

FALMOUTH TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Cultural Services Committee held virtually by Zoom on 22nd February 2021 at 6.00 pm.

Present: Councillors G F Evans CC MBE (Chairman), A J Gillett (Vice-Chair), L D Coley, A Parker, B M A Ross and D W Saunby CC.

Councillors S D Eva, R J O'Shea and P A Minson also attended.

In Attendance: A M Williams (Town Clerk)
H M Boex (Director of Cultural Services)
K Springfield (Youth, Families & Development Manager)

A889 APOLOGIES

An apology was received and approved from Councillor Robinson (family matter).

A890 INTERESTS

None received.

A891 MINUTES

It was proposed by Councillor Gillett, seconded by Councillor Parker and

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 6th January 2020 be confirmed as a correct record of the proceedings and signed by the Chair.

A892 CULTURAL SERVICES REPORT

The Director of Cultural Services presented her report that was duly noted and forms part of these minutes. Further she updated on strategic and plan writing work she was undertaking for the Council. It was noted the Staffing Committee would further review the devolved management model for Cultural Services.

The Youth, Families & Development Manager provided a report on work supporting young people and families at the Dracaena Centre. The Committee acknowledged that excellent work by the Team.

The Director of Cultural Services reported further that improvements to the front of the Municipal Buildings would be undertaken as part of the 2021 town dressing measures. This was supported by the Committee.

There being no further business to transact the Chairman declared the meeting closed at 6.50pm.

Signed: Date:

Introduction

This report covers the year since the Cultural Services committee meeting on 6th January 2020. The Coronavirus pandemic and ‘associated lockdowns’ have proved challenging. The Art Gallery and Library closed to the public at 13:00 on Saturday 21st March, reopened on Monday 6th July. Then the Art Gallery closed on November 5th and opened again on December 2nd but the Library was able to continue with click and collect throughout this period. The Art Gallery remains closed but the Library continues with the click and collect service. Every cloud has a silver lining, however, and the Cultural Services team working from their homes pulled together to create the Falculture on-line brand and invested their home-working time into creating a number of digitally accessible activities that are being shared with the community at large.

Library and Information Service

- 1.1 As stated above, the Library has remained open for click and collect since 6th July but is only open 9:30-13:00 Monday-Friday. A strict one-way and one in, one out system has worked very well with a hand sanitisation station at a drop-off point in the lobby. People are requested to wear masks on entering the building and we have had no resistance to this.
- 1.2 The last monthly statistical report issued by Cornwall Council was for December 2020. There were 1,737 issues and 14 new borrowers compared with December 2019 when there were 6,351 issues and 54 new borrowers. .
- 1.3 Regular community in the Library is on hold but we have story-telling available on-line at [Falmouth Library Storytime – Falmouth Cultural Services \(falculture.org\)](https://falmouthlibrary.org.uk/storytime)
- 1.4 Falmouth Library is one of fourteen libraries nationally to have been selected to take part in Engaging Libraries 2, a funded research project sponsored by the Carnegie Trust. We elected during the lockdowns to continue this project running three on-line daylong workshops with FoAM Kernow, (<https://fo.am/studios/kernow>) on 6th June 2020, 14th November 2020 and 23rd January 2021. This is a ‘citizen science’ collaboration between academic researchers who are paired with members of the public in order to explore what happens when data/findings in scientific papers are manipulated by the media to form sensational headlines. The feedback from these workshops will help us to understand how libraries can adapt to the needs of our emerging digital culture.
- 1.5 The Information Service no longer sits under Cultural Service and is anyway currently closed to the public.

Art Gallery:

2. Supporters Scheme, donations, grant Income and awards

2.1 Donations have been severely impacted by the lockdowns.

3. Acquisitions, Gifts, Bequests and Loans

3.1 Terry Frost's *Orchard Tambourine* was loaned to the Royal Cornwall Museum to supplement their Cornwall Council Schools Art Collection show which was held at the same time as ours.

