

MAIDSTONE MUSEUM 20 YEAR PLAN

JUNE 2017



Mission Statement

Maidstone Museums inspires, educates and challenges its visitors and users through the use of its collections, staff and buildings. We do this by telling the story of Maidstone, its people, their natural environment and the wider world in which they live, through the artefacts and specimens we collect and interpret.

Vision Statement

We will create a diverse and energetic community of people invested and involved in the museum and its collections.

We envision a future where the story of Maidstone and its people will be told through the objects in our care which, in turn, inspire learning, shared experiences and new ways of seeing.

We will achieve this by:

- Delivering a high quality informed service
- Creating a sustainable and resilient organisation
- Caring for and creating access to our collections for present and future generations
- Creating an environment that inspires, educates and challenges visitors and users
- Ensuring that the museum is accessible to all and has the power to transform lives through the use of its collections
- Developing and encouraging a forward thinking and innovative workforce
- Working to nationally recognised standards

The things we value are:

- Enriching people's lives with new experiences and access to amazing collections
- Being inclusive and welcoming to everyone
- Excellence in collections care and interpretation
- Enjoyment of our collections and exhibitions in a friendly, relaxed environment
- Running an efficient and effective service in order to ensure we can be here for generations to come





1. Introduction

In January 2015 a report was taken to the Council's Heritage, Culture and Leisure Committee with the following recommendations:

- a) That a Strategic Board be established to shape a vision for the museums service for the next 20 years and to oversee delivery of that vision.
- b) That the vision should link to Maidstone Borough Council's (MBC's) strategic plan and in particular to the Culture & Heritage Positioning Statement and Destination Management's Plan's ambitions to grow Maidstone as a cultural and heritage destination and broaden its appeal to visitors.
- c) The vision should reflect Maidstone's status as one of the largest museum services in Kent, with the largest collection in Kent, some of which is of international significance.
- d) The vision should be ambitious, seeking to re-gain the position of Maidstone Museums as the county museum service and to become one of the South East's hub services.
- e) Maidstone Museums should be a flagship museum service and a nationally recognised tourist destination; a service that is well used by the local community and of which they are proud; but which also draws audiences from across the country forming the cornerstone of Maidstone's tourist economy.

To achieve this vision, the museum service will need to be attaining best practice in the following areas:

- Visitor experience and audience development.
- Curatorship, interpretation and access to collection.
- Entrepreneurship and ongoing sustainability.
- Leadership in the sector and ability to be mentor smaller services.

These reflect the Arts Council priorities of:

- Care for Collections
- Connect with people
- Create a sustainable service.

Accordingly, a Strategic Board was established and has met several times during 2016 and 2017 with the following membership:

Paul Hudson, former chairman of Heritage Lottery Fund south-east region and Kent Ambassador (Chairman)

Emma Liddiard (until March 2017), Managing Director Global.com and Kent Ambassador

Cllr Fran Wilson, MBC

Cllr David Pickett, MBC

Michael Cooke, Arts Council South East

Lucy Keeley, Kent County Council

Joanna Low, South East Museums Development Service

Dawn Hudd, MBC

Victoria Barlow, MBC

Mark Baker, Maidstone Museums Foundation

The Board identified several key issues concerning the existing museum operation, and these include:

- Complexity of the ownership of several major collections
- Future of the Carriage Museum
- Updating the collections and exhibitions
- Marketing and branding
- Visitor facilities
- Opening hours
- Opening up the “back door” to Brenchley Gardens

The Strategic Plan seeks to consider how these issues can be addressed in conjunction with gallery redisplays that can attract outside investment and provide value for money for MBC's investment.

If major issues around the quality of offer, resident awareness and involvement and governance/ownership of collections are addressed swiftly, the real likelihood is that the spectre of a situation where the museum will stagnate and decline to a state where opening is no longer viable can be avoided. If not, Maidstone Borough Council would still be liable for the cost of maintaining both buildings and collections for no discernible benefit and, indeed, reputational damage.

The Strategic Board did not take this pessimistic view. Rather, it concentrated on the central role that the museum performs and needs to continue to play in the identity of Maidstone itself and the long history it represents. This report is therefore the outcome of the Strategic Board's recommendations to the Council about how best to resolve these issues in order to make the most of the major asset to Maidstone that the museum provides.





2. Context – the national, regional and local picture

This Strategic Plan sits within the context of priorities set nationally and regionally for the museums sector and within MBC's own objectives for the role heritage and the museums will play in the future development of Maidstone and its economy.

The Department of Culture, Media and Sports Culture White Paper, published in 2016, highlighted the government's commitment to the right of everyone to enjoy cultural activities and made special reference to those facing barriers to participation or employment because of the sector's lack of diversity and its impact on inclusion. The same White Paper promoted the importance of heritage in place-making. Maidstone Museums are ideally placed to respond to this agenda, working as part of the Council's Regeneration and Economic Development service.

