

MINUTES OF THE PENLEE HOUSE AND PARK COMMITTEE MEETING
held in Committee Room No. 3, St. John's Hall, Penzance on Tuesday 5th December 2006
at 7.00 pm.

PRESENT

Councillor M. Freeman (Chairman)
Councillor R.A. Mann (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors M.R. Cotton
J.H. Dixon
R.M. Lawrence
J. Parkin

ALSO PRESENT

Mrs. A. Bevan (Director of Penlee House Gallery & Museum and left meeting at 7.45 pm).

23. **APOLOGIES**

Councillors F. Granger and J. Moreland.

24. **MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 31ST OCTOBER 2006**

Having been circulated, it was

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

25. **REPORT OF DIRECTOR**

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

The Director reported that the current Richard T. Pentreath exhibition would run until 6th January 2007 alongside the Crafts for Christmas selling exhibition.

The 'Cornishman' newspaper had prepared an article and photographs of the exhibition which it was hoped would appear within the next two weeks.

The visitor numbers for the period to the end of November 2006 were slightly down at 31,432 as against 34,521 for the same period in 2005 and this was reflected in the shop takings which were down by approximately £3,000.00 over last year.

However, total takings for the year to date had increased and stood at £101,567.00 to the end of November 2006 as opposed to £95,105.00 for the period ending November 2005, representing an increase to date of £6,462.00 and it was

RECOMMENDED: that the Director's verbal report be received.

(b) Forthcoming Exhibitions

The next exhibition would be 'Printmaking in Penwith' which would run from the 13th January to the 10th March 2007.

This exhibition would be followed by 'Seal's Colony: Weatherby and his fellow Lamorna artists' which would run from the 17th March to 2nd June 2007 and which would be accompanied by 'A Century of Music', although this exhibition would finish on the 28th April 2007.

The Director was pleased to advise members that the painting entitled 'The Village Philharmonic' by Stanhope Forbes would be on loan from Birmingham for this exhibition and also the main summer show and it was

RECOMMENDED: that the position be noted.

(c) Resolution to Exclude the Press and Public

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

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

(d) Staff Development

See Confidential Appendix "A".

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

It was

RESOLVED: to re-admit the press and public to the meeting.

(f) Social History Gallery and Education/Theatre Accommodation Development

Following the successful re-development of the archaeology gallery, the Director reiterated her desire to redevelop the Social History Gallery by turning it into a more flexible space and to make greater use of the comprehensive photographic archive held at Penlee House.

Alongside this, the Director would also like to upgrade the Penlee House website to include on-line exhibition viewing and to provide acoustic tours of the Museum and Gallery.

Penlee House would be hosting the National Conference of the Association of Museum Friends and although it was an ambitious target, the Director very much hoped that the improvements could be in place before that event.

The physical aspect of the upgrade of the Social History Gallery would take only a few weeks but the research work would take considerably longer and the Director confirmed that there were a number of artefacts in the Museum that are currently held in storage and

not displayed because of the constraints of the gallery in question.

The Director also felt that it would be beneficial to link the refurbishment of this gallery to the education work of Penlee House and consideration would be given to the demolition of the current store/changing accommodation, with a view to the construction of an eco-friendly building using wood and other sustainable materials and incorporating toilet facilities which could be accessed by school children from within the building and made available to theatre-goers by a different access in the evenings.

The museum fittings budget had sufficient capacity to secure the services of someone to draw up the outline of a project, prepare a bid-document and to establish funding streams and the Director sought approval to engage the services of a contractor in this respect.

Members advised that it would be appropriate to include the Museums Officer and the Arts Officer of the District Council and the Director confirmed that this had been her intention and it was

RECOMMENDED: that the Director should proceed as outlined above.

(g) Patio Area - Front Entrance

The Director advised that there had been minor subsidence on the patio area immediately outside the front entrance of the museum, with water gathering, and the area would require to be lifted and re-laid and, during such works, access to the gallery would be maintained by the café terrace and it was

RECOMMENDED: that the work should proceed.

(h) Use of 'The Rain it Raineth' re. Global Warming Message

Councillor Dixon declared a prejudicial interest regarding his membership of the Liberal Democrat Party and retired from the meeting.

Members had been copied the letter from the office of Andrew George, MP relating to the use of the painting 'The Rain it Raineth' by Norman Garstin which had been altered to show sea water coming over the Promenade and which, the letter said, was intended to highlight the non-political message relating to the effects of Global Warming.

Members were generally concerned with the principle of making changes to works of art, no matter what cause, and setting a precedent which could result in requests from other organisations in this respect and it was, therefore,

RECOMMENDED: that the committee could not accede to the request.

