

Agenda item:

Title of meeting: Culture, Leisure and Sport Decision Meeting

Subject: Update on the First World War Project Lest We Forget

Date of meeting: 21 March 2014

Report by: Head of City Development and Cultural Services

Wards affected: All

1. Requested by:

1.1 Cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure and Sport

2. Purpose

2.1 To update Members on the First World War Centenary plans pertaining to the Heritage Lottery Funded, Lest We Forget community programme and exhibition at Portsmouth (City) Museum.

3. Information Requested

- 3.1 2014 marks 100 years since the outbreak of the First World War. One hundred years on, we are all connected to the First World War, either through our own family history the heritage of our local communities or because of its long-term impact on society and the world we live in today.
- 3.2 Portsmouth Museums Service is a member of the First World War Centenary Partnership, led by the Imperial War Museum. The partnership will present a global programme of cultural events and activities from 2014-2018 to commemorate the centenary. <http://www.1914.org/partners/>
- 3.3 The Lest We Forget project has been awarded £97,400 from the Heritage Lottery Fund towards the total project cost of £111,400, 87% of the total. The remaining funding comes from Portsmouth Museum budgets, £12,000, together with an in kind contribution of £2,000 representing the costs of the contribution of the Research Associate towards the project.
- 3.4 Portsmouth Museum is working in collaboration with staff and students from Portsmouth University. Dr Brad Beaven, Reader in Social and Cultural History, has accepted an invitation to act as the guest curator of the exhibition. He is contributing his academic expertise through his studies of the period and the local area to help bring the story of Portsmouth's contribution to the First World War into focus.

- 3.5 He is aided by Dr Melanie Bassett, Research Associate, who is working with the museum to develop the exhibition's interpretation plan, also to engage and train local community groups to take part in researching their local history.
- 3.6 Seven university students have been recruited and trained to research significant elements of the museum and archive collections, such as the Tribunal papers and the collections relating to the Hampshire Yeomanry.
- 3.7 The museum team is currently driving forward the development of the exhibition. At the heart of the Lest We Forget exhibition will be the museum and archive collections which hold First World War related material relating to some 200 or so individuals: servicemen and women and civilians supporting the war effort at home.
- 3.8 Central to the concept of the exhibition is the idea that visitors will be offered the experience of finding out for themselves the hidden stories of those people who are represented in the collection. All of the information gathered by this collective effort will contribute substantially to the museums' knowledge base.
- 3.9 The Tale of One City Community History website has been updated to incorporate First World War Centenary pages. Portsmouth residents are being actively encouraged to contribute their stories from across the world.
<http://www.ataleofonecity.portsmouth.gov.uk/>
- 3.10 The profile of the Lest We Forget project is being raised across the City with a series of talks and taster sessions with community groups. Four in depth community projects are being developed to investigate the impact of the First World War on local families and the communities within those neighbourhoods. These projects will be documented, included in the exhibition and recorded to provide inspiration for other groups to follow their own centenary plans between now and 2018. On 8th February a community day at Landport Community Centre attracted 47 people. Several schools are also getting involved as well to support the exhibition development.
- 3.11 A series of workshops are in the planning stages with the New Theatre Royal and Portsmouth's Poet Laureate, Sam Cox and opportunities are being explored for these workshops to lead to an Arts Award accreditation.
- 3.12 Volunteers are being actively recruited for several different roles, helping hands, media masters, web wizards and story gatherers.
- 3.13 A family event programme has been planned for the Summer 2014 in partnership with the National Museum of the Royal Navy, the Royal Air Force museum Herndon and the Royal Armouries.
- 3.14 On 4th August a special review of the exhibition is being planned as part of the City's centenary programme, when the local community groups will be invited to the review to recognize their contribution to the Lest We Forget project.

This item is for information only

- 3.15 The exhibition will run until 25th January with the expectation that a further six community groups will be engaged in the outreach programme. The project itself is being evaluated for impact across the City of Portsmouth.

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Signed by:
Stephen Baily, Head of City Development & Cultural Services

Appendices: None

Background list of documents: Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972

The following documents disclose facts or matters, which have been relied upon to a material extent by the author in preparing this report:

Title of document	Location
Application to the Heritage Lottery Fund by Portsmouth Museums	Portsmouth Museums.
Project Initiation Document Lest We Forget	Portsmouth Museums
Guidance from the Imperial War Museum	http://www.1914.org/partners/