



**BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL**  
**MUSEUM AND TOURIST INFORMATION**  
**CENTRE TASK GROUP**



**FINAL REPORT**

Museum and Tourist Information Centre Task Group Final Report

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### **BACKGROUND**

The Task Group was initially composed of Councillors Mrs. M. A. Sherrey (Chairman) Mrs. K. M. Gall (Vice Chairman), A. L. Deakin, Mrs. J. D. Luck, P. M. McDonald, D. McGrath and S. R. Peters. During the course of the work of the Task Group Councillors Mrs Sherrey and Deakin ceased to be members of the Task Group.

The terms of reference of the Task Group were to establish:-

- (a) whether the Council should run a Museum?
- (b) what objectives should be set for such a service?
- (c) what form the Museum should take?
- (d) how the collection should be managed?
- (e) the service and financial implications of the options that have been identified so far?  
and
- (f) if there are any other options for the future of the Museum?

The Task Group considered the history of the Museum and in particular the Trust document under which the Norton Collection was given to the Museum. The Task Group met Mr Norton who had originally established the Museum.

The Task Group heard evidence from staff employed at the Museum about how they felt the Museum could be improved and in particular modifications which would be necessary to enable the building to meet the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act. As part of this the Task Group considered two reports on the Museum prepared by consultants. The Task Group received evidence from the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council and the County Museums Service on their perception of the future of the Museum. The Task Group interviewed Councillor Mrs Griffiths the cabinet member with responsibility for the Museum.

The Task Group issued press releases and provided a page on the council's web site through which the public could make comments on the future of the Museum. Members of the Task Group sought the views of local schools on how they would like to use the Museum.

The Task Group visited Avoncroft Museum of Historic Buildings in order to establish whether it would be practical to transfer the collection to the Avoncroft site and if so under what terms and conditions. As part of this work a valuation was carried out of the Museum building to establish how much it was worth should it be sold.

The Task Group also visited Bewdley Museum to see how that was run and the kind of facilities it provided as it was very similar to the Bromsgrove Museum in that it also housed the local Tourist Information Centre. The Task Group received information on the future of tourist information centres across the County .

Having considered the above the Task Group drew up some initial recommendations and sought information on the financial implications of the recommendations. During the consideration of the financial implications the Task Group became aware that no financial provision had been made for the operation of the Museum for the financial year 2007/8 and beyond. The Task Group was agreed that the collections currently housed at the Museum should continue to be available to the people of Bromsgrove either in their current location or at Avoncroft. The Task Group wanted to ensure that sufficient funding was included in the budget for 2007/8 and if necessary for future years to enable whichever option was chosen by the Executive Cabinet to be implemented.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Executive Cabinet is recommended to choose one of the options set out below and to ensure that sufficient funding is included in the Culture and Community Services department revenue budget for 2007/8, and for future years if necessary, to enable whichever option is chosen to be implemented.

### **Option 1**

That:

- Bromsgrove Museum and the Norton Collection be retained in its current location
- Adequate funding, as detailed on pages 24- 26 be provided to enable the Museum to fulfil its long term potential on issues such as staffing, Museum registration, storage and maintenance of the collection, displays, publicity, improving disabled access and education/outreach/audience development and that it be recognised that provision of such funding will enable the Museum to attract additional funding from external sources in the future.
- A management board for the Museum be established to enable the further development of the Museum and the collections. The management board to be made up of a mixture of Councillors, persons with technical knowledge of Museums and tourism and other interested local people.
- The Trust document under which the Norton Collection was given to the Museum be amended to enable the Museum management board to manage the collection in the best interests of the collection and of the museum. Such changes to the document should enable the acquisition and disposal of items within the collection.

### **Option 2**

That:

- Negotiations be entered into with Avoncroft Museum of Historic Buildings to enable the transfer of the Norton Collection and the other collections currently located at Bromsgrove Museum to Avoncroft Museum
- Subject to agreement being reached with Avoncroft Museum the Bromsgrove Museum building be sold and the capital receipt received be used to provide match funding for the Avoncroft Museum Heritage Lottery Fund bid to enable the creation of a new building at Avoncroft Museum to house the collections transferred from Bromsgrove Museum
- Revenue budget provision be made to enable the provision of curatorial services for the collections at Avoncroft Museum
- The Trust document under which the Norton Collection was given to the Museum be amended to enable the transfer and relocation of the Norton Collection to Avoncroft Museum and to allow Avoncroft Museum management board to manage the collection in the best interests of the collection and of the museum. Such changes to the document should enable the acquisition and disposal of items within the collection.

**Mrs K. M. Gall**

**Task Group Chairman on behalf of the members of the Task group**

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The Task Group was formed by the former Health and Leisure Scrutiny Committee to consider the future of the Bromsgrove Museum and the Tourist Information Centre which is housed in the same building.

## **2. COMPOSITION OF TASK GROUP AND TERMS OF REFERENCE**

- 2.1 The Task Group was initially composed of Councillors Mrs. M. A. Sherrey (Chairman) Mrs. K. M. Gall (Vice Chairman), A. L. Deakin, Mrs. J. D. Luck, P. M. McDonald, D. McGrath and S. R. Peters. During the course of the work of the Task Group Councillors Mrs Sherrey and Deakin ceased to be members of the Task Group.
- 2.2 At its first meeting the Task Group agreed its terms of reference. The Task Group would seek to establish:-
- (a) whether the Council should run a Museum service?
  - (b) what objectives should be set for such a service?
  - (c) what form a Museum service should take?
  - (d) how the collection should be managed?
  - (e) the service and financial implications of the options that have been identified so far?, and
  - (f) if there are any other options for the future of the Museum?

## **3. BACKGROUND AND HISTORY OF THE MUSEUM**

- 3.1 On 14<sup>th</sup> September 1992 Mr. D. C. Norton and Bromsgrove District Council entered into a declaration of charitable Trust. The Trust document related to the gift from Mr. Norton to the Council of "The Norton Collection". The gift was for the purposes of "benefiting the citizens of Bromsgrove in particular and the public generally and in furtherance of public education". The Collection consisted of items collected by Mr. Norton in the period 1949 to 1992 and which were exhibited, stored or housed at Bromsgrove Museum which was situated on Birmingham Road Bromsgrove.
- 3.2 The trust document contained a number of terms and conditions and these can be summarized as follows:-
- The collection would be known as "The Norton Collection".
  - The Council would be responsible for the display and conservation of The Norton Collection and would appoint such staff as it thinks fit and proper at its own expense.
  - The Norton Collection should be displayed within a specified area of Bromsgrove Town Centre for a specified minimum number of hours per week.
  - The Council could make an admission charge for entry to view the collection.
  - Those parts of the collection not on permanent display could be stored outside the town centre.
  - Within two years of the date of the trust document the Council would arrange for the cataloguing of the Collection and provide a copy of the catalogue to Mr. Norton.
  - The Council is not entitled to dispose of all or any part of The Norton Collection. Any item forming part of Collection may only be disposed of or exchanged provided that such sale or exchange is conducted strictly in accordance with the Museums and Galleries Commission registration scheme.
  - The Council should use its best endeavours to secure registration of the Museum in accordance with the scheme of registration operated by the Museums and Galleries Commission.

- The Council will operate the Bromsgrove Museum and its management of The Norton Collection in accordance with the registration standards issued by the Museums and Galleries Commission.
- The Collection will be displayed within and as part of the Bromsgrove Museum.
- The Council will continue to accept the financial and other voluntary support of the Friends of the Museum.
- The Council will register the charitable trust established by the Deed as a charity.

#### **4. EVIDENCE SUBMITTED BY MR. NORTON**

- 4.1 The Task Group were initially unsure of the exact terms of the Trust document and what control, if any Mr. Norton retained over the collection. Mr. Norton addressed the Task Group to provide background information on the history of the Collection and details of the Trust agreement.
- 4.2 Mr. Norton made the following points:-
- The Trust agreement required that the artefacts should be catalogued within two years of the transfer (1992) and stated that he understood that such work was still a long way from completion of the (probable) 25,000 items in the collection.
  - Approximately 10% of the collection was on display at any one time.
  - The Council's registration of the Museum with the Museums and Galleries Commission had ceased and the Group were advised that the reasons for that were (i) that the Museum was not in compliance with the appropriate Regulations, and (ii) the absence of a Forward Plan.
  - Mr. Norton confirmed that the only direct control he had over the collection was that set out in the Trust document, which meant he had to agree to the movement of the collection outside the town centre of Bromsgrove. When questioned as to whether he would consider agreeing to change the Trust document if it were in the best interests of the collection and the Council, he intimated that he could be flexible over the question of possible relocation, but he would have to be reassured on a number of points before giving any final agreement.
  - The security system at the Museum should be inspected, and, if necessary, overhauled and/or improved.
  - Mr. Norton felt that if the four workshops to the rear of the Museum were fully occupied and let on a commercial basis, this should prove financially beneficial and could attract more custom.
- 4.3 The Group asked Mr. Norton to submit his proposals for the future of the Norton Collection and the operation of the Museum. Set out below is a summary of Mr. Norton's proposals and related comments.
- Mr. Norton is very concerned that the number of visitors that now visit the Museum has fallen and would like to reverse that trend and try to raise attendance. He stated that when he was in charge visitor levels were in the region of approx 10,000 per annum though this figure has not been verified.
  - The most successful part of the Museum was the interest shown in the street scene of shops which uses all local names. At the moment there are 13 shops and it was planned to double this to 26 so he would want to complete the shopping displays. Around 90% of people were in favour of the shop-fronts, indicated through his own research.
  - Mr. Norton believes it is essential that there should be a qualified curator to run, organise and develop the Museum. It is important to complete the cataloguing and conserve the artefacts.

- He believes it was necessary for him to charge rent to enable for financial support the Museum. Mr. Norton had to pay full rates and was working full time to support the Museum. The rent for the workshops 12 years ago was £30 per week. Today he expected it to be £70 per week for each of the 4 workshops but now would use the workshops as part of the display area to support the Museum.
- Mr. Norton would certainly support 'Friends of the Museum' again. They were a great help and organised displays throughout the year.
- Mr. Norton sees no reason why the Museum should not get schools visiting as they did before when teachers would come 2 weeks before to do a work programme.



