

MINUTES OF THE PENLEE HOUSE AND PARK COMMITTEE MEETING held in Committee Room No. 3, St. John's Hall, Penzance on Tuesday 16th September 2008 at 7.00 pm.

PRESENT

Councillors JF Moreland (Chairman)
M Lovegrove (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors MR Cotton
RM Lawrence
D Nebesnuick
J Parkin
TE Williams

ALSO PRESENT

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

13. **APOLOGIES**

Councillors R Clark, JH Dixon, RA Mann, CAC White

Absent without apologies: Councillor F Granger.

14. **TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Parkin declared a prejudicial interest in Minute 16.(f) BAfM Conference Update.

15. **MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 1ST JULY 2008**

Having been circulated, it was

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

16. **REPORT OF DIRECTOR**

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

The Director reported that visitor numbers were down slightly over last year showing 28344 to date this year against 29598 to the end of September 2007 but statistics showed that figures nationally for paid attractions were considerably down, mainly owing to bad weather and the rising fuel costs.

Shop takings for the financial year so far were slightly above those of last year (£53,860 as opposed to £52,584 to the end of August) but overall takings were slightly down (£76,678 against £77,550 at the end of August). However, the Director was optimistic and felt that,

given the current economic climate and the very wet summer, it had still been a good year and it was

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

(b) Forthcoming exhibitions

The gallery was in the process of re-hanging for the next exhibition, 'The Magic of a Line', a display of rarely seen first class drawings and etchings that would run from 20th September to 22nd November and a good response to the exhibition was expected. The exhibition would be opened by Laura Knight's nephew and coincided with the national 'Big Draw' campaign which was aimed at promoting drawing as a leisure pastime for all ages.

The following exhibition, 'A Village in Focus: Mousehole', running from 29th November 2008 to 14th March 2009 was already coming together and would include the original artwork for the book 'The Mousehole Cat' and it was

RECOMMENDED: that the position be noted.

(c) Acquisitions

The gallery was in the process of acquiring a John Opie work 'Old Kneebone of Helston' with funding from the Friends of Penlee but the painting required extensive renovation work estimated at between £1650 and £2300 which could be carried out locally and it was

RESOLVED: that the conservation fund could be used for this renovation work.

The Director was also hoping to acquire a Laura Knight that was on sale for £160,000 but had been offered to Penlee House for £125,000. The Friends of Penlee had pledged £8,000 towards the cost and bids for funding had been placed with the V&A and the Art Fund and the outcome of these bids should be known by Friday 19th September and it was

RECOMMENDED: that the position be noted.

(d) Education/Open Air Theatre Eco Building – report of meeting

A meeting with the retained consultant, the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of this Committee, Councillor Ruhrmund, the Director and the Town Clerk had taken place on 26th August and it was evident that the consultant had a good idea of what the Council was seeking to achieve and a draft sketch of the facility had been drawn up.

The Director also met recently with Toni Kirk of the Acorn Theatre in order to understand the requirements of the Open Air Theatre in relation to the new building and the Director informed members that the improved facilities for schools and larger groups, including the opportunity to serve buffet-style lunches would greatly enhance the services that Penlee House could offer and it was

RECOMMENDED: that the position be noted.

(e) Joint Ticketing Project - update

The joint ticketing project was working well although it was not being actively promoted by Tate St Ives and although the numbers were not great, 300 visitors had used the ticket so far to visit Penlee House and approximately half of these had reported that they probably would not have done so if they had not bought an art pass. Final figures were not yet available and it was

RECOMMENDED: that the position be noted.

(f) BAfM Conference Update

Councillor Parkin declared a prejudicial interest in relation to decorative flags and bunting for the BAfM Conference.

The BAfM (British Association of Friends of Museums) national conference would be taking place in Penzance (hosted by Penlee House) on the weekend of 3rd to 5th October 2008 and, although there had been some organisational problems with speakers and venues being cancelled at a late date, everything was now in place and the Director wished to thank the Friends of Penlee House for all the hard work and effort that had gone into organising this event and it was pointed out that Penlee House is the smallest ever venue to host this national conference.