Kent County Council is currently in the process of producing a Cultural Strategy for the county. It is hoped that the Strategy will provide clear paths to cooperation and partnership with arts organisations across the county. Maidstone is already a leading member of the Kent and Medway Museums Partnership.

Maidstone Borough Council's Strategic Plan 2015-2020 makes it clear that the museum has an important role to play in the development of the cultural offer in the town. One of the two priorities for the Borough Council is 'Keeping Maidstone Borough an attractive place for all' and one of the action areas for this is 'Respecting the character and heritage of our borough'.

The Maidstone Destination Management Plan produced by Blue Sail in 2015, also makes clear that Heritage has an important role in attracting visitors to Maidstone. Over 50% of overseas visitors said it was a major factor in their visit to the town, although it is recognised that the museums are only one part of the heritage offer locally.

Most recently, the Culture and Heritage Positioning Report commissioned by Maidstone Borough Council and produced by Nick Ewbank Associates in 2015 stressed the importance of finding a positive solution to the placement and under-use of the Carriage Museum at the Tithe Barn, Maidstone.

All of these plans feed into this Strategic Plan in order to ensure that Maidstone Museums continue to "harness the nourishing effects of culture" (Ed Vaizey MP, The Culture White Paper (2016)) for the benefit of the people of Maidstone.

3. Maidstone Museums: The current service

Maidstone Museums is made up of three, technically separate, museums – Maidstone Museum and Bently Art Gallery, The Queens Own Royal West Kent Regimental Museum and Maidstone Carriage Museum. The first two of these are co-located at the St Faith's Street site, whilst the Carriage Museum is a separate building in Mill Street. They are all funded, managed and operated by Maidstone Borough Council. However, there is also a complicated pattern of ownership of collections within the museums of long-standing which will need to be simplified if the current service is to be improved. The main museum opens 6 days a week (5 in winter) and the Carriage Museum has a limited hours, summer-only opening. This difference is reflected in the visitor figures.

3.1 Collections

The museum collections are at the heart of everything Maidstone Museums offer and the collections of over 600,500 artefacts and specimens are outstanding in their diversity and quality. They form the largest collections in Kent and are recognised as one of the South East's most important mixed collections.

Three collections are of exceptional national importance:

Japanese – The Japanese collection of Fine and Applied Art from the Edo period is acknowledged as the best, most comprehensive collection in public ownership outside a national museum. The 3,000+ artefacts include rare and exceptionally high quality pieces. They were collected, in large part, by two local men, Marsham and Samuel. Other pieces were added by Julius Brenchley.



The Brenchley collection – Lucius Julius Brenchley was born into a wealthy Maidstone family. Between 1845 and 1867 he went travelling around the world collecting thousands of objects while living with indigenous groups in North America and with the Royal Navy in the Pacific. Many of the items in the collection come from New Zealand and the Solomon Islands. Other items from his collection were bequeathed to the British Museum and The Pitt Rivers Museum in Oxford.



The Tyrwhitt-Drake Carriage collection – comprising approximately 60 specimens of horse drawn transport the collection is widely regarded as the best public collection of carriages in the country and one of the finest in Europe. As a reflection of its national significance, the collection includes objects from the Royal Mews and the V and A, and is housed in its own museum in the mediaeval stables of Maidstone's Archbishop's Palace. However, the building has severe limitations in terms of facilities and environment for visitors and schools. Thus it is only currently open in summer and has a limited number of visitors. These limitations will need to be addressed if the collection is to take its rightful place in the story of Maidstone.

Beyond these national collections, there are extensive holdings of British and foreign archaeology (including two human mummies); county wide social history material; worldwide ethnography; over 20,000 coins and medals; the finest ceramics collection in the region and over 9,000 items of costume and textiles. The museum also holds 600 oil paintings (including works by Continental Old Masters), 2,500 watercolours and drawings and over 3,500 prints.

The Natural History collections include zoological holdings forming a comprehensive collection of British birds, mammals and insects. Geology includes important collections of minerals and palaeontology. Botanical collections include 30,000 specimens representative of British flora and include type specimens.



3.2 Cost of service

The museum budget for 2017-18 is £1,076,930 and the detail is included as Appendix1.

As with any front facing service, there is a significant element of spending on staff salaries and on-costs. A staffing review was carried out in 2016 and this reduced structure is now in place. Two key posts are currently funded through an Arts Council grant scheme, and it is anticipated that these posts will become self-financing over the next 5 years.

Volunteers have traditionally only been used by the collections team for packing and cataloguing and are currently under-used elsewhere in the museum. New roles have now been identified in exhibitions, learning and visitor operations. Gallery volunteers will allow us to increase the human interaction our visitors receive. The main Maidstone museum building in St. Faith's Street is somewhat sprawling and confusing and guides will be on hand not only to impart historical and collections information but also to direct and advise visitors who are a bit lost.

Income generation is actively being pursued by all departments within the museum through successful programmes such as children's parties, schools sessions and retail. This is being further developed with the introduction of charges for entry to Temporary Exhibitions, a wider range of paid for events and improved marketing of room hire.