(i) 'Friends of Penlee House'

The minutes of the meeting of the committee of the 'Friends of Penlee House' held on the 25th September and the agenda for the meeting on the 28th November had been distributed to members for information and it was

RECOMMENDED: that receipt be noted.

The Town Clerk also advised that a copy of the latest edition of 'Artefact' had been received and was available from the office for any member who wished to have sight of it and it was, again,

RECOMMENDED: that the position be noted.

(j) Auction of Paintings

The Director advised that the 'Garnier Collection' of paintings was coming up for auction on the 14th December.

The proposal had been for a joint bid with Falmouth Art Gallery for six of the paintings (three per gallery) but due to the tight deadline, there was insufficient time to put together the necessary funding and the Director advised, therefore, that she would wish to make a bid in respect of a Stanhope Forbes painting dated 1884 with an estimated value of £20,000.00 to £30,000.00.

The vendor had agreed to withdraw it from the sale if Penlee House could raise £25,000.00 and the Director advised that the likely funding sources were the V & A and the National Arts Collection Fund with support from the 'Friends' and it was

RESOLVED: that the Director should pursue the acquisition of the painting concerned.

26. **REPORT OF TOWN CLERK**

(a) Report re. Park - Review of Improvement Works and Outstanding Work and Correspondence re. Sensory Garden

The Town Clerk advised of a copy letter which had been forwarded to him by the Civic Society regarding the cider press and its location in relation to the newly constructed Sensory Garden.

The letter expressed concern that the press was not now displayed to its best advantage and suggesting that the press might be relocated.

The Town Clerk advised that the design of the Sensory Garden sought to incorporate the cider press and prior to the work going ahead, drawings had been displayed in the 'Cornishman' and comments invited but none had been received.

The Town Clerk suggested that he discuss the matter with the Garden Designer and Councillor Moreland had also offered some input in this respect and it was

RECOMMENDED: that the Town Clerk proceed accordingly.

In respect of the failure of the plaster and paintwork on the retaining walls of the raised flower-beds, it had already been acknowledged that further remedial work was needed and this would be carried out during March and charged to the new financial year budget and

it was

RECOMMENDED: that the position be noted.

- (b) Resolution to Exclude the Press and Public

It was

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

- (c) Staffing - Links to Budget 2007/08

See Confidential Appendix “B”.

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

It was

RESOLVED: to re-admit the press and the public to the meeting.

- (e) Jewish Cemetery - Application for Scheduling

The Town Clerk advised that concern had been expressed by the local custodian of the Jewish Cemetery regarding a planning application for the property adjoining the cemetery which had been refused by the District Council and was now subject to an appeal.

The custodian had been concerned that the District Council had not taken into account the listed status of the boundary wall of the cemetery and having contacted the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, had been advised that rather than scheduling as stated above, an application should be made to have the cemetery listed as Grade II* which would afford it greater protection and it was

RECOMMENDED: that the Town Clerk work with the custodian on such an application.

- (f) Resolution to Exclude the Press and Public

Due to the confidential nature of the item to be discussed, it was

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

- (g) Security - Penlee House Car Park

See Confidential Appendix “C”.

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

It was

RESOLVED: to re-admit the press and the public to the meeting.

(i) Use of Car Park by Tennis Club

The Town Clerk advised that he had received a letter from the Tennis Club relating to an agreement many years ago where the club had been provided with permits for members to use the car park at off-peak times, ie. evening and Sundays.

The Town Clerk advised that the scheme had not been in existence in his time as Town Clerk and he had written to the Tennis Club pointing out that the Town Council were already helping the club in respect of the peppercorn rent while the club repaid the loan on the clubhouse and it was

RECOMMENDED: that the position taken by the Town Clerk be supported.

27. **FINANCIAL POSITION INCLUDING REVISED ESTIMATES 2006/07 AND ESTIMATES 2007/08**

The Chairman referred to the papers which had been circulated with the agenda and thanked the Town Clerk for the detailed notes which had accompanied the estimates.

The committee then examined all budget headings in detail and took particular note of the proposal to increase the car park charge for the machine from £1.20 to £1.30 per day, with such monies being used to help off-set the increased energy cost and also to the proposed rise in anticipated income in 2007/08 from Penlee House, with such additional income being used to provide improved expenditure in relation to Exhibitions Council Run.

Other budget heads had been inflated in line with the Retail Price Index and it was

RECOMMENDED: that the financial position to the 31st October 2006 be noted and

FURTHER RECOMMENDED: that the revised estimates 2006/07 and the budget in respect of the year 2007/08 be approved. See Appendix 'D' for both financial position and budget estimates.

8.43 pm

Chairman
23rd January 2007