

RUSSELL COTES ART GALLERY AND MUSEUM MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

FRIDAY, 22ND OCTOBER, 2021

Present: Mr S Bartholomew - Chairman

**Councillors Cllr L Williams, Cllr M Iyengar and
Cllr J Kelly**

1 Election of Chairman of the Russell-Cotes Art Gallery and Museum Management Committee

Mr Stuart Bartholomew was elected as Chairman of the Russell-Cotes Art Gallery and Museum Management Committee 2021/22, until the first meeting of the new municipal year.

Voting: unanimous

2 Election of Vice Chairman of the Russell-Cotes Art Gallery and Museum Management Committee

Cllr Williams was elected as Vice Chairman of the Russell-Cotes Art Gallery and Museum Management Committee 2021/22, until the first meeting of the new municipal year.

Voting: unanimous

3 Apologies

There were no apologies received on this occasion.

4 Declarations of Interests

Councillor Williams declared an interest as a member of the Arts Council South West, but stayed in the meeting.

5 Confirmation of Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 8 January 2021 were agreed as a true and correct record.

Voting: unanimous

6 **Public Issues**

No public issues had been received.

7 **Russell-Cotes Art Gallery & Museum Update Report 1 December 2020 – 31 September 2021**

The Museum Manager presented a report, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member and a copy of which appears as Appendix 'A' to these Minutes in the Minute Book.

The Committee were provided with an update on the activities of the Russell-Cotes Art Gallery & Museum from December 2020 – September 2021 including the ongoing impact of the coronavirus pandemic.

The Committee were advised that the MEND application to the Arts Council and match funding from BCP Council, totalling nearly a million pounds of funding, had been submitted on Monday 18 October. A decision was expected in February 2022. Planning permission was already being sought, and some other preliminary works had commenced, so work could be quickly progressed if funding should be granted.

The National Portfolio Organisation application would be submitted, with an April 2022 deadline. With the support of this Committee an application would be submitted.

The Committee was advised that different specialist had been enlisted to help progress building activities, including Philip Hughes Surveyors; Martin Thomas Associates, national heating specialists, who would be looking at the electrical needs; an expert from Arts Council England has conducted a survey and is offering advice. Conservation accredited personnel were essential.

RESOLVED that the Management Committee accepted the Russell-Cotes Art Gallery & Museum review report for the period 1 December 2020 – 31 September 2021 and agreed the actions suggested in the report.

Voting: Nem. Con.

8 **Update on Progress towards Externalisation**

The Museum Manager presented a report, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member and a copy of which appears as Appendix 'B' to these Minutes in the Minute Book.

The Committee received an update on the progress towards externalisation of the museum and art gallery.

The Committee was advised that the Management of the Museum had received advice from Dates Wells Solicitors that the witness case should be strengthened and additionally, a summary should be made of the reasons why the change was being sought. This is the main point that needs to be confirmed with the Charity Commission. This would be reported to Cabinet and then full Council, who would make the final decision formally to progress.

RESOLVED that:

- a) **The Management Committee noted the progress made with Business Planning and Governance Discussions; and**
- b) **The Management Committee approved the continued progress of the Russell-Cotes Art Gallery and Museum to externalisation as a fully independent charity, subject to a full business case.**

Voting: Unanimous

9 Approval of allocation of funds generated for the restoration of the Russell-Cotes Conservatory to the ACE MEND 'Repair and Renewal' Project

The Museum Manager presented a report, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member and a copy of which appears as Appendix 'C' to these Minutes in the Minute Book.

The Committee were asked to approve the allocation of funds generated for the restoration of the Russell-Cotes Conservatory to the ACE MEND 'Repair and Renewal' Project.

The Committee passed on their congratulations to the Team for a successful funding application, which was very welcome.

RESOLVED that the RCAGM Committee agreed to the allocation of all funds raised to support the restoration of the Conservatory (£30,000) and held in the Restricted Conservatory fund as match funding for the ACE MEND project (should the grant application be successful).

