

ABINGDON TOWN COUNCIL

Report to	Community Committee
Meeting date	07 June 2022
Report author	Museum Manager
Agenda item	11

Report of Museum Manager

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To inform Members about the current activities and events at the Abingdon County Hall Museum.
- 1.2 To report the Collections Officer's and Abingdon Museum Friends updates.

2. Summary

2.1 **Museum Operation**

Our second exhibition for 2022 is '70; Abingdon in the second Elizabethan era.' In celebration of the Platinum Jubilee the exhibition looks at Abingdon life against a backdrop of world events during the last seven decades. Covid protocols such as mask wearing, and social distancing have been maintained as normal procedure at the Museum. Wearing a mask for visitors has been advisory and not compulsory. Due to growing confidence in the management of the virus, the vaccination effects on severity of the virus and public consensus, your officers have advised staff that mask wearing will be a personal choice for visitors and staff from 19 May 2022.

2.2 **Visitors**

Visitor numbers from 1 April 2022 to 17 May 2022 reached 2,087 which is approximately 75% of the average expected visitor numbers (pre-covid).

2.3 **Education**

The Museum's school's education programme is gaining momentum in the new year as schools begin to book sessions at the Museum again. Virtual workshops help maintain educational outreach to schools during 2020 and 2021 but enquiries for physical visits to the museum have overtaken demand for virtual sessions.

2.4 **Platinum Jubilee Oral History Project**

Led by the Museum Collections Officer, the project is underway and has involved workshops and outreach sessions with local schools and care homes.

2.5 **Accreditation Renewal**

The Museum Collections Officer submitted an application with associated

documents for renewal of Accreditation status on 31 March 2022.

3. **Action required**

3.1 Members are requested **note** this report.

4. **Link to strategic plan and objectives**

KO3 To manage the Council's assets efficiently and effectively to meet the needs of the community now and in the future.

KO4 To work with community partners to support those who are vulnerable and in need and to create opportunities to increase social inclusivity.

5. **Background**

5.1 The activities of the museum are supported by the budget which was approved for 2022-23.

6. **Key information and options**

6.1 **Museum Operation.**

Visitor numbers are returning to pre-covid levels. Mask wearing inside the Museum building has been relaxed and is now individual choice whether a mask is worn. The staff are happy with this arrangement. Your Officers have retained the screens at reception and signage encouraging social distancing.

6.2 **Shop** sales improved in average spend to £0.38 per visitor, totalling £804.78 from 1 April 2022 to 14 May 2022.

6.3 **Roof** takings are £479.17 for the same period averaging at £0.23 per visitor. A reduction in roof visitors is due to roof closure during maintenance work on the Cupola in addition to seasonal influences.

6.4 **Donations** average £0.29 per visitor, totalling £592.67 to 14 May 2022.

6.5 **Education programme**

The Museum Educator Jennifer Doran has delivered a new workshop based on the Platinum Jubilee titled 'Come and Celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee at Abingdon Museum'. Since January we have had 7 school class visits for workshops, and these were from Thameside, OLA Academy and Caldecott schools. We have 7 school class visits pending until the end of term (July) from Europa and St Nicolas schools.

Collections Report

6.6 **Accreditation**

The museum has submitted the application for re-accreditation in time for the deadline of 30th of March. This will now be assessed by the Accreditation Panel

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at the Arts Council between April and September 2022. The receipt of the application has been acknowledged, but so far there has been no feedback.

6.7 **Platinum Jubilee Project**

Members of the Platinum Jubilee Project have visited Old Station House for an informal chat about the Jubilee and the Coronation with residents. Others have delivered 1950s-themed sessions to classes from Europa School and Thameside School. These were conceived as a special offering for the Jubilee and were well received. A third school session is planned with Our Lady's for late June. Some Abingdon residents have sent their memories of the Coronation to the Collections Officer. Museum volunteer Bob Frampton has researched the North Berkshire Herald for reports of the Coronation celebrations. This material will feed into a blogpost to be published in time for the Jubilee.

Abingdon Museum Friends

6.8 The link between AMF and the Museum management continues to develop, with the intention of streamlining future opportunities for fund raising with targeted objectives. The Museum Friends have funds available for the Museum if funding is required for new items or equipment. It is hoped that the Friends can use the Museum as host to meetings and talks in the near future.

6.9 The Museum Friends have purchased and provided 300 new Abingdon Museum Friends Membership leaflets to the Museum. It is hoped that these will help to increase AMF membership.

6.10 AMF recently held their Annual General Meeting, and the notes of this meeting can be viewed at **APPENDIX A**.

7. **Climate change/green implications**

7.1 In collaboration with Abingdon Science Partnership and Atom festival, the Museum hosts 'The Schools Clean Air Monitoring Project in Abingdon (SCAMPA)' from Tuesday 14 June 2022 to Friday 17 June 2022.

8. **Financial/budget implications**

8.1 All museum activities will be funded by the annual budget approved for 2022-23.

9. **HR implications**

9.1 There are no HR considerations.

10. **Supporting Documentation**

APPENDIX A: Minutes of Abingdon Museum Friends AGM.

Dan Sancisi Museum Manager
30 May 2022