

Report Title:	Maidenhead Heritage Centre annual report
Contains Confidential or Exempt Information	No - Part I
Lead Member:	Councillor Rayner, Deputy Leader of the Council, Resident and Leisure Services, HR, IT, Legal, Performance Management and Windsor
Meeting and Date:	Communities Overview & Scrutiny Panel, 13 April 2021
Responsible Officer(s):	Steph James, Service Lead for Economic Growth
Wards affected:	All

REPORT SUMMARY

This report provides Members with an outline of a presentation that will be made by The Chairman of the Maidenhead Heritage Centre, Richard Poad. The Chairman will present the Trustees' Report for the year ended 31 March 2020.

1. DETAILS OF RECOMMENDATION(S)

RECOMMENDATION: That Communities Overview & Scrutiny Panel notes the report and presentation content from the Maidenhead Heritage Centre.

2. REASON(S) FOR RECOMMENDATION(S) AND OPTIONS CONSIDERED

Options

Table 1: Options arising from this report

Option	Comments
Note the presentation and comment thereon. This is the recommended option	None

- 2.1 This report recommends noting the content of the presentation and seeks Members' views and questions arising from it. The presentation will also provide Members with the opportunity to speak directly to the Maidenhead Heritage Centre about service delivery and future service delivery plans.
- 2.2 The presentation will provide the annual report from the Maidenhead Heritage Centre including how they have adapted during the Covid-19 pandemic.
- 2.3 The Maidenhead Heritage Centre is a fully accredited museum founded in April 1993 by Maidenhead Civic Society and Maidenhead Historical and Archaeological Society. It became an independent charity in 1995. It operated from 6 different premises before buying its own building, which was opened to

the public in summer 2008. The building is located in central Maidenhead in Park Street.

- 2.4 The museum was forced to close in March 2020 as the country went into national lockdown however they were successfully delivering engaging online content including exhibitions and talks until they could reopen their doors on the 29 July 2020. Unfortunately, the centre was forced to once again close its doors on the 18 December as the borough moved into Tier 3 restrictions followed by another national lockdown.

3. KEY IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 The key implications are set out in Table 2.

Table 2: Key Implications

Outcome	Unmet	Met	Exceeded	Significantly Exceeded	Date of delivery
Increased awareness and understanding of the work of the Maidenhead Heritage Centre	N/A	Presentation provided	N/A	N/A	N/A

4. FINANCIAL DETAILS / VALUE FOR MONEY

- 4.1 There are no financial implications through this presentation of information.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no legal implications arising through this presentation of information.

6. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 6.1 There are no risks associated with this presentation of information.

7. POTENTIAL IMPACTS

- 7.1 Equalities. No impacts arising through the presentation of information.

- 7.2 Climate change/sustainability. No impacts arising through the presentation of this information.

7.3 Data Protection/GDPR. No impacts arising through the presentation of this information.

8. CONSULTATION

8.1 Not applicable

9. TIMETABLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

9.1 Not applicable.

10. APPENDICES

- Appendix 1: Maidenhead Heritage Centre Trust Trustee's report for the year ended 31 March 2020.
- Appendix 2: Vision for a new Heritage Centre

11. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

11.1 None.

12. CONSULTATION (MANDATORY)

Name of consultee	Post held	Date sent	Date returned
Cllr Rayner	Deputy Leader of the Council, Resident and Leisure Services, HR, IT, Legal, Performance Management and Windsor	01/04/21	
Duncan Sharkey	Managing Director	01/04/21	
Adele Taylor	Director of Resources/S151 Officer	01/04/21	
Andrew Durrant	Director of Place	01/04/21	
Kevin McDaniel	Director of Children's Services	01/04/21	
Hilary Hall	Director of Adults, Health and Commissioning	01/04/21	
Andrew Vallance	Head of Finance	01/04/21	
Elaine Browne	Head of Law	01/04/21	
Emma Duncan	Deputy Director of Law and Strategy / Monitoring Officer	01/04/21	
Nikki Craig	Head of HR Corporate Projects and IT	01/04/21	
Louisa Dean	Communications	01/04/21	
Karen Shepherd	Head of Governance	01/04/21	1/4/21

REPORT HISTORY

Decision type:	Urgency item?	To follow item?
For information	No	No

Report Author: Stephanie James, Service Lead for Economic Growth

Maidenhead Heritage Trust

Trustees' Report for the year ended 31 March 2020

In reviewing the year 2019-2020 your Trustees are conscious that the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic in early 2020 overshadowed everything that came before. Against that background it is very important to thank everybody who kept the show on the road, including our manager Flora Woodruff, our curator and webmaster and of course our team of dedicated volunteers.