Sponsorship and partner funding is actively sought for both project and revenue funding, and the museum activities as a whole are strongly supported by the Maidstone Museum Foundation as a separate Friend's organisation.

3.3 Audiences

Visitor figures are critical for showing the health of the museum service. While the museum records a range of figures for use of the service both on and off site, the figures below show the number of visits by people to the museums sites whether for a general visit, school trip or event.

2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
62,692	81,417	72,489	74,291	84,262	69,813

It is clear from these figures that the opening of the East Wing entrance in 2012 encouraged much higher visitation than previously. The dip in 2014/15 was caused by a closure period necessary for remedial works to the reception area, while 2015/16 benefited from the unprecedentedly popular Lego exhibition, Brick City. 2016/17 shows very disappointing figures in comparison. The success of Lego was not duplicated and the museum was closed, for the first time, on Mondays which affected visits. Monday closure was instigated to reduce the Visitor Experience Officer expenditure and allowed other teams to carry out work in galleries that could not be done while the public were present. However, the impact on reduced visitor numbers for 2016/17 was inevitable.

Sampling work has shown that the museum's audiences tend, in general terms, to be 30-45 year olds with children or the active retired. Work is being carried out through projects to reach those under 24 and those over 65, especially people at risk of isolation. The museum's social history collections will need to represent both modernity and the diversity of people in the area and so this will be tied closely to the Audience Development Plan.

However, it is clear from visitor feedback that the museum offers a high quality experience, reflected in exceptionally high scoring reviews on Facebook and Trip Advisor. The museum presents an appealing and inviting offer backed up by an excellent modern website, and plainly much progress has been made in trying to overcome the difficulties of a complex building through floor plans and signage to guide visitors.

Overall though, the collection strengths are not recognised by the majority of visitors. The most popular and regularly visited galleries are those relating to ancient Egypt and Geology (the Dinosaur Gallery). Work to improve the quality of galleries has begun with the 2017 redevelopment of the Egyptian gallery into the Ancient Lives gallery - but it is also clear that the real artefacts in the Geology gallery are not as popular as the scene stealing plastic dinosaurs!

It is vital that the profile of the collections must be raised and their importance shared with the residents of Maidstone, as they have been, more successfully, with academics and specialists. This will require the redevelopment and reordering of the older galleries to tell a consistent story and make clear their relevance to life in Maidstone in the past and the future.



4. A vision for Maidstone Museums

A SWOT analysis (Appendix 2) carried out in 2015, identified a large number of issues and opportunities for the museums. This provides a helpful checklist sitting alongside the main considerations identified by the Strategic Board mentioned in the introduction which form the recommendations for the Strategic Plan.

4.1 Quality of collections and storytelling

Collections are the 'Unique Selling Point' of any museum. Maidstone Museums have, as highlighted above, collections of national and international importance. In addition they hold collections which tell the stories of the people of Maidstone and its surroundings throughout history. The audit of current collections means that the museum will not only hold the objects with the most relevance to the borough but will also show where there is a need for development. It is clear that little contemporary collecting has been carried out which means that there is an imbalance in social history and the ability to tell the story of recent history. This is especially important at a time when Maidstone is seeing unprecedented growth in both the numbers and diversity of its residents.

Maidstone's unique history as a centre of Kent life and home to explorers, travellers and migrants provides for a wealth of stories to be told using the collections. Artefacts from all over the world sit alongside the everyday reminding us that as well as the County Town, Maidstone and its people have travelled and been part of a much wider world just as today increasing numbers of residents have experience of life elsewhere. It is those experiences, stories and memories that will allow visitors to find connections with their own lives and, in turn, share their own.

The most modern displays in the Museum, particularly in the newly constructed East Wing, are of a standard matching that of the best museums in the country. However, others are decidedly tired and badly in need of updating. Perhaps most important is the need to substantially improve the displays dealing with Maidstone itself which are presently cramped despite containing individual objects and artefacts of enormous importance and appeal. At the same time, decisions need to be taken about the continuing relevance of some displays such as the costume gallery and what stories they need to tell in relation to the overarching purpose of the museum. Once these priorities are settled and detailed proposals established, then external funding support needs to be sought to implement them.



4.2 The Carriage Museum

Formerly known as the Tyrwhitt-Drake Museum of Carriages, the Carriage Museum has been housed in the Tithe Barn in Mill Street since its opening in 1946. It is centrally located, close to plentiful parking and next to a pocket park which provides a tranquil space to enjoy the architecture of this 14th century building. The Board considered whether the Carriage Museum is a liability which should be closed and a new owner sought for the collection. The carriage collection, as has been noted, is of considerable importance nationally and internationally and in the Board's view has massive potential for supporting learning in science, technology, engineering and maths as well as local history

At present, the displays are very crowded and poorly explained. Some of the less important items could be removed from display to improve the appeal and integrity of the overall collection. There are considerable drawbacks with the current building in that it has never been converted for museum purposes and so lacks heating, toilet facilities or room for school groups. However, subject to the appropriate statutory permissions, the building could be extended into the park to create a new entrance and facilities, including lift access to the second floor. It would then be possible to allow for year-round use and the ability to secure a large increase in visitation. Plainly this is a project on its own which would require some considerable resources and the first step is to draw up a detailed proposition to enable the costs to be established and the appropriate funding then sought for implementation.



