
MUSEUMS-PROCEDURES

To: **Governance and Audit Committee – 26 June 2013**
By: **Katherine Wilson – Community Development Officer**
Classification: **Unrestricted**

Summary: **This report is to update Members of the Governance and Audit Committee on the Procedures now in place for the museum artefacts**

For Decision

1.0 Introduction

1.1 On 21 March 2013 Governance and Audit Committee discussed the agenda item 'Procedures for dealing with TDC artefacts'. The matter was raised following correspondence addressed to the Chairman of the Governance and Audit Committee raising concerns about the stewardship of the TDC artefacts. Two actions were proposed and agreed:

- 'A Museums processes document be written for Members for the next meeting of Governance and Audit Committee in June 2013'
- 'The item 'Procedures for Dealing with TDC Artefacts' be taken to the Overview and Scrutiny Panel'

1.2 The purpose of this report is to outline the present processes in place for the TDC artefacts.

2.0 Background

TDC Collections

2.1 The Council's artefact collections at Margate Museum are typical of a mixed social history collection with a good proportion of the collections being of local origin and/or relevance. This includes a large number of the souvenirs and ephemera one would expect from a seaside town with a long history of tourism and entertainment. There are also artefacts from local industries, especially the Cobb Brewery, and from the agricultural past of the area. As with many local history museums, there is a collection of artefacts reflecting Margate's World War experiences and, as the Museum is sited in the town's old Gaol, some items drawn from the Police profession. Other groups of items include coins, medals and tokens, the town's official Weights and Measures, a small number of medical, technical and audio equipment, and a collection of local newspapers. There is a small collection of archaeology owned by the Museum which is supported by a larger collection of material on loan from Thanet Archaeological Trust, plus a shell collection on loan to Quex Park.

2.2 The artefacts with the higher financial values include a very important wooden doll dating back to 1750, a marble bust by Sir Francis Chantry, a few theatrical posters, and Victorian furniture (mostly at Dickens House, Broadstairs).

2.3 The artefact collection is supported by a large fine art collection including some oils on canvas by notable artists, with the bulk of this collection made up of several

hundred engravings of local scenes and seascapes, again, with some works by notable artists. Of particular note and financial value is the Rowe Bequest of engravings including many produced by Phillipe Loucherberg; the large oil on canvas by James Webb Margate from the Pier; and significant but lower value oil paintings by Alfred Clint, George Chambers and Arthur Meadows.

- 2.4 This important collection is supported by a large photographic collection, including the Sunbeam Studio collection (tourist portraits) presently being scanned as part of the SEAS project and material from the East Kent Times; an extensive collection of postcards depicting local scenes underlines the strength and importance of visual images of local scenes in the Museum's collection.

Museum Catalogues and documentation

- 2.5 Margate Museum has a paper catalogue created by Colin Wilson (TDC Museum Officer) which covers the core of the collection and most valuable artefacts including artefacts from the Rowe and Parker bequests. The information within this catalogue is of a high standard. EKMT created an electronic 'Excel' catalogue which used the Colin Wilson catalogue as its basis. However, this catalogue is unreliable outside the Colin Wilson artefacts, with 'new' items often not entered or mislabelled. During this period other documentation, including entry and exit forms were not routinely completed. When EKMT handed back the keys to the council, the museum closed to the public and donations stopped, however the museum gained items through council officers 'saving' items and storing them in the museum for example a collection of Winter Garden posters and music; no entry documentation was completed, but loan agreements were put in place for high value objects i.e. Webb picture and paddle-steamer items. Overall the museum documentation is fragmented.
- 2.6 Dickens House Museum has a paper inventory created by council officer Chris Tull and Dickens Fellowship. This part of the TDC collection has received few donations and the displays are static except for loan items from the present curator. There are no items in store.

Processes in place

- 2.7 The following documentation procedures are in place:
- Items entering the museum: entry records form completed, including loans into the museum
 - Items leaving the museum: exit records, including loans out of the museum
 - Accession numbering of museum objects; each object is being given a unique number prefixed by the Institutional numbering code MRGMM. This is being carried out as part of the development of the new Margate catalogue.
 - Location and movement records: recently implemented for objects being moved around the Margate museum
 - Collection policies: Margate Old Town Museum, collections management, acquisition and disposal policy (1991) - new documentation has been drafted. Dickens House Museum, acquisition and disposal policy.

'Projects' in progress

- 2.8 Several 'projects' are in progress to bring the museum documentation up to present museum standards.
- Audit of artefacts (checking items off against EKMT catalogue): pictures (approx. 1,000) in the store room have been audited. Artefacts in the store boxes have been listed and these will be cross referenced against the EKMT catalogue to identify 'unlisted items'.
 - New Margate Catalogue (A record for each item that includes unique number, description, condition, photograph, measurements): the downstairs rooms are almost complete.

- Rowe Bequest: audited pictures are being checked against Rowe documentation to confirm location of bequest items.
- Audit of Dickens House Museum artefacts: scheduled to start week commencing 3rd June but postponed to after Broadstairs Dickens week due to commitments and scheduled visitor groups.

3.0 Options

3.1 Members agree to refer matter to the Task & Finish Group for consideration and bring the matter back to Governance and Audit after Task and Finish Group have completed work, if necessary.

4.0 Corporate Implications

4.1 Financial

4.1.1 The Council collections have a financial value and procedures should be in place to minimise council risk.

4.2 Legal

4.2.1 The appropriate documentation is needed to ensure ownership of artefacts can be verified.

4.3 Corporate

4.3.1 The Council collections have a social and financial value and procedures should be in place to ensure the collections are appropriately looked after for the present and future benefit of residents and visitors

4.4 Equity and Equalities

4.4.1 There are no equity or equalities issues arising from this report.

4.5 Risks

4.5.1 Appropriate procedures in place to safeguard the collections.

5.0 Recommendation(s)

5.1 That Members agree that the matter be referred to the Overview & Scrutiny Task and Finish Group for their consideration.

6.0 Decision Making Process

6.1 This recommendation does not involve the making of a key decision and may be taken by the Governance and Audit Committee.

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Annex List

Annex 1	n/a
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Corporate Consultation Undertaken

Monitoring Officer	Harvey Patterson, Corporate and Regulatory Services Manager
Finance	Sarah Martin, Financial Services Manager