

Maidstone Museums 20 Year Plan – Draft Project/Action Plan

The Maidstone Museum 20 year Plan was considered at the meeting of the Borough Council's Heritage, Culture and Leisure Committee in July 2017 which resolved that the Plan be adopted, and that the Museum's Strategic Board be given approval to develop a detailed Action Plan in pursuit of fulfilling the Plan.

The Plan contains proposals for the next steps over the short medium and long term with the intention of developing these into a detailed action plan. However, since then the acute financial position of the Museum within the financial operating constraints of the Borough Council as a whole suggests that the immediate priority is to establish a stable financial basis for the continuing operation of the Museum.

For that reason, the action plan needs to concentrate on those realistic and relatively small steps required now to carry forward improvements to the Museum in order to improve its operation, attractiveness and visitor appeal. Accordingly, rather than develop an action plan for the short, medium and long terms, at this stage the priority is on those immediate actions proposed for 2018/2019. These will be reviewed towards the end of the financial year for their progress, leading to drafting of actions for 2019/2020 and beyond.

Actions proposed for 2018/2019

Objective	Action	Timescale	Target	Progress
Ensure the 20 year Plan and MBC's adoption of it is formally communicated to a wide range of interest groups.	Send 20 Year Plan to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ACE • Mendoza Review task group • Culture Kent Board • HLF • KCC • MMF • QORWKR • Bentlif Trust • Brenchley Trust 	30/4/18	Copy of 20 Year Plan sent to senior officials at each organisation	Completed
Ensure the profile of the 20 year Plan is recognised in partners' activities, for example KCC's cultural strategy.	Arrange a meeting with Headley from ACE. Encourage KCC to attend Museums Strategic Board at a more senior level.	31/5/18	Meeting with Headley Swain agreed New representative appointed and attending	Meeting with Hedley Swain took place 21 st September
Establish links with the team within the DCMS preparing the action plan following the Mendoza review published in November 2017, identifying the 20 year Plan as an exemplar.	Contact the Mendoza review team and ask for a meeting.	30/4/18	Named contact identified Meeting arranged	Mendoza review team no longer constituted and we have been referred back to sector bodies working on the action plan.
Commission MMF to substantially increase the relationship with business interests.	Exhibition schedule sent to MMF MMF to identify and arrange meeting with promising bodies. MMF representative to meet and agree approach with Museum Public Programming Manager	30/9/18	New sponsors identified for exhibitions, events or learning activities	Meeting was held to discuss this action on XX September 2018. The schedule was shared and potential sponsors identified. They are currently working with the Public Programming Manager to produce sponsorship packages which will be promoted by MMF.

Finalise the Governance Review and formally confirm a decision to retain the status quo with the Museum as a BC function.	Summary report to CLT 30 Jan 17 and HCLC 6 Mar 17 recommending retain status quo.	6 Mar 17		It was agreed at Heritage Culture and Leisure committee that the status quo be maintained at the current time but that the situation should be reviewed regularly.
Formally inform the QORWK, Brenchley and Bentlif Trusts of the decision as the basis for negotiating SLAs.	Set up joint meeting with these trusts	30/4/18		As it has not been possible to arrange a joint meeting of these Trusts, it was agreed that initial conversations would start with each individually QORWKR Museum Trust has been informed of progress and negotiations have taken place with National Army Museum who are keen to support the retention of Queen's Own collections in Maidstone. 5 separate dates have been offered to the Bentlif Trust. So far no offer has been suitable for a quorum of members. The Chair of the Trust has been informed by post and further discussions will take place when members are available. The Trust have previously indicated that they are unwilling to discuss any changes to the Trust's status without the attendance of the full committee. The Brenchley Trust will be advised at their next meeting.
Commence negotiations with the Bentlif Wing Trust about simplifying access arrangements to	Arrange meeting with the Bentlif Trust.	30/9/18	Paul Hudson and Fran Wilson to attend meeting with chair of Bentlif Trust	See above

the eastern wing of the Museum.				
Agree and implement measures to improve the interest and importance of the Chillington Manor building itself from Fremlins Walk, and the visibility of the Museum entrance on St Faith's St,	Pre app meeting with Planning to understand what can be achieved within the historical building context.	30/9/18	Pre-app advice received PR campaign in progress Building history events completed	Pre-app advice was received recommending that a flag pole inside the courtyard be used. There are currently two flag poles in use in this area. Hanging banners the length of the building were rejected as unsuitable because they would cross the string course (horizontal band of pale stone in the red brick) and compromise the view of the building. Part One of a drama based on the history of the museum building was performed in May this year and the second part will be performed in November. Proposals for revamped displays include a section on the history of the house and museum.
Review existing galleries and displays and determine the priority order for improvements and interpretation,	Programme of consultative events with: Staff and volunteers Users and non-users Stakeholders	31/12/18	Consultation programme to be brought to Strategic Board Events scheduled Events carried out Results collated	Consultation is underway and will continue throughout the project but results are already feeding into planning for new galleries. Stakeholder and member consultation is planned for September/October this year.
Commission study from consultants to explore moving the cafe to the ground floor of the eastern wing of the Museum, with the potential to fully use the	Pre app meeting with Planning to understand what can be achieved within the historical building context. Write a consultants brief to go out to market for a feasibility study.	31/7/18	Consultants brief completed by Mike Evans Brief issued Bids received Report delivered	Consultants Innes have been appointed to carry out the report. Concepts are being developed and a further report will be brought to committee at the appropriate time.

courtyard and open up access to Brenchley Gardens.				
Examine options for using the space made available following possible relocation of the cafe, to include for temporary exhibitions, moving the most significant elements of the Carriage Museum and relocation/expansion of other existing gallery displays.	Pre app meeting with Planning to understand what can be achieved within the historical building context. Write a consultants brief to go out to market for a feasibility study.		Significance report on all carriages Consultants brief completed Brief issued Bids received Report delivered	Work on the Carriage Museum will follow the project to refurbishment of the ST Faith's Street site as the museum has neither financial nor staff resources to carry out both pieces of work at the same time.
Commission MMF to develop an outreach plan to maximise the contribution volunteers can make to museum operations and engaging with the community to fully understand needs and aspirations by, among other areas of involvement, cultivating more volunteers	Write a brief and action plan with timescales of what we would like MMF to do.	31/7/18	Brief and action plan completed	As yet uncompleted.