach to museums. It has an excellent manifesto for the museum to embrace.

A volunteer will be visiting all the local primary schools in September. She intends to involve the children in expressing their feelings about the area they live in (Cornwall/Liskeard). This can be both a display and a springboard for future exhibitions and also meets the accreditation requirement for active community engagement.

New Displays

Daniel Gumb room

Plans are being drawn up to make substantial changes in this room, with 2017 focussing on actual local mines, the mining and the use of minerals extracted. Volunteers are supported by geologists, outside consultants and the Cornwall Microscopical Society. The aim is for more local information and more ‘hands-on’ activities.

2018 will develop this theme drawing on local people and transport involved in the mines.

The John Rapson room

Will continue to house Liskeard local history, trades and important personalities, with some changes.

The John Allen/Henry Rice Rooms.

The toy collector has offered to loan more of his toy collection for a minimum of three years. There are plans for a new, more structured exhibition, emphasizing the development of toys and the materials of

which they are made. This will particularly complement the exhibition in the Daniel Gumb room, looking at tin, and metal toys and moving forward to today's familiar plastic toys. It is hoped this will lead to some thought provoking display (in the Henry Rice room) related to plastics and where are these toys now?

Toys recently donated by local Liskeard residents will also be exhibited.

The generosity and goodwill of our toy collector cannot be over emphasised - he sees the toys as an incentive to visit Liskeard, since there is nowhere else in Cornwall where such a comprehensive collection is on display.

Dates for Closure

In order for the museum to put new displays in place, the museum will be closed to the public from 31st October 2016 – 13th February, 2017. This is in line with most other small museums. It is planned to open with a private viewing on Saturday 11th February, 2017, when Councillors, donors, local dignitaries and other selected guests (e.g. schools and community leaders) can see the exhibitions and meet the contributors and volunteers.

Display cabinets

The museum is currently looking out for a new display case large enough for a small child's car - Plymouth museum has been approached (they may have one we could loan or they even mentioned a donation) and we are also getting quotes for a new one. The Management Committee would like to dispose of the wooden cabinet with drawers, which takes up a great deal of space but it not particularly useful, having been stripped of its glass top and the drawers are warped and unusable. It is too small for the car to rest on, beside which it would need a cover.

The Museum has been advised that the market price for such an item would be between £150 and £300. It should not accept less than £150 and that £300 would be the very most that could be expected.

A local man, who happens to have the original top was approached and has made an offer of £250 together with its removal. The Museum Committee consider that it would be good if the item was reunited. However, the top is heavy glass and would not meet present day museum standards. The money raised to be put towards a new, fit-for-purpose display case. It is not accessioned by the museum.

Proposal: To sell the old museum cabinet base for £250 and put the funds raised towards a new fit-for-purpose display case. The item is not accessioned by the museum.

Decoration/making good

It was pointed out that the ceiling of the Henry Rice Room needs making good - and that holes filled and a fresh coat of paint would be worthwhile downstairs. Tony Misson has been asked to look into costs. The paint need not be a high spec, only lead free as befits a child's bedroom!

The Museum Shop

Seen as an integral part of the museum, shop sales are up on last year, with 4 months' sales raising the same amount as 12 months' trading in 12 months last year. However, the shop stock is currently under review. Two volunteers are attending a course on stocking/running a museum shop. (Free to museum volunteers) This will benefit TIC too!

Photos/postcards of some of the exhibits will be made next year, which will raise revenue for the museum.

Conservation

Conservation is part of a museum's responsibility. Three items are currently being considered - a Victorian punch doll puppet (Judy), a back of a photographers chair and the vintage sock knitting machine. Estimates are being sort. There are grants available for this if needed.

Acquisitions/De-accessions

The following issues were raised;

- Clarity is important whether acquisitioning an artefact or simply putting it into research library.
- Provenance and as much detail as possible needs to be put on numbered Object Entry Forms.
- It is important to look at museum collections policy. We do not accept an object just because it is old unless it meets the criteria.
- Sometimes it is difficult to reject an entry. It requires sensitivity and donors need to be told there is an accessions committee and that their object might not be accepted. It is not a personal decision. All

decisions are a matter for the Museum Management Committee with queries being discussed with either the MDO (Museum Development Officer) or the Conservation Officer or both.

The following items were accessioned in August from local residents

Arthur Askey puppet in box.

South Cornwall guidebook.

School photo 1927 -Liskeard County Secondary School.

Visitor Numbers for July and August

There continues to be an increase in footfall as the attached graphs show with obviously a spike for the Man Engine Day.