Voting: Unanimous

10 Approval of Museum Policies Required for Accreditation

The Museum Manager presented a report, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member and a copy of which appears as Appendix 'D' to these Minutes in the Minute Book.

The Committee were asked to recommend the adoption of 5 plans and policies governing the operation of the Russell-Cotes Art Gallery and Museum: Forward Plan, Collections Development Strategy, Documentation Policy and Plan, Collections Care and Conservation Policy and Access Policy.

In response to a question regarding how likely it was that the Museum could buy back anything that was already disposed of, it was explained that staff monitor any auctions for any items which may appear. It was therefore, unlikely but possible.

It was advised that with regards to the Collections Policy, the Committee noted acquisitions but have to give agreement for disposals. However, if it was a large sum, this would come to Committee. Following some discussion, it was agreed that if an acquisition's value reached a ceiling of £1000 per item, it be brought to Committee for sign-off, be added to the policy.

Friday, 22nd October, 2021

It was noted that the Museum was aware of the potential risk associated with the number of homeless people in the area, using the grounds. The Rangers, Police and Rough Sleepers Team have worked with Museum staff.

RESOLVED that the RCAGM Management Committee approved the plans and policies attached to the report as appendices:

- a) **The Forward Plan;**
- b) **Collections Development Strategy adding: that if an acquisition's value reached a ceiling of £1000 per item, it be brought to Committee for sign-off, be added to the policy;**
- c) **Documentation Policy and Plan;**
- d) **Collections Care and Conservation Policy; and**
- e) **Access Policy**

Voting: Unanimous

11 **Acquisitions, Loans and Disposals Report**

The Museum Manager presented a report, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member and a copy of which appears as Appendix 'E' to these Minutes in the Minute Book.

The Committee were asked to note the new acquisitions to the Collection (the material owned and held in trust by the Russell-Cotes Art Gallery & Museum charity in accordance with its charitable objectives) and the loan of material to other institutions (i.e. public art galleries and museums) and to approve the disposal of items in the collection according to the Museums Association Code of Ethics.

RESOLVED that the Management Committee notes:

- a) **The acquisitions; and**
- b) **The loans.**

And approves:

- c) **The disposals as outlined in the Acquisitions, Loans and Disposals Report.**

Voting: Unanimous

12 **Exclusion of Press and Public**

RESOLVED that under Section 100 (A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 in Part I of Schedule 12A of the Act and that the public interest in withholding the information outweighs such interest in disclosing the information.

13 **The draft annual report and statement of accounts**

Exempt Report as defined in Paragraph 3 in Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

The Museum Manager presented a report, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member and a copy of which appears as Appendix 'F' to these Minutes in the Minute Book.

The Committee were invited to ask questions and agree in principle the draft annual report and statement of accounts.

Any questions will need to be submitted to Finance in writing, for consideration and will be addressed before the final version is submitted for signing.

The draft annual report and statement of accounts were circulated previously, following a request from the Portfolio Holder that they be circulated earlier in the process of them being finalised, than they were last year.

It was asked how much was the performance of the Museum consistent with others over this time and it was explained that there has been a profound impact, data would be available soon that could be shared. However, the Museum had picked up relatively quickly, whilst some were running at 50% of normal trade. The Museum was relatively in line with the rest of the sector, at almost normal running figures.

It was advised that the audit of accounts would be completed by early December, to the satisfaction of the Auditor. 31 January 2022 was the deadline for them to be submitted to the Charity Commission.

It was agreed that the Committee noted the draft accounts, but would formally agree them later, at a special meeting to be arranged.

It was asked, as the figures relating to the valuation of the property was an insurance valuation, could the method of assessing the valuation be shared with the Committee. The Company Accountant agreed to find out the method used from the Auditor.

RESOLVED to note the draft Accounts, which would be formally agreed at a meeting to be arranged in early 2022.

Voting: Nem.con

Duration of the meeting: 2.00 - 3.15 pm

Chairman at the meeting on
Friday, 22 October 2021