

BRIDGWATER TOWN COUNCIL
MUSEUM SUB-COMMITTEE
Meeting Room Town Hall
held on Wednesday 15 July 2009 at 3.30pm

PRESENT : Councillors Granter, Smeed and Turner

Also present: Alan Hurford, Town Clerk, Dr Peter Cattermole, Honorary Museum Co-ordinator and Natalie Watson, Curatorial Advisor and Bryan Gillard (Chairman) and nine representatives of the Friends of Blake Museum

01 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN: RESOLVED: That Councillor Graham Granter be appointed

02 MINUTES:

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Meeting held on 18 May 2009 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

03 MATTERS ARISING: i) Min 15 - Safety Policy and Code of Practice for Volunteers: Dr Cattermole confirmed that the Code of practice had been signed on 9 July 2009. On the agenda for next Friends meeting (28 July 2009) was nomination for the appointment of a Safety Supervisor. In the meantime Bryan Gillard was adopted as the interim nominee safety supervisor answerable to the council. **ii) Min 10 – HLF Novation agreement for Chubb collection:** This had been signed (SDC to BTC).

04 STATEMENT OF PERFORMANCE AGAINST BUDGET: Dr Cattermole gave a summary confirming that performance against budget was appropriate including sums on capital projects and refurbishment. Small additional costs had been faced through difficulties in transfer of electricity and telephone and higher insurance likely to be more than the £2000 allocated. NNDR (Business rates) thought to be discounted, but not as BTC precepting authority, therefore cost of £8700 in business rates rather than discounted figure if a Charity or Incorporated body which could be clawed back. Further comment on budget report included digitisation, need to improve digitisation budget due to visitor interest although some £1000 for electoral registers was available in budget. Monies from budget had been made available by way of advance payment enabling grant from BTC in 2008/9 to prepare for takeover.

RESOLVED: That expenditure in year on digitisation be reviewed at the next meeting

05 REPORT OF HONORARY MUSEUM CO-ORDINATOR: This was received as circulated. SDC were contributing towards remedial works through previous contractor to prevent flooding (lead flashing) rather than this falling to new regime. Equipment from BTC funding enabled greater enjoyment of materials for visitors. Collection cataloguing was a factor in preparation for the accreditation process. Tony Woolrich's tri-fold leaflets were commended for excellence. Satisfactory progress had been made in short time since reopening. Suggestions – Better interpretation and labeling for museum, full consultation and input from stakeholders particularly with cataloguing to aid preparations for accreditation by September. Comment on stakeholder input speed – new version of

catalogue on Bridgwater Museum website, request for more feedback. The Town Clerk confirmed the portfolio of policies was building up but must be ready for accreditation and for running of Museum.

06 REPORT OF FRIENDS OF BLAKE MUSEUM: The Chairman commented on visitor statistics and volunteer support in presenting the report. Main issue was in terms of legal requirements for CRB checks (CRB checks from other organisations could be transferred with permission attained by Blake Museum, if able to gain authorised “umbrella” body status). Details on authorised body status was being obtained and clarification sought. The Curatorial Adviser explained that CRB rechecking was due every 2 years (currently cost £55 each). The Town Clerk suggested the costs for custodians should be met from the museum budget. Information was therefore needed on number of custodians requiring CRB checks. Also needed was the full list of nominated volunteers with areas of responsibility.

RESOLVED: 1. That the position with CRB checks be clarified and completed as a matter of urgency; and
2. that the full list of nominated volunteers be supplied to the Town Clerk for record.

07 GOVERNANCE STATEMENT: RESOLVED: That this be endorsed.

08 MUSEUM ACQUISITION and DISPOSAL POLICY:

RESOLVED: 1. That the Policy be adopted as presented; and
2. that that the 'key aims' statement be completed for the next meeting.

09 DRAFT SCALE OF CHARGES FOR MUSEUM SERVICES: A draft was presented to establish principle and the Sub-Committee delegated authority to the Museum Co-ordinator and Town Clerk to finalise the charges. There was Ongoing pressure for viewing of photographs, both physical and via website. Photocopier not protected in terms of who could make copies, and should make a charge comparable to copying bureau. There had been two general enquiries for use of museum as a wedding reception venue (charge balance of needs of visitors/outside opening hours for use of meeting room). Possible commercial interest for “Jane Austin” style scenes. Charges were outside the scope of Gift Aid until a Blake Museum Trust formed. Confirmation on commercial use of photographs with digitised work now under copyright with secure watermarking of some 20000 images.

RESOLVED: That BTC endorse principles for final agreement by August meeting.

10 CURATORIAL ADVISOR: Natalie Watson working through Somerset Museums service based at the County Records office confirmed her willingness to advise and deal with any problems which the organisation might come across in terms of running the museum and her acknowledgement of the progress so far.

11 CORRESPONDENCE: 1. from Kay Robins on behalf of the Friends setting out their desire to continue to support learning to which the Town Clerk was requested to respond and 2. from Mrs Marcia Hill also commenting on the 'education' role of the museum for visiting parties including schools and youth groups etc. All agreed that a “visiting party criteria” was essential with advance notice to ensure supervision arrangements alongside the Child protection policy submitted and a “code of practice” for visiting teachers/guardians/responsible adults required. This was also referred for discussion at next Friends meeting based on the papers supplied.

12 NEXT MEETING: This was planned for late August with target date of 19/08/2009 and a follow up in early September, tied to accreditation

13 GENERAL DISCUSSION: The Chairman invited comments from 'Friends' – John feels there is interference from outside influences in terms of displays etc. with no consultation - Elizabeth feels the plan laid out in January has altered significantly, such as being told what the displays are going to be - Bryan enquired whether the Sub-committee were content with the policies being carried out by the Friends via the Museum Co-ordinator and this was confirmed by the Chairman who requested any issues be discussed at next Friends meeting to ensure all working to the same end.

The meeting finished at 5.15pm