

**BEWDLEY MUSEUM MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE**  
**REGISTERED NUMBER 527511**  
**ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31<sup>ST</sup> MARCH 2008**

Wyre Forest District Council became Trustee of The Bewdley Museum in May 1975, and operates the Museum as a local service under powers contained in the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964.

Bewdley Museum Management Committee is purely of an advisory status with no powers to expend money or set admission fees and is composed of Wyre Forest District Council Councillors, together with representatives of the Friends of Bewdley Museum. Non voting advisory members of the Management Committee are also appointed by Worcestershire County Council, Bewdley Town Council and The Museums, Libraries and Archives (MLA) Council; West Midlands are occasionally represented as required.

The Trustee makes acknowledgement to Wyre Forest District Council for the resources provided in operating the Museum from public funds. Since becoming Trustee in 1975, the Council has previously provided, from public funds, capital finance to the entire complex in the sum of £116,130 for initial works.

Funding of £480,000 was secured from 'The Heritage Lottery Fund' in December 2007, towards works including the building of three new craft units, a cafeteria (for which the licence is to be franchised) and various other building works including elements of educational facilities. The overall project budget is £648,348, including £96,000 match funding from Wyre Forest District Council, £15,000 funding still to be secured and the remainder in 'in kind' support from volunteers and Wyre Forest District Council officers.

Tenders for the building works are scheduled to be opened at Miscellaneous Function Committee on 18<sup>th</sup> August 2008, with works expected to commence in October 2008 and a provisional opening date of 10<sup>th</sup> April 2009.

The opening of the 2008 Season was 21<sup>st</sup> March (Good Friday) with lots of Easter activities and events scheduled over the bank holiday weekend. The third discover Bewdley Weekend was moved from March and took place over the May Day bank holiday weekend.

The ever popular evening concert to support Bewdley Carnival took place on Friday 8<sup>th</sup> June 2007 with local musicians The Chains Blues and Soul Band sponsored by Bewdley Festival and Wyre Forest District Council.

The "Music in the Gardens" programme on Sunday afternoons took place during the period 29<sup>th</sup> July through to 26<sup>th</sup> August 2007. We are grateful to the Friends of Bewdley Museum who sponsored the July concert and Cultural Services for funding the August programme.

The Museum continues to support the revival of traditional and contemporary craft practices with a changing programme of courses and workshops each year.

### **Agenda Item No. 11.1.**

Currently there are six resident craftspeople including, a stained glass maker, textile artists, cabinet maker, fine artist, French polisher and education specialist. A ceramicist potter has temporary residence in the saw yard building.

The clearance and refurbishment of the Air Raid Shelter was completed for March 2008 in a joint project between The Friends of the Museum and the Museum staff. The project was funded in the main through visitor donations. Volunteers of the Friends of the Museum aim to initially open the shelter and provide guided tours for the public for two days during the week and during weekends.

Admissions have continued to rise. The free visitor admission provided an overwhelming total of 92,519 visitors during the season compared to 73,252 last year (an increase of 26 %).

The final Education Service figures for the season showed an increase of 6% over the previous season with 17 new enquiries from a variety of areas and Local Education Authority's (LEA's). 31% of visits came from schools and groups in the Wyre Forest area. 80% of the visiting schools returned a level 5 – very satisfied evaluation of their visit.

This continuing increase in visiting schools and groups was again due mainly to the popularity of the SVR programme 'Blitz & Evacuation' with 35 schools participating including those from as far afield as Oswestry, Sutton Coldfield, Tamworth and Gloucester. With replica gas mask boxes, labels and identity cards provided as part of the programme, the majority of schools participated fully in creating the right atmosphere for their visits by coming dressed in appropriate clothes.

The other SVR partnership programmes – 'River and Rail' and 'Town Trail' also proved popular in their second year. A new joint programme in this series was also introduced entitled 'Bewdley Trades'. In these sessions, children learnt about the various trades and crafts important in the town's history with an illustrated introductory talk plus hands-on sessions and an opportunity to look at related artefacts and skills demonstrated by Museum Technician Dave Darby.

During June, the Education Service worked with pupils from Wribbenhall First School (now Bewdley Primary) on the Wribbenhall Early History Project. In three specially arranged sessions, over 75 children produced replica card models of a building on Stourport Road that is thought to have been a medieval aisled hall. Dendrochronology dating has assessed it as early 14<sup>th</sup> Century. Dave Darby devised the model and the children worked in pairs to assemble their own versions.

