

Draft Minutes of the County Hall Museum Management Committee held at 7.00 pm on 19 October 2009 in the Committee Room, the Old Abbey House, Abingdon

Present	Cllr Margaret Crick	
	Cllr Alastair Fear	
	Cllr Patrick Lonergan	
	Cllr Julie Mayhew-Archer	Chair
	Cllr Martin Smith	Vice Chair
	Cllr Lorraine Smith	
	Cllr Lesley Legge	Ex-officio (Chair of Finance & General Purposes/Leader)
	Cllr Patricia Hobby	Ex-officio (Mayor of Abingdon)
	Mr Peter Clare	Co-opted (Museum Friends)
	Cllr Beth Fleming	Co-opted (Vale of White Horse District Council)

In attendance Councillor Lorraine Oates
Councillor Tim Oates
Councillor Alison Rooke
Councillor Audrey Tamplin

Mrs Carol Anderson	Oxfordshire County Council
Dr Lauren Gilmour	Curator/Project Officer
Mr Nigel Warner	Town Clerk
Mrs Sandra Hill	Deputy Town Clerk

19 **Apologies for Absence**

There were no apologies for absence.

20 **Declarations of Interests**

Councillors Patrick Lonergan, Julie Mayhew-Archer and Alison Rooke declared personal interests in relation to the Museum as Members of the Vale of White Horse District Council who support the Museum through the provision of grant aid.

21 **Minutes**

Resolved: *that the minutes of the County Hall Museum Management Committee held on 1 September 2009 be signed as a true and correct record subject to the following amendment:*

Page 4 24 Exhibition Programme (2nd paragraph)
The Leader of the Council commented that the "Tudors Exhibition" was excellent and congratulated the staff involved.

22 **Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising.

23 **Financial Monitoring & Performance Management Report**

The report of the Town Clerk relating to the above was received and considered. The Town Clerk reported that the allocation from 4001/101 (Museum) to 4001/104 (education) for August and September 2009 has yet to be processed, meaning that

that the former will be overstated and the latter understated by approximately £1,500 but there was no impact on the overall expenditure total.

Resolved: that the report of the Town Clerk be approved.

24 **Exhibition Programme**

Members received and considered the report on exhibitions.

Resolved: *that the report of the Museum Assistant (Education) be approved.*

25 **Administrator's report**

Members received and considered the report of the administrator together with schedules of visitor figures, visitor comments and shop takings.

Resolved: *that the report of the Administrator be approved.*

26 **Education and family-friendly activities**

Members received and considered the report in relation to education and family-friendly activities. It was noted that two schools booked for the September to December sessions were not Abingdon Schools, as quoted in the report.

Resolved: *that the report of the Administrator be approved.*

27 **Museum Friends**

Mr Peter Clare, co-opted committee member representing the Museum Friends reported that the Winter Talks programme has got off to a good start with attendances of around 30 people. The Friends are proceeding with their application to register with the Charity Commission. They have recruited 18 new members during the last 5 months, mainly from forms distributed in the Museum, making a total membership of 150.

28 **Dates of meetings 2009/10**

The dates of the remaining scheduled meeting for the 2009/10 were confirmed as:

Tuesday 1st December 2009 (meeting will include consideration of estimates)

Tuesday 23rd February 2010

It may be necessary during the course of the year that additional special meetings may be required, particularly to consider the County Hall and Museum Improvement and Access Project. As much notice as possible will be given of any such meetings.

29 **Exempt information under section 1 (2) of the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 (as extended by Section 100 of the Local Government Act 1972)**

It was moved:

That in accordance with section 1 (2) of the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 (as extended by Section 100 of the Local Government Act 1972), the public

(including the press) be excluded from the meeting because of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, as summarised below.

Some parts of the following agenda item were discussed in open session and others in confidential session. The confidential parts of the business primarily related to the cost plan for the project, the details of which were commercially sensitive and which if in the public domain could compromise the Council's position with regard to obtaining competitive tenders at a later stage. However most of the minutes in relation to this item are recorded in the open minutes although there is one part of the discussion which is minuted in confidential session.

No members of the public were present at the meeting but if they had been present then the intention of the Chair was to structure discussion so that any necessarily confidential details would have been deferred to an item at the end of the meeting allowing the public access to as much of the meeting as possible.

