



**THIS ITEM IS FOR INFORMATION ONLY**

(Please note that "Information Only" reports do not require Equality Impact Assessments, Legal or Finance Comments as no decision is being taken)

**Title of meeting:** Culture, Leisure and Sport Decision Meeting

**Subject:** Update on the Wild about Portsmouth Project

**Date of meeting:** 20 July 2018

**Report by:** Director of Culture and City Development

**Wards affected:** All

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**1. Requested by**

1.1 Cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure and Sport

**2. Purpose**

2.1 The purpose of the report is to update Members on the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) funded project 'Wild about Portsmouth'.

**3. Information Requested**

3.1 This is a very exciting project that will raise the profile of and enhance access to Portsmouth's natural history collection. The collection is believed to be of considerable scientific importance as a historic record of the region's wildlife but at present there is little awareness or understanding of what it contains. This is about to change. Through an exciting programme of activities - from family activities to identification masterclasses - and opportunities for volunteers the collection will be revealed and shared with audiences across the city and beyond.

3.2 The total project cost of £ 151,700 is supported by a £79,700 (53%) award from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF). The HLF have identified the following approved purposes for the project on which we will be monitored over the two years of the project.

- Acknowledge the Heritage Lottery Funding
- Recruit 2x new staff (Curator and Collections Assistant)
- Commission external specialists to assess the collection and produce a report, including prioritised recommendations and an Action Plan
- Recruit volunteers, who will be trained in the techniques used to collect, preserve and document natural history collections
- Share project findings on the applicant's website and social media platforms
- Organise 2x community engagement events for up to 600 people
- Engage up to 60 school children from two schools



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- Produce an evaluation report, hold 6 discussion meetings with stakeholders on the future of the collection, and undertake a visit to Derby Museums
- 3.3 Throughout the intention is to involve participants in the project and for their views to inform how the collection is developed in the future and how it is used (this is the motivation for the visit to Derby Museums where a co-creation model has been successfully used).
- 3.4 Christine Taylor was appointed as Curator of Natural History (CNH) in May. She will spend the first few months familiarising herself with the collections.
- 3.5 The natural history collections are stored in three locations: main museum store at Hilsea, Portsmouth Museum and Cumberland House. The new curator's initial impression is that the collections are in good condition. They are however, stored very densely in the main museum store (ie stacked very high or so closely that cabinet drawers cannot be opened) and there are therefore a number of issues that will have to be resolved to enable the project to proceed as planned.
- 3.6 In spite of this, progress has already been made with respect to the involvement of volunteers. Role profiles have been created and two geology volunteers have been recruited (working at Cumberland House). Other roles have been promoted at the Volunteer Fair at the Guildhall and it is envisaged that volunteers will shortly start work on the plant collections held at Portsmouth Museum.
- 3.7 A weekly Blog has been set up on the Portsmouth Museums website <http://portsmouthcitymuseums.co.uk/> and a weekly Twitter feed [@wildaboutportsmouth](#). Both are enabling initial research into the collections to be recorded and shared.
- 3.8 Wild about Portsmouth will work with countryside and wildlife organisations across the city and region including colleagues from countryside services and the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust that manages Farlington Marshes. The curator has also made contact with organisations and recorders such as NatSca (Natural Sciences Collections Association), BSBI (Botanical Society of Britain and Ireland), Southampton Mineral and Fossil Society, Dinosaur Isle and other individuals with expertise (mainly botanists).
- 3.9 Talks, workshops and events are being planned from October 2018 onwards. Initial ideas include family workshops based on specimens from the collection (eg ice age animals, animals of the seashore, garden birds), insect identification workshops for adults, and the creation of a 21<sup>st</sup> century collection of plants from Portsdown Hill to add to the collection. More detail will follow in due course.

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Signed by:  
**Stephen Baily**  
**Director of Culture and City Development**

**Appendices:**  
Appendix 1 - Items from Portsmouth's Natural History Collection.

**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:

<b>Title of document</b>	<b>Location</b>