

**SANDWICH TOLL BRIDGE FUND
MUSEUM / ARCHIVE COMMITTEE**

Minutes of a meeting of Sandwich Toll Bridge Fund's Museum & Archive Committee on Monday 18th January 2016 in the Council Chamber, Guildhall, Sandwich at 6:00pm

Present: **Councillors:** **The Mayor, Cllr Paul Graeme (in the Chair)**
 Cllr Mrs Dunay
 Cllr Franklin
 Cllr Gisbey
 Mr Ray Harlow, Honorary Curator
 Mr John Scollard, Museum Volunteer Manager

Officer: **Ms T. Weir**

- 01.01.16 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**
 Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr Mrs Lioté (who was at a meeting with DDC), and Cllr Ms O'Donoghue (due to ill health). No apologies were received from Cllr Wood.
- 02.01.16 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**
 None were received.
- 03.01.16 MINUTES**
 The Committee received the minutes of the meeting of 12th October 2015. Mr Scollard confirmed under minute point 07.10.15 that Lili Rasmussen did not wish to attend Committee meetings, unless they specifically related to banners or bunting.
- 04.01.16 FINANCE**
 The Committee received and noted the Museum accounts as at 31st December 2015. Mr Scollard made an enquiry regarding the format of the accounts and separation of the World War One budget – Ms Weir agreed to take his enquiry to the Finance Officer, Mrs Palmer.
- 05.01.16 HONORARY CURATOR'S UPDATE**
 Mr Ray Harlow, Honorary Curator, gave a verbal update to the Committee. He informed the Committee that he had started putting up the 1916 WWI display in the Museum, this would focus largely on the Battle of the Somme.

Linda Elliott, a volunteer Archivist, has been taking work forward on several fronts:

- working with the Revd. Roberts and the Trustees of the Sandwich United Charity to transfer and conserve items previously stored in a damp chest at St Bart's Chapel (including transfer of the baptismal registers to Canterbury Cathedral Archive)
- purchasing an indenture via EBay and 'watching' another pack of indentures (Mr Harlow clarified that, according to the Collection Development Policy

approved by the Trustee in February 2015, expenditure on acquisitions up to £100 is a curatorial decision)

- a bid to DDC's Neighbourhood Forum Grant Scheme 2015/16 for funding towards conservation of the Archive's tithe maps. Ms Weir informed the Committee that this bid had had to be withdrawn, as an organisation can only make one bid to the grant scheme at any one time.

Mr Harlow also informed the Committee that there had been some discussion on the online *Art Detective* forum regarding the attribution and subject of the four-panel painting in the Court Room listed as *The Battle of Sole Bay* by Willem van de Velde the Younger. It had been suggested that discrepancies between the events depicted and the events of the Battle of Sole Bay (1672) could mean the picture showed the Battle of Yarmouth / Lowestoft (1665). However an article in *Archeologia Cantiana* by Mayor Dorman showed that this panel painting had been found along with the panel painting of the visit of Queen Catherine of Braganza in a house previously belonging to Mayor Coombs – in whose mayoralty the visit of Queen Catherine and the Battle of Sole Bay both occurred. Ray had informed those commenting online that they would be welcome to visit the Guildhall to look at the painting.

Lastly, Mr Harlow informed the Committee that he had written a letter to the Clerk to Sandwich Toll Bridge Fund, informing her of his intention to step down from the post of Honorary Curator but to continue as a volunteer Archivist (and that he would remain as Honorary Curator until a replacement was found, in order to ensure continuity). This letter would be brought forward for formal consideration by the Trustee of Sandwich Toll Bridge Fund at the Trustee meeting on 25th January 2016. The Mayor thanked Mr Harlow for his years of work as Honorary Curator and Mr Scollard paid tribute to his knowledge and experience.

RECOMMENDATIONS: (i) That a vote of thanks be given to Mr Harlow for his work since taking over as Honorary Curator in the 1990s.

(ii) That the Archivists and the Town Clerk's Office look out for future rounds of the Neighbourhood Forum Grant Scheme and any other potential sources of funding towards conservation of the Archive's tithe maps.

06.01.16

MUSEUM VOLUNTEER MANAGER'S UPDATE

Mr John Scollard, Museum Volunteer Manager, gave a verbal update to the Committee. The Museum is closed at the moment. The VDU in the Museum broke down at the end of the last open season, but Mr Scollard has managed to set the unit to 'on' – if this unit continued to be used, it would have to be turned on & off at the mains at the daily opening and closing of the Museum.

RECOMMENDATION: That Mr Scollard and Mr Harlow discuss the best way forward and, if necessary, investigate purchasing an economically-priced DVD player (in which case Mr Harlow would make a new disk recording of the display sequence).

07.01.16 DMAG/DAD WWI COMMEMORATION PROJECT (“CODENAME: JOINED UP”)

Mr Harlow and Mr Scollard informed the Committee that they had attended a recent all-day project meeting at Samphire Hoe (Mr Harlow was only able to attend for part of the day). The meeting looked to the future and there was general agreement that DMAG should continue after *Codename: Joined Up* ends in summer 2016, perhaps as a forum for museums in the Dover District. There would be no other *Codename: Joined Up* events now except the closing exhibition and concert in Dover in May 2016.

RECOMMENDATION: That this information be noted.

08.01.16 MAGNA CARTA & CHARTER OF THE FOREST UPDATE

The Committee considered an email dated 7th January 2016 from Miss Laura Fidler, Clerk to Sandwich Toll Bridge Fund, giving an update regarding the Magna Carta & Charter of the Forest, including proposals to display them during the Sandwich Festival and Sandwich Arts Week 2016. The Committee noted that the Charters could not be displayed in the Museum without deterioration, except in cases with full environmental control.