## **5. EVIDENCE FROM THE MARKETING, TOURISM AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT MANAGER**

- 5.1 The Task Group received evidence from Rosemary Clarke the Marketing Tourism and Business Development Manager. Since joining the Council in August 2003, she had felt increasingly frustrated by the lack of progress at the Museum in spite of the fact that, in February 2004, she had attended a meeting with Mr. Norton and the Director of Leisure Services at which some of the issues identified as a Forward Plan were laid down. It was her view that the Terms and Conditions of the Trust document should be reviewed; that there had been, by the Council, a distinct lack of strategic vision; a lack of resources (both human and financial) and a lack of interest in local heritage.
- 5.2 She praised the work done by Karen Spry, the Curatorial Officer who had sorted out the items from the collection which were stored at the Council's Depot. This process had highlighted some 400 items which ought to be disposed of, as they were a potential health and safety risk.
- 5.3 Rosemary Clarke was supportive of their recommendations contained in the reports prepared by the consultants. She also informed the Group of a further report, "The Forward Plan" written in May 2004, which proposed the creation a new Exhibition area along with other suggestions including structural alterations allowing wheelchair access to the Courtyard area; locating a local Bromsgrove History room on the ground floor; and use of IT to bring the first floor exhibits "downstairs". Rosemary Clarke suggested that had such ideas been approved they could have attracted funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund and/or the Museum and Libraries Association.



## **6 CURATORIAL OFFICER'S EVIDENCE**

- 6.1 The Task Group twice received evidence from Karen Spry, the Museum's Curatorial Officer. Summaries of the reports she submitted are set out below.
- 6.2 Ms Spry's first report, included the following documents:-
- List of Potential Disposals;
  - Museums Association Ethical Guidelines on Disposals;
  - Bromsgrove Museum Acquisition and Disposal Policy (January 2004);
  - Photographs of stored items at Depot;
  - Glossary of Terms; and
  - Curatorial Officer's response to public consultation exercise.
- 6.3 Ms Spry's first report included her response to the public consultation exercise main points of which can be summarised as follows:-
- Museums (as opposed to visitor or heritage attractions, such as Avoncroft) are a public service, like libraries. The local community especially should feel ownership of them, be free to roam throughout at will, and to take what they want/need from the visit, rather than having the visit prescribed to them. Museums should also, where possible, be free entry to allow this.
  - Museums should offer something for everyone through intellectual and physical access to objects on a variety of levels and in different ways. Displays should have the potential and guidance to challenge, stimulate debate, make people think about the world around them and use the past to tackle issues head-on. All this promotes engagement with the collection, rather than a passive experience.
  - A small Museum, such as Bromsgrove should be community focussed to represent and hold the identity of the community. It could look beyond the boundaries of the building to find ways of engaging audiences by taking the Museum out to libraries, schools, and community centres. Small, local Museums can and should be at the heart of any community if they are backed by the right vision and support.
  - The potential of the Museum has been wasted due to years of under investment and lack of commitment, right up to the present day.
  - The Scrutiny Task Group needs to set itself the challenge of answering three questions:
    1. What is a Museum?
    2. What is the role of a Museum?
    3. What is the potential of a Museum?
  - If, the above questions stimulate significant debate and enough possibilities are raised, then the Museum may have a very real and exciting future, providing the people with the vision and enthusiasm to take the Museum forward are given every form of support and allowance to do so.
  - The Council needs to show a real commitment for several years to come, including a long term strategic vision and increased financial and human resource commitments. This should include curatorial support and educational/lifelong learning support, as well as giving the Museum itself a "face lift" as a way of enticing people back.
  - It is Bromsgrove's Museum and it should encapsulate Bromsgrove. It is a basic privilege of any community to have somewhere which represents and fosters pride, identity and sense of place.
  - The Museum should be a significant feature of Bromsgrove, something the people are proud of, and which reflects well on the Council. However, success or failure depends very much on the vision of the Council and whether they will allow this to happen.



- 6.4 Karen Spry produced a second report for the Task Group. The main points of which were:-
- Accreditation
  - Education, inclusion and access
  - Future of the Museum
  - Sustained investment and Financing
  - Disposals

#### 6.5 ACCREDITATION

Accreditation represents the minimum of professional standards in Museums. In her view there was no reason why Bromsgrove Museum could not attain accreditation if everyone is committed to it. The aim of accreditation is to ensure that Museums meet their responsibilities to the public. Achieving accreditation is a requirement for most funding bodies. To achieve accreditation, the Museum would have to address issues of:-

- Governance and Management
- User Services
- Visitor Facilities
- Collections Management

#### 6.6 EDUCATION, INCLUSION AND ACCESS

Museum education does not have to take place in the Museum. Other methods are all as valid as a visit but offer more practical solutions to teachers and schools. They do take time to develop however. Education is not confined to schools. It should encourage anyone who wants to learn. Access and Inclusion are not the same thing. Access means enabling people to have a Museum experience; doing all that is reasonable to remove physical and attitudinal barriers and actively looking for ways to increase the chances of any one person being able to have a positive experience. Inclusion is about making people feel that the Museum belongs to them.

#### 6.7 FUTURE OF THE MUSEUM

Ms Spry suggested that it was not a viable option to carry on as before and gave five options for retaining the Museum in some form and two regarding closure of the Museum. The options were as follows:-

##### Retain the Museum

1. Museum stays where it is with the TIC attached.
2. Museum stays where it is without TIC and perhaps a café instead.
3. Museum and TIC move to alternative premises together.
4. Museum and TIC move to alternative premises separately.
5. Museum moves to Avoncroft and Council takes a greater role in supporting Avoncroft.

##### Closure of the Museum

1. Close Museum, relocate TIC and hold entire collection in storage.
2. Close Museum, relocate TIC, allow local/regional Museums to cherry pick items, and store/dispose of the rest.

Whatever is decided must be sustainable and must be committed to by the Council in the long term. Ms Spry suggested that Mr. Norton's status and role in relation to the collection and the Museum more generally must be resolved and clarified to all parties for the sake of all concerned.

## 6.8 SUSTAINED INVESTMENT AND FINANCING

Ms Spry stated that should the Museum be retained, it was her view that the Council would need to carefully reconsider the budgets and resources assigned to the Museum. Ms Spry stated that it was clear to her that the Museum could not achieve a basic level of professional display on a year by year basis with current funding. In terms of the basic annual budget, the areas that which she considered to be are currently woefully inadequate were:

- Curatorial salary/expenses plus County support
- Promotions and Publicity
- Displays and Exhibitions

Doubling the displays and exhibitions budget along with the promotions and publicity budget would allow one "Bromsgrove's War" type exhibition a year or an exhibition every two years, along with gradual improvements to be made to the displays over time. Trebling the displays and exhibitions budget would allow an exhibition every year plus gradual improvements to displays over time. There was also a need for a conservation budget for the upkeep and maintenance of objects, which are, still of value but have deteriorated over time.

Whilst some Museums are operated solely by volunteers, Ms Spry argued that there was generally very little sympathy (and funding) for Council run Museums operated in this way. Paid and qualified staffing was essential. She stated that the following staffing levels were both suitable for and needed by Bromsgrove Museum.

### *Minimum staffing level*

1 F/T Curator                    £16,500

1 P/T Assistant                £14,500 pro rata

Plus County support

If no TIC 2 P/T front of house staff would also be needed at approx £13,000 pro rata

### *Ideal staffing level*

1 F/T Curator                    £18,000

1 F/T Assistant                £14,000

1 P/T Educator                 £18,000 pro rata

1 P/T Technician              £13,000 pro rata

Plus County support

If no TIC 3 P/T front of house staff would also be needed at approx £14,500 pro rata

Ms Spry gave the Task Group an indication of the cost of materials and equipment for storage and displays. The list included:-

Acid free boxes (object storage):

➤ Document boxes:                    1 = £3.15;            50 = £134.00

➤ Shoe boxes:                            1 = £8.00;            50 = £340.00

➤ Costume boxes:                      1 = £17.00;          10 = £145.00

Acid free tissue paper (object protection): 1 roll = £54.00 500 sheets = £135.00

### *Advertising and displays*

➤ Great Ideas for Schools            £295.00

➤ Worcestershire Visitors Guide    £25.00

➤ Teacher's Guide                      £150.00

➤ Local Press (advert)                £124.00

➤ Library exhibition space            £25.00

➤ A1 Foamex display panels (from)   £150.00 each

➤ Promotional leaflets (from)        10,000 = £650

➤ A2 posters: (from)                    20 = £190.00

Ms Spry told the Task Group that if the Museum were to remain under Council control, the Council would need to identify the basic budgets through external funding that would enhance the service. No external funding would be available to the Museum unless the Council made a firm and sustainable long-term commitment to the Museum. The Council must commit to accreditation to stand any chance of receiving extra funding for the service.

#### 6.9 DISPOSALS

All Museums accept that it is vital to dispose of objects in order to carry on collecting what is important. Museums need to be able to do both and the mechanisms must be in place to do both. Disposing of parts of the collection would improve the care of other objects, reduce the risk of damage to other objects increase the amount of available storage, make better use of Curatorial time and resources, allow improved access to the collection, enable handling and/or educational collections to be established, enable a more coherent story to be told and prevent the wasting of resources on objects which are of little use/interest.

### 7 EVIDENCE FROM THE MUSEUMS, LIBRARIES AND ARCHIVES COUNCIL AND THE COUNTY MUSEUM'S SERVICE

7.1 The Task Group discussed with Robin Hill, Worcestershire County Council County Museums Officer and Mike Cook from West Midlands Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA), their views on the future of Bromsgrove Museum.

7.2 Mr. Cook stated that MLA undertook a strategic role guiding Museums and galleries across the region. The County Council provided more "pastoral care" by providing funding for Museum Development Officers who could offer day-to-day advice and guidance. The MLA had a major interest in what happened to Museums and to other culture and heritage services in a general way, and managed the Accreditation Scheme. The Accreditation scheme had four main areas which Museums needed to have minimum standards; governance and management; user services; visitor facilities, and collection management. The MLA encouraged Museums to look beyond the minimum requirements of accreditation. Accreditation, attendance and active participation, e-delivery, the level of volunteering and the involvement of targeted groups (social inclusion) were seen as essential areas of work for Museums. The MLA also placed importance on a sense of identity/belonging, lifelong learning and collection/collection management. It was also keen to foster the capacity of Museums to engage in partnerships (libraries/archives), together with public service partnerships and possibly with the private sector. Mr. Cook supported improving the marketing of the Museum.

7.3 Mr. Cook felt that it was important that a town such as Bromsgrove should have a Museum and he stressed that the MLA would be willing to support the Council in any way they could to ensure it provided a viable service, and to assist in working in a positive way to achieving accreditation.

