

RUSSELL COTES ART GALLERY AND MUSEUM MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

MONDAY, 24TH OCTOBER, 2022

Present: Stuart Bartholomew in the Chair

Councillors Cllr L Williams (Vice-Chairman),
Cllr B Dunlop, Cllr M Iyengar, Mr A Frost and Mr G
Irvine

Apologies: Ms F Winrow and Sir George Meyrick Baronet

29 Apologies

Apologies for absence had been received from Sir George Meyrick and Fiona Winrow.

30 Declarations of Interests

Councillor Lawrence advised that he was a member of Arts Council, England.

31 Confirmation of Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 4 May 2022 were agreed as a true and correct record.
Voting: unanimous

32 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.

This report provided an update on the activities of the Russell-Cotes Art Gallery & Museum from 1 April – 31 September 2022.

It was advised that visitor numbers and performance had returned to pre-Covid levels with strong income levels in admissions, the shop and café.

The Museum had embarked on the MEND programme to replace Mechanical and Engineering services and to refurbish the Conservatory. Additional applications had been made for grant funding to support further work on the fabric of the building.

In the Centenary year, there had been a focus on improved programming with children's activity days and late night openings encouraging audiences to return. The Sixpence days brought in very significant numbers and enabled access for all.

A very strong exhibition programme had been developed for the next year with 'Telling Tales: the Story of Victorian Narrative Art' in partnership with Southampton City Art Gallery opening in October 2022. An exhibition on Bournemouth born, equestrian artist Lucy Kemp-Welch was being developed in association with the National Horse Racing Museum for Spring 2023.

Schools, universities and language schools had returned for formal learning sessions as well as group visits.

During recent heavy rain, water was coming in through seven separate locations in the building. This is further aggravated by the fact that little building maintenance had

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been done recently. The main entrance has to be closed during such times, as water comes down the main stairway. Visitors during such times are forced to either use the lift or the metal staircase. This increases stress on staffing as well.

The Committee was shown a presentation, detailing finances, which would be circulated after the meeting.

It was advised that income was strong, and salaries were on track. Regarding overheads, the main challenges were for resources, with monthly invoices totalling £9000 for utilities. Whilst efforts were being made to reduce utility costs, essential humidity maintenance costs, rather than heating, could not be avoided. Therefore, this was an issue during the hot summer.

In response to a question of identifying potential risks, if the necessary building maintenance was not completed in the next couple of years, it was advised that it may be unsafe to open the building to the public and the collection would be at significant risk.

It was suggested that the membership should meet to produce an up-to-date risk register, and subsequent action plan.

It was highlighted that currently, the Council's budget had dictated a moratorium on spend. Although BCP Council was in a better financial position than most local authorities, there would need to be further discussions before any spending was allocated.

In response to a question about the success of this summer's takings, it was explained that it was the result of a mixture of things, good visitor incentives, good weather and marketing. £30k had been taken in merchandise sales for the summer exhibition alone. There had been overseas and local visitors.

The Committee recognised and gave their thanks for the very successful past six months and increase in income.

RESOLVED that the Management Committee accepted the Russell-Cotes Art Gallery and Museum review report for the period 1 April – 31 September 2022 and agreed the actions suggested in the report.

Voting: Unanimous

33 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 'B' 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, which did not meet the Museum's Core Offer, according to the Museums Association Code of Ethics.

In response to a question as to whether the Art Gallery and Museum received testimonials from museums who had borrowed from the Russell-Cotes collection, it was explained that written thanks were received and shared on social media. It was advised that there should be information, detailing the loanee, in place of loaned items, in the museum.

RESOLVED that the Management Committee noted and approved:

- (a) The acquisitions;**
- (b) The loans; and**
- (c) The disposals**

as outlined in the Acquisitions, Loans and Disposals Report.

Voting: Unanimous

34 Russell-Cotes Work Programme October 2022

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.

It was RESOLVED that the Russell-Cotes Work Programme be noted.

Voting: Nem. Con

35 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.

36 Progress on the Externalization of the Russell-Cotes Art Gallery and Museum

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 'D' to these Minutes in the Minute Book.

The Russell-Cotes Management Committee had been reviewing the governance arrangements of the Russell-Cotes since 2018, to address the compromised arrangements in place which materially impact on the charity's ability to deliver its objectives.

The Russell-Cotes now had clarity on the governance changes needed and a clear business plan which set out a 10-year strategy. The Charity Commission agreed that the changes were in the best interests of the Russell-Cotes and invited BCP Council as sole trustee, to apply to them for a parliamentary scheme to change the Sole Trustee.

A draft Cabinet/Council Report and Business Plan have been drafted for formal submission to BCP Council. These outline the case for change, seek agreement to implement the governance changes required and make the request for financial support to the new sole trustee. Input from Management Committee members was sought to ensure that they agreed with the argument and proposals presented, they supported the level of financial request to be made, and they endorsed the decision to proceed.

It was explained that further consultation may need to be carried out, to help secure NHLF funding and to meet the requirements of the Charity Commission.

The Monitoring Officer had signed-off this report from a legal point of view. The essential financial information would be needed before the report could be signed off by Finance, before then going to Cabinet for consideration.

It was highlighted that the timetable of the whole process may be influenced by how quickly it could be agreed by the Charity Commission.

It was discussed that any consultation must be conducted across as many organisations as possible, across Bournemouth.

It was discussed and agreed that the application to the charity commission needed to be submitted by Spring 2023. If this deadline was not achieved, it would be difficult to judge what may be the outcome post May 2023.

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It was suggested that a working group of the Committee be formed to work with the Museum Manager to update the risk register. The risk register would need to include actions in the active tense, with timings and who would be the lead.

RESOLVED that:

The Management Committee reviewed:

- a) the draft Cabinet/Council report on externalization of the Russell-Cotes;**
- b) the draft 10-year Financial Model;**
- c) provide any comments, changes and advice on the contents, financial request and strategy outlined; and**
- d) The Management Committee agreed to progress the revised Report and Financial Model and present them to Cabinet and Council in due course.**

Voting: Unanimous

Duration of the meeting: 2.00 - 3.50 pm

Chairman at the meeting on
Monday, 24 October 2022