

MINUTES OF THE PENLEE HOUSE AND PARK COMMITTEE MEETING
held in Committee Room No. 3, St. John's Hall, Penzance on Tuesday 28th February 2006
at 7.00 pm.

PRESENT

Councillor M. Freeman (Chairman)

Councillors J.W. Champion
R. Clark
M.R. Cotton
J.H. Dixon
F. Granger
R.M. Lawrence
P.C.H. Rendle

ALSO PRESENT

Mrs. A. Bevan (Director of Penlee House Gallery & Museum)

34. **APOLOGIES**

Councillor A.J. Richings

35. **MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 17TH JANUARY 2006**

Having been circulated, it was

RESOLVED: that they should be signed as a true and correct record.

36. **REPORT OF DIRECTOR**

(a) **Exhibition, Income and Visitor Number Report**

The Director advised that the visitor numbers for February stood at 2,561 being the second highest since Penlee House was refurbished.

For the financial year, the total stood at 33,048 as against 34,598 at the same stage in the previous year.

The total takings to date stood at £114,444.00 as against £122,322.00 in the previous year and although this was down on what had been a record in the previous year, the takings appeared to be on target to reach the estimate of £120,000.00 and it was

RESOLVED: to note the position.

(b) Forthcoming Exhibitions

The Director reminded members that the next exhibition entitled “John Brett: A Pre-Raphaelite in Cornwall” would commence on the 1st April and concluded on the 10th June 2006.

The exhibition is accompanied by a well illustrated book which is being published by Sansom and Co. and there is every hope that the book will sell extremely well.

The main summer show, “Charles Napier Hemy”, would run from the 17th June to the 9th September and a number of venues were signing up to take the exhibition on tour.

Looking ahead to Christmas 2007, the Director drew attention to the low visitor numbers throughout December and proposed that there should be an exhibition to go alongside the Crafts for Christmas show entitled “Gifts Given” which would run for 5 weeks and to which admission would be free.

The total admission income for December was approximately £400.00 and if the free admission was well promoted, shop income could well compensate for the admission charge and the council and the gallery will have gained from the gesture to local people in particular and it was

RESOLVED: that the report relating to forthcoming exhibitions be noted and that the proposal in respect of Christmas 2007 be approved.

(c) Staffing

The Director advised that interviews had taken place on Thursday 16th February 2006 and that from a very strong field of applicants, the panel had resolved to appoint Miss Vicky Reid to the post of Shop Manager.

The Director drew attention to the loyal service provided by Ro George and Julia West who had covered the role of Shop Manager for the past year and it was

RESOLVED: that a letter of thanks should be sent on behalf of the Town Council.

(d) Education Events

The Director referred to the education events which had run during the recent half-term week, details of which were contained in the schedule of educational activities for the year, which would be copied to all members for information and which now appears as Appendix “A” to the minutes, and it was

RESOLVED: to note the position.

(e) Archaeology Re. Displays - Update

The Director was pleased to advise that good progress was being made with the redisplay of the archaeology galleries and there would be a launch date for the refurbished display on Saturday 15th July 2006.

This date marked the start of National Archaeology Week and the Director wished to place on record her appreciation for the great assistance provided by the Royal Cornwall Museum, Mr. Nic Thomas a volunteer and members of the Cornwall Historic Environment section of the County Council and it was

RECOMMENDED: that the position be noted.

(f) Invitation for Director to Speak at the Celtic Congress in Brittany

The Director advised that she had received an invitation to speak at the International Congress on the subject of the Newlyn School of Paintings, with the Congress taking place in the first week of August.

The Congress had offered to pay all expenses in this respect and the Director advised that she would take part of the visit as annual leave and it was

RECOMMENDED: that the Director's attendance be approved.

(g) Acquisitions

The Director reminded members that attempts were being made to secure two Harold Harvey paintings entitled "In the Whiting Grounds" and "The Donkey Meadow" and the Director would keep members informed of progress being made with the grant giving agencies.

The Director went on to advise of the receipt of the Madron banner relating to the Battle of Trafalgar which had been accepted on long-term loan from Madron Parochial Church Council.

Penlee House had also taken receipt of the 1914-18 Roll of Honour which had been gifted to the Town Council on the closure of St. Paul's Church in Clarence Street and it was

RECOMMENDED: that the information be noted.