7.4 Mr. Hill confirmed that his job was, in part, to provide support that, traditionally, the Regional Museums Council had provided and that the MLA was now delegating to the County Museum service. He saw his role as a 3-way split, looking after the County Museum at Hartlebury, acting as a Museum Development Officer supporting a variety of smaller Museums and fostering good practice. He assisted with accreditation issues, held seminars and helped with the administration of a grant-aid scheme. He also provided services to Museums and for the last five years had been providing a contracted service to the Bromsgrove Museum through the provision of curatorial support.

- 7.5 Mr. Hill saw the Museum in much the same light as the Mr. Cook and felt that it did have a future, having many strong points. On being asked for their views about a possible re-location of the Museum, Mr. Hill expressed the view that to move the Collection to Avoncroft would require considerable adjustment on Avoncroft's part and would involve a significant financial commitment. Mr. Hill stressed that, whilst the potential of the Museum was huge, it was largely unrealised at present and that a decision on its future was crucial in order to unlock potential funding. Mr. Hill stressed the importance of preparing a Forward Plan.
- 7.6 Mr. Hill and Mr. Cook were asked about the correlation of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) and Accreditation. The Task Group was advised that there must be a willingness to make "reasonable adjustments" to comply with the DDA. It was stressed that there were a number of ways to overcome the structural barriers presented by buildings to the less able.

## **8. CONSULTANTS REPORTS**

8.1 The Task Group considered reports prepared two consultants on the future operation of the Museum. One was prepared in March 2002 by Stuart Davison and the other in May 2004 by Nicole Burnett.

### **8.2 Burnett Report Summary**

8.2.1 Nicole Burnett was commissioned the Council to develop a new exhibition telling the story of Bromsgrove and its residents. The objectives of the new exhibition and re-interpretation of the Museum were identified as:

- The provision of a well-researched, up-to-date exhibition of the Bromsgrove District and its people
- To improve access to the exhibitions and displays for DDA compliance
- The provision of a focal point for the Museum on the ground floor next to the TIC, thereby attracting more people to the Museum
- The provision of positive publicity and increased local and regional interest
- To stimulate community interest and feeling of ownership in the areas heritage and in the Museum.
- To help increase visitor figures and to encourage repeat visitors, as well as school visits
- To make use of articles not currently on display
- To establish and provide the opportunity for partnership working

8.2.2 The report stated that the Upstairs Gallery, used as the main exhibition gallery, does not meet the criteria of the DDA, as it is not accessible to those with mobility difficulties. The display cases are of poor safety and security standards, and due to poor lighting the objects are difficult to see behind the glass. This is a valuable display area and should be used to best advantage. The Shop Gallery, was described as "visually very pleasing". There are issues with the long-term care of these materials, especially potential light damage.



8.2.3 The display in the Guild Room is poorly interpreted and there is little information on the objects or the Guild itself. The brief of the Backyard display has not been met, as there is a “mish-mash” of unlabelled and uninterrupted objects; this makes them meaningless. The impression of neglect was given. The Banshee Garage display is difficult to see due to poor lighting and are suffering from the extremes of environmental conditions. It is effectively an outside store.



- 8.2.4 Bromsgrove Museum, is a worthwhile institution that could have a valuable role to play in the community, but work needs to be done to establish this stronger identity. It was believed that the Museum should become a point of reference on the history of Bromsgrove District and any future exhibition should be targeted at increasing school visits.
- 8.2.5 A meeting with stakeholders was held and those who attended showed interest and concern in the future development of the Museum. It was felt that it had become disconnected with the community and that there was no feeling of ownership by local residents.
- 8.2.6 Burnett suggested a two part exhibition proposal; local history and social history. The local history part would be made up of mostly text panels with three object cases, reusing the three existing display cases. It would tell the story of the origins, development and change in the Bromsgrove area and the significant aspects of the areas heritage that has been identified. The social history of Bromsgrove, would reflect the need to show the everyday life of the areas inhabitants in the past. Such themes could include house and home, religion, food and drink, health, childhood, education, work, leisure and local politics/law. The focus of the exhibition should reflect the strongest parts of the Collection; the items from the period 1880 to 1920. This would encourage school visits, as the National Curriculum at Key Stage 2 studies the Victorian period.
- 8.2.7 Burnett outlined several interpretation methods. The text used on exhibition panels should be clear and written simply and in an easily understood by younger children. Object labels should be provided for every object on display; A series of free handout sheets could be made available on a variety of subjects. A Living History aspect could also be introduced, these could include first-person interpretation, personal testimonies, third-person and theatre.
- 8.2.8 In the short-term Burnett proposed that the Museum could improve access and maximise learning potential for visitors by:
- The Long Gallery – Remove the centre cases to maximise floor space; examples of the Guild material; display of Housman text panels; relocate the Bromsgrove Society archive, freeing the room to be used as an education room
  - The Street Scene – cleaning of the articles; re-interpretation so that it is more relevant; an audio tour for those with visual impairments; hands-on activities; construction of a small play shop
  - The Backyard Area – re-interpretation; object labelling; re-lighting and cleaning the Banshee display; assessment of environmental conditions
  - The Guild Room – cleared of collections and use as an exhibition preparation area, and for cleaning
- 8.2.9 Burnett identified the possibility of partnership working which would be of benefit of the Museum. Creating a programme of events two years in advance would ensure this possibility is maximised. Making reference to other institutions, such as Forge Mill or Droitwich TIC could result in a reciprocation programme, mutually directing visitors to other institutions. Joint exhibitions with The Bromsgrove Society, The Housman Society or the Bromsgrove Guild could also be a possibility.



### 8.3 Davison Report Summary

8.3.1 Stuart Davison was commissioned by the Council to undertake a review of Bromsgrove Museum and to develop a strategy for the future of the Museum. The key issues which were identified were :

- the role and purpose of the Museum and its collections management
- the suitability of the current location
- the potential to operate in partnership with third parties
- increasing visitor/user numbers

8.3.2 The collections provide a strong basis for presenting the local history of Bromsgrove and its District. The way forward should maximise the benefit to the local population and increase the audience reached. This strength can be augmented through partnership links with other cultural heritage organisations.

8.3.3 In Davison's view the lack of a significant tourist audience in Bromsgrove argued against attempting to produce a stand-alone visitor attraction based on non-local themes. Whilst it is possible to redevelop the Museum on its existing site, Davison did not consider that the potential end result would justify the considerable expenditure that would be required, and a number of significant opportunities would be lost in the process. He recommended the development of a new Museum site, in partnership with others, as the best way of achieving an effective Museum provision clearly focused on the available audiences.

8.3.4 Davison considered the question of whether the Museum continued to be a direct function of the District Council or whether it should be transferred to another governing body, e.g. a charitable Trust. He did not believe that a change of governance in itself will resolve the fundamental problems faced by Bromsgrove Museum, and that the process of such a change could inhibit the necessary dialogue that needs to be undertaken with potential partners.

8.3.5 Davison argued that the District Council needs to adopt a clear objective for its Museum service, and then to rationalise the collections to fit that objective. The objective might be summarised appropriately in a mission statement such as "Bromsgrove Museum provides the means to enjoy and understand the history and heritage of the District".

8.3.4 This short statement could be expanded with a list of the principal functions associated with achieving that mission:

- preserving material heritage of local relevance and maintaining related documentary information
- providing access for all to the district's history through displays, exhibitions, multimedia presentations, events, and activities
- providing learning opportunities

8.3.5 Establishing a clear purpose for the Museum requires a clear collecting policy. This should be derived from the mission statement and designed to enable the achievement of the Museum's objectives. In broad terms, the Museum should collect material (including associated documentary sources) which represents the social history of Bromsgrove District from 16th Century to the present day. This would include themes such as :

- The Bromsgrove Guild
- industrial development
- personal and domestic life
- community activity



- 8.3.6 In particular the policy should include contemporary collecting. This will not only contribute to the continuity of the collections but will also enable exhibition and learning programmes to relate past events to present-day situations.
- 8.3.7 Davison saw the completion of a basic catalogue of the collections is a pressing priority. Ideally, sufficient time ought to be allocated to this task to enable a catalogue to be produced in less than one year. A realistic compromise might be to double the present amount of staff-time allocated which would enable the catalogue to be completed within 15 to 18 months. Once a catalogue has been completed, a process of rationalisation needs to be undertaken - retaining only those collections which contribute to the newly adopted objectives for the Museum and disposing of those which do not, in accordance with the approved disposals procedure.
- 8.3.8 Davison stated that the current storage conditions at the Council depot are unsatisfactory. In the immediate short-term the collections need to be accommodated within a weatherproof structure that can afford a reasonable degree of environmental control, and crucially that will enable staff to work on the collections in storage for documentation and other purposes. In the longer term, after rationalisation, the retained collections need to be housed in a permanent location that meets appropriate standards and provides for convenient access on site with the public areas of a new Museum development would be the ideal situation. The ongoing need for care, management, and development of the collections requires a full-time appropriately qualified Museum professional.
- 8.3.9 Davison concluded that the audiences to be served by Bromsgrove Museum are essentially local ones - including local schools, and also including 'visiting friends and relatives' as part of this local audience. The Museum should seek to provide opportunities for all in relation to lifelong learning; from formal provisions aimed at supporting the curriculum needs of schools, to enabling leisure interests such as local and family history. The Museum should seek to be the definitive source of information, enlightenment, and education on all aspects of the District's history and heritage; and should fulfil this aspiration in ways that are enjoyable, and encourage participation and a sense of ownership within the local community.
- 8.3.10 In addition, the Museum should be the prime source of information about the Bromsgrove Guild and should provide the definitive presentation on this subject - both physically in exhibition form and in virtual form through a website to enable it to meet the audience for this subject which is world-wide.
- 8.3.11 Developing an exciting range of events, activities, exhibitions, and other multimedia presentations will require a substantial amount of staff time over and above the care of collections, and would require staffing dedicated to devising and implementing such a varied programme. This function should be shared across all partners in a joint development.
- 8.3.12 The obvious potential candidates for partnership involvement with the Museum are as follows:
- Library Service local studies collections
  - County Archives
  - local history collections of Bromsgrove Society
  - owners of Bromsgrove Guild material (principally the County Museums Service)
- A dialogue should be initiated with all of these potential partners at an early stage to :
- . establish the common objectives in relation to cultural heritage
  - . explore the interest in pursuing a joint development project In Bromsgrove
- 8.3.13 In the absence of a detailed joint development plan, the most crucial point to make is that such a proposed development will need to satisfy the criteria for support from the likely major grant-

giving sources, such as the Heritage Lottery Fund. The following aspects of the recommended way forward will all contribute to a successful application:

- reaching new audiences with an existing Museum collection
- meeting more effectively the needs of the local community, and
- enhancing opportunities for community participation
- reaching across authority boundaries to collaborate with library and archive services in a multidisciplinary approach
- direct community involvement from partners such as the Bromsgrove Society

8.3.14 Other aspects such as building design and an imaginative approach to service provision would also be developed to meet the high standards and innovation expected of grant-supported projects.

