



Chair's Report (ATTACHMENT 03)

This report provides an update on significant infrastructure issues since the EGM held on 04th September 2021.

SSDC Negotiations

The Museum's solicitor Patrick Wilding (Milford and Dormor) has been liaising with the SSDC Legal Department on the details of the Overage Deed. The original version was so complicated that our Solicitor could not understand it. Following a request by him, a simplified version has been received. Having both read it, we are now reasonably confident that if the Museum went into receivership there would be adequate funds from the sale of the property to pay off any debts and dispose of the collection in the approved manner. Trustees have instructed Patrick to proceed towards exchange of contracts. A date of late March seems achievable.

Museum Insurance

Ownership of the Museum will mean we have to take on the insurance of the buildings, contents and collection. Simon Hay, from Lycetts, who is acting as our broker advises that the premium from Ecclesiastical has increased to £4872. An increase of approximately 10%. This is a result of increased cost of materials during the pandemic resulting in rebuilding costs spiralling.

Business Rates

In 2021 we were successful in winning our business rates case following a challenge to the Valuation Office (VO) on the 2010 rateable value. This reduction by the VO was only effective until 2017. At that time the rateable value was again increased to the previous level of £23K. Colin Hunter (Lambert Smith and Hampton), is still representing the Museum and has issued a challenge to the rateable value which was sent to the VO on the 02-02-2022. The VO processes and decisions are confusing. It is our opinion that Colin is doing excellent work on our behalf and in challenging the VO. A copy of the challenge is available to Members. Simply email info@chardmuseum.co.uk for a copy.

Savings

We hold £75,000 of savings in three separate Cambridge and Counties Bank account. This was established over five years ago because, at that time they provided the best interest rate. Further and at that time Museum funds were static and rarely used. The penalty of withdrawal from these accounts 31, 95, and 120 day notice on these accounts was beneficial. Purchasing the Museum has changed the situation. We now need to re-assess how urgently we may need access to savings. Clearly the withdrawal notice may not be practical when considering our cash flow needs. To cover the payment to SSDC, Trustees actioned a transfer of £10K to reach us on 14th February and a further £15K on the 19th April. Presently, and including impending grants, we hold £43K in our Lloyds current account. We are handicapped in our financial planning by the changing deadlines and work presented by SSDC.

Vince Lean
Chair, Chard Museum
07th March 2022