

Cromwell Museum

Forward Plan

January 2010 – December 2013



**Cambridgeshire County Council
November 2009**



1.0 Purpose

This Forward Plan for the next three years 2010 – 2013 is the fourth to be produced and follows the same format as previous plans. It aims to provide a clear route for the development of the Museum, taking into account the resources both currently and potentially available.

It is intended as a working document to provide strategy to guide day-to-day decisions and to inform colleagues and members of Cambridgeshire County Council, partners and external agencies of the Museum's intentions.

2.0 Revised Mission Statement

The Museum is provided by Cambridgeshire County Council to focus on the life and legacy of Oliver Cromwell, (1599 - 1658), by the collection, conservation, exhibition and interpretation of relevant material.

It does so for the enjoyment and benefit, educational and economic, of the local community, and for all visitors and users, actual and virtual (with and without prior knowledge) in the belief that it helps to sustain a lively, well informed and wide ranging debate of Cromwell's significance, both locally and nationally.

3.0 Background information

- 3.1 Oliver Cromwell was born in Huntingdon in 1599, and lived in the town for over half his life. He died in 1658 whilst Lord Protector. He is one of the most frequently studied figures of British history, and his significance has been constantly reinterpreted by succeeding generations. Cromwell is a figure of national and international importance.

The denigration of Cromwell at the Restoration inhibited the development of any single collection of personalia immediately after his death. There was no Cromwell collection in the public domain until the acquisition of the Tangye Collection by the London Museum (now part of the Museum of London) early in the 20th century. The Tangye Collection is mainly of secondary sources with some items of doubtful provenance.

- 3.2 Following a successful, but brief, tercentenary exhibition in 1958, to mark the anniversary of Cromwell's death, the initiative was taken by Huntingdonshire County Council to establish a Cromwell Museum in Huntingdon.
- 3.3 The County Council occupied the old town Grammar School, a remnant of the monastic hospital of St John the Baptist, of the late 12th century, which had been heavily restored in 1877. As Cromwell went to the Grammar School it was an obvious choice of location for the Museum.
- 3.4 The Museum opened in 1962 after major internal re-decoration. The building was a scheduled Ancient Monument, but was de-scheduled in 2003 following a review by English Heritage. It is listed as Grade 2*.

- 3.5 The Museum was managed by a sub-committee of the Archives Committee of Huntingdonshire County Council, and from 1965 it came under the control of the new Huntingdon and Peterborough County Council. Following changes to the management of the Archive Service in 1968 the Museum sub-committee reported to the General Purposes Committee of the County Council.
- 3.6 From 1974 the Museum was the responsibility of the Library Service (in various incarnations) of Cambridgeshire County Council. There was no professional curatorial input until the appointment of a County Museums Officer in 1985. A new post (50%) of Curator of the Cromwell Museum was created with effect from 1.11.2005. The post is line-managed by the Head of Archives and Local Studies, part of the Libraries, Archives and Information Service, within the Community Learning and Development Directorate of Community and Adult Services of the County Council.
- 3.7 In 1988 the Museum was completely re-displayed for the first time since 1962. The Museum was significantly refurbished between November 2003 and late May 2004 when major building work was undertaken and a new heating and air-handling unit was installed. Some minor changes were made to the internal furniture at the same time.
- 3.8 The Museum is fully Accredited with the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA). Accreditation is an external standards scheme which has the aim of improving standards across the museum sector. Accredited museums must adhere to published standards of how they care for and document their collections, how they are governed and managed, and on the information and services they offer to their users.
- 3.9 The Museum collection has grown and some items cannot be exhibited because of lack of space. The building, whilst a significant heritage asset in its own right does not provide ideal conditions for the storage and display of a mixed collection of the type that makes up the Cromwell Museum. The work undertaken in 2004 made considerable improvements. Space is severely constrained which inhibits the appreciation and interpretation of the collection by visitors.

4.0 Review of current activities - key dimensions of the Museum

4.1 Visitor figures

Visitor numbers are a straightforward indicator of the Museum's performance. The average annual number of visitors for the three years ending 31.3.2006 was just under 8,500. The average for the three years ending 31.3.2009 was 11,000, an increase of almost 30%. Visitor data collected at the Museum shows that local visitor numbers have grown significantly over the last three years.

4.2 Staffing

The curatorial and management input to the Museum is limited. The total amount of staff time available to the Museum is less than 1.3 full time equivalents, of which the Curator is 0.5fte. The Museum is staffed on a day to day basis by a Senior Museum Assistant, supported by Assistants, to provide coverage for planned absence, whilst maintaining the current opening hours. The Museum is open throughout the year daily Tuesday -Saturday, with reduced opening hours from November to March.

