

WAVERLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE - 2 FEBRUARY 2010

Title:

FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR GODALMING MUSEUM

[Portfolio Holders: Cllrs Roger Steel and Mike Band]

[Wards Affected: Godalming and Surrounding Area]

Summary and purpose:

This report seeks approval to support Godalming Museum financially, on a one-off basis and to review the building rental agreement.

How this report relates to the Council's Corporate Priorities:

Leisure is one of the Council's key priorities and Godalming Museum Trust as operators of Godalming Museum provides an invaluable cultural facility for the residents of Godalming and the surrounding area.

Equality and Diversity Implications:

There are no Equality and Diversity implications.

Resource/Value for Money implications:

The Council's Community Partnership Grant to Godalming Museum is £2,630 in 2009/10. The annual rent for the building, as assessed by Waverley's property team, is £3,880pa. The Council provides a rent-related grant of £2,380 (61%) leaving the Trust to pay the balance of £1,500.

The economic downturn has adversely affected the income generated by the Trust who manages Godalming Museum. This reduction in income will result in the Museum making an operational loss for the first time in many years. The request for a one-off payment will reverse this operational loss in the current year.

Legal Implications:

There are no legal implications.

Background

1. Within Waverley four museums are in operation, all run within different management models with differing support from Waverley. Farnham Museum is run directly by Waverley, Haslemere Museum & the Rural Life Museum are run by separate organisations and supported by Waverley through our partnership grants and advice. Godalming Museum is a mix of both of these operational set ups. Waverley owns the building in which it is situated and maintains responsibility for structural repairs, Waverley directly employs the full time curator and supports the operation financially in the form of a rent reduction and through our partnership grant scheme. The Museum Trust

takes the operational risk of the business. The trust relies on raising monies through donations and sales from their internal coffee and gift shop to maintain an operational breakeven or small operational surplus.

2. The Trust has operated successfully for over 20 years, since 1987, within these financial parameters without needing further support from any other outside body. The current economic downturn has unfortunately had an adverse affect on charitable donations, business sponsorship and shop sales income. The Trust is asking for a one-off grant of up to £5,000 from Waverley to address the impact of the reduction in revenue income for this financial year only. In recent months the shop sales income has started to rise and it is expected that the financial travails suffered this year are the result of exceptional circumstances. The Trust's 2010-11 budget indicates that a near break-even position is expected next year.
3. The Trust is also requesting that, in future years, the rental rebate received from Waverley is reviewed to cover the full amount of the chargeable rent. Currently the museum pays an annual rent, after rebate, of £1,500. An increase in rebate would assist the museum financially on an ongoing basis.
4. The Trust realise that these requests come at a difficult time for the Council and that other charitable organisations within the Borough will also be finding the recession financially difficult. The Trust's Chairman and Treasurer have offered to assist the Council in its review of the operational reorganisation of Farnham Museum for the first year. Their experience of managing a museum, as a charitable trust, will be invaluable to the process of change proposed for Farnham.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Executive:

1. supports Godalming Museum Trust's request for a one-off financial payment of up to £5,000 to assist with the projected deficit on its general operations in 2009/10, to be funded from the revenue contribution to the Revenue Reserve Fund;
2. requests that officers review the building rent and rebate arrangements currently in place alongside the evaluation of the Museum's Waverley Community Partnership grant application; and
3. accepts to the support offered by Godalming Museums Trust's Chairman and Treasurer to work with Waverley during the proposed reorganisation at Farnham Museum.

Background Papers (SDCS)

Godalming Museum Management accounts.

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Comms/exec/2009-10/020210/020 godalming museum