1. THE COLLECTION

We are a fully accredited museum and museums own stuff! In 2019 we accepted 310 individual objects, over half of which relate to our nationally important ATA collection. It is essential to record the help that Kay Lamb gave throughout the year in photographing individual objects. Richard Butters did the same tasks with material we accept for the ATA collection, which now includes over 140 pilot logbooks and thousands of photographs. There is an ongoing documentation backlog which needs to be addressed in the coming year. Lack of display space is becoming an issue as the collection grows, with the historic 18th century Bray Fire Engine due to arrive in 2021 and one very large item (a WW2 Cheetah aero engine) being stored temporarily at Upper Heyford Heritage Centre in Oxfordshire.

2. **VISITOR NUMBERS** Reviews posted by visitors frequently refer to how friendly and helpful are all our volunteers, both on the reception desk and in the ATA gallery upstairs. So many thanks to them all. The dip in our visitor numbers in 2018-19 continued in 2019-20, reflecting in part the smaller footfall in Maidenhead Town Centre due to the town becoming one enormous building site with much reduced parking. Covid burst upon us in the first three months of 2020 and visitor numbers dropped well before the first lockdown began at the end of March. So the total for 2019-20 was a very disappointing 4050 visitors. Strenuous efforts must be made to enlarge our audience, using the internet and social media to involve more local people, especially family groups, while also promoting ourselves to the tourist market and to special interest groups (i.e. ATA and aviation). We participate in the "Great West Way" touring route initiative, attended the annual Excursions show in London in January and worked closely with the Borough's excellent tourism team.

3. EXHIBITIONS IN 2019/20

Exhibitions included 'The Story of Skindles', 'Memories of D-Day' (for the 75th anniversary of the Normandy landings), 'ATA-girls and Ancient Airmen' 'An artist's view of Maidenhead' (paintings by contemporary artists) and 'Women in Green' – a Tribute to the WVS, WRVS and RVS. All of these exhibitions have since been posted on our website.

4. EVENTS

September 2019 saw our Thames cruise sold out. In October 2019 Flora Woodruff did the 14 miles of the Boundary Walk and thanks to your generosity raised around £800. As usual we had a stall at the Charities Fair in November. In March 2020 we hosted an event for the Maidenhead Big Read, but due to Covid had to postpone our BBO Big Band concert and suspend our lunchtime lectures.

5. SCHOOLS

Our work with schools was somewhat limited as school budgets were under increasing pressure. Nevertheless we delivered a number of sessions about the history and development of Maidenhead to Year 4 classes in local schools, using our digitized collection of maps to illustrate the presentations. Craft sessions for younger children were held during the summer half term and summer holidays, while several groups such as cubs and brownies enjoyed evening visits which are not subject to the same constraints as school visits. Trustees are very grateful to the volunteers who helped offer this service to the local community.

6. OUTREACH

Keith Parry, Christopher Hobbs, Robert Cooper, John Webster and Richard Poad gave around 50 talks in 2019/20, most but not all of them to groups within 10 miles of Maidenhead. For small local groups we always try to persuade them to come to the museum for their talks; it gets them into the building, many of them for the first time, and often they go away to tell their friends all about us.

7. **FINANCE** The accounts for 2019-20 are included in these papers. We are very grateful to the Royal Borough for again giving a Revenue Grant, but the accounts do highlight how much we depend on grants and donations to support the balance sheet. Therefore Trustees must take urgent steps to monetize our collections and all our activities. When the national lockdown began in March, we received at £25000 under the government's Retail, Hospitality and Leisure support scheme, which has been an immense help in the current 2020-21 year.