(h) Collecting Policy

The Director advised that SWMLAC had found it necessary to return the Collections Policy document with slight changes to the text at items 1, 13.12, 13.16 and the addition of an item 13.18 which states "Acquisitions outside the current stated policy will only be made in very exceptional circumstances, and then only after proper consideration by the Governing Body of the Museum itself, having regard to the interest of other museums" (see summary at Appendix "B") and it was

RESOLVED: that the changes be noted and approved.

(i) Public Catalogue Foundation

Members were reminded that the Council had agreed to participate in the project, which would see all paintings in its ownership photographed and catalogued and, when the catalogue is finally produced, copies would be available to sell with a proportion of the cover price dedicated to the conservation of paintings in the Council's ownership and it was

RECOMMENDED: that this condition of participation in the project be approved.

37. **REPORT OF TOWN CLERK**

(a) Park Improvements

(i) Pond Project

The Pond Project was proceeding well with all clearance work having taken place and the new retaining wall and steps nearing completion and the lion's head fountain rebuilt and operational and it was

RECOMMENDED: that the position be noted.

(ii) Playground

The removal of the old play equipment had taken place and preparatory ground works were complete.

Ventureplay were still maintaining their assurance that all work would be completed by the 31st March and it was

RECOMMENDED: that the position be noted.

(iii) Sensory Garden

The Council's Head Gardener had commenced work on the Sensory Garden with the foundations and blockwork complete in readiness for the facing of the block walls with granite.

The Newlyn Copper fountain feature was also nearing completion in readiness for installation within the next few weeks and it was

RECOMMENDED: that the position be noted.

(iv) Resolution to Exclude the Press and Public

Due to the confidential nature of the next matter to be discussed, it was

RESOLVED: to exclude the press and public from the next part of the meeting.

(v) Northern Boundary Railings and Resurfacing of Driveway and Paths

See Confidential Appendix "C" regarding resurfacing of driveway and paths and provision of new railings.

(vi) Resolution to Re-Admit the Press and Public

RESOLVED: to re-admit the press and public.

(vii) Woodland Walk

The Town Clerk advised that a considerable amount of clearance work had taken place within the woodland walk and staff would now clear debris from the area, carry out some levelling and provide a shredded wood surface to create a path.

Further planting of bulbs and woodland plants would take place during the Autumn, together with the planting of a number of trees to extend the walk down towards the main play field and it was

RECOMMENDED: that the position be noted.

(b) West Cornwall Arts Archive

The Town Clerk advised that a meeting of the Executive Committee had been held on Wednesday 15th February 2006 at Trevelyan House in Chapel Street where the committee focussed on the grant money available and the way in which it would secure the services of a freelance worker/consultant to be employed against the brief currently being prepared by the Director of Penlee House, the main thrust of which would be the identification and location of likely funds to provide a permanent and accessible home for the archive.

The Director's position had now been clarified on this committee as ex-officio and the Town Clerk would be invited to meetings, but the Executive Committee had also sought representation from an elected member of Penzance Town Council and, in this respect, it was

RECOMMENDED: that Councillor Jan Ruhmund be invited to join the Executive Committee.

(c) Orangery Café - Awning

The café awning was now approaching 9 years old and was giving notice both in terms of the awning material and the cantilever support. It was

RECOMMENDED: that the Town Clerk proceed as follows:-

(i) Meet with the provider of the awning to confirm its operational safety for the forthcoming season;

(ii) Subject to the above, to identify the necessary funding (in the region of £4,000.00) to replace the awning, possibly through over-achievement of income in the forthcoming financial year or the Penlee House Fabric Fund;

(iii) Write to the Architect, who designed the refurbished Penlee House, seeking his advice as to the possible provision of an “in keeping” conservatory.

38. **FINANCIAL POSITION**

The Committee considered its finances to the 31st January 2006 and it was

RESOLVED: to note the position.

The Committee also considered payments made in the months of December 2005 and January 2006 and it was

RESOLVED: to approve such payments (see Appendix “D” for both financial position and payments made).

In respect of the over-spend on the cost of exhibitions council run, the Town Clerk advised that the cost of returning paintings on loan in respect of the major exhibition “Painting At the Edge” had exceeded even the adjusted budget, based on the fact that the lenders had required the use of high spec art transport vehicles, with the cost charged by such firms having increased considerably during the year because of the rise in fuel cost.

The Town Clerk went on to advise that both he and the Director had been aware of the likely need for further funds under this heading and the shop acquisition budget had been closely monitored, and would be held at a level to produce an under-spend sufficient to provide a balanced budget between the two expenditure heads, and it was

RESOLVED: to note the position.

8.30 pm

Chairman
16th May 2006