

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

**QUEEN'S OWN ROYAL WEST KENT REGIMENT MUSEUM TRUST
COMMITTEE**

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 10 OCTOBER
2017**

Present: Councillor Newton (Chairman), and
Councillors Cox, Cuming, Round and Mrs Wilson

17. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

18. NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

There were no Substitute Members.

19. NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS

There were no Visiting Members.

20. DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

Councillor Wilson disclosed membership of the Museum Strategic Board but confirmed that this would not affect her ability to take part in the Committee and vote.

21. DISCLOSURES OF LOBBYING

There were no disclosures of lobbying.

22. EXEMPT INFORMATION

RESOLVED: That all items be taken in public as proposed.

23. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 11 JULY 2017

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 11 July 2017 be approved as a correct record and signed.

24. REPORT INTO THE CHARGED-FOR ENQUIRY SERVICE AT QUEEN'S OWN
ROYAL WEST KENT REGIMENT MUSEUM

The Museums Director presented this report to the Committee. The report gave information to Trustees on the amount of time and resources allocated to each research request received by the Queen's Own Royal West Kent Regiment Museum Trust by Maidstone Museum staff and how the enquiry charges were structured. It was noted that:

- The enquiry charge was £15 for every enquiry taking longer than 30 minutes. (Following the meeting Officers have clarified that this amount of time was 20 minutes.)
- Enquiries were received by email, telephone, post and via the contact form on the Maidstone Museum website.
- In the current financial year 2017/18, 117 enquiries had been received and logged. Of these, 26 were taken forward and charged for and a total of £390 had been secured.
- The Collection Manager spent on average a day a month working on the administration of these enquiries and the cost for this service was £1410.78 for the past six months. This resulted in a net cost to the Queen's Own Royal West Kent Regiment Museum Trust of £1020.78.
- A volunteer carried out the research for the enquiry once it had been logged by the Collection Manager, as he had the regimental knowledge to complete the research to a high standard.
- Appendix A detailed the enquiry service charges in other museums. Most museums charged between £15 and £25 for the service, if they charged at all, and it was fairly standard that the first half an hour of the service was free. This indicated that the current enquiry service charge for Queen's Own Royal West Kent Regiment Museum Trust was at the lower end of charging spectrum.

The Committee was concerned that the cost per hour for the administration of the enquiry was very high and asked whether a volunteer or somebody with a lower hourly rate could carry out this task. Officers informed the Committee that the Collection Manager had the knowledge and expertise to carry out the task efficiently and if anybody else was to do it the process would take much longer. Officers also confirmed that volunteers did not have access to financial information or an email account and so could not perform the task.

In response to a question, the Senior Finance Manager (Client Accountancy) advised the Committee that he would investigate whether gift aid could be collected for the enquiry service as the charge was a donation to the Queen's Own Royal West Kent Regiment Museum Trust.

The Museums Director confirmed that she would send details of the enquiries received to the Committee, in order that they could understand the substance of the enquiries.

It was noted that the Committee said that members of the public could be directed more easily to the online form when making enquiries about the Queen's Own Royal West Kent Regiment online.

The Committee agreed with Officers that charging £20 for each enquiry would make the charge more reflective of costs without causing too greater fall in enquiries.

RESOLVED:

1. That the report be noted.
2. That the level of charging for 2018-19 be set at £20.

Note: In the report it stated that for each enquiry the first 30 minutes of research was free and then an enquiry charge would be made. After the meeting, Officers confirmed that the first 20 minutes of research was free and after that an enquiry charge would be made.

25. DURATION OF MEETING

10.00 a.m. to 10.56 a.m.