

## **The Museum of Dartmoor Life**



### **Trustees' Annual Report 2021**

#### **Aim and Purpose**

The aim of the charity is to provide and maintain the Museum of Dartmoor Life. The museum exists to provide opportunities for visitors, volunteers and members of the local community to learn about and enjoy the cultural and natural heritage of Dartmoor and Okehampton.

#### **Objectives and Activities**

The trustees' main objectives are to maintain the existing collection and to conserve artefacts and records, presenting them to the public in an absorbing and informative way. The museum organises and hosts local exhibitions and aspires to be a vibrant centre of lifelong learning with an exciting and diverse programme of workshops and events for the local community and visitors alike. It is a specific objective that the museum is for the public benefit, whether this is part of life long learning or maintaining the collection for visitors and the local community.

#### **Achievements, Performance and Outlook**

The museum only opened for six weeks in the 2020 season due to the national guidelines issued by the government in relation to the Covid 19 pandemic. This opening was limited to individuals or small family groups. There were no visits by schools or local community groups and the footfall was severely reduced. The museum shop's turnover was affected by poor visitor levels and all events, exhibitions and workshops that were included in the year's programme were cancelled. However, efforts were made to increase public awareness of the collection through social media.

The museum continues to build upon its links with the local educational establishments and commissioned a series of short films aimed primarily at the primary school age group. These films will be also be used as part of a social media campaign to heighten awareness of the collection to a multi-generational audience.

The museum continues to undertake the role of providing tourist information, although in the reporting year, provided assistance to less than 1,000 visitors due to the pandemic.

Routine maintenance and some improvements to the fabric of the building have been achieved, mainly on a self help basis. The museum has a policy of sustainability and a longer term environmental control programme will be put in place over the next two years to maintain the integrity of the museum and collection. This forms part of the museum's bid to the National Lottery Heritage Fund that will be made in 2021.

The trustees were unable to pursue physical aspects of their goals for the season set out in their five year plan, but continued to monitor and develop the strategic plan that will require, potentially, new interpretation and development of the premises. The project will need engagement with grant giving bodies, as well as a bid to the National Lottery Heritage Fund. Trustees have continued to ensure good governance is in place and trustees, whilst staff and volunteers have received external training (electronically) to assist with our objectives.

The museum was reaccredited with the Arts Council in 2017 and will continue with accreditation when the scheme is reintroduced by the Arts Council after national restrictions are lifted.

## **Financial Review**

In this accounting period the trustees continued their policy of financial caution, especially with the uncertainty of income streams with the museum closed. However, government assistance in the form of grants and the furlough scheme allowed the charity a reasonable surplus over operating income and expenditure. Capital assets at the end of the accounting period are £315,000 although these assets cannot be used without undermining the work of the charity.

There remain a number of financial risks to the charity, not least any loss of rental or grant income. Therefore, the priority is to increase visitor numbers and shop revenue to offset any potential loss of revenue in other areas. It is anticipated that due to the Coronavirus outbreak the museum will not open in the next early season and income will be reduced for the 2021 season. The trustees will continue to exercise prudence in the next financial period and seek grants where possible.

The trustees are particularly grateful for the continued support of Okehampton Town Council without whose financial assistance the museum and charity would have ceased to be a going concern.

## **Reserves**

It is charity's policy to maintain a balance on unrestricted funds (if possible), which equates to at least three months unrestricted payments and an amount to cover emergency situations that may arise from time to time, equivalent to £25,000. The balance of £56,533, held in unrestricted funds, meets this target. The trustees will continue with measures to ensure that cash reserves are maintained and available to meet unforeseen eventualities. Additionally, surplus funds have been set aside to invest in development and infrastructure funding, together with any matched funding requirements.

## **Volunteers**

Our volunteers continue to be the life blood of the organisation and the museum would not survive without the dedicated service provided by our volunteers. The trustees would like to take this opportunity to formally thank all volunteers who work tremendously hard in ensuring that the museum continues to fulfil its purpose. Without our volunteers' valuable contribution, the museum would be unable to meet its objectives. Volunteers, undertake a variety of vital roles that ensures the maintenance, collection care and documentation of the museum's core activities are maintained.

In 2021 the front of house volunteers continued to provide the valued tourist information service that has receive many plaudits. The museum continues to seek volunteers and especially front of house information advisers who express an interest in supporting the community in this area.

It is the aspiration of the trustees that all volunteers should enjoy a meaningful experience when associated with the museum and every effort is made to ensure their experience is as fulfilling and structured as possible.

## **Structure, Governance and Management**

The method of appointment of trustees and the charity's officers is set out in the charity's governing document. The trustees are responsible for the running of the museum and meet at least six times a year. Administrative matters are overseen by the trustees' officers which consists of the chair, immediate past chair, secretary and treasurer. Routine operational matters are delegated to the manager who with lead volunteers have day to day operational responsibilities. The trustees will continue to seek new trustees with appropriate skills to enhance the work of the charity.

## Administrative Information

The trustees during the year and up to the date of this report are:

Deborah Pritchard	Immediate Past Chair
Anne Russell	Reappointed May 2020
Christopher Proctor	Resigned March 2021
Jan Goffey	
Jo Robison	Resigned September 2020
Dr Mary Seddon	Reappointed May 2020
Karen Slattery	Secretary
Jane Marchand	Reappointed May 2020
Rose Dugard	Appointed November 2020
Richard Jennings	Treasurer, Chair (Oct 18)

Approved by the trustees of The Museum of Dartmoor Life on their behalf by:

Trustee

Trustee

Date