'Skip & Play – toys' for Key Stage 1 (KS1) continued to be popular and another KS1 programme 'Fire, Fire' based on the National Curriculum History link and presented by freelance interpreter Paul Harding (Discover History), received a level 5 satisfaction rating from the Kidderminster Home Educated children who use the Education Service on a very regular basis. Paul's work with them for the other new programme – 'Viking Raiders', also received a level 5.

## Agenda Item No. 11.1.

Apart from the usual school groups, the museum had more than the usual amount of visits during the year by adult interest groups including ones as varied as the Grand College Ladies group from Birmingham, two Historical societies from Derbyshire and Alvechurch and a group of 8 calling themselves the Leprechauns simply because they all met in Ireland and share an interest in historical buildings. Another visit from the Stroke Association for yet more varied sessions proved to be another excellent and enjoyable afternoon.

Children's holiday groups also use the site for pre-booked activities such as the local Wyre Forest ones based at St Anne's First School and Church House Day Nursery in Kidderminster.

Children's holiday workshops at Easter as well as those in August gained a 68% occupancy rating with two extra pottery workshops added to the advertised programme Drop in additional brass rubbing sessions also continued to be very popular. Resident textile artist Roslyn Zalin also offered extra drop in children's lino printing sessions in her studio over those four weeks.

Continuing with the Education Services' partnership work with local schools on work experience, Bewdley High School pupil Natalie Palmer spent a varied week on site assisting in many areas.

Unfortunately the Education Service was unsuccessful this time in attaining its fourth Sandford Award for Heritage Education. Adverse factors particularly the site's educational facilities were influential in the decision of the judge despite the fact that prospective plans for its improvement in the future were discussed. Some criticism was made of the programmes on offer but the increased educational figures and a high percentage of '*very satisfactory*' feed back proves that the service is fully curricular based and what teachers want to support their programmes of study. The Service will apply again when proposed improvements have been made under the Heritage Lottery funding.

The Tea Shop licence was relinquished at the end of the 2007 season by local caterer Geraldine Owen as she wanted to concentrate on her other business. Pauline Brookes, who managed the Tea Shop for the previous two years on Geraldine's behalf, has taken on the Licence for the 2008 season. They will continue to offer a range of freshly made sandwiches, savouries, cakes and hot and cold drinks. Opening hours will be extended to reflect those of the Museum.

The Friends of the Museum continue to offer valuable support in many different ways including; administration of the donations & active fundraising at the 'Music in the Garden' events, development, notably the Air Raid Shelter Project in 2007/2008 and Support for the Museum events and exhibition programme. In 2007 The Friends organised the extremely successful 'Bewdley Open Studios' event. Over 40 local artists signed up for the event and over 1500 visitors came through the Museum doors. Tiggerty Boo theatre group performed a themed street drama for the Discover Bewdley weekend and are set to perform again to celebrate the opening of the Air Raid Shelter in 2008.

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The Friends have been nominated by the Museum for an MLA Excellence Award for their 'Jail Project'. They were announced as successful award winners in April 2008.

The Friends continue to grow their group of active volunteers. They cover brass foundry activities during weekends and during the school holidays, help with gardening duties, count the donations, get involved with research for projects, collect donations, offer gallery assistance for exhibitions, help to host events and exhibitions and assist with special projects.

The Friends have enthusiastically supported the Museum's Heritage Lottery bid by canvassing public support and providing funding.

External funding was received throughout the year: £998 from Worcestershire Museum's Association, to purchase additional picture racking for the store. The Friends of the Museum and Kidderminster Educational Foundation provided grants of £3,000 and £1,000 respectively, towards an 'Interpretative Plan' for the HLF project.

Two temporary twelve month staff positions will be funded through the HLF project, An 'Assistant Technician' (in post 1<sup>st</sup> April 2008) and an 'Exhibition and Interpretation Assistant' (in post 21<sup>st</sup> April 2008).

Bewdley Museum Management Committee meeting held on 15<sup>th</sup> January 2008 gave further consideration to the proposed amendments to its Constitution and Terms of Reference as detailed in minute BM72 (see minute number BN72 attached as Appendix 1). Approval to these amendments was recommended by Cabinet of 21<sup>st</sup> February and Council on 27<sup>th</sup> February followed by approval at a Special Meeting of Bewdley Museum Management Committee on 4<sup>th</sup> March 2008.