The Assistants' staff role is to ensure the safe opening of the Museum to the public, to answer enquiries which might arise from visitors, to sell goods from the museum shop, and provide the daily administration. They are also key - holders for security purposes. The ability to utilise their time for curatorial purposes, without compromising their primary role, is very limited. Volunteers, to support the curatorial and other non-custodial work of the Museum, are taken from time to time. When possible students with a fixed block of time, who can be briefed to undertake a specific task, are engaged.

4.3 Budget

The Museum's budget is part of the Libraries, Archives and Information Service budget of the Council. The draft unconfirmed budget for 2010-11 is £47,235 (net) £55,039 (gross). Whilst all opportunities for income generation are taken they are limited. Admission to the Museum is free of charge. Previous considerations of this issue have consistently led to the conclusion that an admission charge would be counter-productive.

Generation of additional income through trading is important but on-line sales have on the whole been unsuccessful in attracting customers.

4.4 Building resources

The Museum building is both the greatest strength and the greatest weakness. The costs of maintaining the building do not appear on the Museums Budget, as it is a corporate responsibility.

The building is less than 70 sq.m. overall. There are no lavatory facilities for staff or visitors, no office space, no activity or lecture space, and only one means of escape in the event of an emergency. Nevertheless it does have the direct association with Cromwell, which compensates to some degree.

The new Library and Archive nearby in Princes Street has provided many of the facilities which the Museum previously lacked. There is a small reserve store and work area on the ground floor and a picture store within the archive strong room on the first floor which is both highly secure and environmentally controlled. The meeting room on the first floor has been developed with the museum's educational use in mind, with wipe down floors and equipment for younger children.

There are also public facilities in the new building which museum visitors can be directed to such as a cafe and lavatories. This represents a real step change for the Museum.

4.5 Collections

The Museum collection is the best collection of 'Cromwelliana' in the UK, and the Museum is unaware of any significant collections in public or private ownership, other than those from which loans have already been negotiated. The Cromwell Museum collection comprises approx 610 items of varying quality. The Acquisition and Disposal Policy was reviewed in December 2004 and subsequently endorsed by Cabinet in March 2005, and is currently under review.

The governing body owns approximately 70% of the collection. The Museum has significant loan collections. The largest of these is from the Bush family, descendants of Henry Cromwell the fourth son of Oliver Cromwell. The Bush loan includes significant pieces that are well provenanced to the Cromwell family.

The Museum also has an inward loan from the Royal Armouries of 17th century military equipment, and an inward loan from the Museum of London of various pieces of Cromwelliana from their own Cromwell collection (formerly the Tangye Collection).

Of the current collection a large proportion of the print collection and the book and document collection is in store. The majority of the remainder of the collection is on display. Approximately half of the paintings from the Bush collection are on loan to Hinchingsbrooke House.

The catalogue of the collection is documented on Catalist (museum specific documentation software). Parts of the collection have been digitised.

4.6 Exhibitions and events

Over the last three years the Museum has had a continuous programme of small exhibitions. The space available is approximately 2mx2m, so options are very limited. All exhibitions have been generated in-house.

Subjects have been varied ranging from Cromwell and the re-admission of the Jews to England, to Cromwell and the railways, and the most successful in terms of visitor numbers and publicity, the Death & Funeral of Cromwell.

Exhibitions are time-consuming to produce but essential if the Museum is to continue to attract local and regional visitors on a regular basis.

The events programme has consisted of a mixture of re-enactment and demonstrations, guided walks and identification sessions.

4.7 Education services

The numbers of actual pupils visiting the Museum is still disappointing, but it is increasing. The three year average for the calendar years 2004-2006 was 288 per annum and has gone up to an average of 460 per annum for the three years ending in 2009, an increase of 27%.

The Museum has been very fortunate that staff, past and present, have been willing to undertake some direct teaching which is beyond their core job function and their core hours.

The Museum requires additional resource if this aspect of service delivery is to be enhanced. Work with tertiary education and adult groups has continued but

again further resource is necessary if it is to be expanded further.

4.8 ICT services

The Museum 'owns' or 'part-owns' three web sites. The Museum's own web site www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/cromwell part of the County Council's site is essential and more resources are being added to it.

The site developed in association with the Cromwell Collection , colleagues in archives and local studies, www.cromwellcollection.org.uk has also been extensively used, though it requires further development.

The third site www.olivercromwell.org sits outside of the County Council's structure and is run jointly with the Cromwell Association see below, and is the most significant in terms of visitor numbers and use.

