

This report will be made public
on 30th March 2021

**Folkestone
Town Council**



Report Number: **CS/21/286**

To: Community Services
Date: 6th April 2021
Responsible Officer: Town Clerk
Subject: Museum

SUMMARY:

This report provides an update on Folkestone Museum's work covering the period 19th January 2021 to 22nd March 2021.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION:

The Town Council committed to sourcing funding from the Heritage Lottery to deliver its objective to preserve and enhance the town's heritage. There is a need to show evidence of working with the community and stakeholders as part of the programming agreed by the Council and the Heritage Lottery.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. To receive and note report **CS/21/286**

Aims and Objectives – Maintaining an accredited museum
Financial Implications – Meeting the requirements of HLF & Council within budget
Equal Opportunities – Access to all

1. Introduction

The Museum has remained closed due the third national lockdown put in place on 4th January 2021, to counter the effects of Covid-19, the 'Kent Variant'. The 'Roadmap out of Lockdown', announced on 22nd February, sees museums, along with other indoor entertainment venues unable to open before 17th May at the earliest.

A countdown to reopening plan has been put in place that should see the Museum reopen on Tuesday 25th May, allowing a week of operations before the end of term school break commences, while allowing for slight slippage in the *Roadmap* timetable. It should be noted that this date may yet change depending on the Government's assessment of the factors dictating the speed at which the timetable proceeds. Initially reopening will be on a *5-days-per-week* basis, which will be reviewed as visitor confidence and need increases.

2. Exhibitions

As previously noted the Rev. David Railton exhibition, which had only opened three weeks prior to the 2nd (November) lockdown, will continue its run through the summer period.

A co-ordination meeting was held with Creative Folkestone at the start of February to map out the interrelationship of the now confirmed 2021 Triennial with the Town Council. The key aspect, as previously reported will be the William Harvey exhibition, which will feature a component of one of Creative Folkestone's commissioned artworks. The Museum will also be supporting parts of the Triennial programme, including hoped for external performance in Market Place and 'short walks' led by staff about Harvey and St Eanswythe.

A second meeting with Folkestone Pride was held during in late February to establish outline parameters for the 2022 exhibition about Michael Dillon. It was felt that a key outcome of the project should be that the Museum should be actively seen by families and individuals, that feel themselves judged as other, as a safe space where they can both engage with the town's heritage *and* its diverse and increasingly inclusive communities. The Curator is currently drawing up a tighter exhibition brief and outline budget with the aspiration of attracting external funding, in particular an Arts Council England museum project grant.

As part of the countdown to reopening plan annual display case deep cleaning has been planned, which will take place during April, when the Museum staff return to the building full-time.

3. Outreach and Education

As in the previous period informal engagement has been restricted to the Museum's online channels. With the February half-term and British Science Week falling within the period two specific sets of online resources were created. That for the holiday was a four-part activity based on shadow puppetry, while for science week looked at future innovations, which were inspired by the natural

history collection; both are available to view on the Museum's social media channels.

A summer & autumn programme of activity has been put together, with external providers being booked at the time of writing. This will take the form of collection themed weeks during the main summer holidays and more specific themed days on or as near as possible such days as Harvey Sunday and the Feast of St Eanswythe.

Formal (schools) engagement has been restricted to the FMlearnwithobjects website (to which further improvement have been made); however it is planned to reconnect with schools during April to encourage bookings for visits and workshops, that may take place during the summer term, likely at a reduced level, but with the aspiration to be back on track with start of the 2021-2022 school year as anticipated in the (pre-Covid) business plan.

The Museum team is pleased to report that the FMlearnwithobjects website was nominated for permanent preservation within the digital archives of the British Library by one of website's users and it has confirmed that this will take place.

4. Friends of Folkestone Museum

The Friends of Folkestone Museum monthly lectures have continued to be very well received, with thanks to the Friends for organising them. Tony Quarrington gave a talk about the story behind his walking tours for the February talk, while March's was given by Grenville Hancox on 'caring through singing'. A third talk also took place in February with the Curator giving a talk at the end of the friends AGM about when things go wrong in Museum's and heritage and how to avoid them.

The Friends have also continued to support the Museum through the sponsorship on new acquisitions, for which the Museum is extremely grateful, see item 6.

5. Conservation and Collection's Care

The Curator has continued weekly on-site collection and display checks to ensure that everything remains in a healthy state during closure. Likewise, the work by the Museum team to build collections knowledge through improved documentation has continued. Enquiries from the British Museum and from Malta about the numismatics and arts collections have also allowed some deeper research into particular artefacts for which there was little recorded information, in particular a set of electrocopy Roman coins and medallions which now appear to have come to Folkestone in the 1880s and the possible misattribution of 17th Century painting of St Francis of Assisi which may in fact be the work of Neapolitan painter Mattia Pretti (1613-1699).

