



STROUD DISTRICT COUNCIL

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COMMUNITY SERVICES AND LICENSING COMMITTEE MEMBER REPORT

NAME OF ORGANISATION/BODY	Museum in the Park (Cowle Trust)
DATE OF LAST MEETING ATTENDED	8 th November 2021

BRIEF REPORT

Whilst the museum team have done an excellent job of retaining trust once audiences were able to return to the museum, it has found its resources stretched – both from external requests, as others sought to return to normality, but also invigilating and managing the return of visitors to the museum. Having objects on open display continues to be problematic. Despite this, visitor numbers have been good, though, as expected, not quite to pre-Covid 19 levels.

The museum has maintained a scaled down approach to events and exhibitions to manage resources with quality of visitor experience favoured over quantity. The Museum's summer holiday programme opened with a free, all-age drop in creative day on Wednesday 28 July, 'Art in the Park', funded by a grant from Arts Society Painswick. There followed a series of different drop-in activities throughout the summer, often located outdoors. HAF activity packs & 'Grow Your Own' food boxes were also distributed to families during Wednesday sessions.

Longfields Hospice Butterfly Appeal was hosted in the Walled Garden: a moving example of how well-organised events in the Garden (combined with a warm and respectful museum welcome) can help with the healing process & inspire people to feel and cope better with grief and difficult times. There were also a number of musical events over the summer in addition to hosting a Steampunk Picnic in the Park and Stroud Theatre Festival.

Museum Membership was launched on 25th October. This was previously known as 'Supporter Scheme'. The launch had been delayed but is still on course to deliver all elements of the project by the end of March 2022. Arts Council England approved the interim report. The launch was deliberately low-key which the museum team will develop sustainably. Members are encouraged to sign-up here: [Free-to-Join Museum Membership](#).



Further to previous reports two consultants were engaged regarding collection storage needs, particularly in regards to space. They took into account 25 years' growth, better packing and developer led archaeology that the museum has not been able to collect since 2014 due to a lack of space. Both consultants (who approached this from different perspectives) have arrived at similar figures and provided comprehensive reports. This work is an early step towards creating a single collections store (from the current three, excluding the Museum in the Park site) to improve community access and care for the district's heritage. This in turn must be preceded by the replacement of the museum's collections database, which is no longer fit for purpose. This will also be a vital step towards community engagement and re-display of the museum.

The museum was awarded a grant of up to £6,055 towards the costs of an Ice Age Exhibition & Learning Pack from Arts Council England. The exhibition will open on 25th January 2022.

The museum's monthly sustainable stories series continues, focussing on exploring different collection objects from the past which reveal useful lessons for a kinder, more sustainable, living in the present and future. Please visit: <https://museuminthepark.org.uk/sustainable-stories>

The previously reported courtyard awning project has been cancelled.

The museum continues to take part in the previously reported Rebuilding the Foundations: Gloucestershire Museums project led by SW Museum Development (SWMD).

The Cowle Trust has a trustee vacancy which will be advertised early in the new year.

The final day of public opening in 2021 is Sunday 19th December. The museum re-opens after deep cleaning and maintenance with the Ice Age exhibition on 25th January 2022.

REPORT SUBMITTED BY	Cllr Nigel Prenter
DATE	18 November 2021