Within the Museum the Community Network pc provides ready access for visitors to a range of materials, as well as general computer access.

All of the web sites generate a range of enquiries which vary from the frivolous to the seriously academic. Every attempt is made to reply to all in a timely fashion.

4.9 Partners and joint working

The Museum works closely with colleagues within Libraries, Archives and Information, and the Museum Support Officer of the County Council. Opportunities are taken to work with town and district council colleagues and the Museum is a member of the Huntingdon Town Centre Partnership and the Huntingdonshire Association for Tourism. A good relationship is maintained with Cromwell House and East Cambridgeshire District Council though there is clearly more scope for joint promotion and working. The Museum's principal partner outside of local government is the Cromwell Association, a long-standing national society that is supported by the academic community but has a broad non-specialist membership. The Curator has been invited to sit ex-officio on the Association's Council, and the Association nominates a representative to the Museum's Management Committee. Other opportunities for joint working are taken as they arise.

5.0 Review of strategic objectives set for 2006-2009

The objectives set for the previous plan were presented as a table. They are presented here with a note on performance achieved against the indicators set:

Aim	Objective	How to be achieved	Performance indicator	Commentary
1.1	Increase use by local schools at all phases	Promote the model project developed for KS 2 in 2006	% Increase in BVPI 170c – schools visits and contact in schools	Lack of take-up from schools has been disappointing and school use remains broadly comparable. Lack of resources precludes appointment of Education Officer.
1.2	Further develop family learning	Develop and deliver activity programme targeted at local families	% increase in use by families	The activity cabinet in the Museum has been added to and well received from comments from visitors.
1.3	Provide opportunities for personal development and study based on the Museum	Create routes for the study of the Museum's core content for life-long learners	% increase in learning activity	Course on the resources available will be delivered from October 2009.
1.4	Increase awareness of the Museum across key target audiences	Focus marketing activity on segmented potential audiences	% increase in users from key target audiences	There is more information available on who our visitors are but ability to target segments is limited. Local visitor numbers have been increased.

2.1	Deliver programme of activities with broad appeal	Annually planned programme marketed to target audiences	Visitor numbers and satisfaction surveys	Visitor numbers have increased over 36% from 2006-07 to 2008-09, which to an extent is due to the programming.
2.2	Develop temporary exhibitions	Planned programme of temporary exhibitions	As above	A programme has been delivered with only small gaps for changeovers.
2.3	Provide improved opportunities for volunteering	Developing projects of varying size in conjunction with potential volunteers	No of volunteers used	The new library and archive building facilitates volunteering opportunities. The new course is a chance to develop this further, see 1.3 above.
2.4	Ensure that the Museum is as accessible as possible	Improve visibility of the Museum in Huntingdon town centre through improved pedestrian signage	% increase in signs	Signage has improved – but could be further improved.
3.1	Provide access to collection information on www	Develop web based catalogue Digitisation of collection Utilise existing software	% of collection available on web	No progress due to lack of resource, mainly time.
3.2	Develop web based contact with museum users, current and potential	Initiate email based user newsletter to maintain contact, inform and advise of developments, initiate dialogue and comment	Number signed up	Email lists are being developed and information disseminated.

3.3	Develop web content on existing sites	Plan all work with web publication in mind	Use of web sites see BVPI 170a	Web use continues to expand and more content has been added.
4.1	Develop off-site store	Ensure that secure and environmentally controlled store, appropriate to the needs of the collection is available in the new building	% of reserve in high quality store	New building has greatly improved storage for museum collection, especially for the pictures, now on racking in the Archives strong-room.
4.2	Full accreditation under new standard	Submission of all additional information requested	Accreditation	Full accreditation awarded
4.3	Improved storage of reserve collections	Reboxing and re-mounting collections as necessary	% adequately conserved and stored	Progress continues .
5.1	Provision of high quality secondary resources in Huntingdon	Continued development of the Cromwell Collection Cooperation with Cromwell Collection partners	Number of readers	Cromwell Collection has been allocated good space in the new building. All partners working together very well.
5.2	Develop learning space for Museum use	Joint development with Archives and Library of new joint use facilities to incorporate display space where possible	Additional space available	The new meeting room has been commissioned with the needs of museum education in mind, and has been used successfully.

5.3	Access to collections/exhibitions in other locations	Plan temporary exhibitions with the potential for display elsewhere as a specific consideration	Number of external spaces used	Two exhibitions have been produced with this aspect specifically in mind, one of which has been shown elsewhere.
5.4	Improved access to the collections and their interpretation in additional premises	To work closely with HTC and HDC over plans for Huntingdon Town Hall and its possible use as a venue for high quality, larger temporary exhibitions	Agreed and funded proposals	HDC are awaiting a specialist report on the future use of the building.