## **9. DISABILITY DISCRIMINATION ACT IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 The Task Group considered the Access Audit report on the Museum and TIC which had been prepared by Mouzer Associates on behalf of the Council, in October 2002. A summary of the findings of the report is set out below. The costs shown are based on 2002 estimates.

### **Approach to the Site**

Consider directional sign to indicate location of the Museum from the downward side of the road. Ensure that the colour contrast, size of text and font is compatible to RNIB recommendations. **Priority** As part of ongoing maintenance programme **Cost** £0 - £500

### **Car Parking**

Consider the provision of accessible parking on the road near the Museum or utilise the courtyard area at the front of the building (on the left hand side).

Use yellow markings, 3600mm minimum width and 5600mm minimum length – use the blue badge with your sign. **Priority** As part of next refurbishment **Cost** £501 - £2500

### **Entrances**

The current main entrance presents real issues pertaining to access by a wheelchair – consider using the fire door exit as an alternative main entrance point. **Priority** As part of next refurbishment **Cost** N/A

### **Reception and Lobby areas**

- Counter to be lowered to 700/750mm, along with a recess of 600mm, to allow easier access for a wheelchair user. **Priority** As part of next refurbishment **Cost** £501 - £2500
- Install a hearing loop system. **Priority** As part of next refurbishment **Cost** £0 - 500
- Install a textphone. **Priority** As part of next refurbishment **Cost** £0 - 500
- Via the lobby area, there is a fire escape exit door that opens over a step that is 100mm – consider ramping this area to enable smooth egress from the building. **Priority** As soon as possible **Cost** £501 - £2500
- It is in this area (the lobby) that the proposed main entry point could be. **Priority** As part of next refurbishment **Cost** N/A
- Consider provision of additional seating that offers high back and arm support. **Priority** As part of next refurbishment **Cost** £0 - 500
- Remove seating directly below the 2 display lamps or re-site the lamps elsewhere. **Priority** urgent low cost or immediate health and safety risk **Cost** N/A

### Entrance in to the Museum

- The slope down to the side door should be made level to this door. **Priority** As part of ongoing maintenance programme **Cost** £501 - £2500
- Alternatively, the step is distinctively colour contrasted and a sign is placed at eye level on both sides of the door warning people about this step. **Priority** as soon as possible **Cost** £0 - £500
- The last step to the metal fire escape in the backyard requires distinctive colour contrasting to alert people with a visual impairment as to its existence. **Priority** as soon as possible **Cost** £0 - £500

### Around the Buildings

#### Museum (outside backyard)

- Consider opening up the back entrance to the building from the side road – this may be of consideration when reviewing the possible re-organisation of the main entrance – an example could be the issue of an entry pass that allows someone in a wheelchair to gain access to the backyard via the side road. **Priority** as part of next refurbishment **Cost** N/A

#### Museum (1st Floor – right turn at top of stairs)

- Re-paint window guard with a distinctive colour contrast (by the salt making display). **Priority** as part of ongoing maintenance programme **Cost** £0- £500
- Consider tinting the window or providing blinds for those windows that letting in a lot of glare that reflects against the display cabinets. **Priority** as part of ongoing maintenance programme **Cost** £501-£2500
- Replace existing chair for one that offers high back and arm support. **Priority** as soon as possible **Cost** £0 - £500
- Consider replacing the existing flooring cover with the same pine effect parquet flooring as the other side or consider replacement carpet with a more distinctive brighter colour contrast. **Priority** as part of next refurbishment **Cost** £501 - £5000
- Consider information notices that are easier to see and read (colour contrast, size of text, style of font etc) and these to be placed at the front of display units. **Priority** as part of next refurbishment **Cost** £501 - £2500



### **Museum (1st Floor – left turn at top of stairs)**

- As you enter, to the left the edge of the glass display cabinet can be lost against the pine flooring – paint this edge with dark, distinctive colour contrast. **Priority** Urgent low cost or health and safety risk **Cost** £0 - £500
- Consider information notices that are easier to see and read (colour contrast, size of text, style of font etc) and these to be placed at the front of display units. **Priority** As part of next refurbishment **Cost** £501- £5000

### **Accessible Toilets**

Consider converting adjoining ladies and gents toilets into one unisex accessible toilet, with one cubicle fitted out with the usual accessible fittings etc. **Priority** As part of next refurbishment **Cost** £501 -£5000

### **Information**

Consider review and revamp of the 'Bromsgrove Museum' and 'Bromsgrove and its rural surrounding' Leaflets to incorporate accessible numbers and that they are available in alternative formats. **Priority** As part of next refurbishment **Cost** £501 - £2500

### **Management Issues**

- Re-organisation of reception and the main entrance should be seriously considered in order to make the Tourist Information Centre and the Museum more accessible to the greater disability community (15% of the community have a disability). **Priority** As part of next refurbishment **Cost** N/A
- Consider an interactive service to those people who cannot access the Museum – a video could be made. **Priority** As part of next refurbishment **Cost** £501 - £5000
- The introduction of a fee to see the Museum should also be considered.

### ***Way-finding signs strategy to be planned and implemented***

Consider all aspects of directional and information signs and design a corporate style of display. **Priority** As part of next refurbishment **Cost** £501 - £5000

### ***Peeps (Personal Emergency Evacuation Procedures)***

Review present procedures and ensure they are robust in terms of ensuring that disabled customers and staff are covered. **Priority** As part of next refurbishment **Cost** N/A

### ***Communication***

Review and evaluate provision of services – are your telephone services accessible, websites accessible. **Priority** As part of next refurbishment **Cost** N/A

### ***Information***

Review all provision of information leaflets, flyers, notices, forms etc. **Priority** As part of next refurbishment **Cost** N/A

### ***Customer Evaluation***

Review and evaluate current procedures for complaints and customer satisfaction surveys – are they accessible for all people with disabilities.

### ***Disability Policy & Procedures***

Review and evaluate current policy and procedures.

- 9.2 Members expressed the wish that the Museum's exhibits should be accessible to all, although it was conceded that there were a number of ways of achieving this aim.

## **10 COUNCILLOR MRS J. M. L. A. GRIFFITHS**

- 10.1 The Task Group sought the views of Councillor Mrs. J. M. L. A. Griffiths as she was the portfolio holder responsible for the Museum. Councillor Mrs. Griffiths stated that the Executive Cabinet did not have a fixed view of the future of the Museum. The Executive Cabinet were awaiting the outcome of the Task Group's deliberations and investigations before they would come to any conclusions on the way forward.

## **11 AVONCROFT OPTION**

- 11.1 Members were of the opinion that as part of their investigation they should consider the possibility of relocating the Museum to Avoncroft Museum as this may have benefits both in terms of cost savings and more importantly of greater public access to the collection. The Task Group held a special meeting with representatives of Avoncroft Museum. A summary of the outcome of that meeting is set out below.
- 11.2. Avoncroft was developing plans for a new entrance facility that would involve a bid to the Lottery Heritage Fund. This bid has not yet been made as Avoncroft are waiting to confirm whether or not it was likely that the Bromsgrove Museum Collections including the Norton Collection could be transferred to Avoncroft. If The Collections were to be moved to Avoncroft, a larger, revised bid would have to be submitted to ensure that the building created could display The Collection in the new Reception/Entrance building and to provide additional storage areas to house those parts of the collection not on display. Any bid would be dependent on match funding; a bid of over £1million would increase the amount that had to be matched from 10% to 25%, for which Avoncroft would look to Bromsgrove Council to provide. There are also further costs of transferring the collection; it is believed that it would cost Avoncroft around £45,000 extra per annum to house The Collection, funding which Bromsgrove Council would provide by agreement in the long-term. If the Heritage Fund bid were unsuccessful, Avoncroft would only house the collection if the necessary resources were provided by Bromsgrove Council.
- 11.3 The issue of the number of visitors to each Museum was considered. Avoncroft's latest visitor figure recorded over 40,000 visits, of which 11,000 were school visits. Members believed that the relocation of the Collection to Avoncroft would lead to greater exposure to the exhibits than was the case at present. One member observed that the majority of the visitors to Avoncroft were from outside the district, and suggested that a concessionary rate could be available the local population.
- 11.4 If the Collection were to be housed at Avoncroft, Avoncroft would require that certain criteria were satisfied as a condition of the partnership between Bromsgrove Council, Worcestershire County Council (WCC) and Avoncroft. The Collection would need to be catalogued to Registration/Accreditation standard in order to ensure that they did not threaten Avoncroft's Registered status. Items, which were transferred, would need to be free from conditions as to how they should or could be used. Every effort would be made to ensure the wishes of the Bromsgrove Museum's Trustees were met, however Avoncroft would need to be able to use the items in any way that was necessary to meet their own objectives. Avoncroft would also like to continue developing the existing partnership between Bromsgrove Council and WCC.

- 11.5 Alternative possibilities for the future of the collection were discussed. The former Director of Leisure Services suggested that, depending on how or if the Collection might be transferred there were a number of options that could be considered, for example, it may pass from one charity to another, a joint charitable trust could be set up or, alternatively, it could remain with the existing Trustees (Bromsgrove District Council). This could be in the form of a 'service level agreement' being established with Avoncroft, for a fixed period of, for example, five years.
- 11.6 The representatives of Avoncroft were of the opinion that if the status quo were maintained with regards to The Collection and Museum, it would need more than mere curatorial support to improve matters, whereas at their site there was a "core team" already in place able to support the Collection.