4.3 Community relationships

With new and planned housing development, improvements in infrastructure and travel times to London alongside general population growth, Maidstone Borough has and will continue to grow at a fast rate. At its most basic, this growth will provide an increasing market for the museums' services but it will also provide opportunities to diversify the workforce, volunteer background and stories told by the museums.

There are two strands to be developed here. The first is the involvement of people in the museum as volunteers. A successful scheme is already running in the collections department and this has been expanded to Learning, Visitor Services and Public Programming in early 2017. Volunteers not only bring increased capacity to the museum but also fresh thinking, ideas and commitment. In return the museum provides volunteers with both formal and informal learning opportunities, skills and experience which can be used in career or personal development as well the health and well being benefits of being part of a team and avoiding isolation.

The second strand is the development of working relationships with residents and users. A modern museum can not operate without the cooperation of those whose story it purports to tell. The days of the curatorial voice being the only authority are gone. Visitors want and expect to see themselves and their lives reflected in the displays, marketing and event programming of the museums. Groups and individuals will need to be involved at all stages of planning and providing services. This will require a large cultural change as decision making powers will need to be surrendered by those who have long held them and consider themselves to know best. However, the power of working with the people in whose name the collection is held will result in a better used, loved and understood shared history.



4.4 Lack of physical access

All three constituents of Maidstone Museums are housed in historic buildings, The Carriage Museum is housed in a Grade 1 listed building, whilst the main museum itself in St Faith's Street is a Grade 2* listed building, so both are of extreme importance to the built heritage of Maidstone in their own right, let alone the uses they contain. Whilst these provide attractive surroundings for the collections, they are often impractical for modern demands. For first-time visitors, the main museum is difficult to navigate, despite some recent major improvements in providing floor plans and signage. Currently the main museum has access only via stairs to the majority of galleries. Refurbishment work will allow access to three more with the installation of a two-storey lift.

An access audit was carried out in 2016 which shows that whilst it would be possible to create accessible routes around the museums, these would depend heavily on funding and approval from the planning authority. A comprehensive improvement programme is therefore needed to make the layout of the galleries in the main museum more comprehensible and intelligible, and at the same time improve access for disabled visitors.

In addition, the museum backs onto Brenchley Gardens which historically forms an integral part of the building but is practically isolated from it by the lack of any rear access. In the Board's view, the Gardens represent a major asset to the museum which needs to be realised by opening up the back of the museum building to enable much easier visitor flows, with the opportunities to use some of the outdoor spaces more purposefully. With an eye on the prospective redevelopment of the Maidstone East station site and adjoining sites, there is every advantage to the museum in looking at this whole sector of the town in a comprehensive way to maximise linkages and increase the profile and appeal of the museum itself.

4.5 Lack of collections expansion space

As part of the East Wing project in 2012, two new environmentally controlled stores were constructed. These have provided museum quality storage for a large part of the museums' collections. However, following the move from Chillington House of offices and smaller storage spaces, many items are now stored in cellars, an attic and former gallery. The museum currently has no expansion space and a hold was placed on collecting in 2015-16. While it is desirable that as many objects as possible are on display at any one time, it is impossible to show all the collections at once and so storage is essential for the protection of collections. In order for the museum to represent the history of the borough thoroughly, there is a need to continue and, as noted above, especially contemporary collecting. Without sufficient storage space it would be irresponsible to bring new items into the collection and we would be unable to represent life in a large part of the 20th and all of the 21st centuries.

4.6 Governance

The museum service currently manages and cares for collections and buildings as well as operating the museums. Governance is provided by MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL through the Heritage, Culture and Leisure Committee.

However, the ownership of items is more complicated. The majority of objects (for ease known here as the Museum Collection) are held in Trust by Maidstone Council on behalf of the people of Maidstone. The Collection therefore is neither a realisable asset nor will its ownership be passed to another organisation even if stewardship is. This means that in the event of the museum service passing from the local authority control, the Collection would not become the property of any new entity.

Not all items held by Maidstone Museums are part of the Museum Collection. Some are on loan from other organisations such as other museums or private individuals. Much work has been done in the past few years on formalising and updating these arrangements. All loans are now only taken for a specific purpose and for a maximum of 5 years.

In addition, the museum hosts collections owned by the Bentrif, Brenchley and Queens Own Royal West Kent Regimental Museum (QORWKRM) charitable trusts. Further, the QORWKRM has only one corporate trustee – Maidstone Borough Council. These collections are cared for, managed, documented and displayed by the museum service although no Service Level Agreement exists for any of the collections. In addition, The Bentrif Trust also retains a claim over the use of various spaces in the museum.

