

# HENFIELD MUSEUM

## STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The Museum aims to be an integrated part of community ownership, a focal point for local studies, and a centre of excellence in the education of all groups in society.

The Museum seeks to work as the cultural arm of Henfield and the surrounding villages, by collecting, preserving and exhibiting objects of local interest to tell human stories and, by illuminating the historical context and practical usage of the objects, to increase knowledge, lighting the flame of inspiration for children and igniting memories for their elders.

The Museum also seeks to inform neighbourhood planning and to ensure that new building is sensitive to what Henfield has been and so is today, while contributing to the development of the rural economy.

## SITUATION REVIEW as at January 2020

**Finance** – The Museum is owned by Henfield Parish Council (HPC), and is mainly funded through the Council's precept. Its annual running costs are approximately £9100. Income is derived from occasional sales of, for example, duplicate postcards from the collection, and from donations by the public. HPC holds a reserve fund for the Museum of £2900. The Friends of Henfield Museum also derive income from the sale of books and DVDs.

**Management** – Since June 2019, the Management Committee has included the Curator, two members representing the Friends of Henfield Museum, as well as four Parish Councillors. The positions of Chair and Deputy Chair are held by Parish Councillors. All committee members have voting rights and each member may have a substitute who will take their vote if necessary. The committee currently meets four times per year, although extraordinary meetings may be held if required.

**Volunteers** – the Curator and Assistant Curator are assisted by volunteers, currently numbering 35, whose main duty is to man the Museum during opening hours. A few volunteers help with the cleaning and inspection of objects.

**Visitor Numbers** - Visitor numbers have dropped over the last few years (2546 in 2015, 2242 in 2016, 2162 in 2017 and 1738 in 2018). The Museum continues to open outside of normal hours when special events are taking place in the village or the Henfield Hall.

**Outreach** - The Museum has digital footfall through its presence on the websites of HPC, the Henfield Hub, and the Sussex Museums Group; the Museum also has a Facebook page. Photographs from the Museum are being posted on the Henfield Club Facebook page. A "roving case", which moves to various locations within the village, enables a wider public to view a themed display of small artefacts, photographs and documents.

**User Services** – Help continues to be given to people carrying out family history research, and by providing historical information to groups and individuals on land and properties. Visits from the Felpham school have ceased, but children from the Henfield school visit the Museum twice a year to learn about the history of the village and Henfield in WW2. Other groups, including U3A, continue to arrange visits to the Museum and receive a guided historical tour around the village.

**Museum Premises** – The Museum continues to provide a good conservation environment for the collection. The shortage of storage on site continues to be a problem. The off-site store for a few large object and a small number of smaller objects has continued to be made available; this arrangement is subject to annual renewal.

**The Museum Collection** – The collection has been put together over a period of about eighty years, and donations continue to come in on a regular basis. The Management Committee of the Museum now formally approve all new acquisitions. Existing objects which we are unable to exhibit through lack of space, fall outside of our collections policy, or are duplicates, are being offered to other museums in accordance with the Disposals Policy. The **Costume Collection** was also started about eighty years ago. Donations from local residents have been the main source of items, which include a broad mix of female accessories, shoes, undergarments and outerwear, together with some menswear. The latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century is well represented and there is a selection of 20<sup>th</sup> century pieces. The policy for future acquisitions is similar to the Museum's general policy with regard to the strength of the local connection, with additional criteria relating to date (1830s to 1960s) and condition.

**Collection Management** – An audit on the care of the collections was carried out several years ago and recommendations from that report have been put into place. These include a procedure for monitoring the environmental conditions, installation of traps for insects, and providing foam boards between the stacked framed photographs and paintings.

**External Review** – HPC have negotiated a payment with the Village Hall Trust for the hire of the Museum's room and store which will be coming up for review in 2019. It is hoped that the funds raised by the Friends of Henfield Museum group will help fund the running of the Museum in future years. There is no threat in the foreseeable future of the closure of Henfield Museum.

## **REVIEW OF FORWARD PLAN 2014-2018**

The proposal to provide more imaginative displays has only just started and is the subject of further work under the next forward plan.

Approaches were made to local schools in surrounding villages but they did not respond to our emails. A more proactive approach is required to see how we can work together.

A visitor questionnaire was produced, but little useful feedback was obtained. A questionnaire was also produced aimed at people who do not visit the Museum. This has had a limited circulation and more needs to be done to circulate this.

Some ideas were raised as a means of providing additional museum storage but nothing came from this partly due to the expenditure involved, and where it could be sited. It is hoped the recently reformed Management Committee, which now includes representatives from The Friends of Henfield Museum, or a separate committee made up of enthusiastic local people could apply for grants etc. to fund the building of a store or look into siting the Museum at a different location.

The oral history programme is developing very well with a group of about four people carrying out recordings of people's early memories of Henfield, or where they were brought up, and their working lives etc.

All the 9,000 entries from the Marjorie Baker negative archive were entered onto the computer in the time period without the need to train up additional staff.