

**MINUTES OF THE SECOND ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE
RICHMONDSHIRE MUSEUM
(1st APRIL 2018 to 31st MARCH 2019)**

HELD AT RICHMONDSHIRE MUSEUM 1900hrs 29th MAY 2019

1. Open Meeting/preamble

2. Recording of attendees:

J.Finlayson (Chair) M.Wood; G.Alexander; A.Young; S.Young; Z.Johnson; F.Rosher;
J.Huddleston, S.Thubron; F.Vasey; Lord Zetland; A.Simpson; J.Culpan; B.Benson; S.Benson;
J.Dawin.

3. Apologies for absence

R.Issac; S.Harrisson; L.Tate; S.Wood; D.Storey.

4. Minutes of previous meeting

The minutes of the First General Meeting of Richmondshire Museum 6th May 2018 were accepted as a true record.

5. Honorary Directors Report

This report covers the first full financial year operation of the incorporated charity. The financial year was changed at incorporation to relate to the fiscal year away from the old charity year of 1st November to 31st October.

We pay tribute to the loyal volunteers and not least to our Museums Officer and Cleaner without whose unstinted dedication and work the Museum would not continue.

The Museum reports a loss for the year of (£2438). By way of comparison; for the last operating year of the old charity there was a small surplus of £992 made possible, against an underlying loss, by a £5000 donation from a single anonymous benefactor.

Notwithstanding our dedicated team, and our efforts to provide Richmondshire with its own local history focal point accessible to the spectrum of interests; from local to regional, national and increasingly international, we remain concerned with ongoing financial sustainability. The climate for grant funding and sponsorship continues limited especially for a small volunteer run organization; available monies migrate to higher profile attractions. We continue to improve our footfall, shop sales and miscellanies income and reduce costs where possible but donations remain paramount.

The Museum operates within a three year horizon Forward Plan and the reports which follow reflect our adherence to our plan notwithstanding other additional opportunity and event driven works and activities.

The Museum had 3580 visitors during the 2017/18 season. This was an 7% increase against 3350 visitors in 2016/17. Sunday opening was spasmodic due to volunteer availability.

The Management Committee met eleven times during period. The Hon Directors (Trustees) met three times to consider governance matters.

Mrs Fiona Vasey, Dr Brian Benson and Mrs Lesley Tate were co-opted onto the Management Committee during the year. Baroness Harris of Richmond became an Honorary Patron after visiting the Museum. We also had in increase in volunteer numbers throughout the year.

The Museum participated fully with local events and organizations including Love Local Day, the Georgian Festival, and the Richmond Town Ticket as well as representation on Welcome to Richmond and Yorkshire and Humberside Museums Forum.

The Museum again hosted two work experience students and a long-term summer placement student. Visits by schools took place but now seem to be limited by cost constraints at local schools. The school loan box scheme continued.

Addressing the problem of limited collection storage capacity, a dedicated archaeology store was established but a storeroom adjoining the building, used for many years through custom and practice, was returned to the freehold owner to avoid possible repair responsibility. Additional emergency lighting was installed.

The Fundraising Committee was reformed thanks to the initiative of a group of our volunteers.

Accessioning and re-organizing the archival holdings of the previous Wenham Trust was completed and our collections details updated on the National Archive database.

The Museum became fully compliant with new Data Protection Regulations.

6. Finance Report

I am pleased to present the accounts for the year ended 31 March 2019. These have been examined by our Independent Examiner and given a clean report. They can now be filed with the Charity Commissioners.

There is a net deficit for the year of £2,438. This is mainly due to the continuation of our necessary programme of repairing and maintaining the property in the closed period.

Other expenses have continued to be carefully monitored and kept to a minimum. However, we are always dependent on donations to cover our net expenditure and we welcome all opportunities to benefit from them. Our other efforts to raise money continue and we are very grateful for the efforts of our staff and volunteers in the direction. We also take advantage of any grants which are available for projects; unfortunately, none are available to defray normal running costs.

Nevertheless, our balance sheet continues to show a healthy situation but our projections for the current year show that we again need to receive substantial donations in order to show a surplus for the year. Since the year end we expect to receive a taxation refund of some £900 from the benefit of Gift Aid on the donations from individuals in the year to 5 April 2019.

