

**Scrutiny Committee Update Report from the
Portfolio Holder for Leisure, Culture and Localism**

CHALLENGE 1: INCOME GENERATION

The museum currently makes around £45k in income. We want to increase this figure and have invested recently in the shop and are all thinking entrepreneurially. Achieving greater income does depend to a great extent on achieving the above (development) aims.

Visitor Figures for July and August 15631 are up over 2500 on the visitors for July and August 2014. In addition income from April to date is £20200 compared to £14577 same time last year increase of £5600. Donations to date £2550 compared to £1700 last year – increase of £850.

CHALLENGE 2: MARKETING

We have no marketing budget at the moment. We need to develop a dedicated website to attract visitors to the same standard as other similar attractions. We need to have a greater visual presence on the road to attract visitors and raise awareness of the service. We are currently working on a rebranding project for the museum and park to give the Brampton a stronger identity to make it more marketable. These issues were highlighted in a grant aided study of our audience and marketing undertaken in 2010/11.

A £2000 marketing budget has been earmarked. New branding has been adopted and we are currently looking at creating a unified signage to direct people from the road and within the park to the museum. Working on the council's new website has been our greatest challenge – we want to create a website that effectively showcases the quality of the offer at Brampton Park and to convert web hits into visits in person. The content management system adopted by the council has hindered our ability to effectively do this. We are planning to use some of the budget to create a professional bank of museum images that can be used on the website.

A highlight of the summer was to be awarded the Trip Advisor Certificate of Excellence for consistently good reviews. Reviewers described it as a “hidden gem” with great staff, quality exhibitions and fun children’s activities set in picturesque surroundings.

The museum Facebook page now has over 1000 likes and is a valuable and powerful marketing tool for the museum.

CHALLENGE 3: FACILITIES MAINTENANCE & IMPROVEMENTS

The museum building needs modernising if the service is to develop and achieve its potential. Galleries need improving as do visitor facilities (café, meeting rooms, toilets etc.), research facilities, education spaces and stores for the collections. The exterior of the building is currently in a poor state of repair which reflects badly on the service.

Classification: NULBC **UNCLASSIFIED**

Museum exterior is currently undergoing surface repair and repainting programme. With new guttering and drainage system installed. The public toilets are due to have a deep clean and redecorating during Winter 15.

Fixed electrical testing report has resulted in planned upgrade to the building electrical system which will be completed in November 15

Plans are in place to erect a temporary learning resource studio at the rear of the building to increase square footage and to relieve the pressures on the building in the short term. This will be used to accommodate school groups and children's parties.

The coffee area of the museum has been extended and improved.

Discussions are taking place regarding investment and funding opportunities to provide long term solutions to the service's sustainability.

OTHER DEVELOPMENTS: PARTNERSHIP WORKING

Maxim's development

We are advising the developers of the Maxim's site on incorporating the history of the site into the final project. They are still awaiting the outcome of an HLF bid which is pending.

Astley Steering Group

We are working with a number of partner organisations on a project to celebrate the life and work of Philip Astley – the inventor of the modern circus who was born in Newcastle. Partners include Newcastle TCP, New Vic Theatre, Staffordshire and Keele Universities, Newcastle College as well as the Van Buren family. The aim is to organise events leading up to the 250th anniversary of the first modern circus performance which is in 2018. An HLF bid will be submitted by the committee for a year of celebration in 2018.

St Giles Development

We are working with Staffordshire University on the historical elements of the St Giles' HLF project. They are awaiting the outcome on an HLF bid which is imminent.

British Ceramics Biennial

Working with the BCB the museum has held a Flower Army workshop to contribute to a major installation. Links with the BCB will be built upon in future years.

Museum Consortium

The museum is part of a consortium of Staffordshire Museums who work in partnership to strengthen the sector locally and work on joint projects to maximize the impact the museums can have on a larger scale. The museum is currently hosting a touring exhibition based around the Great War collections in five Staffordshire museums (Brampton Museum being one). Funding for the exhibition was obtained through a consortiums bid to Arts Council England. Future joint projects are being discussed.