



Trustees' Annual Report for the period

		Period start date			Period end date		
From	Day	Month	Year	To	Day	Month	Year
	1	4	2020		31	3	2021

Section A Reference and administration details

Charity name Beccles and District Museum

Other names charity is known by (now merged with Beccles and District Museum CIO, 1191550)

Registered charity number (if any) 279134

Charity's principal address Beccles and District Museum

Ballygate

Beccles, Suffolk

Postcode

NR34 9ND

Names of the charity trustees who manage the charity

	Trustee name	Office (if any)	Dates acted if not for whole year	Name of person (or body) entitled to appoint trustee (if any)
1	Barry Darch	Chairman		
2	Andy Lovegrove	Secretary	From 9 th September 2019	
3	Paul Gurbutt	Treasurer	From 7 th December 2020	
4	Sue Cain			
5	Keith Hibbard		Until 7 th December 2020	
6	Mary Jacqueline Butler Holmes			
7	Jennifer Langeskov			Townlands Charity
8	Chris Scott			
9	Alan Wheeler			
10	Jenny Willer			
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Names of the trustees for the charity, if any, (for example, any custodian trustees)

Name	Dates acted if not for whole year

Names and addresses of advisers (Optional information)

Type of adviser	Name	Address
Museum Mentor	Heather Lomas	

Name of chief executive or names of senior staff members (Optional information)

Honorary Curator	Alan Wheeler
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Section B Structure, governance and management

Description of the charity's trusts

Type of governing document (eg. trust deed, constitution)	Constitution
How the charity is constituted (eg. trust, association, company)	Trust
Trustee selection methods (eg. appointed by, elected by)	Appointed by other members of the Trust

Additional governance issues (Optional information)

You **may choose** to include additional information, where relevant, about:

- ☐ policies and procedures adopted for the induction and training of trustees;
- ☐ the charity's organisational structure and any wider network with which the charity works;
- ☐ relationship with any related parties;
- ☐ trustees' consideration of

The Charity has a formal Constitution which governs how the Trust is managed. A new constitution has been prepared for the move to a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) type trust; and it has been accepted by the Charity Commission.

The Trustees are responsible for the strategic direction of the Trust. Day to day management is in the hands of a curator who also has the task of caring for the collection. A group of volunteers assists the curator with these tasks and where possible the volunteers will have attended suitable training as provided by SHARE Museums East.

The Museum is located in a building owned by the Townlands Charity which lets space in the building to the Museum. The Townlands Charity retains responsibility for the building and its upkeep. A member of the Townlands Charity Board (the Feoffees) sits on the Museum Trustee Board.

major risks and the system and procedures to manage them.

Beccles Town Council nominates a representative who attends Trustee meetings. Since May 2020 this has been Cllr Jeff Harris.

The Museum is a member of the Association of Independent Museums (AIM) and the Association for Suffolk Museums (AfSM). AfSM provides assistance and advice; and our membership also provides emergency help from Harwell Drying.

The Museum is an Arts Council Accredited Museum and as such has to meet professional standards in its policies and operating procedures covering all aspects of its management. These documents are audited as part of our accreditation application. Accreditation lasts for five years and then we have to re-apply. We achieved Full Accreditation in May 2018, following the submission of documentation in February 2017; the delay was due to a review of accreditation by the Arts Council.

The Museum has a Museum Professional Mentor, Heather Lomas, who attends Trustee meetings and provides support, help and guidance as requested.

CCTV helps keep secure the Museum's collections.

Annual training is provided for stewards to help them keep visitors and themselves safe. This has been reviewed and enhanced to include guidance covering the Covid virus situation.

A concern for the Museum management and Trustees has been that the age of most of our stewards and the way that Covid targets the elderly may have made them reluctant to return to the role. To reduce anxiety and protect volunteers (and visitors) we have followed government regulations and advice, putting in place measures to reassure stewards and visitors about the safety of the Museum environment. Stewards have been consulted on the Risk Assessment.

We have also kept in regular communication through 2020/21 with all the Museum volunteers to keep them informed about the Museum situation and plans for the future.

Section C

Objectives and activities

Summary of the objects of the charity set out in its governing document

The Museum objectives are to provide a historic collection, relevant to the local community, and to educate and entertain the local community in all aspects of the history of the area.

Summary of the main activities undertaken for the public benefit in relation to these objects (include within this section the statutory declaration that trustees have had regard to the guidance issued by the Charity Commission on public benefit)

The Museum did not open to the public in 2020 because of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Although closed we have provided help and advice on the history of the area and its people to some enquirers. Typically, we receive and answer enquiries on family and local history and support other organisations, such as the Town Council and local history groups with their activities. Some local researchers have used material from the Museum but much less so than usually. Some of this material will appear in forthcoming publications, such as a history of the Beccles Lido (researched by a group from Beccles U3A), a history of Ballygate on which the Museum stands) and the book *Secret Beccles*.

