

MINUTES OF THE PENLEE HOUSE AND PARK COMMITTEE MEETING
held in Committee Room No. 3, St. John's Hall, Penzance on Tuesday 23rd January 2007
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. Moreland
J. Parkin

ALSO PRESENT

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

28. **APOLOGIES**

Councillors D.J. Axford, F. Granger and T.E. Williams.

29. **MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 5TH DECEMBER 2006**

Having been circulated, it was

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

30. **REPORT OF DIRECTOR**

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

The Director advised that the final visitor figures for 2006 had stood at 32474, which was a drop of just under 3000 on the previous year, but was still a good number, keeping Penlee House within the top 25% of Museums throughout England.

The visitor figures to date for the financial year stood at 25035, against 35226 for the period to the end of January last year, which was a disappointing drop.

Income from sales in the shop stood at £84,353.00 against £89,067.00 to the end of January in the previous financial year, but added to admission takings, the figure rose to £113,071.00 against £108,353.00 to 31st January the previous year, so it is still looking set to exceed the target income.

The Director advised that the exhibition 'Printmaking in Penwith' had recently opened and was being well received. It was

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

(b) Forthcoming Exhibitions

The Director advised that the next exhibition would be 'Seal's Colony', looking at the work of R.C. 'Seal' Weatherby and his fellow Lamorna artists.

This would be accompanied by a small exhibition celebrating the centenary of Penzance Orchestral Society, which would include Stanhope Forbes's painting 'The Village Philharmonic', on loan from Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery, which had been restored specially (at their expense) to come to Penlee House.

The summer exhibition would be a focus exhibition on Stanhope Forbes, marking his 150th birthday and the 60th anniversary of his death. It was

RECOMMENDED: that the position be noted.

(c) Accreditation

The Director advised that Penlee House had now been granted full Accreditation by the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council. The Director showed the certificate received, which would be framed and displayed alongside the original Registration Certificate. It was

RECOMMENDED: that the position be noted

(d) Acquisitions

The Director advised that Penlee House had been successful in purchasing the small study of a fisherwoman by Stanhope Forbes, dated 1884, from the Garnier Collection.

Having secured sufficient funds to meet the agreed price, the vendor had honoured his agreement to withdraw the painting from auction, despite being advised of a higher offer on the books.

The Capital Taxes Office of the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council had subsequently ruled that the painting meets the 'pre-eminence' criteria to qualify for Capital Gains Tax relief. The final figure to pay had yet to be resolved, but the Capital Gains Tax relief will mean the sum would be reduced by approximately £4000.00. It was therefore

RESOLVED: that the Vendor be sent a letter of thanks for enabling the securing of this painting for the people of Penzance, and that its acquisition be noted.

The Director informed the Committee that another Stanhope Forbes painting would be coming up for sale and recommended that Penlee House try to purchase this work.

The painting was 'The Quarry Team', 1894, and formed part of the estate of Treneere Manor. It was a very large painting and was of great local significance but, because of its dark subject and poor condition, including historical damage caused by a suffragette at the Royal Academy, it had a relatively low value and the auction estimate was £70,000.00 and it was

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

(e) Solicitors' Evening at Tate St. Ives

The Director advised that she had been invited to take part in an awareness-raising evening for Solicitors to be held at Tate St. Ives on Tuesday 24th April 2007. The event was aimed at making Solicitors aware of the potential benefits for their clients in bequeathing money and/or works of art to Museums and Galleries and it was

RECOMMENDED: that the position be noted.

(f) 'Friends of Penlee House'

The minutes of the meeting of the committee of the 'Friends of Penlee House' held on the 28th November 2006 and the agenda for the meeting on the 29th January 2007 had been distributed to members for information and it was

RECOMMENDED: that receipt be noted.

(g) Fire Damage

The Director advised that on the night of Friday 29th December, three youths had started a fire in a recycling bin alongside the Orangery kitchen at Penlee House, causing damage to the guttering, lightning conductor and awning.

The Fire Brigade had been alerted by a Mr Senior, who had been walking his dog in the park, and the Director felt that his prompt action had averted a more major incident.

The Clerk advised that the process of making an insurance claim had been started and that quotations were being obtained in order to make good the damage.

It was felt that the storage of flammable rubbish alongside the building was too great a risk for the future and it was agreed that either a wheelie bin, which would be locked away from the building in the greenhouse compound, or a fire-resistant lockable cabinet would be obtained. It was

RESOLVED: that a safe storage solution for cardboard be obtained at the earliest opportunity and that the installation of further security measures would also be investigated.

31. **REPORT OF TOWN CLERK**

(a) Penlee Park

(i) Tree Survey

The Clerk advised that the Tree Survey had been received and, some works were required under priority one. The Clerk would meet with the park staff to ascertain if any of these works could be carried out 'in house' before putting the works out to tender.

The survey also made reference to some trees that were approaching the end of their lifespan and replacement trees were identified. The Clerk advised that he had received a request for a tree to be donated in memory of a former Minister of Penzance and the Clerk would liaise with the donor to establish the type of tree from the list which may be purchased for this.

Councillor Moreland offered to source costs for the trees and, therefore, would require a copy of the report and it was

RECOMMENDED: that the position be noted.

(ii) Surface Water in Main Field

The Clerk reported that there appeared to be a substantial amount of water in the main field and that at the steps leading to the pond there seemed to be evidence of water seepage. It was thought that this may stem from a burst land drain, perhaps caused by heavy machinery used in the installation of the play equipment crushing the pipe. It was

RECOMMENDED: that the Clerk seek a contractor to investigate what works would be required to rectify the problem.

(iii) Access to the Pond for Maintenance

The gardeners had requested that, in order to carry out work in the pond, it would be necessary to have a removable section of the railings. It was

RECOMMENDED: that the Clerk contact the manufacturer asking if it would be possible to modify the railings.

(iv) 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.

(v) Play Area

See Confidential Appendix "A".

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

It was

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

(b) Memorial Chapel Roof

The Clerk advised that the Town Council's handyman had reported that the ceiling to the Memorial Chapel had started to sag in one corner. The handyman had made an inspection

hole in the ceiling and had found rot in the timbers. The Clerk advised that he would seek the services of a Surveyor to ascertain the damage to the ceiling timbers and it was

RESOLVED: to note the position.

(c) Arboricultural Training - 21st February 2007

The invitation to attend the above had been circulated to all members for information.

It was

RECOMMENDED: that this matter be held over to the full Town Council Meeting for nomination of a representative to attend and the Clerk would ascertain if the council could have a member of the gardening staff to also attend.

(d) 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.

(e) Staffing Matters

See Confidential Appendix "B".

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

It was

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

32. **FINANCIAL POSITION**

The Committee considered its finances to the 30th November 2006 and it was

RESOLVED: to note the position.

The Committee also considered payments made in the months of October and November 2006 and it was

RESOLVED: to approve such payments (see Appendix "C" for both financial position and payments made).

33. **LOCATION SITE OF THE CIDER PRESS**

The Chairman advised that she had met with Councillor Moreland and the Chairman of the Civic Society to investigate the relocation of the Cider Press in Penlee Park following work to the Sensory Garden.

The options were that it be moved to the front lawn by the Morrab Road entrance or that it be moved further away from the Sensory Garden to give a better symmetry.

The Director advised that the movement of the stone should be investigated by a suitably qualified Officer from the Heritage Department of Cornwall County Council, as the stone is in a very delicate condition and the slightest movement could cause further damage to such an important piece of heritage.

It was

RECOMMENDED: that the position be noted.

8.38 pm

Chairman
6th March 2007