

ABINGDON TOWN COUNCIL

Report to	Museum Management sub-committee
Meeting date	9 September 2026
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Agenda item	7

Report of Collections Officer

1. Work Experience

- 1.1. The Museum had received a request for work experience, from a student looking to pursue a post-graduate degree in heritage or museum studies and wanting to get some practical insight into the field.
- 1.2. The Collections Officer agreed to provide the same work experience offered to school students but spread out over several weeks with one session each week, and this arrangement will start in February.
- 1.3. The work experience came to an end a month later because the student took up a job offer in London.
- 1.4. The Museum has received another request for work experience from a history student at Oxford Brookes University, who has to complete 10 days of work experience as part of her course.
- 1.5. The Museum has offered her a similar arrangement, with the days spread out between September and December.
- 1.6. We had three work experience weeks for Year 10 students, one in March and two in July. The experience was a success for both the Museum and the students. The Museum received some very positive feedback, with one of the students sending the following message: 'The week I spent at the museum really helped to affirm my love for history and my desire to do something within that area of work. Thank you again for the time you spent with me and for giving me a taste of life working inside a museum. It's a week I won't forget for a long time.'
- 1.7. Our long-term work experience student from Abingdon and Witney College has now finished his work experience period. He had been coming for an hour a week for 18 months. This arrangement was facilitated by the MacIntyre Charity, who help students with learning difficulties to transition to the world of work. His positive attitude made him great to work with, and the progress he made was evident in the increasingly hands-off approach from his support workers as he became more experienced.

2. Micro-Internships

- 2.1. The Museum has partnered again with the Oxford University Careers Service to offer Micro-Internships to students.
- 2.2. We offered four students the opportunity to research and write a post for the Abingdon Museum Blog. The posts were posted throughout July, with themes ranging from the Monks' Map and the armorial windows to the Islamic glass and World War I propaganda posters.

3. Object Identification Session

- 3.1. The Museum has agreed dates for object identification sessions with the Finds Liaison Officer for Oxfordshire Edward Caswell. The first two took place on 31 March and 28 July, and the third one will be 27 October 2026. These continue to be popular, with a number of people coming on the day, and several enquiries about them beforehand.

4. The Town Archive

- 4.1 The Museum and the Town Archive have always been separate institutions, and the Town Archivist is not part of the Museum's management structure. While the Museum also holds archival material, this consists of photographs and prints, letters and other documents which relate to the history of the town and the lives of some of its inhabitants. The Town Archive on the other hand is the repository for all documents relating to the Town Council's business, such as minute books and documentation of civic events.
- 4.2. The Museum is aware that the Town Archive has not been fully accessible for some time as the Town Archivist had to step back from her duties temporarily and had only partially resumed them now.
- 4.3. The Museum is also aware that under the Terms of Reference it is required to support the Town Archive.
- 4.4. While the Museum is committed to a supportive relationship with the Town Archive, it does not have the resources to take on any part its management. We therefore suggest that any consideration of the future management of the Town Archive beyond the resumption of duties by the current Town Archivist should involve the hiring of an extra staff member.

5. Jurassic Marine Reptiles Loan Agreement

- 5.1. A draft loan agreement for the loan of Jurassic marine reptile fossils from James Etienne is appended to this report as [Appendix](#) item7 - Abingdon Museum Loan Agreement draft for JMR.