- 5.1 There has been progress on the majority of the objectives, but not all have been fulfilled.
- 5.2 The value of the plan as a management tool is proven, and it does provide for progress to be measured over time. As with all plans it is only of value when it can be adapted and varied as circumstances alter. The Museum must be flexible enough to take advantage of opportunities and circumstances as they arise.

6.0 Prospects issues and challenges for the next four years 2010-2013

- 6.1 It is very clear that the budget pressures on local government in general, and Cambridgeshire in particular, are going to increase over the next four years. Whilst the Museum cannot hope to remain unaffected the scope for reducing the service without fatally compromising its ability to deliver services is very limited. It is likely that the issue of alternatives means of delivery will be re-visited but the position vis-a-vis devolution to a charitable trust for the Museum has not altered since it was last considered and rejected in 2005.
- 6.2 Opportunities to bid for external funding will also become more restricted over the next four years. The decline in income to the National Lottery, and the priority accorded to the 2012 Olympics has reduced the capacity of the Heritage Lottery Fund. Similarly charitable sources income has declined as investment income has fallen.
- 6.3 The position of central government funding for museums via Renaissance in the Regions also has an uncertain future. After a slow start the tangible benefits to small museums outside of the hubs is now more apparent. The demise of the regional arms of the MLA has further diminished actual support for small museums.
- 6.4 The further development of domestic tourism and a weak pound attracting foreign tourists could represent opportunities for the Museum to contribute more fully to the local economy. Unfortunately the reduction in direct tourist information services at a local level mitigates against this.
- 6.5 The future of Huntingdon Town Hall remains uncertain and an unused building in such a key location has the potential to blight the whole of the market square. The trend in Huntingdon is broadly towards 'value-shopping' which does not contribute greatly to the day-visit and short-stay market which might benefit the Museum.

7.0 Target Audiences and Strategic Aims

- 7.1 The Museum has a number of audiences, which reflect the nature of the collection and the appeal of its content. The Museum will continue to work to attract local audiences on a regular basis as well as appeal to a wider national audience. Without additional resources the significant development of a curriculum focussed schools' audience is not achievable but enhancing individual and family visits is a realistic target.
- 7.2 The current strategic objectives of Cambridgeshire County Council, the governing body of the Museum are:
enabling people to thrive, achieve their potential and improve their quality of life:
supporting and protecting vulnerable people:
managing and delivering the growth and development of sustainable communities:
promoting improved skill levels and economic prosperity across the county,
helping people into jobs and encouraging enterprise:
meeting the challenges of climate change and enhancing the natural environment.
The Museum's specific aims are each contributing to the fulfilment of these priorities by the provision of high quality learning activities in a neutral social space, whilst supporting the development of individuals, groups and the local economy.
- 7.3 The Museum's strategic aims for the next four years are consistent with the objectives of the Libraries, Archives and Information Service Plan and are broadly consistent with those identified in the previous Development Plan. The revised aims are:
1. to provide high quality, accessible and interesting exhibitions and activities and to actively promote them to the whole community
2. to provide access to our services through ICT for remote access
3. to provide learning opportunities for individuals and families
4. to implement good stewardship of our resources
5. to work in effective partnerships wherever possible.
- 7.4 The factors critical to the successful implementation of the aims are:
adequate curatorial and management time
maintenance of the base budget
attraction of external funds
corporate support.

8.0 Aims and objectives for the period 2010- 2013

- 8.1 The table that follows presents the key objectives, which are referenced back to the Strategic Aims outlined at 7.3 above.
- 8.2 It is proposed that the Forward Plan be subject to review over the four year period it covers, with a complete review in late 2013.

Aims and objectives for the period 2010-2013

Strategic aim 1: to provide interesting, high quality accessible exhibitions and activities made relevant to our visitors

Aim	Objective	How to be achieved	Resources available	Completion date	Performance indicator
1.1	Deliver programme of activities with broad appeal	Annually planned programme marketed to target audiences	Budget provision and additional external funding	December each year	Visitor numbers, comments recorded and satisfaction surveys
1.2	Deliver a programme of temporary exhibitions	Planned programme of exhibitions to take place in the Museum, minimum of two each year	As above Our reserve collections Loans from other institutions	December each year	As above
1.3	Ensure that the programmes are marketed locally, regionally and nationally	Annual leaflet circulated widely Free editorial Web based listings	Budget provision Support from press & pr	December each year	Print run No of distribution points No of press releases issued Amount of press coverage generated
1.4	Maintain the visibility of the Museum	Improved signage for pedestrians Located on town centre maps and publicity	Budget provision Support from all tiers of local government and HTCPartnership	March 2011	No of new signs, and maps