6. Collection Acquisitions

The Museum has been working with the Friends of Folkestone Museum and the Remembrance Line Association on the acquisition of the nameplate of one of the

last steam locomotives to work the Harbour Branchline in the 1960s. The consortium bid at auction was successful and the plate will be deposited with the Museum for display in due course.

7. Town Trail and District Council 'Place Plan'

The groundwork for the additions to the town trail have been outlined, however progress has been hampered by the lockdown, particularly the ability to undertake archival research as sources, such as the Library and Kent History Centre, have been closed. A second working group meeting is being organised at the time of writing and is likely to take place shortly after the Community Services Committee meeting.

The Curator took part in the 'We Made That' led Folkestone & Hythe District Council place plan consultations on the 5th March 'Place, Heritage and Revitalisation'.

Corporate Plan KPI Performance for January & February 2021

D9 – Number of visitors to the Town Hall; *closed due to Corona Virus Lockdown*

D11 – Annual hits on Council's websites (Museum Only); November 4,818 (unique number of visitors 2,532), December 3,447 (unique number of visitors 2,170)

D12 – Annual Facebook Likes (Museum Only); January 2,401 (daily reach 16,054* for the month), February 2,414 (daily reach 2,905 for the month)

D13 – Annual Twitter Followers (Museum Only); 588 to date

M1 - Number of bookings of the Temporary Exhibition Room per annum; September 1, October 2

M2 – Number of volunteer hours per annum helping to deliver museum services; *not possible Corona Virus Lockdown*

M3 - Number of school visits per annum; *not possible due to Corona Virus Lockdown*

M4 - Number of paid bookings of the Education Room per annum; *not possible Corona Virus Lockdown*

** This extreme peak is due to a social media campaign to push online formal learning resources*

NB the Folkestone Museum Instagram account also has 1,355 followers

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REPORT NUMBER CS/21/287

To: Community Services Committee
Date: 6 April 2021
Responsible Officer: Town Clerk
Subject: Communities and Events Officer Report

SUMMARY:

The report provides an update on the delivery and development of services and events led by the Communities & Events Officer.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION:

The Town Council is committed to the continual development of its services and events.

To identify what aspects of our Community Services within Folkestone Town Council require priority development, especially mindful of Covid19 and its far-reaching impact and to consider the provision of additional services to enhance existing resources. Therefore, there is a need to show evidence of current provision and those to be considered for the future.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. To receive and note Report CS/21/287
2. To consider hosting a Kwik Cricket & Football Tournament in 2021.
3. To approve the release of £2,100 from the 2021/22 Youth Facilities budget for cricket coaching.
4. To approve the release of funding from the 2021/22 Local Projects budget to facilitate support of the Fairtrade Action Plan.

Aims and Objectives – *To enhance the current services to the community*
Financial Implications – *Services Budget 2021/22 £99,800*
Equal Opportunities – *Access to all*

1. INTRODUCTION

The intent of this report is to summarise the delivered and developing projects from October 2020 to April 2021.

2. PRIMARY SCHOOLS KWIK CRICKET & FOOTBALL TOURNAMENTS

2.1 Folkestone Town Council are considering organising specific events and as such, the C & E Officer has drafted Version 1 of a Covid19 Risk Assessment (Appendix A) and written to all primary schools, including this as a supporting document, to ascertain their willingness to take part in the annual (pre Covid19) FTC sports tournaments in May and June 2021 respectively which have become key fixtures in Folkestone schools events calendars as we enter the eleventh year.

2.2 Responses currently received (more exact details to be provided at the meeting) have been mostly enthusiastic and receptive to the proposal although, understandably, schools cannot formally commit until further guidelines with updated road map for relaxing of restrictions are announced.

2.3 Three Hills Sports Park have indicated that they would be willing to host any such outdoor events at this time.

2.4 These competitions are for year 5 and 6 pupils.

2.5 The last time these tournaments were held there was an excellent response from local schools with up to 18 teams entered for each and over 360 children taking part. The umpires / referees are volunteers from Folkestone Cricket Club / local football clubs with Folkestone secondary schools assisting with square leg umpiring. These events join the school's community with the focus on fun and participation.

2.6 Members views are sought.

3. CRICKET COACHING

3.1 Folkestone Town Council have been supporting cricket coaching delivered by Folkestone Cricket Club in primary schools for 10 years.

3.2 In 2020, as the lockdown was slowly eased, Folkestone CC were able to provide a limited socially distanced training for some of their juniors.

3.3 With schools still closed, Folkestone CC held a cricket summer camp for juniors following covid guidelines and social distancing safety measures.

3.4 This was very well attended / received by juniors and parents alike.

3.5 FTC funding was applied to providing coaches who delivered high quality training sessions and equipment such as bats, balls, stumps etc.

3.6 The camps saw 30 children split in to 6 groups of 5 plus 1 coach and were held over two weeks on the following days / times:

- 12th, 13th & 14th August from 10:00 to 15:00

- 19th, 20th & 21st August from 10:00 to 15:00

3.7 Members are asked if they wish to release the £2,100 in the 2021/22 Youth Facilities budget earmarked for cricket coaching to continue this provision.

