

## Appendix 2

### 1.1 Use of technology and innovation

1.2 The museum website [www.museum.maidstone.gov.uk](http://www.museum.maidstone.gov.uk) offers a comprehensive overview of the museum and its services. The Learning pages offer links to available resources for children, adults and education professionals as well as information about services for SEND students and their families. The Explore pages allow users to find out more about the different collections we hold and includes a link to the ArtUK website which has over 500 of our paintings fully illustrated and catalogued.

1.3 In addition we have a YouTube channel with 60 videos looking at all aspects of the museum from children's learning activities to our latest production – animated guides to the history of the museum buildings told by Lady Chilly, the spirit of Chillington Manor. On Twitter we have 4,300 followers with another 1,180 on Instagram and nearly 4,000 who have Liked our Facebook page.

1.4 The area of most potential is the sharing of collections information. We currently produce a regular blog highlighting items or collections but there are a number of ways that are becoming accepted as standard forms for making collections accessible:

- An album – this is a simple way of sharing images and we use these on a number of web pages and on the information pods in museum galleries.
- Audio – speech or music based items can be shared using SoundCloud or via Podcasts. We have fewer resources in this category and so have concentrated our officer time on more visual media but there is potential for growth here.
- Games – this is a relatively new form of sharing and could range from jigsaws created using free software from Jigsaw Planet, creating museums within alternative worlds such as Minecraft or Animal Crossing or even games for Playstation (although these would require resources in terms of cash and expertise that could not be found in the current service).
- Maps- Illustrated maps are a popular tool. We have several paper-based trails around Maidstone, such as the Historic Plaque trail, which could be made available through the website. There is free software such as HistoryMapJS or platforms such as HistoryPin which make this possible
- Video- Whilst we currently use YouTube, social media and the website to share video content, it would also be possible to create simple guides to the museum using the museum's iPads to film. Not all our videos are currently subtitled but free programmes such as Subtitle Workshop and Aegisub are available. Some training would be required but this is an area we are actively committed to improving so that our work is accessible to all our visitors.
- Virtual Visit – It is possible to make a very simple, if not very slick, tour of the museum on an iPad which is helpful not only to people who can't visit the museum in person but also for autistic visitors who find it helpful to know what they will see on a visit. More sophisticated versions, such as a Google Tour start at roughly £600 for a museum of our size but depend on how many individual spaces are to be filmed. Adding contextual information

on objects or the building will cost exponentially more and prices depend on the amount of information to be included or items highlighted.

- Visible Storage – this is perhaps the most traditional way to show a museum’s collections and comes in the form of a searchable database. The museum has had a very basic version of this on our website and we have been negotiating for the past two years to create a live, updated version of this. This method takes information from the museum catalogue and creates a searchable front page. The work needed to do this is underway but will require continuing time investment in professional-standard photography of artefacts (currently carried out on an ad hoc basis by volunteers) and up to date catalogue entries.
- 1.5 It should be noted that the biggest barriers to our current use of these technologies are officer time, training and the need to ensure that network safety is not compromised by new software. There is no dedicated staff resource among the museum team for digital engagement. Individual officers have taken responsibility for social media and the website with support where necessary from the MBC Communications team. Under all these options, that resource would be reduced and so time will have to be carefully prioritised.