A consultant, Julie Cole, has been appointed to carry out a review of current and future governance issues which will be put before the Council in parallel with this Strategic Plan. Museum services across the country have followed different models in recent years and these will be reviewed in order to make recommendations of the most sustainable solution for Maidstone Museums.

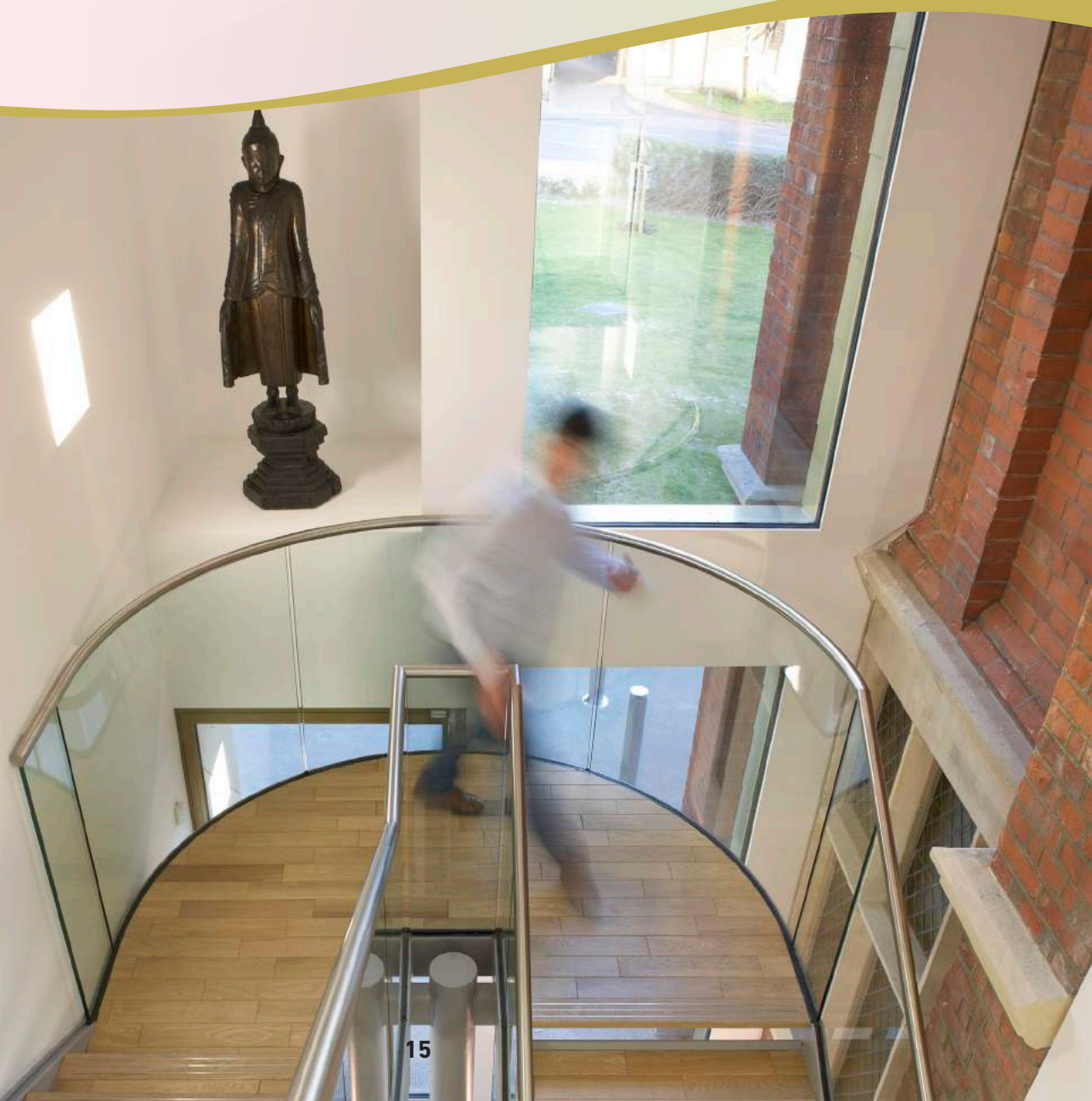
It has become very clear that the relationship between the Council, Museum and Trusts is complex and lacks a standard form of agreement, and it is crucial that these relationships are clarified and simplified. Julie Cole has met the trustees of all of these Trusts as well as other stakeholders as part of the review to determine the best solution for Trusts, Council and Museum.

Whatever form of governance is introduced, the branding of the all different parts of the service as Maidstone Museums (rather than for example the Tyrwhitt-Drake Museum of Carriages) is vital in showcasing the size and the importance of our collections and stories to the town and its residents. None of this detracts from the historic importance of the original collections, their name recognition and contribution to the current museum, but if the recent strides in improved marketing are to be maintained and then a simple inclusive brand is essential.

