

RUSSELL COTES ART GALLERY AND MUSEUM MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

MONDAY, 28TH OCTOBER, 2024

Present: Stuart Bartholomew in the Chair

Cllr L Williams (Vice-Chairman), Cllr A Martin,
Cllr L Northover, Mr G Irvine and Ms F Winrow

13 Apologies for Absence

Apologies received from Alan Frost.

14 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

15 Minutes of the previous meeting

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 03 June 2024 were approved as a correct record.

16 Public Issues

There were no Public Issues.

17 Russell-Cotes Art Gallery & Museum Update Report (1 April – 30 September 2024)

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 Museum had a strong summer half-year, though not quite reaching the record levels of summer 2023. Visitor numbers were reduced from the 2023 peak by 9% but income only by 2%. Admission and events income was strong, but shop and café were reduced, the latter particularly by the loss of tables on the terrace due to building work.

The exhibition of work by Albert de Bellaroche was well received and other programming – children's holiday activities, programmed Late evenings and tours and talks continued successfully.

A number of grant applications had been submitted notably for MEND Round 4 (£1,528,543) for maintenance and repairs and to support exhibitions and engagement.

The Committee congratulated the Museum Manager and colleagues on the successful shows and exhibitions that had taken place with a successful turnout.

The Committee noted the 42 building faults that had been recorded with liquid issues and looked forward to the announcement due to take place in February as the mend project is critical for the stabilisation of the building.

In response to a query about BCP Council's responsibility for its staff and the resolution of issues within the building, the Committee was informed that reports had been submitted to building maintenance, with priorities assigned based on urgency. While building maintenance had attempted to address urgent issues promptly, some problems were complex and took longer to resolve.

The Committee expressed their gratitude to the Museum Manager and colleagues for their ongoing work on the externalisation process and for having continued to operate under challenging conditions. The Committee also offered assistance for the continued promotion of arts and culture.

RESOLVED that The Management Committee accepts the Russell-Cotes Art Gallery & Museum Update Report for the period 1 April – 30 September 2024

18 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.

To note the new acquisitions to the Collection (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 (ie public art galleries and museums) and to approve the disposal of items in the Collection which do not meet the Museum's Core Offer in accordance with the Museums Association Code of Ethics.

The Committee acknowledged the notable exhibitions with loans from the Russell Cotes Museum and congratulated the Museum Manager for the museum's continued endorsement.

RESOLVED that:

The Management Committee notes and approves

- a) acquisitions**
- b) loans**
- c) disposals As outlined in the Acquisitions, Loans and Disposals Report**

19 Update on 'Repair and Renewal' Project funded by ACE MEND for restoration of Conservatory and replacement of services

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 ACE MEND funded project had progressed and was due for completion by March 2025:

- All environmental plant and machinery had been replaced and was functioning fully.
- Drainage had been resolved
- The Conservatory Repair was underway and due for completion by Christmas 2024.
- Increased CCTV would then be procured.

The project is on budget. Total £1,050,000

The Committee was optimistic that the work would restore the Russell Cotes Museum and make it the gem of the Local Authority.

In response to a query raised regarding how BCP Council could assist with current working conditions, the Committee was advised that repairs and maintenance across the council were under considerable pressure. A budget had been allocated for building repairs, which prioritised urgent issues that ensured the building remained operational and staff could work effectively within it.

RESOLVED that The Management Committee reviews the report and approves progress to date.

20 Update on Progress towards the Russell-Cotes becoming a fully Independent Trust

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 Scheme which agrees the future governance framework for the new Corporate Trustee of the Russell-Cotes Art Gallery & Museum is ready for approval.

The Articles of Association for the new Company Limited by Guarantee which will act as Corporate Trustee have been agreed with the Charity Commission and are ready for approval.

Once these critical documents have been approved, the governance change process will move from the drafting phase into the publicity and modification phase, prior to approval.

RESOLVED that The Management Committee approves the revised Scheme and Articles of Association and notes progress on moving to an independent trust.

21 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 Russell-Cotes is an accredited museum under the Museum Accreditation Scheme administered by Arts Council England ACE. It was last accredited in 2015 and has been invited to make an accreditation return by 1 May 2026. Accreditation sets standards for governance, collection care and users and is a requirement for much vital museum activity, such as inter-museum loans, and for grant applications.

The Museum has a suite of policies and plans that provide a framework of good practice and outline future plans. These are reviewed at least every five years. Some require sign-off by the governing body, ie the Management Committee.

The Forward Plan and Documentation Policy and Plan require formal Committee approval.

In response to a query raised regarding the importance of the accreditation for the Russell Cotes Museum, the Committee was advised that most funding schemes and other opportunities were only accessible to museums with star accreditation. Without this accreditation, the museum would have been unable to borrow paintings or apply for grants, which could significantly limit its resources and programs.

The Committee requested that a volunteer policy be included in the Plan.

RESOLVED that The Management Committee approves

- **Transitional Business Plan 2025 -2030**
- **Documentation Policy and Plan 2024**

22 Date of next meeting

20 January 2025

Duration of the meeting: 2.00 - 2.58 pm

Chairman at the meeting on
Monday, 28 October 2024

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