Flags and bunting would be used to decorate the entrance to Penlee Park and the Queens Hotel where the delegation would be staying and as well as using the existing St Piran's Day flags, banners with 'BAfM' would be produced and the total cost of the flags and rigging would be approx. £600 - £700 and it was

RESOLVED: that the expenditure for the decorations be approved from the previous year's 'over-achievement' of income.

(g) Chiller Malfunction and urgent authorised expenditure

Members were informed that, unfortunately, the chiller unit had malfunctioned during early August and the resulting expenditure for the essential repairs had been approved by the Mayor, the Deputy Mayor and the Chairman of the Finance Committee.

The chiller unit should now last 2-3 years after which time new kit would be purchased from the plant fund and alternative units were currently being reviewed by the maintenance contractor and it was

RECOMMENDED: that the position be noted.

(h) Resolution to exclude the press and public

Due to the confidential nature of the next item it was

RESOLVED: to exclude the press and public.

(i) Security of building – change of contractor

See confidential Appendix ‘A’.

(j) Resolution to re-admit the press and public

It was

RESOLVED: to re-admit the press and public.

(k) AHRC Funding

The Arts and Humanities Research Council had allocated £1 million of funding to be shared between four establishments in Cornwall and, although this did not mean that Penlee House would receive £250,000 in cash as had been erroneously published in the press, it did mean that £110,000 in the form of expertise and support provided by the University of Exeter in Falmouth would be available over an 18 month period to assist with research associated with the planned upgrade and renovation of the social history gallery.

In respect of the physical work relating to the upgrade, funding for the project would be provided by the Town Council, the Friends of Penlee House and, possibly, ‘Your Heritage’ (the Heritage Lottery Fund) and remodelling was scheduled to begin in October 2009 and it was

RECOMMENDED: that the position be noted.

(l) Staffing Matters

The Director informed members with great regret that Julia West, a long standing member of the Penlee House team would be leaving this month and that a replacement member of staff would need to be sourced.

(m) Resolution to exclude the press and public

Due to the confidential nature of the following items, it was

RESOLVED: to exclude the press and public.

(n) Staffing Matters cont’d

See confidential Appendix ‘B’.

(o) Highly Confidential Item

See confidential Appendix ‘C’.

- (p) Resolution to re-admit the press and public

It was

RESOLVED: to re-admit the press and public.

17. **REPORT OF TOWN CLERK**

- (a) Sensory Garden – final report and proposed dedication

The Sensory Garden was now almost complete with just some final planting to take place and it was proposed to hold a short dedication ceremony at approx. 6:30pm ahead of the preview of the March 2009 exhibition. A copper plaque would be produced (by Newlyn Copperworks) that would commemorate the work of Jane Haslam, Leo Penaluna and Michael Johnson who were all involved with the Sensory Garden and it was

RECOMMENDED: that the position be noted.

- (b) Battle of Britain Commemoration Service – 21st September 2008

The Town Clerk reminded members that the Battle of Britain Commemoration Service would be taking place in the Garden of Remembrance on Sunday 21st September starting with a parade from St John's Hall to the Garden at 10:30am and everyone was welcome to attend and it was

RECOMMENDED: that the position be noted.

- (c) The Orangery Café – replacement awning

The awnings over the café terrace were now beyond repair with one of them having to be left open permanently and an estimate had been received for replacement awnings operated by remote control at a cost of £4,785 and it was

RESOLVED: that the expenditure for new awnings be approved.

- (d) Open Air Theatre season – preliminary report of season

A written report from the Acorn Arts Centre on the Open Theatre season was circulated to those present and, although the weather had not been kind with 5 of the 11 shows having to take place in the Acorn, a small profit had been achieved and it was

RECOMMENDED: that the position be noted.

18. **FINANCIAL POSITION**

The committee considered payments made in May, June and July 2008 and its financial position to the 31st July 2008 and it was

RECOMMENDED: that the payments and financial position and notes thereto be approved.

(See Appendix 'D' for both financial position and payments made.)

9:05pm

Chairman
4th November 2008