

Museum Management Report for C&E 4th July 2017

Present: Gordon Stokes, Amanda Soady, Jayne Buchanan, Stephanie Meads, Brian Oldham, Hella Tovar, Frances Foulkes

Apologies: Tina Hitchings, Jan Raines (Councillor) Rachel Brooks (Chair of C & E)

There were no matters arising from the Minutes of the last Management Meeting which would not be addressed in this meeting.

Matters arising from C&E Meeting of 1st June

It was noted that Rachel Brooks was nominated and appointed to continue as Chair of C&E for 2017/18 with Sue Pike as Deputy. Jan Raines and David Ambler are the appointed Council representatives for Management Meetings.

The museum management report had been received by the C&E Committee who congratulated the museum and thanked the volunteers for another very positive report. There was a discussion about the best process to establish a permanent museum logo. The Chair of C & E advised that £2,500 is available in C&E budget for establishing a permanent museum logo. Members of the Management Committee expressed concern at this use of public funds given the fact that the current one seems to attract families, was free and visitor numbers are increasing. It was further noted that £2,500 represents just over 20% of the museum's budget for 2017/18. It was acknowledged during the C & E meeting that the reason for this spending was in large part due to the belief that the Management Committee had not followed due process – a belief that the Management Committee would question.

However, the Management Committee is keen to work towards a resolution which satisfies the Councillors' concerns but which also minimizes expenditure. Gordon and Jayne will be part of the working group proposed by C & E to have a series of logos designed which will then be displayed in the museum, along with the current logo, and also published in the Cornish Times with a request that the public vote on their preferred version. That winning the most votes will be adopted.

C & E agreed to the restoration of the Punch Doll.

Finance

Financial year ended 31st March 2017 - Of the total budget of £24,900, the museum only spent £13,961. Areas exceeded were subscriptions/memberships (£385) and Equipment Maintenance and purchase (£310).

The budget allocated to the museum for this year is £12000 – in addition, the Council has kindly agreed that previous years underspend can be treated as a nominated reserve of £15,000 which is to be allocated to display and conservation works.

Museum Management

Following the visit to Combe Martin, Hella suggested that the Core Management Team should include all active volunteers in the museum - those that attend regularly and have defined areas of expertise. At present roles can loosely be defined as Volunteers, Administration, Finance, Collection Care, Publicity, Shop, Outside Events/Fundraising, Exhibitions, Family History and (in the future, Friends of the Museum). However, many areas overlap and most are made up of teams. To meet these positions, Brian Oldham, Keith Charman and Julia Carter will be invited to attend.

Each member present was asked to write what their role currently demands (recognising that many cover more than one area and many overlap). This will be useful for members to know and also assist in recruitment of future volunteers.

Administration

It has been decided to hold separate accessions meetings when there are enough objects assembled. Amanda to call these meetings as and when necessary. The question of Object Entry Forms was raised. The point was made that volunteers have not been detailed and careful enough with entries. They need to be filled in accurately from start and donors need to know that not every object will be accepted into the museum collection. Tact and diplomacy and how to do this was discussed.

New Displays for 2018

The central theme will be around health, the risks and dangers associated with mining and living in a market town such as Liskeard. Rosedean Surgery was Cornwall's first General Practice and there is much to be shared around that.

Very small (but interactive and improved) changes planned for 2018 in Daniel Gumb Room. Biggest changes will be in John Rapson and Henry Rice Rooms. Brian to explore other impressive characters in Liskeard worthy of some attention - perhaps less well known to general public.

The toys will be re-defined - but they are clearly a powerful draw to the museum.

It is hoped that by July's meeting plans should be more defined.

Audio Visual Displays

Currently under review/seeking information for display cabinets and a new Kiosk. Oral History Course was undertaken and some recommendations for recording equipment and procedures need to be followed.

Visitor numbers and Feedback

A year on year improvement in visitor numbers to the museum continues:

May 2015: 272 visitors
May 2016: 429 visitors
May 2017: 531 visitors

This is obviously excellent news and shows the museum's reach to the community and visitors is increasing. The feedback forms provide confirmation that many local visitors have been attracted for the first time.

Social media is also going well with some Facebook posts recording in excess of 500 views.

Twitter - 285 followers

Facebook - 220 followers

TripAdvisor - has many excellent reviews and the museum is currently 11th in the Liskeard Area.

The website continues to work well with an issue reported after the last meeting having been resolved quickly by the developers through museumsincornwall.

Community involvement

Over the last few weeks a volunteer has been in the museum for her Duke of Edinburgh Award. The museum is still in communication with Liskeard School regarding working with their history department. A Youtube video is being prepared by a young person from Liskeard Community School which is exciting.

The history walks and talks have continued to be a great success, attracting a good number of participants (Ave. 30). It is worth noting that these events are free - removing any monetary barriers to attendance.

Volunteers

Combe Martin's comment "volunteer recruitment and management is the poisoned chalice in running of the museum" was noted, as there is an eternal struggle for management to find volunteers. Recruitment, training and development are ongoing. The importance of keeping records of training was raised.

Me & My Favourite Toy - A social history project

Following Oral History Training, a Copyright consent form has been produced and some guidelines have been produced - this will be useful for this project and others. The project will take place in October half-term, with hopefully lots of press releases/publicity to ensure its success. A meeting is planned with Malcolm Mort on 11th July to look at progress and publicity for this event.

Important to consider its use and display in collaboration with Audio/visual kiosk and reuse of the same for future projects.

Community Events

Brian's contribution to the Museum has been invaluable - and his sharing of knowledge (through thorough research and looking at the documentation in the Museum's archive) around Liskeard's history is proving an invaluable asset.

Family History Day: The success of the Family History Day was undoubted - the Museum's display caused a lot of interest. R. Jago's books were coveted by the Parish Records clerk and it is intended to ask him whether he would be prepared to share a copy with them.

Liskeard Show: The exhibition above (adapted and changed slightly) will be part of the Museum display in Liskeard Show on 8th July. To ensure enough space, and because time between the next C&E meeting and the show is limited) a stand (at no extra cost to the council) has been booked next to the Council Tent - a quiz (with a small prize from shop) is being considered.

Any Other Business

A quote for the conservation of the 1875 Brenton Symonds Geological Survey Map of Caradon Mining District was much reduced if we were not in a rush - reduced from £251 to £71. The committee foresaw no rush and accepted the lower quote. The conservators are known to be of museum quality.

Another map of Liskeard and District dated 1844 has been offered by John Wollington: it is extremely large and needs some repair work, and might be better for the Cornwall Records Office.

St. Cleer Church also wonders whether we might like their stocks - currently stored under a table and a trip hazard. The idea is good, but they are large and consideration needs to be given to storage space.

Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be Thursday, 20th July at 2.15pm

Please note that from now on museum management meetings take place on the 3rd Thursday of every month.