RECOMMENDATION: That the Trustee supports proposals to display the Magna Carta & Charter of the Forest during the Sandwich Festival and Sandwich Arts Week 2016, and any measures necessary to ensure environmental control and conservation of the documents.

09.01.16 MUSEUM & ARCHIVE DEVELOPMENT

(i) The Committee received a verbal update from Ms T. Weir regarding proposals for the further development of the Museum. It was reported that the Ministry of Defence had not responded to enquiries regarding the Drill Hall on the Quay but that in any case at present, with only 2,000 visitors or so per annum to the Guildhall Museum, there was no need to pursue a new building for the Museum and in fact it would be difficult to justify bids for Heritage Lottery Funding on those numbers. The current thinking was rather to redevelop the existing Museum with high quality displays and artefacts – including the Magna Carta & Charter of the Forest – which would be directly relevant to Sandwich, as well as putting on high quality temporary displays and exhibitions, which would all feed into the information required for HLF bids. If a redeveloped Museum attracted significantly more visitors, it would be appropriate to revisit the possibility of moving to a new building.

RECOMMENDATION: To proceed with redevelopment of the existing Museum with high quality displays and artefacts – including the Magna Carta & Charter of the Forest – which would be directly relevant to Sandwich, as well as putting on high quality temporary displays and exhibitions.

(ii) The Committee considered effective ways of distribution of information about, and where possible ensuring a Museum / Archive presence at potentially useful training events, and viewed a sample newsletter from the South East Museums Development Programme.

RECOMMENDATION: That the Assistant Town Clerk & Mayor’s Secretary continue to send the Honorary Curator (and his successor, once appointed) and the Museum Volunteer Manager newsletters and other information regarding training courses; and that they should

acknowledge receipt of this information and confirm whether, in the case of training opportunities, they were relevant and whether anyone from the Museum / Archive would attend.

(iii) The Committee considered appointment of a Volunteer School Liaison Officer, with responsibility for general liaison between the Museum & Archive and local schools, and establishment of a working group to investigate ways to involve local schools in specific Museum development projects, especially those involving technological improvements. It was noted that a commitment to developing greater engagement with schools was made by the Trustee in the approved Museum & Archive Forward Plan 2015 – 2018. It was also suggested that local secondary schools may wish to found a ‘Cinque Ports Society’ and that this should be mentioned to history teachers.

RECOMMENDATIONS: (i) That headteachers / history teachers of the local infant, junior and secondary schools should be approached and asked for a point of contact at each school to liaise with the Mayor, in the first instance, about links with the Museum & Archive.

(ii) That these points of contact should be invited to a meeting at the Guildhall with the Mayor, Honorary Curator (or his successor, once appointed) and Museum Volunteer Manager, to discuss joint working in future.

10.01.16 BATTLE OF SANDWICH 800: 1217 – 2017

The Committee received an email update dated 7th December 2015 from Miss Laura Fidler– Clerk to Sandwich Toll Bridge Fund, and verbal updates as necessary regarding the proposed Battle of Sandwich 800th anniversary celebrations (‘Battles, Pirates & Saints’). Mr Scollard pointed out that 2017 was also the centenary of the start of full military operations at the old Richborough Port.

RECOMMENDATIONS: (i) That the information provided by the Clerk regarding the proposed Battle of Sandwich 800th anniversary celebrations be noted.

(ii) That Mr Scollard investigate and report back to the Clerk on the possibility of running a temporary exhibition on Richborough Port in 2017, including whether the model currently held by Ramsgate Maritime Museum and photographs previously displayed at St Peter’s could be used.

11.01.16 MUSEUM & ARCHIVE ACCREDITATION

The Committee received an email update (redacted) from Ben Travers – Accreditation Assessor, regarding progress of the accreditation process and considered two areas identified for further development by Mr Travers:

- Succession Planning: the Committee considered ways in which this may be further developed, and

- Collection Development Policy: the Committee reviewed the Policy, considered approval of the addition of Arts Council clause 16.12: *“Full records will be kept of all decisions on disposals and the items involved and proper arrangements made for the preservation and/or transfer, as appropriate, of the documentation relating to the items concerned, including photographic records where practicable in accordance with SPECTRUM Procedure on deaccession and disposal.”*

The Committee also considered approval of a new review date of February 2017 for the Policy.

RECOMMENDATIONS: (i) Succession Planning: That an organogram be drawn up for the Archive identifying each volunteer archivist's specialist area of work, and that upon completion of this organogram a 'buddy' scheme be initiated so that at least one other person within the Archive team understands each person's area of work. The Committee considered that given the number of volunteers in the Museum, sufficient shared knowledge was available to ensure that any one person's departure would not affect operations.

(ii) Collection Development Policy: That the Policy be approved for another year, with addition of Arts Council clause 16.12, and that the next review should take place in February 2017.

12.01.16 MEETING DATES 2016/17

In order to inform the planning of meeting dates after 18th April 2016, the Committee considered whether quarterly would be sufficiently frequent for Committee meetings in 2016/17 and whether 6pm remained a convenient start time; also, Committee members were asked to indicate any dates between June 2016 and June 2017 which would not be convenient for meetings.

RECOMMENDATIONS: That ordinary Committee meetings continue to be held quarterly (with extraordinary meetings as necessary) with a 6pm start time. No inconvenient dates between June 2016 and June 2017 were identified.

13.01.16 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Monday 18th April 2016 at 6pm in the Council Chamber, Guildhall.