We have been unable to host pre-arranged visits out of normal opening hours for various groups, as we have done in previous years. Photographs from the Museum's collection have been used in online talks given by the chairman to four classes at local infant and primary schools. The chairman also gave a talk about the Museum and its collections to Beccles U3A online.

In 2020 we continued with a 'Community Museum' display cabinet in the Beccles Library.

A '2020 Vision' page on the Museum website has been created by the curator and articles looking at various aspects of Beccles history have been added. The Museum has been able to enhance its ICT facilities and improve its Collection Management System which will increase accessibility, including for visitors and researchers.

The digital photographing of the significant collection of records of the Townlands Charity has been completed, the final few hundred photographs being taken with the help of members of the Beccles Photographic Club. The records have been added to the Museum database.

The curator kept in regular contact during lockdown with the Museum's team of volunteers who look after the collections; and the stewards' organisers have maintained regular contact with stewards.

As part of the plan work for the World War 2 VE day commemorations a museum volunteer ran a reminiscences project with twelve people who were children in the town during the 1939 to 1945 period. Each was interviewed and their memories recorded and are now available via the Museum Collection Management System. While the planned exhibition did not take place due to Covid restrictions a smaller scale exhibition is being put on in 2021. As part of the work regular weekly emails kept all the members of the group in touch and provided interest and support to them during the various lockdown and socialising restrictions of 2020.

Additional details of objectives and activities (Optional information)

You **may choose** to include further statements, where relevant, about:

- ☐ policy on grantmaking;
- ☐ policy programme related investment;
- ☐ contribution made by volunteers.

The Museum does not make grants to other organisations.

The Museum is completely run by volunteers. Stewards open the Museum to the public and assist with visitors' questions. A team of trained volunteers looks after all aspects of the Museum's day-to-day operations under the direction of the curator, including care of the collections, setting up exhibitions, managing group visits, giving talks to outside bodies, answering enquiries from the public and supporting visiting researchers.

Section D

Achievements and performance

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Summary of the main achievements of the charity during the year

The closure of the Museum for the 2020 season has limited significantly what it has been able to do. But, as noted above, some outreach work has been undertaken and some access to the Museum's collections for researchers has been possible.

The Museum has received a number of donations of historic material which have been accessioned and added to the collections. The Museum is keen that new material is made available to the public: so, for example, a number of drawings by a well-known artist that were donated in 2020 will feature in a temporary exhibition in the 2021 season.

Some updating of permanent displays has been undertaken.

The conversion to Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) status has been achieved. A CIO board of trustees has been established.

The Museum has been successful in obtaining grants from East Suffolk Council to give it financial stability during lockdown and help it improve the accessibility of collections and pay for safety measures for reopening. The Museum has also received some financial donations given in memory of Museum volunteers. A grant from SHARE Museums East helped with the cost of conversion to CIO. The Friends of the Museum subscriptions and the 100 Club income have also contributed to the Museum's sound financial positions. But we keep a close eye on expenditure and continue looking at ways to increase our income. A new treasurer has been recruited.

In order to increase visitor numbers, the Museum continues to look for ways to grow its public profile via talks, newspaper items and other media.

The Museum has continued to strive to safeguard the town's historical heritage and increase access to historical records. As indicated above, the records of the Feoffees of the Townlands Charity have been copied and are now available to researchers in digital form.

Section E

Financial review

Brief statement of the charity's policy on reserves

The Museum aims to keep reserves of two years' operating costs and we have maintained that in 2020/21.

Details of any funds materially in deficit

Further financial review details (Optional information)

You **may choose** to include additional information, where relevant about:

- ☐ the charity's principal sources of funds (including any fundraising);
- ☐ how expenditure has supported the key objectives of the charity;
- ☐ investment policy and objectives including any ethical investment policy adopted.

The Townlands Charity continues to be a major donor to the Museum, effectively covering the Museum's rent.

The Museum shop is popular with visitors and when open makes a useful contribution to income, including through the sale of books and booklets, many of which have drawn on the museum's collections. In 2020/21 a few online sales have been made.

Trustees have considered methods of increasing the Museum's funds, including enhanced publicity. A legacy leaflet with the Museum's new CIO charity number is being prepared.

The Museum continues to make no admission fee in order to make the collections and its facilities as widely available as possible.

Expenditure on the presentation of displays and exhibitions, on storage and on maintaining a safe and attractive environment has supported the Museum's aim to provide a relevant and accessible collection and to educate and entertain the local community in all aspects of the area's history.

Section F

Other optional information

The Charity Commission registered the merger of Beccles and District Museum and Beccles and District Museum CIO (Charity number 1191550) on 27th October 2021 with a transfer date of 31st March 2021.

Section G

Declaration

The trustees declare that they have approved the trustees' report above.

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees

Signature(s) *B. Darch*

Full name(s) Barry Darch

Position (eg Secretary, Chair, etc)	Chairman of Trustees	
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Date	14 January 2022
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