## **12 BEWDLEY MUSEUM**

12.1 The Task Group considered it important to visit a Museum of a similar size to Bromsgrove, which also included a TIC. Consequently the Task Group visited Bewdley Museum on Friday 15<sup>th</sup> April 2005. A summary of the main points learnt from the visit is set out below:-

- Bewdley Museum houses over 30,000 exhibits, some of which are on temporary show and others kept in storage and rotated according to their programme.
- Bewdley Museum has a budget of around £147,000 for the financial year 2005/6, excluding the cost of the Tourist Information Centre, which is part provided by Wyre Forest District Council (WFDC).
- Two full-time and two part-time members of staff are employed at a cost of just over £70,000 as well as four seasonal staff at a cost of around £13,000.
- The promotion budget for the current year is around £2,300. Types of promotion used include in-house publicity, regional guides/brochures, national guides, educational materials and direct mail, which is sent to hotels, interest groups, local clubs and previous visitors for example.
- A few years ago WFDC decided that it was no longer going to fund the operations of Bewdley Museum, however local campaigning managed to reverse this decision for two years and Bewdley Museum is now a permanent part of WFDC's budget.
- Bewdley Museum has a Management Committee, which oversees the running of the Museum, sets targets and agrees a common purpose. It is made up of nine voting members, comprising of representatives of Wyre Forest District Council (WFDC), Friends of Bewdley Museum (FoBM) and the Guild of St. George. There are three non-voting members and the committee can invited non-voting persons in for advice.
- Bewdley Museum has had a policy of free admission for the last two years. Before this was implemented, Bewdley Museum had an attendance of around 10,000 visitors a year, which has tripled to around 30,000 since free admission. Bewdley Museum still charges for school visits with prices ranging from £1.50 to £6 per pupil for small activities, half-day events and full-day events.
- They have links with over 800 schools. Around 2,000 school pupils attend Bewdley Museum every year and traditionally most of these pupils are from the seven to eleven age group, however younger children are increasingly visiting.
- Workshops are also offered that are provided through partnership with local craftsmen. For a payment of rent between £500 and £800 per year, craftsmen provide instruction and guides as to how their trade works, which they must provide three out of four weekends in a month. These trades include clay pipe making, pewter-making, skipping rope making and painting. All the goods produced at the Museum are sold in the shop with the money going straight to the craftsmen; the Museum does not receive a portion of this.

### **13 SCHOOLS CONSULTATION**

- 13.1 The Task Group became aware of a lack of visits from schools/students throughout the District to the Museum. The Task Group was concerned to know why schools were not making use of the Museum.
- 13.2 Councillor McDonald reported that the Head of History at Waseley Hills High School had indicated that “they don’t take Bromsgrove Museum that seriously”, that there was “no focus” and should engage in more “eye-catching publicity”. The school tended to visit to places such as Liverpool, the Imperial War Museum, London or the Black Country Museum the school would not visit anywhere unless there was equality of access for all students.

### **14 SUMMARY OF PUBLIC CONSULTATION**

- 14.1 Members agreed that there was a need to involve the public as part of the work of the Task Group in order to be able to understand why the public did or did not visit the Museum. Members were informed that visitors to the Museum were encouraged to complete “feed back” forms giving their comments on the Museum.
- 14.2 The Task Group issued a press release drawing attention to the work of the Task Group and asking members of the public to submit their comments on the operation and future of the Museum and TIC. The public, for the first time as part of a scrutiny exercise, were also offered the opportunity to submit comments via the Council’s website. The comments received in response to the public consultation exercise are attached at Appendix B. The Task group considered all the comments received.

### **15 TOURIST INFORMATION CENTRE**

- 15.1 The Worcestershire Chief Executive’s Panel had considered a report on a shared services approach to tourism in Worcestershire and had agreed, with some reservations, to the setting up of a Destination Marketing Organisation, which would involve a single organisation responsible for all aspects of marketing for the County, including the management of Tourist Information Centres. This would operate under the direction of a public/private partnership, involve the transfer (or secondment) of staff and be supported, through Service Level Agreements, by Districts and County. A Project Manager would be appointed to carry out further work to produce a Business Plan that was more appropriate to the requirements that the District Councils had outlined. Districts were also concerned over the amount of monies they were expected to put into the organisation, and have clarified that the Business Plan would include a number of assumptions, i.e., that there would be a transfer of existing tourism staff, who would primarily have a marketing role, and that there was to be an option for T.I.C.’s to remain independent although functionally integrated. Two organisational options were also identified; (i) to be hosted by a participating local authority; or (ii) for it to be hosted by an existing organisation, and that very much a part of the next stage considerations would be whether or not such an organisation would be viable with local authorities contributing a lesser amount in terms of finances that they are currently putting into tourism. There was also a high expectation from the local tourism industry who were hoping that the creation of a Destination Marketing Organisation would take place in the not too distant future, likewise from Advantage West Midlands, who had been responsible for the creation of a regional tourism strategy. It was noted that the Chief Executive of Wyre Forest District Council had been nominated as a “champion” to take the project forward.

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### **16 ADVICE FROM THE HEAD OF LEGAL SERVICES**



16.1 The Task Group wanted to know if it was possible to change the trust deed that covered the Norton Collection. The former Head of Legal Services advised that the Trust Deed could be changed if the Charity Commission could be convinced that to do so would be for the long term benefit of the collection covered by the Trust document. The process of changing the document was a potentially lengthy one in which all interested parties, including Mr Norton would be invited to give their views on any proposed changes.

## **17 VALUATION**

17.1 The Task Group wanted to know how much the Museum Building was worth. The Council's Property and Valuation Officer advised that, subject to conditions relating to the construction of the building, usual surveys of the building etc if sold on the open market the Museum building would fetch in the region of £325,000.

## **18 FINANCIAL INFORMATION**

18.1 When the Task Group initially considered details of the costs of running the Museum and TIC they were informed that the general budget for the year 2004/5 was £55,600. This budget included £4,000 for monthly wages. The Museum's budget includes £1,000 for promotion and £2,700 for cataloguing and new displays and totals £18,700. The TIC, which has an overall budget of £26,300, spent £26,000 on two part-time staff and one cleaner. Overall, the Museum and TIC has a total service provision cost of £100,600. The details of the budgets for current financial year are set out at pages 24-26

18.2 The Task Group questioned who was responsible for the Workshop rent reviews and why had the income figures for the Workshop not been converted to a "projected" figure, the Group were advised that the responsibility for rent reviews of the Workshop had only been within the remit of the Leisure Services Directorate over the last twelve months.

18.3 When the Task Group drew up its initial recommendations it asked for a detailed breakdown of the likely costs of the various options which could be recommended to the Executive Cabinet. These are shown on pages 24- 26 .The figures show:

- A breakdown of the costs for each area of the Museum's activity including costs of potential improvements in service
- The costs to the Council of carrying out those activities before any transfer to Avoncroft
- The costs to the Council of carrying out those activities following any transfer to Avoncroft
- The costs to the Council of carrying out those activities at a new site
- The costs to the Council of carrying out an improved range of activities on the current site
- The costs to the Council of carrying out the current level of activities at the Museum.

18.4 In 2006 the Task Group was informed by the Head of Financial Services that as part of the review of the Council's medium term financial plan a number of savings were identified to ensure a balanced budget for 2007/08 and 2008/09. The nature of the savings had been identified on the basis that they were not directly linked to the priorities of the Council. Within the Culture and Community Services Department a saving had been proposed which would mean the closure of the Museum with effect from 2007/08 and therefore there was currently no provision for funding of this service in future years. [During the summer of 2006 there was to be a review of service provision and associated costs within various departments of the Council with the intention to mitigate the need to close facilities. Members felt that this development meant that there was a need to totally review their proposed recommendations.](#)

<b>Requirement</b>	<b>Budget Costs</b>	<b>Avoncroft Option (before transfer - 3yrs)</b>	<b>Avoncroft Option (after transfer - in perpetuity)</b>	<b>New location</b>	<b>Improved Service - Present Location</b>	<b>Existing Service</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>						
Exhibitions and displays	7500.00	1000.00	-	7500.00	7500.00	800.00
Events	2500.00	-	-	2500.00	2500.00	-
Education	2000.00	-	-	2000.00	2000.00	-
Disaster planning	1000.00	1000.00	-	1000.00	1000.00	-
Curatorial hardware	12000.00	-	-	12000.00	12000.00	1261.00
Staff - F/T Curator	18000.00	18000.00	-	18000.00	18000.00	-
Staff - F/T Assistant	14000.00	28000.00	-	14000.00	14000.00	-
Staff - P/T Educator	7000.00	-	-	7000.00	7000.00	-
Staff - P/T Technician	7000.00	-	-	7000.00	7000.00	-
Staff - Freelance project worker	1000.00	-	-	1000.00	1000.00	-
Additional staff costs	12000.00	2000.00	-	12000.00	12000.00	-
Staff - P/T Curatorial Officer - Pro rata	16075.00	-	-	-	-	16075.00
Insurance	2300.00	2300.00	-	2300.00	2300.00	2253.00
Audience Development	7000.00	7000.00	-	10000.00	7000.00	5407.00
Additional everyday expenses	2000.00	2000.00	-	2000.00	2000.00	2000.00
TIC running	26457.00	26457.00	26457.00	26457.00	26457.00	26457.00
Utilities	8900.00	8900.00	6000.00	7000.00	8900.00	8817.00
Repairs/Maintenance/cleaning/refuse collection	4500.00	4500.00	4500.00	4500.00	4500.00	4371.00
Refurbishment of foyer (with Curator, assistant and technician)	2000.00	-	-	-	2000.00	-
Refurbishment of Local history gallery (as above)	2000.00	-	-	-	2000.00	-
Refurbishment of shop gallery (as above)	1000.00	-	-	-	1000.00	-
Christmas Santa's Grotto	1500.00	-	-	1500.00	1500.00	-
Develop school room	2000.00	-	-	2000.00	2000.00	-
Redeveloping storage area to display area	10000.00	-	-	-	10000.00	-
Access improvements/Structural alterations	100000.00	-	-	-	100000.00	-
Payment to Avoncroft	44000.00	-	44000.00	-	-	-
Altering Trust Deed	5000.00	5000.00	5000.00	5000.00	5000.00	-
Storage (to be considered)						
Avoncroft Lottery Project Bid	81000.00	81000.00	-	-	-	-

Transfer of material to alternative location	7000.00	7000.00	-	7000.00	-	-
Purchase and fitting out of new building		-	-		-	-
<b>Total</b>		<b>194157.00</b>	<b>85957.00</b>	<b>151757.00</b>	<b>258657.00</b>	<b>67441.00</b>
<b>Total (including one off payments)</b>		<b>194157.00</b>	<b>85957.00</b>	<b>151757.00</b>	<b>258657.00</b>	
<b>Total (excluding one off payments)</b>		<b>101157.00</b>	<b>80957.00</b>	<b>136257.00</b>	<b>135157.00</b>	<b>67441.00</b>
				<b>Plus considerable unknown costs</b>		

\* = denotes initial or one off outlay  
 ? = Unknown sums - these will need more research and are likely to be variable.  
 # = Cost of building if only TIC  
 \*\* = If more efficient heating etc used  
 - = N/A

