



Liskeard & District Museum
Forward Plan 2017 - 2020

Liskeard & District Museum

Governing Body: Liskeard Town Council

Date of Approval by Governing Body: xx/xx/xxxx

Date at which this Forward Plan is to be reviewed: xx/xx/xxxx

HISTORY

In the early 1980s, an exhibition of local historical memorabilia and information was staged in the town's Guildhall. Following much investigation and discussion, including a public meeting, the Town Council endorsed plans and provided the funds to set up a one room Museum on the ground floor of the town's Public Hall. Under the guidance of two local historians and former Town Mayors, Jack Haworth and Ron George, interesting documents, old posters, photographs and objects were labelled, organized and displayed. Items not on display were safely stored in cupboards beneath the display cases.

Liskeard & District Museum was officially opened on 13th May 1985. Conducted visits for schools and other organizations were arranged throughout the subsequent years as were special exhibitions. Many local enthusiasts lent objects and helped put these together. As the collection increased in size the Museum outgrew the space available.

In the late 1990s, the Town Council started looking for more spacious premises to enable the Museum to continue its growth. The derelict, 19th century Henry Rice building in Pike Street, known locally as Foresters Hall, was purchased by the Town Council (augmented by Heritage Lottery Funding) and converted into the present Liskeard & District Museum. The reception room and shop are shared with the town's Tourist Information Centre.

On 2nd May 2002, the Museum was unofficially opened by the Town Mayor and on 6th June 2002, it was officially opened by HRH Prince Charles, Duke of Cornwall.

Liskeard & District Museum is seen as the local centre for the mining heritage in South East Cornwall.

The Museum now has four main galleries named after local historic as well as extant local personalities. The John Allen Room presently houses an exhibition of childhood, The Henry Rice Room an exhibition of toys, The Rapson Room houses exhibits from Liskeard and the surrounding villages incorporating photography, Liskeard Glass and Pottery and the Daniel Gumb Room covers

Mining, Archaeology, Quarrying and Railways and Canals in the Liskeard & District area.

In January 2016, Mr Phil Chapman loaned his collection of toys which has enabled the Museum to start a series of displays on the history of toys which enhances that on the subject of childhood.

Management

The day to day management of the Liskeard & District Museum is undertaken by a core management team which meets on a monthly basis and reports at least four times a year to the Town Council's Communication and Engagement Committee.

The core management team is assisted by the Museums Development Officer/Mentor for East Cornwall. The Museum is also a member of the South East Cornwall Museums Forum and the Cornwall Museums Group.

MISSION STATEMENT

To collect, conserve and document objects and material which will bring to life the past, social history and heritage of Liskeard and the surrounding area reaching out to the community and visitors of all ages.

OVERALL AIMS

During the course of the next three years the aim of Liskeard & District Museum is to progress work in the following areas:

- Documentation
- Collection Development and Conservation
- Audience Development
- Display and Interpretation
- Education/Life-Long Learning
- Training
- Shop Development

SWAT Analysis

Strengths:

- Free entry – funded by Liskeard Town Council
- Buildings, contents and staff insured by Liskeard Town Council
- Staffed by a dedicated team of volunteers some of whom have key management roles
- Close to car parks
- On bus routes and within striking distance of the town's train station
- Close to the main shopping areas
- Good signage
- Signposting from the town's main street
- An accredited Museum
- Support of East Cornwall's Museum Development Officer/Mentor
- Member of Cornwall Museum Group
- Member of South East Cornwall Museum Forum
- Excellent building provided by Liskeard Town Council rent free
- Promoted on various web sites (including our own)
- Promoted on social media
- Wheelchair and pushchair friendly
- Lift access to all floors
- Good public toilet facilities
- Focus for mining heritage much of the Liskeard & District area being designated as a World Heritage Site
- Family history research facilities
- Good research/office space
- Building shared with the town's Tourist Information Centre
- Seasonal opening (also a weakness)

Weaknesses:

- Limited storage space
- Limited ability to expand display areas
- Seasonal opening (also a strength)
- Fluctuating volunteer numbers
- Dependence on Town Council for accommodation and funding

Opportunities:

- Develop and enhance the displays
- Create new storylines relating objects to people
- Digitize the collections of photographs and post-cards
- Create digitized interviews with key local people
- Take advantage of training opportunities
- Develop the relationships with local schools

Threats:

- Dependency on Town Council for support and funding
- Loss of key management volunteers
- Loss of Museum Development Officer/Mentor
- Loss of volunteers
- Possible lack of new volunteers
- Lack of space for storage and expansion of displays

Aim 1: To collect, document and conserve objects relating to Liskeard and its surrounding area for the enjoyment and education of present and future generations.

