

**Report on Swaffham Heritage Ltd for the period November 2018 to April 2019 inclusive for circulation to the Councillors of Swaffham Town Council**

1. Heritage Users

The following table summarises the number of users and the range learning experiences for the above period.

Learning Experience	Number of events	Number of Users actual unless * - then estimated
Schools activity days	9	213
Talks and walks on and off site	2	50
Loan boxes	2	54*
Museum visitors		698
Total		1015

Examples of visitor comments from Visitor Survey include: 'Brilliantly set out and informative. Very helpful staff.' 'Great to have a chair lift and wheel chair to first floor.' 'Really enjoyed the local history we knew nothing about – walked past man times, glad we came in.'

2. Publicity

In order to encourage new visitors to Swaffham Heritage, we have been trialling free admission on a Saturday morning with the expectation of a donation. The success of this is being monitored. . This is for 2019 only to facilitate those who wish to participate in either the Rotary Capture Swaffham Photographic Competition or the Conflict and Consequences Gallery.

3. Working with Partners

Swaffham Heritage has contributed to the Swaffham Neighbourhood Plan, the work of the Town Team and the Norfolk Heritage Network and The Breckland Society publications. Its archives have been called upon for work undertaken on footpaths, local railways and Rev Keeling Scott.

4. Working to Professional Standards

The Trustees have been working with the Arts Council to ensure that Swaffham Heritage's constitution fulfils the new criteria for Accreditation. Under the new timetable for accreditation, Swaffham Heritage is due for re-accreditation in 2021.

We have appointed 2 new trustees to replace retiring trustees bringing the total numbers of trustees to 7.

5. Collections Care and Acquisitions

The Curatorial Team has been restructured to cover a wide range of skills required to complete the audit and accurate record keeping. More detail below under Heritage Manager.

6. New Displays and Initiatives

- The 'ebook' funded by Breckland Council recording events and people from WW1 from Swaffham and the surrounding area is now available on the website at no charge. Contributions can be made to this research by contacting the Heritage Manager.
- A new gallery called 'Conflict and Consequences' funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund has been opened. This is a developing gallery which looks at events, people and issues in and around Swaffham involved in post WW1 conflicts.
- Monique Slaven, a steward for many years at Swaffham Heritage left a bequest to the museum. The Archaeology Room has been renamed the Monique Slaven Room as this houses the collection she found with her metal detector in the Sporle area. Improvements have been made to this room to include the display of one of the largest flint cores in East Anglia.
- Funding is being sought from AIM (the Association of Independent Museums) for the conservation of a 17<sup>th</sup> century cavalry helmet. Should this bid be successful, the helmet will become a key element of the Swaffham Treasures Display in the Ben Emerson Room.

7. Education

Schools continue to enjoy Activity Days on "Howard Carter meets Tutankhamun". Organisations request talks on Howard Carter and the discovery of the tomb of Tutankhamun as well as talks and guided walks on aspects of Historic Swaffham.

8. Research

The History Group uses our archives for research on a variety of topics. One volunteer has researched the WW2 defences around Swaffham as well as the North Pickenham Thor missile site in the 1950s. Research has been conducted on Swaffham in WW1 and volunteers are being sought for research and memories of experiences and situations in other conflicts within living memory.

## 9. Heritage Manager

- **The Collection**

- We are now in the third year of auditing our artefacts. One room is complete, a second is partially complete and the third store room is in progress. This last room has over 250 boxes and drawers of artefacts. All artefacts are checked as to place and accession details, are photographed and checked against or entered into a museum standard database. Procedures on borrowing artefacts from the stores for displays in the museum has been tightened.
- Simultaneously we are digitising our photograph albums and other photographs in the Archive Room. All are logged on a searchable spreadsheet. We are also recording the detail of the contents of our archive boxes and scrapbooks on a searchable spreadsheet. This means that searching time is being reduced considerably and fragile documents are better protected.
- There are now six volunteers working regularly on these tasks. The aim is to complete the whole audit by end 2020. The scrapbooks will be ongoing since we continue to collect news clippings.

- **Future Displays and Events**

Future work over the next four years will concentrate on amassing memories from the Conflict and Consequences Gallery, completing work on WW1 and preparing for an event and gallery refurbishment in 2022 in connection with the centenary of the discovery of the tomb of Tutankhamun by Howard Carter

Anne Fairweather (Trustee) and Sue Gattuso (Heritage Manager and Trustee), May 2019