

Abingdon-on-Thames Town Council

Draft Minutes of the County Hall Museum Management Committee held on Tuesday 3rd February at 7pm in the Bear Room, the Guildhall, Abingdon-on-Thames

Present

Cllr. Julie Mayhew-Archer	Chairman
Cllr Monica Lovatt	Vice-Chairman
Cllr Jason Fiddaman	
Cllr Helen Pighills	
Mr Peter Clare	Abingdon Museum Friends (co-opted)

In Attendance

Cllr Lesley Legge	
Mr Nigel Warner	Town Clerk (Clerk to the Meeting)
Mrs Jane Bowen	Curator

M35 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Cllr Angela Lawrence (ex-officio, Mayor), Cllr Patrick Lonergan, Cllr Sandy Lovatt (ex-officio, Chairman Finance and General Purposes Committee), Cllr Aiden Melville and Cllr Andrew Todd.

M36 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest made at the meeting.

M37 Minutes

Resolved that the committee receive the minutes of 25th November 2014 as a correct record to be signed by the Chairman.

M38 Matters Arising

There were no matters arising which were not covered elsewhere on the agenda.

The meeting was adjourned at this point to allow the Committee to view the Old Magistrates Court, it being 7.10pm.

The Committee reconvened at 7.35pm.

M39 Abingdon Museum Friends

Peter Clare updated the meeting on the work of Abingdon Museum Friends.

Resolved: that the report be noted and that the Friends be thanked for their continued and much appreciated support for the Museum.

The Chairman of the Committee, Cllr Julie Mayhew-Archer, suggested that the order of business be varied to allow confidential items to be considered early in the meeting. The Committee **resolved** accordingly.

M40 Exclusion of the Press and Public

The Chairman moved and it was **resolved that**

“In accordance with the 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 press) be excluded from the meeting because of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

M41 Confidential Report of the Museum Curator

The Committee received and considered the confidential report of the Museum Curator in relation to the above.

The Committee considered a number of property related matters including the use of the Museum basement. These are further detailed in the confidential appendix to the minutes.

(Cllr Jason Fiddaman left the meeting during discussion of this item, it being 9.17pm).

Museum opening hours: it was reported that the current opening hours were Tuesday to Sunday, 10am to 4pm. The Museum is closed from 24th December to 2nd January inclusive. It is open for bank holidays other than over the Christmas period. The Committee considered extended opening through the Christmas period but did not consider that was practical due to the costs involved and the changes which would be required to staff contracts. It was **resolved** that Museum opening hours remain as detailed above.

Resolved that the Curator’s report together with its recommendations be approved, subject to the resolutions in the Confidential appendix to these minutes.

M42 Confidential appendix to minutes

The Committee received and considered the confidential appendix to the minutes of the County Hall Museum Management Committee of 25th November 2014.

Resolved: that the Committee approve the confidential appendix to the minutes of the above meeting as a correct record and that they are signed by the Chairman.

The Committee now **resolved** to move back in to open session.

M43 Report of the Museum Officers

The Committee received and considered the report of the Museum Officers.

It was reported that the museum had received over 27,000 visitors in the period 1st April 2014 to 23rd January 2015 and it was expected that the total visitors for the year would be approximately 30,000.

The 'Abingdon in the Great War' exhibition continued to be popular with visitors and new items had been added to the exhibition, on loan from local people who have contacted the Museum since the exhibition opened. The initial print run of the book written by Bob Frampton had almost sold out. It was **resolved** that the Council order a reprint of a further 200 copies and make some of these available through local bookshops.

It was reported that Bob Frampton was now researching a companion World War 2 book which the Curator suggested should be published by September 2015 so that it linked with the 70th anniversary of the end of the War and would be available for before Heritage weekend. The Committee **resolved** accordingly.

The Curator reported that Elin Bornemann had started work with the Museum on 12th January 2015 as the Collections Assistant. She had previously worked at the Pitt Rivers Museum in Oxford and at the Bate Collection of musical instruments.

Members noted that the HLF project was now officially complete. The final items undertaken as part of the project included the interactive display and quiz 'Abingdon Adventure' in the middle attic and the new showcases next to the Ichthyosaur.

It was **resolved** that the future exhibition programme be agreed as follows:

Date /Events	Session Gallery	Attic Gallery	Notes
January – April 2015	Port Meadow – photos by Adrian Arbib Opens 7 February	Abingdon in WW1	
16 – 22 March / ATOM Festival Market Place event on 21 March	Port Meadow – photos by Adrian Arbib Closes 19 April	Abingdon in WW1	The Science of Art – lecture 17 March Eclipse on the roof 20 March
April – May 2015	Gateway to the Gods: the ancient temple site at Marcham Opens 25 April?	Abingdon in WW1 Closes end 31 May 2015	Easter 3 – 6 April 2015 May Museums at Night WW2 Music event