During the year, the Bewdley Museum Management Committee met five times to consider reports on the running of the Museum.

The Museum and Brass Foundry is now insured jointly with the Guildhall at a total value of £9.4 million. The Exhibits and Displays are insured to a total value of £106,000.

There was no income or expenditure accruing to the Trust.

Signed:   
Linda Collis, Head of Community and Partnership Services

Date: 7<sup>th</sup> August 2008

Signed:   
David Buckland, Head of Financial Services

Date: 8<sup>th</sup> August 2008

**BM.72 CONSTITUTION - THE BEWDLEY MUSEUM**

Further to Minute BM 50 of the 20<sup>th</sup> November 2007 meeting, the Committee considered the following proposed amendments to its constitution. Members had before them a copy of the constitution, which included emboldened details of the proposals.

**Constitution Paragraph 4(b)- Meetings – Annual Meeting**

The Chairman reminded members that, at its November 2007 meeting, the Committee had wished to give further consideration to the possibility of moving the date of its annual meeting to June to align with the beginning of the Council's municipal year. However, he advised that, having discussed the matter with the museum staff, it was considered preferable for the annual meeting to continue to be held in October, i.e. during the winter closure, as June was a particularly busy month for the museum. The committee endorsed this view.

The Committee also considered the following amendments which had been suggested since the last meeting:

**Constitution Paragraph 4(b)- MEETINGS –Setting of Meeting Dates**

The Chairman pointed out that the constitution currently specified that the committee should meet in February, April, June, August and October each year and that the dates should be agreed in February. An amendment was proposed to specify that the Committee should meet at least four times a year, the dates to be agreed at the annual meeting in October. This was supported as it would enable the dates to be set for the year ahead, provide more flexibility and address the issue that August could be a difficult month to hold a meeting.

**Constitution Paragraph 5 - QUORUM**

The Committee agreed to recommend that, in the event of unforeseen circumstances, whereby a member, nominated by Wyre Forest District Council was not present, the meeting could go ahead on an informal basis.

**Constitution Paragraph 6- CHAIRMAN AND VICE-CHAIRMAN**

The Committee agreed to recommend the appointment of a Vice-Chairman from among Wyre Forest District Council Member who were also members of the Committee.

**TERMS OF REFERENCE Paragraphs 2 (J) and (K)**

The Committee noted that the references to the "Area Museum Service" and the Bewdley Museum Society needed to be updated, respectively, to the "Museums, Libraries and Archives Council", the "Museums, Libraries And Archives West Midlands or any subsequent organisation" and the "Friends Of Bewdley Museum".

**RECOMMENDED TO WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL CABINET  
TO RECOMMEND TO WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL**

The following amendments be made to the Bewdley Museum Management Committee Constitution and Terms of Reference as shown in emboldened italics below:

**“4. MEETINGS**

...

***(b) Meetings are to be held –in February, April, June, August and October every year, the dates to be agreed in February for the year ahead and the annual meeting to be held during October at least four times a year, the dates to be agreed at the annual meeting, which is to be held during October. “***

**5. QUORUM**

***“(b) In the event of unforeseen circumstances, whereby a member nominated by Wyre Forest District Council is not present, the meeting may proceed on an informal basis without any decisions being taken.”***

**“6. CHAIRMAN AND VICE-CHAIRMAN**

- (a) At every annual meeting the Committee shall elect a Chairman ***and Vice-Chairman*** from the members who are also members of and nominated by Wyre Forest District Council, who shall remain in office until the end of the next annual meeting.
- (b) If the offices of Chairman ***or Vice-Chairman*** become vacant during the year of office, the Committee may at a special meeting appoint another Chairman ***or Vice-Chairman*** who are also members of and nominated by Wyre Forest District Council to remain in office until the next annual meeting.
- (d) If the Chairman ***and Vice-Chairman*** are not present within ten minutes after the time appointed for the meeting, the members of the Committee then present shall appoint one of their number who is also a member of and appointed by Wyre Forest District Council to act as Chairman during that meeting.”

**TERMS OF REFERENCE**

**Paragraphs 2 (j) and 2 (k)**

References to the “Area Museum Service”, the “Museums Association” and the Bewdley Museum Society be updated, respectively, to the “Museums, Libraries and Archives Council”, the “Museums, Libraries And Archives West Midlands or any subsequent organisation” and the “Friends Of Bewdley Museum”.