

MINUTES OF THE PENLEE HOUSE AND PARK COMMITTEE MEETING held in Committee Room No. 3, St. John's Hall, Penzance on Tuesday 3 November 2009 at 7.00 pm.

PRESENT

Councillors J F Moreland (Chairman)

Councillors M R Cotton
R M Lawrence
R A Mann
D Nebesnuick
J Ruhmund (left at 8.20 pm)

ALSO PRESENT

Alison Bevan (Director, Penlee House Gallery & Museum)

18. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE – were received from

Councillors J H Dixon, M Freeman, M Lovegrove, J Parkin, C A C White, T E Williams.

Absent without apologies: Councillor K L W Perry

19. TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

20. MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 15 SEPTEMBER 2009

Having been circulated, it was

RESOLVED - that the Chairman should sign the Minutes as a true and correct record.

21. RESIGNATION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN AND ELECTION TO THE POSITION

The Town Clerk informed those present that Councillor Lovegrove had tendered his resignation from the position of Vice-Chairman but wished to remain on the Committee and it was unanimously

RESOLVED – that Councillor Freeman be elected to the position of Vice-Chairman of the Penlee House & Park Committee.

22. REPORT OF DIRECTOR

(a) Exhibition, income and visitor number report

The Director reported that Penlee House had won the gold award from Cornish Tourism for the small visitor attraction of the year and had been in the final five nominations for the South West Excellence in Tourism awards. The award consisted of a certificate and a glass obelisk that was now on display in the Gallery.

The Committee wished to record its congratulations to the Director and all the staff of Penlee House for obtaining this award.

The Director went on to report that shop takings were below those of the same period last year standing at £70,694.95 at the end of October against £75,830.00 at the end of October 2009, although September had been a fairly good month with above average income. Total takings at the end of October stood at £101,321.33 against £106,919.00 at the end of October 2009.

However, visitor figures had continue to increase and for the calendar year to the end of October showed a record figure of 36,315.

(b) Acquisitions

Penlee House had now secured the silver inkwell inscribed 'The Ship Institute Newlyn', dated 1911, despite the initial controversy over legal ownership that had been satisfactorily resolved with written confirmation of ownership from the vendor and a written waiver of any rights to the article being provided by the Fishermen's Mission in Newlyn. This artefact is a rare example of Newlyn silver and is of great importance owing to its link with the Fishermen's Mission that plays such an important role in the life of Newlyn.

The owner of the painting 'Abbey Slip' by Stanhope Forbes (that had already been lent to Penlee House on numerous occasions) was now selling the work and had offered it to the Gallery at a price of £285,000. It was recognised that obtaining the necessary funding to purchase the painting could be difficult but would be worthwhile pursuing. The Chairman suggested that the owner of the Abbey Warehouse building might be willing to make a donation towards the cost.

A further painting, 'On The Cliffs' by Dame Laura Knight would be auctioned at Sotheby's on 17 December with a guide price of £250,000 to £350,000 and the Director would be very keen to secure this painting for Penlee House that currently did not own a significant work by Laura Knight. However, members felt that the 'Abbey Slip' was also of great importance due to its association with Penzance and the Director would continue to pursue further avenues of funding for either or both of the paintings.

(c) Alarm system

Following the recent break-in there had been problems with the alarm system resulting in numerous call-outs. The alarm company had recommended that the control panel could be changed and upgraded to one that would enable the alarm system to be monitored remotely. The proposed new panel would cost £2,800. The current system of vibration sensors on the windows also represented a problem in that all the sensors were on the same panel and when one failed it was not possible to tell which one it was without inspecting them individually, necessitating the removal of paintings from the walls etc. to access the windows. A new control panel would simplify this although extra cost would be incurred for the installation of new sensors that could only take place during a period when the Gallery was closed.

It had also become evident, as a result of the break-in, that a camera with night vision was required by the front door of the building and this would entail an extra cost of £695. ASG (the security firm) would be conducting a survey in the near future to look at ways of improving security and it was

RESOLVED – that the Committee would approve the expenditure of £3,495 in total for the new control panel and camera.

(d) The Coach House

Plans and approximate costings for the alterations to the Coach House (former Penlee Playgroup) had now been prepared by a local company and were available for members to view. These plans would be used to form the basis of a grant funding application and, if successful, the project would be put out to tender. The aim was to provide a multi-purpose education space for all ages and it was hoped that the building could also be hired out to local community groups.

(e) Launch of Social History Gallery

The new Social History Gallery was due to be launched on Friday 4 December 2009 and would be opened by the Deputy Chairman of Cornwall Council (John Dyer) as the Chairman would be unable to attend. The launch would coincide with the opening of the 'Penlee Inspired' exhibition which was already proving to be hugely popular and many exhibits had already been received. It would not be possible to exhibit all the artwork submitted and there would be a selection process, the criteria for which had been made clear to all entrants.

On the 12th anniversary of the refurbishment of Penlee House, 17 November, there would be a pre-launch of the Social History Gallery for all the volunteers who had worked on the project and this would be combined with the Town Council's 'thank you' party to the stewards. The event would take place from 5.30pm to 7.30pm and all councillors were welcome to attend.

23. REPORT OF TOWN CLERK

- (a) Resolution to exclude the press and public

Due to the sensitivity of the following items, it was

RESOLVED: to exclude the press and public.

- (b) Staffing matters

See Confidential Appendix 'A'.

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

It was

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

24. FINANCIAL POSITION

The Committee considered its financial position to 31 August 2009 and also considered payments made in the months of July and August 2009 and it was

RESOLVED: to approve the financial position and payments (see Appendix 'B' for both financial position and payments made).

The meeting closed at 8.45pm

Chairman
1 December 2009