

Is the final decision on the recommendations in this report to be made at this meeting?

**Yes**

**Report into the charged-for enquiry service at Queen's Own Royal West Kent Regiment Museum**

<b>Final Decision-Maker</b>	QORWKR Museum Trust Committee
<b>Lead Head of Service</b>	Head of Regeneration and Economic Development
<b>Lead Officer and Report Author</b>	Victoria Barlow – Museums Director
<b>Classification</b>	Public
<b>Wards affected</b>	All

**This report makes the following recommendations to this Committee:**

1. That the report be noted.
2. That the level of charging for 2018-19 be agreed.

**This report relates to the following corporate priorities:**

- Keeping Maidstone Borough an attractive place for all – respecting the character and heritage of our borough.

**Timetable**

<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Date</b>
QORWKR Trust	10/10/17

# Report into the charged-for enquiry service at Queen's Own Royal West Kent Regiment Museum

## 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report is intended to give Trustees information on the amount of time and resources allocated to each research request received by the Queen's Own Royal West Kent Trust (QORWKRT) by Maidstone Museum staff.
  - 1.2 Further it makes comparisons with fees charged by museums carrying out a similar service.
  - 1.3 Finally, it makes recommendations on charging options for the service.
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## 2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 2.1 A report into the charging structure for enquiries was requested by Trustees at a meeting in January 2017 during which they discussed the current level of fees. The current charge, agreed by Maidstone Borough Council, is £15 for every enquiry taking longer than 30 minutes.
- 2.2 QORWKRT Museum is an independent museum co-located with and entirely managed and run by Maidstone Museum.

### 2.3 Administration of enquiries

- 2.3.1 The enquiry procedure:  
Enquiries are received by email, post, phone and contact form via the museum website. Where possible, enquiries are encouraged by email so that they can be tracked.
- 2.3.2 Recording and tracking an enquiry:  
Details of the enquiry are added to the QORWKRT enquiry spreadsheet, by a member of the collections team, so that progress can be tracked. Payment is sought at this stage and no enquiry will be further processed until the fee is paid. If no payment is made after six months, an enquiry is considered cancelled.
- 2.3.3 Processing enquiries:  
A database search taking less than 30 minutes is free of charge. All other enquiries such as family history research incur a £15 fee, receivable before an enquiry is processed. If the enquiry is related to artefacts in the museum collection, this is unlikely to take more than 30 minutes to process and so not likely to incur a fee.  
The enquiry research itself is carried out by a volunteer at no charge to the museum.

### 2.4 Current use of the service

2.4.1 So far in the financial year 2017/18, 117 enquiries have been received. These were all logged and payment requested. Of this 117, only 26 were taken forward and charged for and a total of £390 has been secured. On average, the Collections Manager spends a day a month simply on the administration of requests.

## **2.5 Cost of the service**

2.5.1 Staff administration of the scheme includes recording the enquiries, requesting and processing payment, passing to volunteer, ensuring completion etc.

1.5.2 The cost of this for the past six months is £1,410.78. This is calculated based on 6 working days for the Collection Manager at an hourly rate of £33.59. This results in a net cost to the museum of £1,020.78

2.5.3 Currently an annual charge of £2,000 is levied against the Trust as a contribution to the care and management of Trust collections.

## **2.6 Charges levied by other Local Authorities**

2.6.1 See Appendix A

2.6.2 Firstly it should be noted that not all services charge for answering enquiries. For example, Canterbury City Museums currently makes no charge. Other services, such as Horsham Museum, do not carry out research on behalf of individuals at all. Of those who do charge, the majority charge between £15 and £25, often with no charge for the first 30 minutes' search.

2.6.3 QORWKRTM's fee of £15, therefore, sits at the lower end of this range.

## **3. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

3.1.1 It is recommended that Trustees raise the enquiry fee from £15 to £20

3.1.2 It is felt by the Museum Director that this is an appropriate amount to charge so as to make the charge more reflective of costs without causing too great a fall in enquiries.

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## **4 CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS**

<b>Issue</b>	<b>Implications</b>	<b>Sign-off</b>
<b>Impact on Corporate Priorities</b>	This report relates to the Corporate Priority "Ensuring there are good Leisure and Cultural Facilities"	Head of Regeneration and Economic Development.
<b>Risk Management</b>	Low risk	Head of Regeneration

		and Economic Development.
<b>Financial</b>	'Income for the enquiry service is £390 for the year to date. In the Museum Director's judgement, the effect of increasing fees would be to reduce income'.	Senior Finance Manager (Client Accountancy)
<b>Staffing</b>	There are no staffing implications	Head of Regeneration and Economic Development.
<b>Legal</b>	There are no legal implications	[Legal Team]
<b>Equality Impact Needs Assessment</b>	N/A	
<b>Environmental/Sustainable Development</b>	N/A	
<b>Community Safety</b>	N/A	
<b>Human Rights Act</b>	N/A	
<b>Procurement</b>	N/A	
<b>Asset Management</b>	N/A	

## 5 REPORT APPENDICES

The following documents are to be published with this report and form part of the report:

- Appendix A: Charges made by other museums