4. ARMED FORCES DAY

4.1 Armed Forces Day takes place on the last Saturday each June. The annual event provides the opportunity for people to show their support and give recognition to the Armed Forces Community including current Service personnel, veterans, cadets and Service families.

4.2 The event supports Council's pledge to the Armed Forces Covenant that together we acknowledge and understand that those who serve or who have served in the armed forces, and their families, should be treated with fairness and respect in the communities, economy and society they serve with their lives.

4.3 Many towns and cities that would usually hold a physical event are organising virtual events for 2021 due to Covid19 and the ongoing challenges faced in delivering a safe and successful physical event.

4.4 The C & E Officer is currently liaising with local cadet units, serving regiments, military charities and schools to explore the potential to work in partnership with them to deliver virtual assemblies / presentations in schools to mark this years Armed Forces Day showing our continued support.

4.5 Discussions are underway with the Museum officers regarding their potential involvement including the suggestion to invite a local historian to speak about the history of the Armed Forces in our area.

4.5 The Armed Forces Day Virtual Event Tool Kit 2021 (Appendix B) outlines ideas for organising such events. Members views are sought.

5. PUBLIC REALM ASSET LISTING

5.1 The C & E Officer has completed photographing the Christmas lighting and flowerbeds in Folkestone and continues to log trees and litter bins to assist in the management, improvement and development of ongoing maintenance schedules whilst identifying current maintenance requirements. The Town Clerk has been developing the new system and plotting the assets into the new digital maps which will be published live on the internet.

6. VISITOR INFORMATION SERVICE AND VISIT FOLKESTONE & HYTHE WEBSITE

6.1 FTC continues to lead on the development of the Visit Folkestone, Hythe, Romney Marsh & The Downs tourism website with the C & E Officer recently writing to district wide tourism / hospitality businesses inviting them to update their existing content / images or newly subscribe for a listing using our new

content submission form and Business Charter (Appendices C & D) whilst offering our continued support.

- 6.2 This engagement has been very well received by the local tourism industry with feedback suggesting this is due to the valued reputation and ongoing development of the website / Visitor Information Service with a high level of responses / content submitted from existing and new subscribers wishing to be listed.
- 6.3 As Data Managers, Folkestone Town Council regularly update, develop and populate the website in liaison with the Folkestone & Hythe Tourism Board (of which we are members) whilst continuously considering new tourism initiatives to promote the area.

7. FAIRTRADE TOWN STATUS

- 7.1 The C & E Officer recently wrote to all local schools, youth organisations, community groups, faith groups, local businesses and retailers inviting them to join a Fairtrade Steering Group. Further to many positive responses it has been possible to re-establish the Steering Group and its first meeting will be held on Wednesday 31st March with the C & E Officer providing the CSC with a full update at its meeting on 6th April, including key objectives identified.
- 7.2 This meeting will include a review of the newly drafted Action Plan (Appendix E) and enable Members to identify, agree and allocate specific tasks with a 'lead' for each to be nominated.
- 7.3 Views will also be sought on formalising and focus on the Steering Group aims, objectives and structure through agreeing a group constitution.
- 7.4 Work to achieve Fairtrade status continues to bring together a cross-section of the community, united in their support for Fairtrade and for farmers and workers in developing countries.
- 7.5 Members are asked if they wish to release funding from the 2021/22 Local Projects budget to facilitate support of the Action Plan.

8. TREE PLANTING 2021/22

- 8.1 The C & E Officer, Cllr Richard Wallace (Tree Champion) and Tree Wardens have begun drafting a suggested Tree Planting Schedule for 2021/22 to be presented at the inaugural Climate & Environment Committee meeting in June for Member's consideration.
- 8.2 Members views and details of suggested planting sites are sought.

9. FEED A FAMILY OF 4 FOR FIVE DAYS FOOD BOX INITIATIVE

- 9.1 Further to the demand for and success of the Christmas Hot Meal Scheme Folkestone Town Council delivered for ten days leading up to Christmas and New Year in 2020, at its meeting on 2nd February 2021 the Community Services Committee resolved: '*That £3,000 be released from the Xmas Meals budget to*

provide hampers during the April half term holiday to families in need that do not qualify for Free School Meal vouchers from the County Council'.

- 9.2 The C & E Officer wrote to all nineteen Folkestone schools asking for them to identify up to five families in their schools that are most in need of this assistance and are just above the threshold for eligibility to receive any low-income benefits and therefore struggling significantly without the support, such as Free Meal vouchers, that other vulnerable families receive.
- 9.3 Responses were received from 16 schools with details subsequently collated and a total of 74 eligible nominated families will receive a Morrison's food hamper which will also contain easy to follow, healthy cheap meal recipe cards to be delivered directly to the recipients by DPD on Friday 2nd April.