June – September 2015	Gateway to the Gods: the ancient temple site at Marcham Closes 1 st September 2015	Making a star on Earth: 50 years of fusion research at Culham Opens 13 June 2015 Closes 18 October	3 SUNDOME days during summer holidays Culham Choir for Autumn late night at the Museum
September – October 2015	The Thames is liquid history - Haptic Art textile artists group Opens 12 th September	Unicorn School Art exhibition – links with Dyslexia awareness 23 Oct – 1 Nov 2015	Haptic PV 11 Sept 2015 Adult Workshops Also family workshop in half term 24 Oct – 1 Nov 2015
November – December 2015	The Thames is liquid history - Haptic Art textile artists group Closes 20 th December	Display of New Acquisitions to the museum collection 7 November – 3 January	
January – April 2016	John Piper: Currents and Cross-currents 12 Jan – 10 April 2016	John Piper: Currents and Cross-currents 16 Jan - 10 April 2016	Easter 25 – 28 March 2016

April – June 2016	Oswald Couldrey watercolours	Forged in the Fire – touring exhibition from OCC Aspire opens mid April – closes mid July 2016	
July – September 2016	Judi Harris More Quilting Opens late June 2016	Town Treasures Either from the Guildhall or the museum collection Opens late July 2016	

October	Judi Harris More Quilting Ends late October 2016	Town Treasures Either from the Guildhall or the museum collection to co-incide with potential closure period Ends late Nov 2016	
November 2016	Life and times of Sir John Mason Link to Charter Day in November 2016	New exhibition opens December 2016 TBC	
OPTIONS for possible exhibitions	Medieval Abingdon and the Abbey Or Abingdon's visitors Royalty, Earl of Abingdon, Pepys, Ruskin, Turner, Constable, Spies, Convicts, Assassins	Abingdon in the Civil War Or A history of Abingdon in 100 objects – community exhibition Or Abingdon 150 years Ago - A time of change	
Dates for the Diary			Notes
2017			Bronco Bill's Wild West Show came to Town 100 years ago
Nov 2018	WW1 Posters Opens September 2018 – closes Jan 2018		Armistice Day 11 Nov 100 years commemoration
4 August 2019			Abingdon Peace Parade +100 yrs on

The Curator reported some issues which she would encounter in preparing the John Piper exhibition and would report back to a future meeting in that regard.

It was reported that the family craft activities run by Judi Mail and Margaret Herbertson continued to be popular with local families. They had included Christmas Crafts, making tiles and books linked to the life of a Medieval Monk

and in February half term a Medals and Memories activity linked to the WW1 exhibition. More Saturday and school holiday craft activities were planned for 2015 and in addition there would be some archaeology days run by volunteers linked to the 'Gateway to the Gods' exhibition and Sundome days linked to the 'Making a Star on Earth' 50th anniversary of Culham .

The Museum had exceeded previous years in terms of volume of school bookings, with 25 groups having attended or confirmed already in the academic year so far. Schools had made use of the recently developed World War 1 handling workshop, and continued to find Toys and Victorian Household workshops suitable for current curriculum requirements.

The Curator stated that the Museum had reduced its paid marketing schedule for the duration of the financial year, but would continue to make best use of the council website, free advertising spaces and with in-house design and print of posters. The upcoming events were booking well.

The Committee **resolved** to approve the following loan requests:

- Loan of a Roman bronze pan and a medieval metal spoon to Oxfordshire County Council, for inclusion in their proposed temporary exhibition 'Forged in the Fire' at The Oxfordshire Museum. The items would be required for approximately 4 months from March - June 2015.
- Three-year loan to Vale and Downland Museum of most of the items which have previously been on loan to the Vale and Downland Museum. It was noted that the Curator and Collections Assistant had visited Vale and Downland Museum on 27th January 2015 and were satisfied that they were being displayed in a secure case with appropriate environment. The new loan period was agreed as 3 years except for the following items:
- Roman bronze pan – to be loaned to Oxfordshire County Council (see above), Candlestick, (both items previously not on display at Vale and Downland Museum) also the return to Abingdon of a medieval Tile from Barton Court and a Saxon pot.

Members were pleased to hear that the gift shop continued to perform well with an exceptional period over the Christmas Extravaganza.

The Committee had previously considered adding a stone panel or cartouche to one of the pillars under the arches to commemorate the work undertaken to the building from 2011 to 2012. This would be funded from the earmarked reserve in relation to the Museum. The Curator now reported that the estimated cost for the panel in the style of previous panels with the inscription below was approximately £2,400.

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BY THE
TOWN COUNCIL
MMX11

It was **resolved** to install the cartouche as detailed above and authorise the Curator to apply for listed building consent.

It was noted that some of the Town Council paintings which had been removed for conservation were now ready to return to the Guildhall and the remaining paintings would be available shortly.

Resolved that the Report be approved, together with the recommendations contained therein.

M44 Financial Report

The Committee received and considered the management accounts for the year to date.

Members were pleased to note that the Curator had recently secured a grant to allow for a security expert to undertake a review of the Museum and this expertise was also being made available to the Guildhall.

Resolved that the Report be approved

M45 Date of next meetings

It was noted that the calendar of meetings for the Council was due to be agreed by the Council at its meeting of 25th March 2015.

The meeting rose at 10.01pm