8. LOOKING AHEAD

- 8.1 **Possible Relocation** We were very disappointed that without any consultation the Royal Borough withdrew its outline offer of space in the building rising from the site of the Town Hall Car Park. At the very end of March 2020 the Borough made an outline offer (*note: withdrawn in March 2021*) of floorspace on the ground floor of their proposed new carpark which would replace the present Broadway car park as part of the Nicholson Quarter redevelopment. However there are no remotely firm dates, since the developer has to a) receive planning consent and b) raise the finance for the £500m scheme. Trustees hope to hold new discussions early in 2021 with the council while continuing to explore alternative options which will still enable us to make a positive contribution to the regeneration of Maidenhead. (*note: an inconclusive first meeting was held in March 2021. Further meetings are scheduled*)
- 8.2 **Establishment of new CIO (Charitable Incorporated Organisation)** Work continues to establish a new CIO to take over the running of Maidenhead Heritage Centre, this move being a requirement of Arts Council England who administer the Museum Accreditation Scheme. It is planned to complete this process by mid 2021 (*probable date end April 2021*)
- 8.3 **Personnel issues** Flora Woodruff became our Administrator in March 2020, having served previously as the Assistant Administrator. The Covid lockdown started within weeks, but she rose to the challenge and has done a first-rate job, despite having to shield during the lockdown. Likewise our Curator has worked from home since April 2020, with only rare visits to the museum itself. However a lack of suitable specialist volunteers is a handicap which Trustees will be addressing with a volunteer recruiting campaign in Spring 2021. Richard Poad has given notice that he will stand down as Chairman in the summer of 2021. The Trust's forward plan has the 'professionalisation' of the museum's management as a major aim and a contract with a professional website management company was signed in autumn 2020. However lack of funding may slow this process.

Maidenhead

November 2020

VISION FOR A NEW MAIDENHEAD HERITAGE CENTRE

BIGGER, BETTER, BRIGHTER, ATTRACTING NEW AUDIENCES FROM WITHIN AND WITHOUT THE ROYAL BOROUGH.

MHC has been operating from the former Cricketers Arms for 12 years, having acquired in the full knowledge of its redevelopment potential as part of the regeneration of Maidenhead. Discussions with RBWM go back to 2011 but regrettably a new Heritage Centre/Museum as part of the regeneration near the Town Hall – or anywhere else – is as far away as ever.

The new museum needs much more floorspace than it has now. Our aim is to increase our visitor numbers very significantly, attracting many more local people and also drawing in people from outside the local area – especially aiming to attract visitors to Windsor and the Thames Valley to visit Maidenhead also. MHC was an early ambassador member of the GREAT WEST WAY touring route and is concentrating on the independent travellers, since the existing building is too small to accept large groups. The new museum will make a positive and on-going contribution to the regeneration of Maidenhead.

The new museum will be filled with things to do, things to touch and hold, things to see and things to discover, drawn largely from the transportation theme that runs throughout local history. So Maidenhead's fascinating history, which includes everything from the Romans to the Vanwall racing cars, will be told through the stories of the River Thames and Boulton's Lock and boats, the Bath Road and coaches and motor cars, the Railway and trains and Aviation, White Waltham airfield and Air Transport Auxiliary, that inspiring international story from World War II. Objects on display will include the historic 18th century Bray Fire Engine, cars from the early 20th century and other equally large items. They need space! Spitfire and Racing Car simulator experiences may be complemented with virtual reality experiences. The museum's archive, including thousands of photographs and documents, will be easily accessible via computer terminals.

The new museum, open 6 or 7 days a week, will include provision for temporary exhibitions, including travelling exhibitions from other, even **national museums**, or exhibitions put on by local community groups

whose involvement will be very important, e.g. *An artist's view of Maidenhead*, shown in 2019 and *All the World's a Stage* shown in 2020 but curtailed by the pandemic.

There will also be space offering increased educational possibilities for schools and other groups, space which can also it can be used for talks, meetings, and other events, some of them in the evenings.

While our Trustees explore all possible options, it will be business as usual at the existing Heritage Centre in Park Street – once Covid restrictions are lifted on May 17th. A major marketing push will start after Easter and we look forward to welcoming visitors from around the Royal Borough and others having a 'staycation' in the Thames Valley.

Maidenhead

March 2021