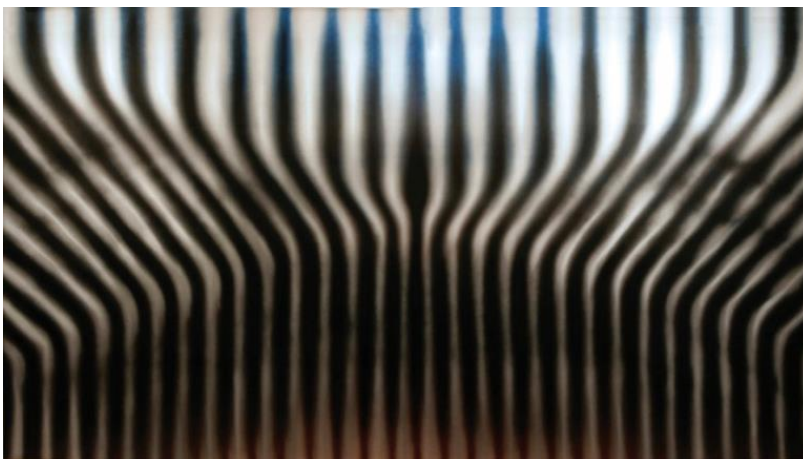
3.2 *The Golden Age of French Tourist Posters* in collaboration with the Musée Breton, Quimper was due to be returned in March 2020 but got caught up in lockdown one and was consequently only shipped back in July 2020.

3.2 Planned loans to other exhibitions have been variously postponed.

4. Exhibitions and displays

4.1 *The Golden Age of French Tourist Posters* in collaboration with the Musée Breton, Quimper which was in the Entrance Gallery was due to be replaced by *Robert Organ* and *A Sharp Pencil* in the main galleries by *Jeremy Gardiner South by Southwest: The Coast Revealed* both due to open on Friday 27th March, 2020 and both cancelled. Just before we went into lockdown we decided to hang an exhibition *Piers, Ports and Quays* from our collection just in case we might be able to do guided tours during the first lock-down. This didn't prove the case but the Director was able to do a Powerpoint presentation Ps & Qs – Piers, ports and quays over Zoom to Mawnan WI.

4.2 *A Sharp Pencil* stayed on the walls during lockdown 1 and when we knew that museums would be allowed to open from 4th July we decided to keep with the title of our proposed summer show *2020, A Different Way of Seeing* (6 July -12th September) and instead of all the 'tactile'/sensory art that we had planned (no touching allowed and socially-distanced visits) we hung an exhibition of artworks from our collection which could be interpreted as a different way of seeing. This also



gave us the opportunity of hanging Barrie Cook's *Towards the Holy Grail* which was given by the artists who very sadly died two weeks after the exhibition opened. A fitting tribute.

- 4.3 In September we rehung both the entrance gallery with *Monsters and Serpents* and the two main galleries with *Cornwall Council Schools Art Collection* but obviously due to Covid no private views etc. could be held. The Director gave an on-line tour of these exhibitions which can be seen by using this link. [Autumn 2020 exhibitions – Walk-through with Henrietta – Falmouth Cultural Services \(falculture.org\)](https://www.falculture.org/autumn-2020-exhibitions-walk-through-with-henrietta).
- 4.4 As we were allowed a work bubble the exhibitions team demounted these exhibitions in November and hung two new exhibitions from our collection *There and Back* and *Here and There* both travel-themed exhibitions which gave our visitors something new to look at when the doors opened once again on 2nd December. These exhibitions are still on the walls at the time of writing but will be replaced in March in the hopes that we will be open for Easter.
- 4.5 Our main exhibition *Polperro* due to open in March has been delayed by a year and the exhibition that should have been hung last November *Thanks for the Apples* has been rescheduled for November 2021. It takes a couple of years to co-ordinate all the loans etc. for a major exhibition and Covid has proved quite a challenge for our exhibition team.
- 4.5 In the light of the *Black Lives Matter* movement, we celebrated Black History Month in October with an exhibition in the Foyer telling the tale of Joseph Emidy (1775-1835), the celebrated enslaved Guinean musician who was freed on his arrival in Falmouth by Admiral Sir Edward Pellew (whose family held property in Flushing) and became leader of the Truro Philharmonic Orchestra.
- 4.6 The Community Gallery up the stairs and on the mezzanine featured artworks created by Stroke Club during lockdown1 and more recently by participants from the Smartphone photography course run by Cultural Services.
- 4.7 Work on the shop refit was concluded just before lockdown1 and the new Shopify hardware and software financed with the help of a Cultivator grant has greatly increased accounting efficiency.
- 4.8 At the same time the final set of old spotlights in the Entrance Gallery were replaced by new LED lights which means that all three galleries now have fully adjustable lighting of the same lux.
- 4.9 The fact that we had opened and bothered to hang new exhibitions was warmly received by most of our visitors and whilst we could not have out our usual visitor book, we introduced a system of postcard feedback with free pencils to take away. The following gives a flavour of the public feedback:

“Very friendly staff – warm & welcoming. Felt ‘normal’ in the best sense of the word. Nothing was a problem. Felt at ease and able to take my time. Staff are to be congratulated on their attitude”

“we love visiting the gallery every visit to Falmouth – Thank you!”

“So excited to see our Stroke Club art exhibition – thank you – Tracy”

“ I had a wonderful time in the gallery with such inspirational work and themes. The staff were immensely helpful – Thank you.

“Brilliant – (as always) Thank you - T R St Ives

“Wow, amazing exhibitions, thank you – so happy to see in real life, Barbara Hepworth!”

4/12 – “Such a relief to be able to come here again and enjoy the gallery with all its wonderful art works – Thank you! Margaret J

5. Visitor Statistics – art gallery

5.1 In line with all museums and indoor activities this summer the impact of ‘booked ticket slots’, reduced opening etc. had a major impact on our visitor figures

	2019	2020
July	4,599	626
August	6,914	1,357
Sept	3,720	1,143
Oct	4,076	1,196
Nov	3,343	71
Dec	2,178	333
	24,830	4,726

6. Community and learning – art gallery

6.1 We usually include a table of community engagement at this point but our digital engagement has been harder to measure as it has mostly featured outreach activity and digital activities that we have posted up on <http://open.falculture.org> .

6.2 During lockdown1 we distributed 82 high quality art packs through the Dracaena Centre’ Young Women’s Group, Friday Drop in group and food donation families. We are continuing to do this in the current lockdown. Feedback has been very positive.

6.3 We have been running workshops with the Young Women’s Group, have a young poet in residence who is also working towards his gold Arts Award and has contributed poems to all the exhibitions. During the summer, when we could we ran socially distanced workshops with the 50+ group at Dracaena and two baby-paint sessions, also at Dracaena and in the lockdowns on-line workshops (having provided

materials in advance through the click and collect service downstairs) with Stroke Club and seniors Make and Take and this spring we are working with WILD young mum's group.

- 6.4 In October we had 117 school children from Marlborough school over four sessions – closing the Gallery to the public so that they could spread out in all three galleries in their class bubbles. In November lockdown we held on-line workshops for Constantine school and we have also been continuing to support Penryn ARB group digitally.
- 6.5 In the Autumn we were again able to work with Falmouth University Academy of Music and Theatre Arts (AMATA) to support their LIVE dance project over six weeks culminating in a performance on the stage at Kimberley Park. Wonderful to have such infectious youthful enthusiasm. This link will take you to the Zine created as part of the project <https://indd.adobe.com/view/5e75eaf8-d2fb-44c9-9166-a3baf9cbf31f>
- 6.6 The Director has given four Powerpoint Zoom talks to Mawnan WI (average attendance 24) on Ps&Qs as previously stated, the Cornwall Council Schools Art Collection, Clough Williams Ellis and Women Artists in Cornwall raising £200 towards donations and also assisted Michael Carver to give a most informative talk on the founding of the Poly and the Fox family ventures at Perran, Gwennap and of course the Poly.