4.7 Opening Hours

There is an obvious dilemma in matching the costs of opening the museums against the pattern of visitation, such that the buildings are open during the most popular core times and closed when visitor numbers are low. The main museum is now open six days a week whilst the Carriage Museum is limited to weekends only during the summer months. Experience from museums elsewhere suggest that visitor expectations are much more broad with pressure for evening opening alongside seven days a week, and indeed Maidstone has had popular success with the programme of evening lates.

The main museum is also the location of the visitor information centre, and plainly this is of limited value as it is constrained by museum opening hours, including not being open at all on Mondays. To make the museum a fully functioning attraction at the heart of Maidstone's visitor offer, the objective should be to return to opening the main museum every day of the week and if possible extending closing times. The Carriage Museum is a separate issue, considered above.



4.8 Funding

The report referred to in the introduction proposed the allocation of a capital budget set out in Appendix 3 to facilitate the most efficient running of the museum and maximise the potential for income generation.

The capital projects identified for 2016 -18 address immediate concerns:

- Firstly improvements to the building which will improve the efficiency of staff by enabling them to multi-task and take on additional tasks during quiet time. These works include creating a second workspace/ reception area at the old reception area and re-routing CCTV to the old reception desk.
- Secondly, improvements are proposed that will increase the ability to generate income and draw more visitors into the building. These works include refurbishing the 'old education room' to meet the standards of the learning studio which doubles our capacity for delivering children's parties and improves the learning offer and improvements to the outside of the building to attract visitors.

A second phase of the capital programme would reflect the ambition of this Strategic Plan. These works are key to fully realising the museums potential and to addressing larger concerns with the buildings. Projects would address DDA issues, heating and environment in the central and west wing of the building, the need to consider position of the café, visitor flow and redisplay of the galleries. Some of these projects will require additional fundraising to make them a reality.

Currently the full cost of managing, running and maintaining the museums is borne by Maidstone Borough Council. With continuing cuts to public spending by successive governments, it is clear that this cannot be sustained. Whilst the museum has already made moves to increase and diversify its own income streams, this currently covers only a fraction of costs. There is a real danger of funding cuts damaging the museum's ability to carry out basic work and making developments of the type outlined in the vision above impossible.

Over the past 20 years, museums have relied on capital funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund in particular to carry out transformative capital projects such as new museum buildings or the development of refurbished galleries as will be necessary here. It has become clear more recently that, not only is competition becoming heavier, but also that the requirement for partnership funding is a barrier to many organisations, especially local authorities faced with spending cuts. The museum currently has a significant commitment to capital expenditure from Maidstone Borough Council but by no means all the funds it will need to update and improve the museum facilities. The challenge to management will be to attract investment from external sources for a programme of updates to be made within an overall framework to maintain a sense of a coherent whole.



5. Next Steps

If the proposals in this Strategic Plan are to be realised, then a substantial programme of work is necessary to develop projects in detail, in order to establish likely costs as the basis for preparing individual bids for external funding support. The following table contains proposed actions in the immediate period and the medium and long terms as a starting point.

Short Term 1-5 years	Medium Term 6-10 years	Long Term 11-20 years
Governance review	Gallery redisplay phase 2	Resilient governance and funding achieved
New governance model introduced	Museum café move	Review success of advisory panels
Opening of Ancient Civilisations Gallery	Japanese gallery move	Gallery reviews.
Carriage Museum options appraisal	Complete Carriage Museum project	
Gallery redisplay framework created and phase 1	Storage improvement plan implemented	
Learning service funding secured	Community Action Plan in operation	
Museum café brought in-house	Advisory panels formed and operating	
Capital programme completed	Address parking issues	
Storage improvement plan completed	National Awards such as Kids in Museums or museum of the Year	
Programme of in-house exhibitions only launched		
Raised awareness and resident satisfaction		

6. Maidstone Museums 2037

As a concluding section, it is perhaps helpful to articulate a possible vision for how Maidstone museums would look in 20 years time, if at least some of the hopes and opportunities set out in this report are realised.

In 2037 Maidstone Museums will be a vibrant and active service open seven days a week, regularly used by many members of the local community and visitors from further afield, which engenders a feeling of ownership and pride among local people.

The museums' collections will be at the centre of what we do but we will know more about them and be able to share that with audiences both in the museum and via digital platforms. The museum will answer clearly and confidently the questions "Why are these things here?" and "Why does this matter to Maidstone?" whilst allowing people to enjoy and share their own reactions to our artefacts.

One of the first differences you will notice will be the number of people coming to the museum buildings to have fun in non-traditionally museum ways. They might be using the café, taking part in a drawing workshop or attending a birthday party. They may be joining the exercise class in the library, the discussion group in the art gallery or browsing the shop for gifts they can't find elsewhere in Maidstone. Carriage drivers visiting from Belgium will want to see all of our collections having enjoyed the display about our other collections while visiting the Carriage Museum. There may be a couple of teenagers waiting to be collected after school and finding a space where they feel safe but not fussed over. It is vital that the museums lose their image of being places to visit with school or with bored grandchildren and instead become a community hub where people feel at home but open to new ideas, challenges or debate.

