



Chairman's Report 2022/23

AGM 2 June 2023

This is the third year in which the Essex Museum Development Officer post has been hosted by Colchester City Council, through Colchester and Ipswich Museums, with support from Museums Essex and SHARE Museums East. Funding for the current hosting arrangement ends on 31 March 2024 after museum development teams were granted an extension year by Arts Council England. SHARE will be submitting a joint bid to merge with the South East Museum development team (based in Brighton & Hove Museums), to manage delivery of the museum development programme across the entire East/South East region (with the exception of London). This fits in with ACE's five England regions as opposed to the current museum development structure of nine. Museums Essex has contributed to the ongoing consultation work in relation to the new delivery arrangements for museum development in the region, including hosting a members' forum at Colchester Castle on 21 April.

During the year Beth Wilkey resigned as MDO, leaving us in October 2022, and was replaced by Sarah Sinka, previously at London's Horniman Museum, in February 2023. During her time in post Beth made a major contribution to supporting the county's museums, revitalising museum development in Essex. I am very grateful to Beth for her work on behalf of Museums Essex and for her support of me personally.

Over last summer Beth Wilkey continued to establish links between the MDO and museums and heritage sites in Essex, visiting eight museums to meet staff, see the venue and provide support as needed. This work has been continued by the new Essex MDO Sarah who visited ten museums in the weeks immediately after starting in post. Visits have also been made by the chair in recent months to Braintree Museum, Brightlingsea Museum, Frinton and Walton Museum and Maldon Museum in the Park.

One of the key tasks of the MDO is providing advice relating to Accreditation, whether to those considering becoming Accredited museums or those in the process of submitting an Accreditation return. During the year, our members Brightlingsea Museum, Mersea Island Museum and Southend Museums achieved Full Accreditation and are to be congratulated on their success. As well as promoting training organised by SHARE Museums East and other organisations, Museums Essex occasionally puts on its own sessions, including in September 2022 a seminar on museums ethics given by the charity's chair Philip Wise.

Museums Essex has sought to strengthen its links with Essex County Council during the year at both councillor and office level. In particular an online meeting was held with Cllr Graham Butland, the Cabinet Member for Devolution, the Arts, Heritage and Business, his deputy Cllr Mark Durham and Erica Gilson, Business Development Manager, at which it was agreed that we would seek to collaborate as the opportunity arose in the future as well as continuing to keep in regular contact.

Following Museums Essex becoming a member of the Association for Independent Museums in the previous year Beth Wilkey attended the AIM conference at Port Sunlight in June 2022. We have also had an online meeting with AIM to discuss funding opportunities and Sarah will be attending the forthcoming AIM conference in Edinburgh.

Museums Essex has actively participated in a study into the county's archaeological archives led by Essex County Council Place Services with financial support from Highways England – The Essex Archaeological Archives and Museum Project. Several members contributed to the project report published in March 2023 which provides a basis for further discussion of this very important area of collections management.

The Essex Museum Development newsletter is supported by regular emails and social media activity to ensure that the county's museums receive up to date information on the latest developments in the museum sector. The Museums Essex website at museums-essex.org contains sections on membership, individual members, the Grants Scheme, case studies and contacts. Further contributions from members are always welcome.

A tenth round of the Small Grants Scheme was opened during the year with a focus on infrastructure. Grants were made to Maldon Museum in the Park, Stow Maries Great War Aerodrome and Earls Colne Heritage Museum. The grant programme has continued to be managed by a Sub-Committee chaired by Philip Wise supported by Carolyn Wingfield (Saffron Walden Museum) and Caroline Pantling (Scouts Association) whose institutions are not eligible for grants whilst on the Sub-Committee. Museums Essex continues to believe these grants are an important benefit for its members and it is intended that a further round will be launched in the Autumn of 2023.

In 2022/23 we welcomed four new members: Earls Colne Heritage Museum, Tiptree Jam Museum, Bata Heritage Centre and Harlow Art Trust. This takes the current membership to fifty. We will continue to recruit new members as the opportunity arises and via regular campaigns.

I am very grateful to Beth Wilkey and Sarah Sinka for providing administrative support to Museums Essex, including preparing the agendas, producing the minutes and technical support during our online meetings. This assistance is much appreciated and has ensured that things have run smoothly during the year.

I would also like to thank my fellow Trustees for their contribution to the work of the charity: the Vice-chair Caroline Pantling, the Treasurer Gordon Cummings, Rob Sharp, Nick Wickenden, Carolyn Wingfield, Polly Redman and Dr Sarah Demelo. I would particularly like to thank Nick Wickenden and Caroline Pantling who are both stepping down at this AGM. Nick has served the museum community for many years as the treasurer of both the Essex Museum Workers Group and its successor Museums Essex, and is a founder trustee. Caroline has served for several years as the charity's vice-chair and has taken a leading role in the Small Grants Sub-Committee. We are also very dependent upon the ongoing support of Jamie Everitt (SHARE Museums East) and Dr Frank Hargrave (Colchester and Ipswich Museums) to whom I am very grateful. Martin Gruselle has kindly undertaken the examination of the Accounts over several years.

Looking ahead to 2024, Museums Essex aims to continue to support and develop membership benefits through an affordable fee based on income; participate fully in the delivery mechanism for museum development in Essex including the funding of the Museum Development Officer post; continue to support learning activity at the county's museums; provide advocacy for the heritage sector of Essex in partnership with SHARE Museums East and its successor body; provide a Small Grants Scheme; enable free membership of the Harwell Disaster Recovery Service for small and medium-sized museums; create opportunities for networking and provide inspirational case studies of museum development at our meetings, whether virtual or at member museums.

Philip J Wise MA (Cantab) FSA MCIfA AMA
Chair: Museums Essex

Museums Essex is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation, registration number: 1152493
and a member of the Association for Independent Museums, membership number 4738

MUSEUMS ESSEX

RECIPTS AND PAYMENT ACCOUNTS 1st April 2022 - 31/3/ 2023

	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds	Last Year
Subscriptions	£3,400		£3,400	£125
Interest	£433		£433	£1,508
Share Grant				
Total Receipts	£3,833		£3,833	£1,633
AIM Conference	(£264)		(£264)	
Harwell	(£1,014)		(£1,014)	(£810)
Meetings	(£111)		(£111)	(£810)
Postage	(£11)		(£11)	
Training		(£400)	(£400)	(£400)
Website costs	(£41)		(£41)	(£12)
Small Grants Round 8		(£500)	(£500)	(£400)
MDO Post Advt	(£50)		(£50)	
Colchester District Council - Salary contribution				
Subscriptions	(£70)		(£70)	
Total Payments	(£1,561)	(£900)	(£2,461)	(£2,432)
Net of receipts/payments	£2,272	(£900)	£1,372	(£799)
Cash funds last year end	£56,249	£3,214	£59,463	
Cash funds at 31-3-23	£58,521	£2,314	£60,835	
Represented by:	Co-op Bank Current Account		£2,962	
	Virgin Money		£7,440	
	Hampshire Trust Bank		£50,433	
	Total Funds		£60,835	

Philip J. Lillie
Chairman
2/6/2023

[Signature]
Treasurer
2/6/2023