7. Staffing, training and volunteering

- 7.1 Tamsin Bough and Sara Baistrocchi continue to lead on the health and wellbeing agenda with support from Julian Beesley and Catherine Marshall. This includes publishing a monthly newsletter which all staff and Councillors are encouraged to contribute to.
- 7.2 Tamsin Bough and Sara Baistrocchi have just started an on-line course in 'soft' management development skills, to compliment the work the well-being team are doing. They are aiming to implement a new approach to appraisals and performance management and are looking at the best ways to support staff mental health and well-being at work. They are working alongside Emily Middleditch and Val Rogers with the implementation of the new Citrus HR software.
- 7.3 We have recruited a second Curatorial Intern, Eve Swanson. This is a nine month post externally funded by Cultivator and the Ellerman Trust and Arts Council England through the Cornwall Museums Partnership. Lizzie Broughton who held this position last year has had her contract extended by six months to cover Natalie Rigby's absence.
- 7.3 The Citizen Curator volunteer programme, supported by Cornwall Museums Partnership (CMP) is progressing well, with plenty of enthusiasm and interesting

ideas. After the initial welcome from Donna Williams and Tamsin Bough, they have started meeting fortnightly on zoom, alongside training sessions CMP has put in place. Their aim is to complete a walk (or walks) around Falmouth, linking the Town art collection with local view points and areas of historical significance. The walk will be loaded onto a new app and will be designed with blind and partially sighted people in mind.

- 7.4 Donna Williams, Sarah Scott, Eve Swanson and Tamsin Bough have been receiving training in audio description, which has been really beneficial and has given them lots of ideas in how to make our collection more inclusive. Our citizen curators will also develop this skill over the course of their project.

Youth Services

- 8.1 Kate Springfield will attend the Zoom meeting to update.

Festivals & Events

- 9.1 Events are covered by the Town Team's report to full council.

Parks & Gardens

- 10.1 Jacqui Owen has been working on the Making Spaces for Nature (MS4N) project and is tree planting on the Beacon, Tregonigie Woods and Lambs Lane.
- 10.2 The Director is working with Simon Nield of Source FM and architect, Michael Hormann to produce a scheme for Kimberley Park Lodge to include community recording studios and a café.
- 10.3 The Director is also assisting the Town Council in working out an appropriate business delivery mechanism for Princess Pavilion once the asset transfers from Cornwall Council.

Ponsharden and other Cemeteries

- 11.1 A second round bid for £296,000 for the restoration of Ponsharden Cemeteries was submitted to the National Lottery Heritage Fund in June 2020 written by the Director during lockdown. This was successful and further grants totally £45,000 from Historic England have also been secured towards this project.
- 11.2 The Design Team has now been appointed and will be led by Principle Designer pdp Green Architects and tender documents are currently being prepared for the main contract and for supporting specialist stone conservator contracts. These will be published on Contracts finder in March with an expected start on site in July.

- 11.3 A separate treeworks contract was tendered separately to three firms and awarded to Expertrees who began work on site on Monday 15th February in order to get all the work done in advance of the nesting season.
- 11.4 Anthony Fagin gave a Zoom talk on the Jewish Cemetery through Kresen Kernow which can be viewed on their YouTube account <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tPw0n832tw0>
- 11.5 PhD student Amy Smith will be joining the project on placement for two days a week from Apr-Oct and she will help to launch the activity plan and community engagement. There is no cost to the Town Council for her placement.
- 11.6 She will be working with Dr. Sherezade Garcia Rangel from Falmouth University to produce a second series of podcasts based on Ponsharden cemeteries. Her first series which has won awards was based on people buried at Swanpool cemeteries including both Winifred Freeman and her brother in law Charles Napier Hemy. You can find them here <https://weareonthehill.podbean.com/> .

Joint Marketing and Publicity

- 12.1 No CS leaflets have been issued during this period but the saving will be invested into streamlining and integrating our various FTC websites.

Henrietta Boex,
Director of Cultural Services
February 2021