Objectives:

- To collect items in accordance with Liskeard & District Museum's Collection Development Policy
- To complete the review of the collection for the purposes of identifying areas presently poorly represented and to identify items that would be more appropriately placed with other bona fide institutions
- To establish a proactive approach to collecting in areas identified as being unrepresented
- To complete the process of ensuring all items in storage are correctly and appropriately stored under the guidance of the South west Conservation Officer and the Museum Development Officer/Mentor
- Carry out regular environmental monitoring checks of both the stores and exhibition areas and act upon the findings
- To digitize the photographic and post-card collections to preserve the original items and assist with research

- To complete the documentation review procedures to ensure they conform to Spectrum standards

Aim 2 To increase the number of visitors to Liskeard & District Museum.

Objectives:

- To forge closer links with the local press
- Create and maintain a user friendly and informative web site
- Investigate networking and marketing opportunities and make full use of them
- Utilise social media to raise awareness of the Museum, its collection and activities
- Ensure up to date promotional literature is available in local tourist venues
- Continue to review visitor numbers and act upon feedback making sure questionnaires are kept current and meaningful

Aim 3 To develop the displays and broaden their interpretation.

Objectives:

- To ensure all displays tell a clear story
- To take care that all objects and their story relates to people and human activity be it leisure or trade
- To vary the displays to exhibit maximum relevance and interest to visitors
- To create more displays of a multisensory nature
- To build an oral archive

Aim 4 To encourage use of Liskeard & District Museum as an educational resource for life-long learning.

Objectives:

- Raise the profile of Liskeard & District Museum with local schools
- Create displays that enhance and support schools in fulfilling National Curriculum requirements

- Promote use of the museum for talks and educational activities
- Raise public awareness of the facilities available for historic or family history research

Aim 5 To invest in the volunteers by developing their skills for the benefit of both the individual and the Museum and to ensure Liskeard & District Museum actively pursues a policy of sustainability.

Objectives:

- Identify the training needs of all volunteers and take a proactive approach to skills training opportunities
- Ensure there is sufficient money available in the Museum's budget to fund training needs
- Update as required Liskeard & District Museum's volunteer handbook
- Provide induction training for all new volunteers and annual refresher days for existing volunteers, especially on Health & Safety related matters
- Develop the existing volunteer team and instigate a shadowing system in key areas and roles
- Seek to increase the number of volunteers by proactive recruitment

Aim 6 To develop and maximize the Museum's income by way of donations.

Objectives:

- Obtain at least one clear Perspex donations box and increase signage requesting donations
- Make widely available a list of suggested donation amounts for volunteer time spent in research for visitors and the use of loan boxes and actively encourage users to donate

Aim 7 To develop and maximize the benefit of the Museum's/Tourist Information Centre's shop together with its merchandising potential.

Objectives:

- Identify, select and provide a range of merchandise that will appeal to different visitor categories
- Identify techniques for increasing income from the shop
- Practise methods for maximizing profits from the shop
- Promote Cornwall and Cornish distinctiveness through the choice of stock lines
- Ensure the efficient and effective management of the shop to include stock movement, identification of market trends and links with Museum displays to inform stock purchases
- Perform close monitoring of the budget spend and income streams and their feed into the profit and loss account

Review of Previous Forward Plan

Since the submission of Liskeard & District Museum's last Forward Plan the paid curator has resigned and the Museum is once again managed by volunteers. The Museum remains in the ownership of the Town Council with responsibility for strategic aims devolved to a Council sub-committee. The day to day operational management of the Museum is in the hands of a volunteer core management team which is assisted by the Museum's mentor who attends all core management meetings. This committee reports at least four times a year to the Council sub-committee. There are now 24 volunteers, 7 of whom are on the core management committee.