30 **Confidential Minutes of the County Hall Museum Management Committee of 1st September 2009**

Resolved: *that the confidential minutes of the County Hall Museum Management Committee that took place on 1 September 2009 be signed as a true and correct record.*

31 **County Hall and Museum Improvement and Access Project and Stage 2 Heritage Lottery application**

The Committee received and considered the confidential report of the Town Clerk relating to the above.

The Chair of the Committee said that a reception, hosted by the Mayor of Abingdon, would take place in the Mayor's Parlour on Monday 14 December at 5.00 pm. The purpose of the reception was to express the Council's gratitude to the Project Board and Ridge & Partners for their support and help over the past year.

The Chair also reported that a Public Meeting has been arranged to outline the latest project developments. This will be taking place in the Abbey Hall on Thursday 19 November 2009 at 7.30 pm.

Mr James Carter-Brown (Ridge & Partners) gave a brief presentation on the plans for the building. As reported and approved at the meeting of 10th August 2009 the plans had been altered with the removal of the lift to the sessions hall following a change of mind by English Heritage. The plans have therefore been revised to include a platform lift which would give access to the basement and the disabled toilets. The basement would now accommodate inter-active visual access to exhibitions in the Session Gallery for those who are unable to access the exhibition area on the first floor as well as the education space, pump exhibition and café.

Following advice from the Heritage Lottery Fund officer the team had revised it proposals and looked at ways to improved access through increased activities and outreach and the use of computer technology to access collections electronically.

It was emphasised that the project included many improvements in addition to improved access. There were extensive improvements planned for the basement. Improvements in the Sessions Gallery included thermal insulation, floating floor plus floor insulation, double glazing and redecoration. Services would be renewed throughout the building. Developments in the attic space included replacing the roof, insulating, ventilation and

reconfiguration i.e. removal of partitions. The balustrades on the roof would be changed and access would be improved by replacing the current slippery duck boards.

The Council's Quantity Surveyor, Mr Nick Gold (PT Projects) spoke to his draft cost plan, which had been distributed prior to the meeting, carefully outlining the estimated costs for the refurbishment. He highlighted that costs for the lift have been reduced due to the change of plans and that all lift options were fully explored. He explained each section of the cost plan to Members. It was suggested that it would be useful to have a small handrail alongside the current wide handrail to make accessibility easier to the Sessions Gallery; however this had been previously explored and would be unlikely to be supported by English Heritage. Members also stated the importance of signage so the Museum can be clearly branded. A stone tablet or etched glass which would also commemorate the redevelopment work were suggested and Members asked that this be costed in to the final cost plan.

All the costs relayed in the estimated costs were pitched at standard for the applicable space and leveled at good quality equipment. The meeting examined the estimates in some detail. It was agreed that the cost line for a reception desk should read shop fitting/ reception desk.

The Curator Dr Lauren Gilmour, as the client-side Project Co-ordinator, spoke to her previously distributed report relating to outreach and other project-funded activity costs. Outreach and project activities had been reviewed in line with advice from the Heritage Lottery Fund and she outlined the various aspects of this part of the stage 2 bid.

The Town Clerk spoke to his previously distributed report regarding the submission and approval by the Council of the Stage 2 Heritage Lottery application and revised project costings.

It was **recommended** via the Finance and General Purposes Committee that the Council:

1. *Approve the confidential report of the Town Clerk;*
2. *Approve the Council's stage 2 HLF application including the cost plan in the sum of £2,814,942, revised estimates for funding the project and the outreach/ activity programme as presented and noting an approving the financial statement made in paragraph 6 of the above report.*
3. *Note the cost uncertainties outlined in paragraph 7 of the report and that authority be delegated to the Town Clerk, in consultation with the Curator, Leader of the Council and the Chair and Vice-Chair of the County Hall Museum Management Committee to allow a further 10% increase on the cost plan i.e. a sum of £281,500 to cover any increased costs required to make the stage 2 bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund.*
4. *Approve the proposals for Project Management and fundraising during the interim period when the HLF application is being determined and delegate the implementation of these proposals to the Town Clerk, in consultation with the Curator, Leader of the Council and the Chair and Vice-Chair of the County Hall Museum Management Committee.*
5. *Note the statement made in relation to Council revenue costs both during and after the building phase of the project and to endorse the Council's previous in principal agreement to increased revenue costs amounting to £70,000 following the building phase but noting that at this point there would be no*

County Hall Museum Management Committee
13 October 2009

additional impact upon precept/ Council Tax as the capital sum of £117,000 currently allocated each year to the project would no longer be required. To approve the revenue cost of £70,000 previously agreed being increased to allow for inflation, if necessary.