

AGENDA ITEM No.12b

NOTES OF THE MEETING of the HERITAGE QUARTER held on Friday 19th January 2024 at 3.00pm

In Attendance:

Representing Tavistock Museum – Tony Rose

Representing Museum of Policing in Devon and Cornwall – Alison Holmes

Representing Subscription Library – Simon Dell

Representing Guildhall Gateway Centre - Wayne Southall, Louisa Semmens

1. TAVISTOCK MUSEUM

- a) Tavistock Museum is currently contemplating its opening times, aiming to commence operations from early April 2024, through to the end of October 2024, spanning Wednesday to Saturday. However, there are challenges specific to the opening of the museum due to their limited volunteer base.
- b) During discussions, the Tavistock Museum representative then explained the challenges posed by the building's temperature and humidity levels. These conditions could potentially jeopardize the preservation of certain artifact collection and impede with recruitment of volunteers. In addressing this concern, there was deliberation on safeguarding the collection within Tavistock. However, for more delicate artifacts, susceptible to environmental conditions, a proposal was considered to digitize and contribute them to larger institutions, such as The Box in Plymouth.
- c) It was explained that the museum's overarching goal is to attract a greater number of visitors and augment its collection of artifacts. The medium-term strategic vision was possibly to align opening times with the Guildhall, though not feasibly at this stage due to resource challenges.

2. SUBSCRIPTION LIBRARY

- a) The ambition of involving the youth was outlined, particularly those at the Youth Café who had registered interest in learning about the heritage of Tavistock. Arising from this, the representative of the Subscription Library mentioned ongoing discussions involving the Head of History at Tavistock college in order to encourage a collaborative relationship between the college and heritage groups.

3. POLICE MUSEUM

- a) The opening times for the Police Museum were discussed with plans to have an official opening date set for 5th March 2024, but to also utilize the Guildhall Gateway Centre as part of the museum launch. Specific to

committing to regular opening it was explained that this was very challenging again due to the limited volunteer base.

4. SAFEGUARDING

- a) Each organisation then raised their concerns regarding safeguarding policies and lone working. It was clarified that a group of students must be accompanied by either a teacher or a parental figure, emphasizing that safeguarding regulations do not apply to international groups.
- b) Building on the previous point, the group recognised the potential benefits of providing training for staff and volunteers to equip them with the skills needed to assist individuals dealing with mental health issues.

5. CONCERNS

- a) Regarding youth involvement, it was explained that some volunteers had stated that they were concerned with being left with groups of youths. However, there was a proposal to address this by organising training sessions for staff and volunteers. Additionally, fostering communication with staff at the Youth Café was suggested to dispel misunderstandings and potentially channel the youth's interest towards heritage activities.
- b) The challenges for Tavistock Museum were explained, re: multiple levels/stairs limited CCTV, and how this again would impact on the recruitment of volunteers. This concern highlights the importance of addressing safety measures to mitigate any risks associated with the museum's layout and volunteer demographics.

6. ANY OTHER BUSINESS:

- a) Exploring heritage activities was a focal point, with consideration for a broader range of low-impact activities to minimize any adverse effects on the building operations.
- b) The idea of coordinating heritage trips with bus services, connecting Tavistock with Princetown and Okehampton, was suggested as tourist traffic has a high impact on museum visits.
- c) A discussion arose in regards to implementing focus groups on specific topics to ensure alignment and a shared vision amongst advocates for the Heritage Quarter.
- d) The importance of strategic volunteer recruitment was discussed, e.g. planned heritage fair, to ensure there was an effective coordinated approach.

- e) The need for cohesive branding across all offers to foster a unified and recognizable identity was highlighted, e.g. flag banners/external black signs was suggested. The group would also again look into the feasibility of encouraging brown signs to be installed.

7. NEXT MEETING

- a) The next meeting is scheduled for **21st February 2024 at 10.30am**
- b) The agenda for the meeting will include discussions on important topics such as safeguarding measures, mutual support strategies, the determination of opening times for the year 2024, aspirations for the year 2025, and a dedicated focus on establishing a cohesive branding approach across all heritage quarter offers.