

Maidstone Museum Capital Expenditure Update

Appendix 2 – Associated Trusts

1. The Queen's Own Royal West Kent Museum Trust (QORWKMT) is an independent Trust dedicated to the preservation of the collections related to the regiment and held at the museum. Trustees are all Council members and curatorial and administrative support is provided by Maidstone Borough Council (MBC) officers. The museum is located within the St Faith's Street site and, whilst nominally an independent museum paying rent, it is managed as if it were a gallery of the main museum. However, the collections of the QORWKMT are held by the Trust and not by MBC. Work carried out in the past two years to streamline the operation and governance of the museum has shown that, because of the QORWKMT's founding constitution, the collections may under no circumstances be passed to MBC but instead only to the National Army Museum or to another independent trust. The National Army Museum has confirmed that it has no intention or desire to collect the material currently held. In light of this, officers will make recommendations in, January 2023, that the Trust meet only once a year to receive an annual report and financial information on the museum and its collection but otherwise carry out no other work. Museum staff will continue to curate the museum to current museum-wide standards.
2. The Brenchley Trust exists to ensure, as far as possible, that the artefacts which make up the Collections accumulated by Julius Lucius Brenchley, and given to Maidstone Museum for the enlightenment of the people of Maidstone, are maintained, preserved and exhibited. It is important to note that the collections mentioned belong to the museum, thanks to the bequest of JL Brenchley, and not to the Trust. Since Trustees are, in the majority, MBC members and officers, it was proposed in 2018 to request permission of the Charity Commission to dissolve the Trust as in practical terms, MBC was fulfilling the role of the Trust whilst also paying the costs, in staff time, of running the Trust. This action has been delayed by the effects of the Coronavirus Pandemic and by the sad death of the Chair of Trustees, Mr Philip Dodd but will be taken forward in the coming weeks.
3. The Bently Wing Trust (The Bently Trust) is responsible for the management and control of the Bently collection at Maidstone Museum and the use of the Galleries under their auspices. The board is made up of appointees independent of MBC. Under a Deed of Variation signed in 2009, MBC is responsible, in perpetuity, for the storage of the Bently collection of fine and applied art, its curation and administration. In addition, MBC must provide, free of charge, clerical and accountancy services for the Board. The Deed of Variation was also responsible for the transfer of ownership of parts of the museum to MBC from the Trust (which was responsible for building part of the museum in the 19th century) but it was agreed that the Trust would retain an interest in those spaces with a right to consultation and approval of activities taking place therein. These spaces cover a large area of the East Wing of the museum.