

# RUSSELL COTES ART GALLERY AND MUSEUM MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE



Report subject	<b>Update on 'Repair and Renewal' Project funded by ACE MEND for restoration of Conservatory and replacement of services</b>
Meeting date	28 October 2024
Status	Public Report
Executive summary	<p>The ACE MEND funded project has progressed and is due for completion by March 2025:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• All environmental plant and machinery has been replaced and is functioning fully.</li><li>• Drainage has been resolved</li><li>• The Conservatory Repair is underway and due for completion by Christmas 2024.</li><li>• Increased CCTV will then be procured.</li></ul> <p>The project is on budget. Total £1,050,000</p>
Recommendations	<p><b>It is RECOMMENDED that:</b></p> <p><b>The Management Committee reviews the report and approves progress to date.</b></p>
Reason for recommendations	<p>The Management Committee is responsible for the oversight of the Russell-Cotes and is required by ACE to monitor the progress of the MEND project.</p>

Portfolio Holder(s):	Cllr Andy Martin, Portfolio Holder for Customer, Communications and Culture
Corporate Director	Glynn Barton, Chief Operations Officer
Report Authors	Sarah Newman, Museum Manager
Wards	Not applicable
Classification	For Update

## Background

1. The Russell-Cotes received a grant of £518,000 in 2022 from ACE MEND fund to deliver a defined programme of maintenance work: Match funding of £532,000 has been provided by fundraising, CIL, reserves and prudential borrowing. Total project cost £1,050,000. The project consists of:
  - Renewal of environmental plant and machinery
  - Restoration of conservatory
  - Improvements to foul drainage
  - Increased CCTV coverage
2. Work started in October 2023 with Philip Hughes Associates, conservation accredited surveyors appointed as Lead Designers. At the last meeting in June 2024 it was reported that:
  - Renewal of all environmental plant and machinery was completed by Watertite and the system fully operation by the end of January 2024
  - Blocked drains in the garden and party drains with the Royal Bath Hotel had been resolved
  - Conservatory repair work had been procured with BJM securing the contract. In May scaffolding was erected and the work was planned to be complete at the beginning of September.

## Progress

### 3. Renewal of Environmental Plant and Machinery

- The work is complete and the plant fully operational. There have been a few teething problems with new plant, as expected, with a couple of sensor failures which were quickly spotted as the system is monitored internally and externally.
- Staff training on maintenance has taken place on the new system and the front end training is yet to be scheduled
- The new system is delivering a much more closely controlled environment to the benefit of our collections, but we are keeping a close eye on the energy bills as a consequence.

- There is the potential to join up the system which currently uses TREND with the more detailed standalone MEACO system for environmental monitoring which we use to supply the detailed data needed for institutional loan requests.
- We are providing our data to academics at University College London who are evaluating the MEND funding and we hope that they will be able to advise us on how to optimise the system for efficiency and benefit.

### **Conservatory Repair**

4. The repair of the conservatory is now nearing completion. After the construction of the scaffolding the conservatory has been deglazed. All the joinery, guttering and ironmongery has been refurbished or replaced under the direction of the lead designers Philip Hughes Associates and subject to the Conservation Officer's agreement. The repainting and reglazing has started. The Paint Conservator's investigation has supplied the three original colours from 1901 – pale pink, mushroom and peacock blue and these have been colour matched for the interior. The exterior is 'Russell-Cotes green'.
5. Additional lead facings and dressings have been added to prevent water ingress and steel straps incorporated to promote the stability and longevity of the fragile and exposed structure.
6. The conservatory had some broken glass panes and further panes have been broken in the deglazing. The challenge has been to find a supplier particularly for the moulded and fluted glass for the sloping elements and this has delayed the project's completion. However, a supplier has been found in Halifax and they will reproduce the panes according to the templates supplied.
7. Work on the corroded beam under the floor is also yet to be concluded. It is hoped that it will be in budget to redecorate the exposed windows on the west façade since they are in a terrible condition and the current scaffold would allow relatively easy access. This is a rare opportunity as it will likely be many years before such work could be addressed otherwise because of the challenge of access.
8. The likely completion date of the project is now probably end of November and then it will take several weeks to strike the scaffold.

### **CCTV Investment**

9. Additional CCTV will be procured once the conservatory is finished.

### **Impact**

10. The scaffolding on the terrace has impacted the catering offer, although tables were available on the terrace and in the garden. In addition, the weather has not been particularly favourable.
11. The scaffolding has blocked light in the café and in many of the basement offices. However, there has not been any significant negative feedback so far, now that work has started.
12. The Museum had agreed to provide a talk for Dorset Architectural History Week on the conservatory refurbishment in September, but unfortunately it was unable to go ahead as progress was too slow.

### **Options Appraisal**

13. N/A

**Summary of financial implications**

14. The project is on budget.

**Summary of legal implications**

15. n/a

**Summary of human resources implications**

16. N/a

**Summary of sustainability impact**

17. n/a

**Summary of public health implications**

18. N/a

**Summary of equality implications**

19. n/a

**Summary of risk assessment**

20. n/a

**Background papers**

none

**Appendices**

There are no appendices to this report.