<b>Income</b>						
Income - workshop	1681.00	1681.00		-	1681.00	1681.00
Income - sale of buildings	325000.00	-	325000.00	325000.00	-	-
Income - retail	8405.00			8405.00	8405.00	8405.00

Account		C/Centre	
Monthly salaries (@ Cncl Hse)	ED91	Museum and TIC - general	10,895
Employers' liability insurance	ED91	Museum and TIC - general	218
External repair/maint. by non-CIS contractors	ED91	Museum and TIC - general	1,824
Electricity	ED91	Museum and TIC - general	1,617
Business rates (NNDR)	ED91	Museum and TIC - general	5,775
Water charges	ED91	Museum and TIC - general	164
Internal fixtures/fittings - maint'ce	ED91	Museum and TIC - general	2,101
Cleaning and domestic supplies	ED91	Museum and TIC - general	235
Refuse collection (trade waste)	ED91	Museum and TIC - general	210
Building insurance (incl. fixed plant)	ED91	Museum and TIC - general	944
Clothing and uniforms	ED91	Museum and TIC - general	525
General insurances	ED91	Museum and TIC - general	400
Telephones	ED91	Museum and TIC - general	1,051
General Expenses	ED91	Museum and TIC - general	105
Miscellaneous expenses	ED91	Museum and TIC - general	0
Support service/IBU recharges	ED91	Museum and TIC - general	9,012
		<b>Museum and TIC - general Total</b>	<b>35,077</b>
Materials - purchased	ED93	Museum and TIC - museum	1,051
Stock for resale (excl. food)	ED93	Museum and TIC - museum	5,253
General insurances	ED93	Museum and TIC - museum	691
Miscellaneous services	ED93	Museum and TIC - museum	16,075
Printing and stationery	ED93	Museum and TIC - museum	1,576
Telephones	ED93	Museum and TIC - museum	210
General expenses	ED93	Museum and TIC - museum	210
Marketing/promotion/publicity	ED93	Museum and TIC - museum	1,156
Miscellaneous expenses	ED93	Museum and TIC - museum	2,837
Support service/IBU recharges	ED93	Museum and TIC - museum	19,412
INCOME Sales	ED93	Museum and TIC - museum	-8,405
		<b>Museum and TIC - museum Total</b>	<b>40,065</b>
Monthly salaries (not@CnclHse)	ED95	Museum and TIC - tourist information	11,375
Printing and stationery	ED95	Museum and TIC - tourist information	315
General expenses	ED95	Museum and TIC - tourist information	51
Support service/IBU recharges	ED95	Museum and TIC - tourist information	4,032
INCOME Sales	ED95	Museum and TIC - tourist information	-210
		<b>Museum and TIC - tourist information Total</b>	<b>15,562</b>
Non Domestic Rates	ED98	Workshops r/o Museum	578
INCOME Housing and garage rents	ED98	Workshops r/o Museum	-1,681
		<b>Workshops r/o Museum Total</b>	<b>-1,104</b>
		<b>TOTAL COST</b>	<b>89,601</b>

## 19 CONCLUSIONS

19.1 The Task Group reached the following conclusions:-

- Bromsgrove Museum played a valuable role in providing the residents of Bromsgrove and surrounding areas with a range of information about the area which was not available elsewhere and it was important that this resource should not be lost. This was reflected in the comments received from the public.
- Members appreciated the hard work of the curatorial staff and recognised that that work by the current staff had improved both the profile of the Museum and visitor numbers.
- Doing nothing about the future of the Museum was not an option
- Whilst the location of the Museum close to the Town Centre was useful it was not well enough sign posted and many people were unaware of it. In addition the building suffered from a number of problems such as poor disabled access, lack of parking, lack of on site storage and some of the display cases no longer being suitable for purpose.
- The storage of items of the collection at the Council's depot was not ideal and in some cases was leading to items not being stored in a way that was beneficial to their long term retention.
- The collections were not fully catalogued and it was therefore not possible to provide an accurate record of all the items in the collection. To carry out the cataloguing process would take a period of years rather than months.
- The Museum was not accredited and therefore was not able to seek and receive a number of forms of funding. The accreditation process would involve time, expenditure and commitment to move the museum forward. If the museum remained in its current location a move towards accreditation would be vital.
- The experience of Bewdley Museum showed that with sufficient funding and a proper management board a small museum could be successful.
- The reports from the consultants and the advice from the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council and the County Museums Service showed that Bromsgrove Museum had the potential to significantly improve, however such improvements would require significant investment in the building, collection management and marketing.
- Local schools whilst willing to make use of the Museum and the collections would not do so until they could see how visiting the museum could meet the needs of the national curriculum
- The trust document entered into regarding the Norton Collection needed to be reviewed whatever recommendations the Task Group made as it was too restrictive and not beneficial to the long term management of the collection especially regarding the disposal of items.
- The cost of relocating the museum to another building within Bromsgrove Town centre would be prohibitive.
- It was recognised that Avoncroft Museum attracted a substantially larger number of visitors than the Bromsgrove Museum. Any transfer of the collections housed at the Bromsgrove Museum to Avoncroft would enable a larger number of people to see the collections. However such a move would remove the collections from central Bromsgrove. Avoncroft Museum was willing to take on the collections subject to certain criteria including funding being met.
- The collections currently housed at the Museum should continue to be available to the people of Bromsgrove either in their current location or at Avoncroft
- The fact that the museum no longer met the corporate priorities of the Council meant that there was no funding for it in 2007/8 and therefore unless another solution could be found the museum was likely to close.

- However if the Museum were to remain in its present location the Council would need to ensure adequate funding, is provided to enable the Museum to fulfil it's long term potential on issues such as staffing, accreditation and Museum registration, storage and maintenance of the collection, displays, publicity, improving disabled access and education/outreach/audience development. A management board for the Museum should be established to enable the further development of the Museum and the collections. The management board to be made up of a mixture of Councillors, persons with technical knowledge of Museums and tourism and other interested local people.
- Whichever option was chosen for the future of the Museum funding would need to be made available to enable that option to be implemented. This would mean either the restoration and extension of budgets for the Museum to enable it to develop in it's current site or the provision of funding to enable the transfer of the collections to Avoncroft including the maintenance of the collections in the intervening period.

## **20 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 20.1 Initially the majority of the Task Group wanted to recommend that the Museum be retained in its current location, that additional funding be provided to enable it to develop, a management board be established and that the trust document be reviewed. The task group had been minded to recommend that as a fall back position that if funding to retain the museum was not available the option of moving the collections to Avoncroft be explored. The Task Group was agreed that the collections currently housed at the Museum should continue to be available to the people of Bromsgrove either in their current location or at Avoncroft. However following the information received in 2006 that there was currently no budgetary funding for the Museum for the year 2007/8 it was felt that the Executive Cabinet should be recommended to choose between two options. The Task Group wanted to ensure that sufficient funding was included in the budget for 2007/8 and if necessary for future years to enable whichever option was chosen by the Executive Cabinet to be implemented.
- 20.2 The Executive Cabinet is recommended to choose one of the options set out below and to ensure that sufficient funding is included in the Culture and Community Services department revenue budget for 2007/8, and for future years if necessary, to enable whichever option is chosen to be implemented.

### **Option 1**

- Bromsgrove Museum and the Norton Collection be retained in its current location
- Adequate funding, as detailed on pages 24- 26 be provided to enable the Museum to fulfil it's long term potential on issues such as staffing, Museum registration, storage and maintenance of the collection, displays, publicity, improving disabled access and education/outreach/audience development and that it be recognised that such funding will enable the Museum to attract additional funding from external sources in the future.
- A management board for the Museum be established to enable the further development of the Museum and the collections. The management board to be made up of a mixture of Councillors, persons with technical knowledge of Museums and tourism and other interested local people.
- The Trust document under which the Norton Collection was given to the Museum be amended to enable the Museum management board to manage the collection in the best interests of the collection and of the Museum. Such changes to the document should enable the acquisition and disposal of items within the collection.

## **Option 2**

- Negotiations be entered into with Avoncroft Museum of Historic buildings to enable the transfer the Norton Collection and the other collections currently located at Bromsgrove Museum to Avoncroft Museum
- Subject to agreement being reached with Avoncroft Museum the Bromsgrove Museum building be sold and the capital receipt received be used to provide match funding for the Avoncroft Museum Heritage Lottery Fund bid to enable the creation of a new building at Avoncroft Museum to house the collections transferred from Bromsgrove Museum
- Revenue budget provision be made to enable the provision of curatorial services for the collections at Avoncroft Museum
- The Trust document under which the Norton Collection was given to the Museum be amended to enable the transfer and relocation of the Norton Collection to Avoncroft Museum and to allow Avoncroft Museum management board to manage the collection in the best interests of the collection and of the museum. Such changes to the document should enable the acquisition and disposal of items within the collection.



## **LIST OF APPENDICES**

- A COPY OF TRUST DEED
- B PUBLIC CONSULTATION – FULL DETAILS
- C AVONCROFT PROPOSAL
- D ACQUISITIONS AND DISPOSALS POLICY

DATED 14th September 1992

**D. C. NORTON ESQ.**

and

**BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**DECLARATION OF CHARITABLE TRUST**

as within written

6/40165N

**THIS DECLARATION OF CHARITABLE TRUST** is made the 14th day of

Museum and Tourist Information Centre Task Group Final Report

September 1992 **BETWEEN DENNIS CYRIL NORTON** of the one part and **BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL** of the other part

1.0 **INTERPRETATION**

1.1 “Mr. Norton” means Mr. Dennis Cyril Norton of 6 Upland Road Norton Bromsgrove in the County of Hereford and Worcester and includes his heirs and successors in title

1.2 “The Council” means Bromsgrove District Council of The Council House Burcot Lane Bromsgrove aforesaid or other its assigns heirs successors in title or other public authority or body which may replace the Council by virtue of statute or any Regulation Order or Direction made thereunder

1.3 “The Norton Collection” means all those items collected by Mr. Norton during the period 1949 to 1992 which form part of what is presently exhibited stored or kept within the building known as “Bromsgrove Museum” Birmingham Road Bromsgrove aforesaid

1.4 “Bromsgrove Museum” means that part of the freehold premises at 26 Birmingham Road Bromsgrove aforesaid (shown for identification purposes only on the plan annexed hereto and thereon edged blue) presently owned by Mr. Norton within which The Norton Collection is presently exhibited to the public and wherein additional items are stored for future display conservation restoration etc. and within which the management of The Norton Collection currently takes place or such other premises within the Town Centre of Bromsgrove aforesaid as the Council may decide

1.5 “The Museums and Galleries Commission” means the Museum and Galleries Commission of 16 Queen Anne’s Gate London SW1H 9AA