Update 2019

In 2018 the museum employed a Museum Coordinator member of staff on a fixed term basis which has been extended to April 2020. The Museum remains in the ownership of the Town Council with responsibility for strategic aims devolved to a Council sub-committee. The Museum Management Group (who report every other month and advise the Council sub-committee) consists of two elected volunteers and the Museum Coordinator with advisory guests from the Town Council, Youth Parliament and the museum mentor. The day to day operation of the Museum is in the hands of volunteers following the

procedures agreed by the Management Group. The number of volunteers has been fluctuating.

Commented [LTM1]: This section has been updated.

Facilities & Charges

- Museum entrance is still free of charge
- Charges have now been instituted for volunteer time when undertaking research for members of the public which takes in excess of 30 minutes
- Museum facilities are unchanged

Visitor Numbers & Income

- 3,443 visitors were welcomed by the Museum during 2015/16
- Since March 2016, visitors are asked to complete a visitor survey
- During the financial year 2015/16, the Town Council allocated a budget of £25,650 as well as continuing to pay for the maintenance and insurance of the building and artefacts and insurance for the volunteers
- Donations received during the financial year 2015/16 totalled £1,109

Geographical & Social Context

- The geographical context remains unchanged
- The social context has been expanded to enlarge the Museum's interpretation of social history
- There is now a visitor attracting display relating to toys and childhood
- The central themes of geology, mining and photography remain in place

Role of the Museum in the Community

- Liskeard & District Museum continues to belong to a small group of heritage and learning centres within the town
- It is also a member of the South East Cornwall Museums Forum and the Cornwall Museum Group
- Visitor numbers are increasing following the introduction of the toys display
- Dwell times have increased

- Children's interest has increased in the geology and mining gallery which has been enhanced by an electro-microscope called the "enlightened eye" which was purchased following receipt of a grant from a local large business
- School visits have waned and a new initiative to rekindle their interest is planned for the near future
- Despite the above bullet point, there has been increased use by schools of the Museum's loan box service
- The loan box service for the elderly shows some interest and again a drive to increase usage in this part of the community is to be undertaken
- Enquiries from the world-wide emigrant community continue

Consultation with Users

- More meaningful data is now obtained and recorded following the introduction of a new visitor questionnaire
- Attempts are being made to engage the local press with newspaper articles
- Discussions have commenced with a view to the local press printing a bi-monthly centre fold relating to objects or photographs about which little is known. The aim is to engage the local community and encourage their involvement

Collection Management & Display

- For the first time in its history, the Museum closed for the winter period 2015/16 allowing volunteers to undertake a review of the artefacts in one of its store rooms and the creation of a new display
- Modes Complete was purchased in February 2016
- These two activities have identified continuing issues/backlog with cataloguing particularly photographs and post-cards
- Storage space is good but limited
- Review of the collection in terms of acquisition and disposal is a continual process
- New LED lighting was installed in 2014 thanks to grant funding
- Interpretation of the Museum's artefacts is a continuing evolution

IT Equipment

- IT equipment was upgraded in 2015
- The Museum now has free Wi-Fi throughout the building for both visitors and volunteers

Education Resources & Community Use

- The memory box services continue and efforts are being made to grow this
- Liskeard & District Museum has interactive activities for all ages and we are seeing longer dwell times and greater use of the activities by children

Volunteers & Training

- The number of volunteers increased from 4 to 24 during 2015/16 and new volunteers continue to be recruited
- The volunteers make use of formal training courses and organized visits to other museums
- Where possible free training courses are attended but there is a sum of £2,000 allocated to training in the budget for the financial year 2016/17

Publicity & Tourism

- Liskeard & District Museum is promoted by externally printed information leaflets which are exhibited by local tourist attractions and tourist accommodation
- Banners advertising the Museum are located throughout the town
- Use is made of the internet and a new web site is presently under construction
- Good use is made of social media
- The relationship with the local press is good and continues to be developed
- Town Council provided and maintained public signage is adequate
- Liaison with the town's Tourist Information Centre is excellent and space is shared with them in the Museum building

Publication & Sales

- Development of the shop space shared with the Tourist Information Centre is under constant review
- Shop stock lines and suppliers are also under constant review
- No further action has yet been taken on further publications

Budget

- The Town Council is a strong supporter of the Museum and the current budget of £24,900 allows Liskeard & District Museum to function effectively.

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