



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	9 th May 2022 (apologies sent, report based on reports/minutes)
BRIEF REPORT	
<p>The museum welcomed 32,000 visitors in 21-22 compared with 56,000 in the financial year prior to Covid-19. Gross retail sales were not far off those in 19/20 even though visits in person are down. Overall, the signs of recovery are there.</p> <p>The Museum's Forward Plan (2023-2028) will now be produced in the context of the Cultural Strategy. As the existing plan ends in March 2023 the museum's annual service plan will be used in the interim.</p> <p>Key objectives in 22/23:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Recover from impact of Covid-19• Further integration of Museum Membership• Rebuilding the foundations of evaluation and audience development including delivery of new walled garden visitor information and revising information in the museum• Restart volunteer recruitment and engagement• Restart the Collections Management System replacement project• Storage and collections care actions <p>Top three risks to museum operations include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Staffing (vacancies and availability)• Volunteer recruitment and engagement (pending staffing being resolved)• Distributed collection stores and care of collections (environmental controls – see below). <p>The 'Thread of Light' exhibition, showcasing kiln cast glass sculpture by internationally acclaimed artists, five of whom live and work in Stroud, is truly outstanding and a great testament to the artistic talent in the district. This takes place during the International Year of Glass; glass has been endorsed by the UN as a material well worth celebrating for its positive contribution to society. This was accompanied by a small display of glass objects from the museum collection.</p> <p>The first community case of the year in 'The Space' was Sue Harrison's Hat Pins, with a private collection of powder compacts being next. If you belong to a community group or know of anyone who may be interested in staging a display in the Space do get in touch with the museum here.</p>	

A new temporary **missing histories** display was created in the Collectors' Room on women's health as represented in the collections and highlighting how under-represented this subject is. This is the first in a series of displays this year on the theme of missing histories – its installation was timed to coincide with International Women's Day at the beginning of March.

Museum Membership

Not all elements of the implementation project could be delivered by end of March as was hoped. There are user functionality and customisation requirements relating to the new electronic point of sale (EPOS) – all other parts of the project have been delivered and the membership take-up has been very positive. The Trust have provided funding (from unspent implementation project contingency) to enable the museum to continue to contract external marketing support. Sign-up to the free-to-join membership to get news and insights, anyone can join at: www.museuminthepark.org.uk/membership



Collections Care

Following a Collections Storage Report a geological conservator was contracted to undertake a detailed review of the Geology collections – their remit was to look for radioactive and otherwise toxic specimens, to investigate pyrite decay, and to make other general recommendations on the state of the collection and its longer-term preservation & improvement. 28 specimens were identified as having pyrite decay in varying degrees that are salvageable and the conservator has been contracted to undertake remedial work.

Unfortunately, the museum has been dealing with a mould outbreak in rooms 1 & 2 at the School of Science and Art. Conservators from Connect-Conserve-Cymru were contracted to investigate – they have sampled the mould, surveyed the building to look for obvious problems and made recommendations for addressing the issues. The museum has liaised with the landlord regarding external issues and is also undertaking steps internally, starting with dehumidifiers to level out the climate in the rooms. The conservators will be contracted to clean the worst mould from the objects once the environment is stabilised and brief the team on cleaning others.

Green Grant

The museum has been successful in bidding for a SW Museum Development Green Grant for “Revealing Hidden Sustainable Stories of House & Garden” during 2022 we aim to run a series of events, create simple garden signage using natural materials and create a Sustainable Stories loans box for our Remote Learning Project

The current Cowle Trust Chair intends to step down next year. There is one other vacancy.

REPORT SUBMITTED BY	Cllr Nigel Prenter
DATE	13 th June 2022