For the carriage collection in particular, investment in the form of new facilities, interpretation and branding will be needed to allow this internationally important collection to take its place alongside the other jewels in Maidstone's crown. This could mean a radical re-think of how the museum building is laid out and what stories the collection can tell.

The stories told by displays and exhibitions will be exciting, modern and created with societies and members of the community. They will tell interesting stories in exciting and interactive ways. These people might be chosen for specialist knowledge or experience (e.g. Kent Association for the Blind, Maidstone Nepalese Community, Kent Archaeological Society etc.) or purely because they are interested in taking part as individuals. The museum will be less reliant on temporary exhibitions to bring repeat visits as the permanent displays will be change more often and will be flexible with less built-in set construction and cases and better use of movable and temporary displays. Interpretation will be carried out in ways other than wall-mounted panels. These could include the 2037 iteration of digital solutions such as apps or audio-guides which it is impossible to define now but would also include interaction with volunteer gallery guides who may be costumed but who can deliver information in a much more tailored way for visitors.

The museum may charge for entry or for particular exhibitions but the quality of these exhibitions will mean that any charge will be justifiable. Temporary exhibitions will be suggested and created by public or groups working with our staff to provide a programme which highlights the museums' collections as well as reflecting multiple voices and previously unheard stories.

The museum's learning programme for schools will continue to provide an excellent service. A teacher advisory panel will help guide development of new materials and reactions to inevitable curriculum changes. In the informal learning area, a wide range of events will take place at various times of the day. Some of these are small and easy to create (e.g. 5 minute gallery talks by volunteers) others such as the annual Family Fun Day or Night at the Museum event will require significant sponsorship and fundraising efforts by Maidstone Museum Foundation and museum staff together.

Events will be carefully thought through to attract specific audiences and may take place in one of the museum buildings or elsewhere in the borough such as village halls, libraries or in the street (weather permitting!) Again, a vital part of the museums development is to move beyond the walls of the museum buildings into those parts of our community and borough where people not currently visiting are found or would be comfortable to go. Working with partners from an early stage means that where external funding is being sought, the costs of these events can be built in.

As well as community partnerships in the form of volunteering programmes, joint projects and co-production of museum content, we will continue to build more formal connections with local societies and organisations, individual researchers, academics, university departments and other museums through specialist subject networks (SSNs) which allow us access to expertise not held by those on staff. Museum staff will increasingly need knowledge of non-traditional areas such as fundraising, working with hard to reach audiences and creating networks.

The organisation running the museum will no doubt be under-pressure to find more money each year but the ability of the museums to generate income and pay for itself will have grown and the solution chosen after the 2017 review will have allowed a more sustainable funding model to develop.



Appendix 1.

MUSEUM RUNNING COSTS 2017-18				
	Museum	Carriage Museum	Learning Service	Total
Staff costs	£497,800	£14,360	£63,880	£576,040
Property costs - maintenance (planned and reactive)	£88,000	£10,200	-	£98,200
Property costs - Non-domestic Rates	£111,340	£7,460	-	£118,800
Property costs- Gas and electricity	£58,400	£4,390	-	£62,790
Other property costs	£66,040	£5,710	-	£71,750
Stock for shop	£29,800	£400	-	£30,200
Collections Management	£5,000	-	-	£5,000
Exhibitions and events	£18,000	-	-	£18,000
Other controllable costs	£56,840	£3,390	£17,910	£78,140
SUB TOTAL RUNNING COSTS	£931,220	£45,910	£81,790	£1,058,920
Income- Room hire	-£14,000	-	-	-£14,000
Income- Children's parties	-£15,000	-	-	-£15,000
Income- Exhibitions/ events	-£20,600	-	-	-£20,600
Income - Retail sales	-£43,000	-	-	-£43,000
Income -Grant	-	-	-£77,600	-£77,600
Income-other	-£15,200	-£2,000	-£24,300	-£41,500
TOTAL INCOME	£107,800	£2,000	£101,900	£211,700
NET RUNNING COSTS	£823,420	£43,910	-£20,110	£847,220
Recharges- Central charges	£42,100	£6,010	£2,270	£50,380
Recharges- Departmental Overheads	£172,330	£5,250	£1,750	£179,330
RECHARGES	£214,430	£11,260	£4,020	£229,710
TOTAL MUSEUM BUDGET	£1,037,850	£55,170	-£16,090	£1,076,930
Depreciation	£645,000	£22,500	-	£667,500