Regardless of the amount of donations, we expect still to have sufficient funds to pay for our commitments for the current year without the need to resort to our special deposit with HSBC Bank. This deposit represents the proceeds of the sale of our Treasury Stock during the year at a profit following professional advice from our financial advisers.

7. Curatorial

The 2018 season saw some great feedback for our education display and the move to under the stairs for Miss Pedley, we also had some lovely comments from Mr James Fenwick and his wife when he visited the newly refurbished Fenwick shop display.

The last year has seen some great additions to the museum on the curatorial front and with the addition of Brian to work with it has meant that we have explored new areas.

- William Sanderson exhibition looks closely at the role that this local artist played in his time and takes a close look at some of his works including those on loan from private collections.
- The Hurst Exhibition which has already seen an increase in visitors explores the lost community and the impact that lead mining and agriculture had on the area, where these people went and what became of them.
- Development of the existing lace exhibition meant we could explore the craft in more detail and get out items from the archived collection that had not been seen before, it also led to a re-organisation of this collection by Sue Young which has meant that it will be easier to use in the future. There is a real sense that people are looking back to old crafts so we chose to include tatting and crochet amongst the exhibition.

The creation of the archaeology store has meant we could move all related items into one space which is clearly set out and easy to use. This has meant we have more space to take on extra deposits, a viable income stream and re-organize the top store to make it more user friendly. The top store now has been completely re-organized and is clearly set out in sections that have been labelled and a map provided; this means that when an item is required or requested it will be easily obtainable. This makes the collections more useable and will enable us to create exhibitions that show off our collections in the best possible way and also with 90% of the collection being in the correct acid free storage we also know that they are in the correct conditions and will be safe well into the future. We are continuing to photograph the collection so that eventually we will have a digital copy of the museum contents.

The RDC image collection has now being sorted and catalogued into area thanks to Shirley Thubron. We are a good way through the process and by the end of 2019 we hope to have this housed for future use with an index in the box so as to be a useable addition to the collection.

During the closed period we also had the time to clear out a few spaces in the museum which led to some items that were additional to the collections needs, after going through the correct channels these items including four mangles made their way to a local scrap metal artist in Reeth who will be using them in his sculptures. Out with the old and in with the new and we have had some interesting additions to our collection including:

A 1950s wedding dress from local Operatic stalwart Sheila Russell

A series of images of the mills

Two books of local history

A baby cap with photograph of the owner and her nurse

Two 1950s sledges

Two archaeological deposits arrived from NAA which are Barningham Moor and Brignall, this has proven our new store to be most useful especially for the larger stone items.

Wenham study Centre:

The amalgamation of this room and its contents into the museum collection meant the task of auditing and accessioning items. We also decided to move paper collections into this room which means that research requests are easier as it is all in one place and when we have visitors there is no need to leave the room to collect things. This has also helped the top store as it has freed up space so the items can be stored in a better way.

The library within the Wenham room has grown and we hope that this will be a useful research asset to the museum. Gordon and Arnold were key to this process.

Each gallery was deep cleaned, so many thanks to Sylvia for this who also helped with painting the image gallery and other areas so they are as clean and fresh for visitors as possible.

Family engagement was the forefront of activities during the holidays in 2018 and the once a week led workshops worked well given us a working format to move forward with, which has been developed over the closed period and now is ready for the 2019 season with the strapline 'Wednesday Workshops'. These workshops increased our visitors with the dreamcatcher workshop

welcoming 63 children and their adults throughout the afternoon. This has also led to organizational changes to be considered for the future. Equally so our October half term event drew in big crowds with the ghost tales and ghoulish treats being a real crowd pleaser, many thanks to Rhoda Frazer for this. In essence including these events has diversified our audience to include a younger demographic and extend how many times people in the local area are visiting us.

The discovery centre plays a vital role in family engagement and I keep the activities as fresh as possible in there but I believe some additions could be made in the future.

The memory cases have had a few successful outings for reminiscence sessions which are as always very popular thanks to Sheila Harrissons' efforts. I am looking into other groups that may benefit from the use of these.