1.6 “The Plan” means the plan annexed hereto

1.7 “The Town Centre” means the area edged red on the plan annexed hereto

2.0 **BACKGROUND**

2.1 With the object and intention of benefiting the citizens of Bromsgrove in particular and the public generally and in furtherance of public education Mr. Norton is desirous of giving

The Norton Collection to the Council to hold the same upon the charitable trusts hereinafter declared

### 3.0 **DECLARATION**

Mr. Norton gives The Norton Collection to the Council **UPON TRUST** to hold and apply the same for the charitable purpose of promoting the education of the citizens of Bromsgrove and the public generally and subject to the following terms and conditions

### 4.0 **TERMS AND CONDITIONS**

4.1 The Council shall promote the contents of The Norton Collection presently housed within the Bromsgrove Museum at all times hereafter as “The Norton Collection” and the Council shall not cause or permit The Norton Collection to be known or publicised under any other name wherever it (or part of it) may be exhibited or otherwise kept for whatever purpose

4.2 The Council shall be responsible for the display and conservation of The Norton Collection and shall for this purpose appoint such staff as it thinks fit and proper at its own expense

4.3 The Norton Collection shall be displayed within the Town Centre and shall be open to viewing by the public during such hours and such days as the Council may determine but so that it shall not be open for less than 195 hours per month from 1st March to 31st October and from 1st November to 28th February 143 hours. The Council shall be entitled to make such admission charges as it wishes if it considers any charge to be appropriate and any charge made for entry shall be applied for the charitable purposes of this Deed. Such parts of The Norton Collection as are not on permanent public display at any given moment may be stored outside the Town Centre but shall not as a result cease to be part of the Collection. This requirement shall not prevent the storage of part of The Norton Collection in order to accommodate travelling exhibitions and displays but shall not operate in such a way as leads to the storage of any part of The Norton Collection in order to enable the Museum to accommodate anything other than such an exhibition or display

(save for normal staffing)

4.4 The Council shall within two years of the date hereof arrange for the cataloguing of The Norton Collection and to deposit a copy of the catalogue (or any variation thereof) to Mr. Norton for his retention indicating therein the location of each item within the Collection

4.5 Subject to the provisions of article 4.8 hereof the Council shall not be entitled to dispose of all or any part of The Norton Collection whether by way of sale lease mortgage charge gift or in any other way so that the Council shall at all times hereafter remain the trustee of The Norton Collection

4.6 The Council shall use its best endeavours to secure registration of the Bromsgrove Museum in accordance with the scheme of registration operated by the Museums and Galleries Commission. Pending registration by the Museum and Galleries Commission the Council shall operate the Bromsgrove Museum to standards of care (excluding cataloguing) public access and services equivalent to those which presently apply

4.7 The Norton Collection shall be displayed within and as part of the Bromsgrove Museum

4.8 The Council shall operate the Bromsgrove Museum and its management of The Norton Collection in accordance with the registration standards issued by the Museums and Galleries Commission. Any item forming part of The Norton Collection may only be disposed of or exchanged thereunder **PROVIDED** that such sale or exchange is conducted strictly in accordance with the registration scheme

4.9 The Council shall in its reasonable discretion continue to accept as at present the financial and other voluntary support of the Friends of the Museum

#### 5.0 **CHARITY REGISTRATION**

The Council shall register the charitable trust established by this Deed as a charity in accordance with Section 4 of the Charities Act 1960

**IN WITNESS** whereof this Declaration has been executed as a Deed the day and year first before

mentioned

**SIGNED** and **DELIVERED** as a **DEED** by )  
the said **DENNIS CYRIL NORTON** in )  
the presence of: )

*(signed) D. C. Norton*

*(signature)*  
*20 Somerlegton Ct.*  
*Comberton Road,*  
*Kidderminster.*  
*Headteacher).*

**THE COMMON SEAL** of **BROMSGROVE** )  
**DISTRICT COUNCIL** was hereunto affixed )  
in the presence of: )

*(signed) R. P. Bradshaw*  
*Chief Executive Officer*

**PUBLIC CONSULTATION**

The following comments were received in response to the public consultation exercise in which comments on the future of the Museum were requested.

**Comment 1**

Moving the contents of the Museum to Avoncroft (as has previously been suggested) seems like the best idea, if there are ongoing costs to the Council then in return the ratepayers of Bromsgrove should be allowed free access to the Museum once a week, as is the case with the Forge Mill Museum in Redditch, this would increase the number of local visitors to the Avoncroft Museum who will spend money in the shop and restaurant and recommend the Museum to friends and relatives who are visiting the area. The tourist information office would be used far more frequently if it was sited in the centre of the town. I know that many other Bromsgrove residents agree with both suggestions, I hope these comments are of use to you.

**Comment 2**

As Council Tax payers, the cheapest option would be preferred. If this means transferring the Museum to an alternative location, then so be it.

Furthermore, we feel sure that an alternative location (for example, Avoncroft) would get more visitors than the existing Museum location.

**Comment 3**

The facility (more so the TIC) MUST be located in the High St in order to be used more frequently and the Museum should be located to say, Avoncroft (without entry charge!) to enable it to expand and offer more teaching / learning opportunities.

**Comment 4**

The building in which the tourist information is based is very reminiscent of Bromsgrove as a market town. This makes it an ideal building. I would say, a more central location to the high street would be better, but a little walk does no one any harm. I recently visited the T.I. office for some information on local walks and thought the service, information and the facilities were very good. I read recently a lot of news about how the T.I. office should be closed due to lack of facilities for the disabled, I think this is total rubbish and think the Council should give consideration on how to improve the current facilities.

## **Comment 5**

I have been a volunteer at the Museum for the past year, however at the moment I am living temporarily abroad. I have the following observations and suggestions to make on the Museum.

It is evident that the Museum has been and remains the collection of a private individual, gathered for reasons of his own and not to reflect the town in which it is situated.. Since its purchase there does not appear to be a master plan for its development, and it has been static ever since. There has been no investment, no interest from the Council and for several years no staff. There has been no conservation of the existing collection and no attempt to identify what is there or to ascertain what relevance it has to the town. There has never been, to my knowledge, a debate about just what should be in the Museum. The records which came with the collection are inadequate or non-existent.

The Museum store is located in the Council depot where access is difficult; the curator is not a key holder to the building and entrance depends on someone being there to let her in. Moreover access to the store requires physical agility to get over all the things which are dumped outside the door.

The curator is a Council employee, a well qualified professional, but is not involved in decision making, she does not have a budget, and her professional opinions are not sought nor relevant information given to her. She is on a short term contract which I understand expires in March this year. I understand she is not involved with the Task Group, astonishing in itself.

All this reflects the position of the Museum in the Council thinking, i.e., that it is irrelevant and unimportant and is seen as a drain on resources. Any publicity for the Museum seems to be negative; as was evident late last year when Councillors commented on the unsuitability of the building for disabled visitors; these comments made headlines in the local paper. Had the Councillors been positive about the Museum's place in the town they would have focused on the actions which had been taken to make the collection more accessible whilst acknowledging that there was more to be done. Similarly the setting up of the task force seems to suggest that closure is imminent, and that only if there is a vociferous response would there be any chance of the Museum being kept open.

The Museum now has an enthusiastic and interested curator who in has in the past year endeavoured to bring the Museum back to the attention of the town. She has had special interest days, taken part in age concern open days, used the library exhibition space and has begun to re-label exhibits and move some exhibition space downstairs to enable better access for those with disabilities. The exhibitions have challenged the visitor, and encouraged them to think about what they are seeing and not to just have a passive role by just viewing an object or objects.

She has also obtained a grant for equipment to enable audio reminiscences to be obtained, again expanding the accessibility of the collection. She has recruited volunteers to assist in the sorting, listing and eventual cataloguing of the contents of the store. In short she seems to have some idea of how to take the Museum forward and it has been exciting and interesting to be part of this process.

Town Museums are an important part of the fabric of a community, especially in a town such as Bromsgrove which is changing so fast. The Museum is the place to go to find out about the town, its past and the people and things which were important in its development. The Museum should be an active part of the community, an interesting and vibrant place, with changing exhibitions to reflect the interests of the townspeople. Outreach work, taking exhibits to the library or to care homes or Council offices widens accessibility and encourages visitors to the main building. The role of the curator should be strengthened, and she should be allowed to invest her expertise and Council resources in what could be an asset to the town.



Free admission is necessary as it allows frequent repeat visits, and is important in getting people to view Museums as somewhere to visit regularly and not somewhere to go once on a day out. Going to the Museum to see what is new could be as regular an activity as going to the library.

The tourist information centre is a helpful resource for residents looking for information on local or regional activities and for visitors seeking information about the area. It is also useful when planning to travel around Britain. However the centre could play a larger role in being a resource for new residents of the town, giving them information about services and activities, as well as details of clubs and organisations.

### **Comment 6**

Surely the Bromsgrove Museum should be more focused if it is to bring people in. Not a generic folk Museum. It should as an introduction explain the origin of the town – on Roman road/market/mills/its industries etc.

Then concentrate on specifics as.

- The Guild (Hartlebury has good exhibits on the Guild. Why not here)
- Nail making
- A E Housman
- The railway history – the Lickey Incline

And if it is to keep people going it needs a programme of special exhibitions. It should be possible to move towards a more focused Museum by organising over time a series of focused exhibitions covering subjects as above and then after each exhibition consolidating the material in to a permanent exhibition.

## **AVONCROFT/WCC/BDC MUSEUM PARTNERSHIP PROPOSALS**

### **Criteria that Avoncroft Museum would require to be met as a condition of partnership:**

1. Collections transferred would need to be catalogued to Registration/Accreditation standard in order to ensure that they did not threaten Avoncroft's Registered status. It is assumed that this catalogue information would include detail as to which material originated in the Norton Collection, and which did not.
2. Material to be transferred would need to be free from conditions as to the way in which it could/should be used. Naturally every effort would be made to ensure that the wishes of the BDC Museum trustees were met, but Avoncroft Museum Trustees would need to be able to use the collection in any way that was required to meet their own objectives, subject only to the criteria laid down by the MLA under their Registration/Accreditation scheme.
3. Avoncroft Museum would wish to continue and develop the existing partnership arrangements between BDC and the WCC.
4. Material transferred would need to be accompanied by a long term agreement for revenue funding from BDC, currently estimated at about £45,000 a year in order to ensure that the collections were secure in to the long term future, and that the responsibilities associated with caring for them did not threaten the financial viability of Avoncroft Museum itself. Avoncroft Museum does not have surplus funding available to cover those responsibilities. The above figure includes the current cost of specialist support from WCC, and also provides for regular changes to the displays in order to maintain public interest and encourage repeat visits,
5. Housing the material transferred would require the construction of a new building for which a bid to the heritage lottery Fund would need to be prepared. However, Avoncroft already has a project in preparation for a bid for new entrance facilities. Clearly the only basis upon which both needs could be met would be through a new combination project. Although careful detailed planning would be required we believe this to be possible, and we have the space. Adding the Bromsgrove Museum element to the existing project could, however, push costs above the £1m threshold at which the level of partnership funding required rises from 10% to 25%. Whilst Avoncroft could realistically expect to be able to raise a proportion of such a sum, the bulk would have to be provided by BDC.