Appendix 2 – SWOT Analysis

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality and breadth of collections • Historic buildings • Existing partnerships • Location – next to Train Station and edge of Park • Public Programmes • Reputation – Regionally and Nationally • Professional staff • Volunteer programme • External funding and earned income • Formal learning programme • Proactive and forward thinking • Temporary exhibitions – new audiences and repeats • Additional Facilities – TIC, toilets, café • Corporate offer – room hire • Separate Foundation for Friends and fundraising • Local Authority run 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of space and storage • Tired and dated permanent displays and gallery spaces • Access – physical, intellectual • Location – not in Town Centre • Signage – Building externally/internally and Town • Communication • Not a University Town • Council run • Discretionary service • Funding reliant • Funding constraints - projects • Café – outside provider • Ownership – Bentlif Trust and LA • Documentation backlog • Cleanliness • Carriage Museum – location, condition, overall visitor experience • IT support
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community partners • Partnerships & networks • Improvement to access building, collections & learning • Retail Development • Redevelopment of Maidstone East; Public Realm work • New housing developments- audiences • Marketing capacity • Front of House – training and process • User and Stakeholder consultation • Exhibitions and events programme • Learning – Informal learning, teenage audiences • Joint projects & funding–public health • Regional, national & international partnerships • Gallery development • Volunteer programme • Corporate development – membership, loans, sponsorship • External Funding, Donations, Friends memberships • STEAM agenda at Carriage Museum 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Political change • Senior leadership change • Change in MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL strategic direction and priorities • Reputational damage • Budget cuts • Café management – bust • External funding cuts • Loss of staff • Change in funding landscape • KAS moving with their collection • Trusts leavingx

Appendix 3 – Planned Capital expenditure

Project	Planned Capital Expenditure 2017-2018 Programme detail	Total cost (000)	MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL	Other
Egyptian Gallery to Ancient Civilisations Gallery	Refurb of Egyptian Gallery into Ancient Civilisations Gallery taking advantage of necessary building works for damp (already programmed) to improve a tired and shabby gallery.	200	10	HLF up to £79k, MMF fundraising £90k
	Upgrade Old Education room (to modern classroom 25m sq). Also providing additional space for children's parties to meet demand - current usable space fully booked.	30	30	30 TBC
	Install a lift to provide full access to 3 galleries which are difficult/impossible to access for families with buggies and wheelchair users.	110	110	
HLF up to £79k, MMF fundraising £90k	Enables a second workstation for VSA + wayfinding in the west wing for customers. Improves security	10	10	
	Move CCTV system from 1st floor to old reception area. Equipment malfunctioning due to overheating in current space. VSA time unproductive due to monitoring equipment and not able to carry out any other duties.	20	20	
External improvements	Scope improvements to outside of building to improve visibility/attractiveness from Fremlin Walk, St Faith Street and station. Architect procured to create a design - needs a cohesive approach which takes into account listed building consent.	5	5	
	Mark bays to side of museum for efficiency/ deliveries/disabled access space and to better manage non-museum cars parking across fire exits.	3	3	
Replace electrical distribution boards and upgrade wiring	Existing wired fuses to be replaced with RCBs. Upgrade existing wiring to comply with current standards.	60	60	
		438	239	199

Potential capital Projects years 3-5	Programme detail	Est. costs (000)
External		
Improve visibility of museum entrance from street (signage/lighting/public art)	Improve footfall & customer satisfaction	25
Cafe		
Godiva Courtyard extension to house a purpose built café (40m sq)	Improved café offer. Park location gives USP and attracts customers from park/station.	100
Refit existing café as temporary exhibition space (Current Café 40 m sq)	Better space for hosting and managing paid for exhibitions. Enables easy access in and out & can be closed without detriment to the rest of the museum.	30
Galleries		
Improved acoustics and lighting to Brenchley Room	Subject to advice from acoustics and lighting consultant.	20
Refit medieval gallery as a collections store & improve access (85m sq)	Improved storage / better access / easier access for staff.	100
Swap Japanese gallery with small temp exhibition space	Enables outstanding collection to be viewed during paid for exhibitions and during exhibition change (145m sq) Assume no major alterations or replacement. Allow for redecorations, making good . Estimates for replacement of cases or display units to be provided by Museum.	30
Withdrawing room floor	The existing sprung floor causes objects to move in display cases and presents challenges for visitors with mobility issues.	20
General		
Humidity works in vic cellar, upper and lower stores.	To care for the collections	100
Improve museum IT to enable secure storage for collections databases (IT already involved - requires improved connection with Maidstone House)	Issues with the current system mean that collections database isn't always backed up, risking loss of digital database	TBA
Install daytime case alarm system (SECOM indicated £1100 for panel and 10 case alarms with £500 for each additional 10 Units - Sam to confirm number)	No need for patrolling of galleries for security. Assumed to be an extension of the existing intruder alarm system.	25
Upgrade security of temporary exhibitions space to meet government indemnity standards	Save staff time and money for temporary insurance cover for incoming loans	1
Re-lamp East wing with LED		10
External redecorations and repairs	£70k approximately every 5 years - allow x 4	70
		531