Administration

The greatest task within this section is the rota and this year we had a great season with everyone helping as and when they could, we even opened up for summer Sundays which although we do not believe attracted a vast number of visitors we know that those visitors that came on a Sunday were not disappointed, the format of 12:30-4:30 worked well and will be revisited.

Front of house practices have been reorganized including a new front of house manual. The new lanyards and volunteer recruitment have been working well. This came from our VASQAS report suggesting that a way to make the volunteers more visible would be an improvement and with the growing number of new volunteers I felt we needed a concise way in which they could be given the basic outlines of the roles and what is expected of them. This has definitely helped with the new volunteers that joined us for the 2018 season. The volunteer packs has meant that people who are considering volunteering could take one away and look at it closely before coming in and having taster sessions, it has worked really well, largely due to the fact I believe people like to know what is expected of them.

Social media has been the forefront of all of our publicity, largely due to the fact that it is free and this season with the help of Lesley Tate we have a presence on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter all of which are working well to get people interested. Trip Advisor has also been a fantastic tool in promoting the Museum and I am working on ways to utilize this further in the future. However as the season moved on there were a number of occasions where paper advertising such as posters in local shops and things would have helped so this is something I will look at more for the 2019 season.

In addition to social media we have gone back to flyers and posters this season as to make sure we are getting to everyone and this has definitely worked well, especially for the Hurst exhibition with most of the visitors seeing the poster and coming to the museum as a result. I believe these show the importance of covering all bases and as long as it can be done in house and costs kept to a minimum then it should definitely be included.

We have seen a large increase in the number of family history enquiries and thanks to the help of Jane have managed to answer all of these in house and have had donations for our efforts. A total of 54 were taken in 2018. Other enquiries have come in with regard to the local area and again Jane has been most helpful with these. I believe this could be an area which we advertise more, as it could be a better income stream.

The two new gardening volunteers for 2018 have made huge strides in the garden and are working hard towards being ready for our first ever entry into Britain in Bloom in 2019. We have seen significant changes and have also enlisted the help of Chris and his team at Veterans woodcraft who will be making bird boxes for the garden and an insect hotel.

Education

Loan boxes are going out and coming back and once returned are being checked. Plans for a new provision leaflet are being made ready to go out before the summer break as we did last year; this has led to an increase in school response, especially of the loan boxes. We will be developing the leaflet this year to have an input section so we can get the views of education providers as to how we could assist them further with what we provide. During the 2018 season we had a total of six

school visits and one outreach session which Jos and Dorothy attended Hudswell School, all of which had great reviews. The loan boxes are still definitely our best used resource and a good stream of income so we are going to spend time fine tuning these and developing new areas to expand into.

8. Committee Reports

Visitor Numbers

Two histograms 'Visitor Numbers 2014-2018' and 'Visitor Numbers by Category April-October 2018' were tabled. There were 3580 visitors in the 2018 season.

Marketing/External Organization Liaison

The Town Ticket contributed £428 to the Museum from a gross contribution to all organizations of £2255. Welcome to Richmond is now at a crossroads in deciding its future direction.

Membership

As at 31st March we have 7 Hon Life Members; 18 Life Members; 6 Hon Patron Members; 6 Patron Members; 41 Single Members and 21 Family Members. If we take each family membership to indicate 2 persons membership currently stands at 120.

We have complied with the 2018 Data Protection Act with regard to our membership records.

I C T

The website has been static and is now being overtaken by social media. Archive catalogues available on the website have generated a large amount of hits. A card payment system at front of house has been researched and a system selected for installation in the 2019 season.

Data Protection Regulation compliance was achieved.

9. Election of Trustees (Hon Directors)

The current office holders were re-elected.

10. Election of Management Committee

S.Young announced her retirement as Keeper of Textiles and was thanked for her work.

S.Thubron, proposed by A.Simpson and seconded by F.Vasey, was elected to the Management Committee.

The current Committee Members were re-elected.

11. Election of Museum Mentor

F.Rosher was re-elected and thanked for her support.

12. Any Other Business

None.

13. Meeting Close

The meeting closed at 2010 hrs