Strategic aim 2: to provide access to our services through ICT for remote access

2.1	Provide access to collection information on www	Develop web based catalogue Digitisation of collection Utilise existing software	Hub expertise	December 2011	% of collection available on web
2.2	To provide access to exhibition material on the web	Produce all exhibitions with this in mind	Museum Assistant	August 2010	No of exhibitions on the web
2.3	Develop more resources based on the collection for web publication	Publish former hard copy publications on the web	Museum Assistant Copyright permissions if required	December 2010	No of new resources added
2.4	Increase sales from web shop	More active promotion of the facility Publish links to the site more widely	Museum Assistant and DIT	December 2012	% increase in sales

Strategic aim 3: to provide learning opportunities for individuals and families

3.1	To increase family learning opportunities	Further development of the resources already available Externally funded short-term projects to stimulate use	Activity cabinet Bid to external sources	November 2011	Increase in family use
3.2	To increase school use at KS2 & 3	Further development of the resources already available Externally funded short-term projects to stimulate use	Replica material Bid to external sources	March 2012	Increase in school use
3.3	To develop and offer volunteering opportunities	By establishing potential volunteers and their interests and capacity	Curator's time	December 2010	No of volunteer placements
3.4	To offer appropriate work experience	Through working with prospective client organisations eg, JobCentrePlus, Museum Studies courses.	Curator's time	June 2010	No of work experience placements
3.5	To provide opportunities for personal development and study based on the Museum	Development of short courses based on the subject and content of the Museum	Budget provision and relevant partners	March 2011	No of course places offered

Strategic aim 4: to implement good stewardship of our resources

4.1	Relocate all collections to the reserve stores	Moving and re-ordering as necessary	Support of colleagues Additional funding where possible	December 2010	% of reserve in high quality store
4.2	Production of a full catalogue of the painting collection	Externally funded art history specialist to undertake the necessary work	External funding	December 2010	Completion of catalogue
4.3	Review of emergency plan	Review and revise emergency plan	Curator	June 2010	Completion of plan

Strategic aim 5: to work in effective partnerships wherever possible

5.1	To consolidate the relationship with the Cromwell Association	By organising at least one event every two years with the Association Continued joint development of the web site	Curator's time	October 2011	Number of events
5.2	To build a relationship with providers of adult learning	By promoting joint courses with providers	New learning space Cromwell Collection	December 2012	No of courses organised
5.3	To develop the relationship with Hinchingsbrooke School	Helping to improve the interpretation of the paintings on loan to the school Joint promotion of opportunities to visit Hinchingsbrooke	Museums Officer	December 2012	% increase in visitors directed via the Museum
5.4	Improved access to the collections and their interpretation in additional premises	To work closely with HTC and HDC over plans for Huntingdon Town Hall and its possible use as a venue for high quality, larger temporary exhibitions	Partnerships with other authorities External funding	December 2008	Agreed and funded proposals

5.5	To develop a network of museums with specialist knowledge of the 17 th C	Contacting relevant institutions to investigate potential for shared exhibitions	Possible support from MLA	June 2013	Establishment of viable and useful network
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Appendix

Spending Plan for the Cromwell Museum 2010-2013

It is a requirement of the Accreditation Scheme of the Museums , Libraries and Archives Council (MLA) that the Forward Plan of all museums should contain the projected spending plan for the current year and the year following.

The annual service budget for the Cromwell Museum is formulated in the late autumn of each year within the departmental budget making process. Year end budget figures will read slightly differently as centrally paid for insurance costs are shown, other than special insurance if required for incoming loan items.

The projected but unconfirmed budget for 2010-2011 is a net budget of £47,235 and a gross budget of £55,039. Staff buildings and utilities account for 84% of the budget, office and administration costs 8%, and collection care, development and activities including marketing 8%.

Expenditure	£
Staff	34999
Building services and utilities	10815
Office and admin costs	4357
Collection care development & activities	4868
Total	55039
Donations	2161
Shop sales	2930
Reproduction fees	648
Grants & leases	2065
Total	7804
Net cost	47235

It is anticipated, as far as local government finance can be projected with confidence, that the budget for the following year will increase in line with inflation using the same criteria that are applied across the whole of the County Council's budget.

Any expenditure beyond the budget will be the consequence of successful grant aid applications and will be primarily for collection care, development and activities.

Major building works are paid for from separate budgets with the revenue budget responsible for internal maintenance and decoration. No major building works are planned following the programme of works completed in 2004.