

# **RUSSELL COTES ART GALLERY AND MUSEUM MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE**

**FRIDAY, 8TH JANUARY, 2021**

**Present:**           Stuart Bartholomew - Chairman

**Councillors Cllr M Iyengar, Cllr J Kelly,  
Cllr L Williams, James Grasby, Stuart Bartholomew,  
Sir George Meyrick Baronet and Victoria de Wit**

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

Professor Bartholomew was elected as chairman of the Russell-Cotes Art Gallery and Museum Management Committee, until the first meeting of the next municipal year.

Voting: unanimous

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

Mr J Grasby was elected as Vice-Chairman of the Russell-Cotes Art Gallery and Museum Management Committee, until the first meeting of the next municipal year.

Voting: unanimous

**3**    **Apologies**

No apologies for absence had been received.

**4**    **Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of pecuniary interest were received on this occasion.

Councillor Williams confirmed that he was a member of the Arts Council SW, but this did not preclude him from taking part in the meeting.

**5**    **Confirmation of Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 22 January 2020 were agreed as a true and accurate record for signing.

There were no matters arising from the minutes.

Voting: unanimous

**6**    **Public Items**

There were no public items on this occasion.

**7**    **Russell-Cotes Art Gallery & Museum Update 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 '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 over the last year, including the impact of the coronavirus pandemic. The following main points were discussed:

- Due to Covid-19 restrictions the operating of the Gallery and Museum had been limited and emphasis of public interaction directed at online activities. The Committee expressed their thanks and passed on to staff congratulations for what they had achieved during such trying times.
- The Art Council's accreditation process, which had previously been deferred, was still suspended but details regarding the new schedule should be announced during January 2021. The current accreditation status had been extended, so the Museum and Gallery remained accredited. It was suggested that there may still be a minimum of a 12-month delay until the process would be re-started. Any policies and plans that needed review by this Committee for accreditation would be included on the Agenda for the next two meetings.
- Following a successful prosecution against those who had stolen lead from the exterior of the Russell-Cotes building, there was concern that long periods where the Museum was closed, could lead to further opportunistic vandalism. Whilst there was a desire to secure the perimeter of the premises, the building's Listed status limited what could be done. However, this could be discussed with BCP Council, to investigate options.
- Whilst considering the exterior of the building, the matter of visitor access was discussed, particularly in relation to the exterior doors and visibility. It was suggested that the main entrance should be more obvious, and that this should be considered as a part of future activity for presentation.
- The Committee commended the work that had been done to digitalise aspects of the Museum and Gallery. It was advised that there was a long-term ambition to extend the digital range, to compliment the visiting experience. It was hoped to add the museum shop online eventually.

**RESOLVED that the Management Committee accept the Russell-Cotes Art Gallery & Museum 12-month review report for the period November 2019 - November 2020 and agree the actions suggested in the report.**

Voting: Unanimous

## **8 Acquisitions, Loans and Disposal 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 'B' to these Minutes in the Minute Book.

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

Disposal of the judge's chair:

In response to questions it was explained that when accepting an acquisition, staff from the museum assess whether it meets the requirements stipulated within the Collections Policy which includes consideration of ongoing conservation costs. It was explained that the Collections and Conservation Policies would be reviewed for the next Arts Council. A conservation audit by a conservator, will be carried out, but this had been delayed due to Covid restrictions. There was an ambition to have a realistic conservation strategy and plan in place. It was confirmed that any money set aside for conservation would be on a small scale, and the museum would need to commission a full-scale review as a part of the ongoing work.

Members of the Committee were assured that the disposal process conformed with the accredited process and was at the top end of the approved practice. Russell-Cotes Art Gallery and Museum was going through a process of checking the social history items, which it had acquired as there was no other museum to in the area which could accept them.

In response to a question regarding the loans policy, it was explained that there was a charging system. For domestic loans, it was only what was needed to cover costs but for international loans there was a bigger fee. As the Gallery was also a borrower, there had to be a workable balance. £20k earned from a loan of a Dante Gabriel Rossetti painting to Tokyo, enabled work to be completed in the galleries and the Pre-Raphaelite exhibition to be held.

**RESOLVED that:**

**The Management Committee notes:**

- a) the acquisitions; and
- b) the loans

**and approves:**

- c) the disposals outlined in the Acquisitions, Loans and Disposals Report (attached in appendices 1 and 2).

Voting: unanimous

## **9 Russell-Cotes Art Gallery and Museum Annual Accounts 2019/20**

The Company Accountant 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 consider for recommendation to the Portfolio Holder, the 2019/20 final accounts for the Russell-Cotes Museum and Gallery Trust.

It was noted that there was a change to how the accounts were presented regarding depreciation. It was confirmed that this was not a cash movement, but an endowment reserve, not a donation. The mechanics of the accounts had not changed at all.

It was asked what was the effect of the stated valuation of land and buildings, when they did not reflect building value. It was explained that there was no effect on the trading performance. The value was an endowment reserve, on a balance sheet, it could not be spent, as the value was in the building. The land value was notional, as it could not be used for anything other than having the museum on it. The valuation of the buildings was an insurance valuation.

The Committee was advised that Grant Thornton had prepared an audit findings report, which was not included with the Agenda but would be circulated. A clean audit report had been issued and there had been no change in the findings.

It was asked if in future, these accounts could be considered earlier, as there was a deadline for submission. It was explained that this set of accounts was being signed-off prior to the statutory deadline and earlier than normal. It was suggested that there should be an ambition for the accounts to be signed off earlier and not so close to the statutory deadline. It was agreed that an informal meeting be held to discuss further.

It was questioned whether the architectural records were stored in a fire-proof area. It was confirmed that work was scheduled to compile all of the Museum and Gallery records and that the requirement for such documentation had been noted.

**RECOMMENDED that the Management Committee recommend that the 2019/20 annual accounts for Russell-Cotes Art Gallery and Museum are approved by the Portfolio Holder.**

Voting: Unanimous

## **10 Exclusion of the Press and Public**

**RESOLVED that:- The Committee exclude the Press and Public for item 11 of the Agenda under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 on the grounds of the likely disclosure of exempt information, as defined in Paragraphs 3 in Part I of**

Friday, 8th January, 2021

**Schedule 12A of the Act, as the public interest in withholding the information outweighs such interest in disclosing the information.**

11 **Museum Governance - Progress Update**

Exempt item by virtue of Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 on the grounds of the likely disclosure of exempt information, as defined in Paragraphs 3 in Part I of Schedule 12A of the Act.

The Service Director 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.

**RESOLVED that the Committee noted the update.**

Voting: Nem.Con

**Duration of the meeting:** 11.30 am - 1.30 pm

Chairman at the meeting on  
Friday, 8 January 2021