# **Bromsgrove Museum**

## **Acquisition and Disposal Policy**

For clarity this document is subdivided into four sections:-

1. Existing Collections
2. Future Collecting
3. Acquisition Policy
4. Disposal Policy

Copies of this document will be made available to other local Museums and interested parties, including Bromsgrove Tourist Information Centre, and the Council Leisure Services department, as well as to the West Midlands Regional Museums Council. It will be reviewed from time to time, with the next review in January 2007. The Regional Council for Museums, Libraries and Archives will be notified of any changes to this document.

### **1. Existing Collections**

The Museum's collections relate mainly to Social History, mainly in the Domestic and Working Life categories. Several key themes relating to the locality of Bromsgrove are well represented, for example nail making and the Bromsgrove Guild.

The majority of material held has been gifted to the Museum by Dennis Norton, now leader of the Council to be held by the Museum in trust. Objects taken in since the acquisition of the Norton collection have also been taken as gifts. Little material is held on loan.

The existing collections can be sub-divided as follows:-

#### a) History

Most of the historical material dates from c.1850 to 1950. It includes old shops stock, domestic furniture and appliances, toys and games. There is also material received from the administrator of Barnsley Hall hospital when it closed down.

#### b) Crafts and Industry

Material relating to the Bromsgrove Guild, much of which was salvaged from buildings being demolished. Plaster work and stained glass is particularly prominent. N.B. the Bromsgrove Guild order books are currently held at the County Museum. We also have objects relating to local industry in nail, glass, and button making.

- c) Transport  
Several old pedal cycles are held in the collection along with the famous Banshee motor cycle.
- d) Pictures in frame
- e) Photographs and assorted ephemera.
- f) Periodicals  
The Museum has a small collection of working periodicals and journals
- g) Costume  
Women's fashions are particularly prominent and the collection is well supplied with accessories.

This is not an exhaustive description but covers much of the collection. An intensive collections review and documentation project to be conducted in 2004 should highlight any significant omissions.

## **2. Future Collecting**

In preparing a strategy for adding to the Museum collection the Museum Staff are conscious of the restrictions on resources and space presented by their current premises. Future collecting will be limited to the headings already listed with the aim of paying particular attention to:-

- (i) Material relating to the lives and achievements of individual Bromsgrove people, whether famous or simply local personalities. To be accompanied by as much provenance detail as possible.
- (ii) Material charting the development and changes of Bromsgrove as a place.
- (iii) Material relating to local business and industry.
- (iv) Material relating to the history and work of the Bromsgrove Guild.

Priority will be given to objects with a known local provenance, i.e. items produced, used or owned within Bromsgrove or by Bromsgrove people. Every effort will be made to collect all the provenance detail possible and to document this with the items.

Priority will also be given to objects which are as little damage as possible, for the completeness of the historical record and to reduce the burden of conservation/repair costs on the budget. Damaged objects may be considered if they have a special significance for the local history.

The Museum will not seek to acquire:

- (i) Natural History, Geology, Palaeontology, Archaeology and Fine Art (except where the subject is relevant to the history and people of Bromsgrove.
- (ii) Any item which is likely to be beyond its capabilities and resources to adequately house and conserve.
- (iii) Unprovenanced or non-local items. The Museum will undertake to advise potential donors or appropriate Museums wherever possible.

### 3. Acquisition Policy

This policy governs the collecting activities of the Museum during the period of January 2004 – January 2007. The following principles will apply:-

#### a) Relationship with outside organisations

- (i) Bromsgrove Museum will abide by the Museums Association Code of Ethics for Museums (2002).
- (ii) In adding to the existing collection, reference will be made to the collecting policies of other Museums and associated organisations collecting in the same or related subject fields or geographical area in order to avoid unnecessary duplication or omissions. In particular, regular liaison will be envisaged with curatorial staff at the Worcestershire County Museum, Hartlebury Castle, The Worcester City Museum Service and, in the case of documents and photographs, staff at the County Record Office.

#### b) Limitations on collecting

- (i) Additions to the collections will be made selectively and with reference to the policy for future collecting (2 above). Acquisitions outside the current stated policy will only be made in very exceptional circumstances by the governing body having regard to the interests of the Museum.
- (ii) Bromsgrove Museum will not acquire any item which is beyond its capabilities and resources to store, conserve and display. This will include material from the natural sciences, ethnography and fine art (except of local topographical interest).
- (iii) Bromsgrove Museum will not acquire, whether by purchase, gift, bequest, or exchange any object or specimen unless the governing body or responsible officer is satisfied that the Museum can acquire a valid title to the item in question, and that in particular it has not been acquired or exported from, its country of origin (or any immediate country in which it may have been legally owned) in violation of that country's laws. (For the purposes of this paragraph "country of origin" includes the United Kingdom.
- (iv) So far as biological and geological material is concerned, a Museum should not acquire by any direct or indirect means any specimen that has been collected, sold or otherwise transferred in contravention of any national or international wildlife protection or natural history conservation law or treaty of the United Kingdom or any other country except with the express consent of the appropriate outside authority (eg British Court in the case of a specimen seized from a third party under the Protection of Birds Acts).
- (v) So far as British or foreign archaeological antiquities (including excavated ceramics) are concerned, in addition to the safeguards under sub-paragraph a) above, the Museum should not acquire by purchase objects in any case where the governing body or responsible officer has reasonable cause to believe that the circumstances of their recovery involved the recent unscientific or intentional destruction or damage of ancient monuments or other known archaeological sites, or involved the failure to disclose the finds to the owner or occupier of the land, or to the proper authorities in the case of a possible treasure trove (in England and Wales) or Bona Vacantia (Scotland).
- (vi) As a Museum holding archives, including photographs and printed ephemera, Bromsgrove Museum adopts the "Code of Practice on Archives for Museums in the United Kingdom" and the Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts' "Standards for Record Repositories" as guiding documents. Specific further advice will be sought from the County Records Office in Worcester.

(vii) Permanent acquisition through purchase, gift, bequest, or exchange is to be preferred to loans. Loans will only normally be sought for particular purposes, e.g. a themed display, and then should be on a fixed-term of up to three years, when they will be the subject of review and renewal if required. All loans to the Museum are currently under review with the object of transferring them to three-year, fixed term agreements.

c) Guidelines for Receiving New Acquisitions

(i) Consideration of new acquisitions should be based on their individual merit with regard to the collecting policy, and the ability of the Museum to store and care for the objects.

(ii) Previous donors are welcome to donate more items as long as they are relevant to the collection.

(iii) Objects should only be taken in by the Museum or TIC with the intention of accessioning into the collection. The leaving of objects with TIC staff by members of the public, for consideration should be discouraged.

(iv) Details of potential donations should be passed to the Curatorial Officer, along with the potential donor's name, contact details, and some detail of provenance. The final decision rests with the Curatorial Officer and the Museum reserves the right to refuse any offer of material.

(v) The Museum can only accept items that are free of monetary conditions. The Museum will not normally accept any gift, bequest or loan to which any special conditions apply. No item will be accepted until any conditions are approved by the Museum, and in all cases, reference will be made to the Collections Policy.

(vi) If accepting material on loan, the Museum should be confident of being able to satisfy the conditions of the loan and be able to provide adequate levels of care. Where loans are accepted, they shall be agreed for a fixed period and subject to regular review by both parties. Loans will normally only be accepted for the purposes of specific exhibitions.

(vii) All new donations should be accompanied by the appropriate paperwork, particularly regarding the transfer of title and ownership, and ensuring the donor fully understands the terms of the transaction. The object should then be accessioned into the collection as soon as possible, to avoid adding to the backlog.

#### 4) Disposal Policy

- a) By definition a Museum a Museum has a long term purpose and must possess (or intend to acquire) permanent collections in relation to its stated objectives. The governing body accepts the principle that there is a strong presumption against the disposal of any items in the Museum's collection except as set out below.
- b) In those cases where the Museum is legally free to dispose of an item (if this is in doubt, advice will be sought) it is agreed that any decision to sell or otherwise dispose of material from the collections will be taken only after due consideration. Decisions to dispose of items will not be made with the principle aim of generating funds. Once a decision to dispose of an item has been taken, priority will be given to retaining the item within the public domain and with this in view it should be offered first, by exchange, gift or sale to registered Museums before disposal to other interested individuals or organisations is considered.
- c) In cases in which an arrangement for the exchange, gift or sale of material is not being made with an individual registered Museum, the Museum community at large will be advised of the intention to dispose of material. This will normally be through an announcement in the **Museum's Journal** and other professional journals if appropriate. The announcement will indicate the number and nature of the specimens or objects involved, and the basis on which the material will be transferred to another institution. A period of at least two months will be allowed for an interest in acquiring the material to be expressed.
- d) A decision to dispose of an item, whether by sale, exchange, gift, or destruction (in the case of an object too badly damaged or deteriorated to be of any use for the purposes of the collections), will be the responsibility of the governing body of the Museum acting upon the advice of the Curatorial Officer and not of the Curatorial Officer acting alone. Full records will be kept of all such decisions and the items involved and proper arrangements made for the preservation/transfer, as appropriate, of the documentation relating to the items concerned, including photographic records where practicable.
- e) Any monies received by the Museum governing body from the disposal of items will be applied for the benefit of the collections. This normally means the purchase of further acquisitions, but in exceptional cases improvements relating to the care of collections may be justifiable. Advice on these cases may be sought from Resource donor will be informed of the situation.
- f) Where a Museum object has been acquired with aid from an external funding organisation, permission from that organisation will need to be sought before the object is de-accessioned or transferred to another Museum. If the object is sold advice on repayment of the original grant will be obtained prior to sale.
- g) Disposal will be considered only on the following criterion:-
  - (i) Irreparable damage.
  - (ii) Hazard to other items.
  - (iii) Inability of the Museum to care for an item.