

**Curators Report – Bursledon Windmill
Joint Management Committee Meeting – 16 May 2012**

1. Providing a welcoming and well maintained Museum

The Phase 1 Arts and Museums Structure was launched on July 1ST 2011 . For Bursledon Windmill this meant the introduction of new staff and volunteers with the launch of the Community Partnership to engage the Community more widely in the future operational working of the Windmill in all aspects.

The Windmill has continued with Sunday opening, with opening for other events and booked groups by appointment through out the year. New interpretation has been introduced during March 2012 funded through the Renaissance transition fund including a new introductory audio visual and a virtual tour of the windmill to enable all visitors to see the inner workings of the windmill as well being available for those visitors with mobility difficulties. In addition the Windmill has offered a wide range of family events and is developing a new programme for schools.

Towards the end of 2011 it was established that the wind shaft required replacement and as such the staff could not continue to Mill until this work has been undertaken. This has meant some restricted access to the Windmill but with the ongoing development of the volunteer programme and the enriched public offer this has helped offset the limitations to the lack of operational working.

Given this, visitor figures for this year whilst below the previous year 2010/2011, which across the Arts and Museums Service was exceptional – provide a stable base upon which to build post restoration.

Visitor figures 11/12

	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct.	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	March	Total
Bursledon Apr 2009 - Mar 2010	520	509	192	425	720	390	425	242	214	237	264	396	4534
Bursledon Apr 2010 - Mar 2011	660	612	558	461	801	386	542	327	88	262	473	386	5556
Bursledon Apr 2011 - March 2012	581	645	389	435	408	244	261	258	86	159	227	173	3866

2. Caring for the Windmill, promoting access to collections and providing specialist knowledge and advice

2.1 Caring for the windmill

Throughout this period preliminary work has been progressing towards major repairs that are now required to the windshaft. This work has been led by the Arts and Museums Service Management Team, with significant involvement by historic buildings architects from the Hampshire County Council Property team. The first stage of this work commenced in March with the removal of the sails, which has stabilised the structure and has removed any risks that may have been presented by the windshaft that requires repair. This will also enable more detailed assessment of the remainder of the project, and the intention is that the opportunity presented by this work will be taken to explore and interpret the technical aspects of the Mill as a machine and also the opportunity will be taken to carry out other exterior redecoration and repair jobs that will need to be carried out. It is anticipated that the repairs will be completed in time for Bursledon Windmill's 200th anniversary in 2014.

2.2 Promoting access and providing specialist knowledge and advice

During February, the Collections Team contributed to the improvements in the site's interpretation through verification of the history of the windmill, drafting text and researching photographs. In March they also helped members of the Community Engagement and Learning Team prepare for schools and holiday activities, including 'Mini beasts' and supplying a baby rabbit for Easter activities.

3. Inspiring learning and community engagement

3.1 Formal Education Provision:

Over the 3 month period January to March 2012, the Learning and Community Engagement Team only worked with 1 school group (Wickham House Year 1) at the Windmill due to the cold weather and the removal of the sails preventing the National Science and Engineering Week Project in March from going ahead.

However, in the 9 months since the new LCE team took up their posts, they have worked with 135 children in 5 school groups and, more importantly for the future, have modernised the service offered to schools, developing, and now beginning to promote, new sessions which reflect the changes to and expectations of the National Curriculum (See Appendix – School Sessions). When Hamble Primary School came for Creaking Mill sessions the teacher put this on the review section of the website:

The Year 1 and 2 children of Hamble Primary School had a fantastic half day visit to the Windmill and learned lots about buildings, farming and milling. The activities were pitched perfectly for their age and attention span, the learning was all hands on and they enjoyed every aspect of their time at the windmill. Thank you for attention to detail and we will recommend you to other schools in the area.

The teacher added in an e-mail:

It absolutely was the best learning experience of any historic site I have been to with a school trip in over 10 years of teaching, the attention to detail, pitch of activities and use of the site was fabulous. I will tell all teachers in the area that I know that they have to take their class to Bursledon Windmill!

3.2 Community Engagement and Learning:

In line with the Service Plan aim of widening participation, a diverse programme of activities and events was offered over the 3 month period. 213 people took part in high quality community activities.

Activity/Event	Target Audience	Date	No. of participants
Signs of Spring Family Workshop Day	Families	19 Feb	106
Technical Tours of the Mill for National Science and Engineering Week	Adults	11 March	47
Machines at the Mill – Family technology activities for NSEW	Families	18 March	60

The Signs of Spring Family Workshop Day, led by the LCEO and Assistant LCEO with the help of volunteers, was a great success. We set up a wealth of Spring related hands-on activities in the barn including games, make and takes, quizzes and puzzles and a trail. The activities made use of over 40 natural science specimens and covered subjects such as migration, hibernation, breeding and baby animals, life cycles, conservation and more.

We only got 14 completed comments forms (as we were rushed off our feet helping people with the activities) but they all gave us smiley face ratings for all 4 areas - learning, quality of activities, enjoyment, staff . 6 forms said they heard about the event from school (we did flyers to local schools and copy for school e-newsletters for lots of schools). 2 said they heard about it from Culture All, 2 didn't say, 1 from internet, 1 word of mouth, 1 said 'local' and 1 said 'here' (windmill staff had been promoting it on previous Sundays). Postcodes were mainly SO31, SO30, SO18 & one PO12. These forms alone identified **42 new visitors** to the Windmill which shows the attraction of offering different activities at the site in addition to the windmill visit.

Other comments:

"Children enjoyed all activities"

"Well done - a really good chance to explore Spring"

"Lovely friendly staff that were really accommodating, thank you"

Annual Summary for Community Engagement Work:

Over the whole 9 months since taking up their posts, the LCE Team have facilitated 20 events:

3 talks or tours for adults, 1 workshop for a Beaver Scout group, 4 outreach events, 8 family open days/evenings or workshops, and 4 community outreach workshops with Pilands Community Association for their local history project.

The most innovative aspects of the new LCE programme were:

- The Mill by Torchlight open evening in November, where 124 people enjoyed a spooky night time trail (albeit with proper historical interpretation as well as frights!). This innovative access opportunity gave visitors a very different experience of the Windmill, and allowed us trial all the lighting, parking and supervision issues connected with this type of event.
- The Pilands Mini Museum Project where the LCE Officers ran an in depth project with a sector of the local community who were researching their own untold history and are hoping to display their outputs at the Windmill.

These activities have also given local people and other visitors access to collections from the Hampshire Museum Collections, brought to the Windmill for the events.

2012/13 has started well for LCE activity, with two days of 'Bunny Hunts' for children and a community open day – details in the next quarter's report.

3.3 Information on schools sessions:

Below is reproduced information that promotes sessions at the Windmill

4. Marketing and management

Marketing:

40,000 copies of a special bumper edition of 'Enjoy Hampshire Museums and Archives' were produced that includes museums in the Hampshire-Solent Alliance and designed to appeal to the types of people who are most attracted to our museums. It is now being distributed county-wide and in particular to those residential areas with the greatest concentrations of potential visitors.

20,000 copies of 'What's On in Hampshire Museums and Archives', covering the period January to March 2011, were distributed this Winter, which included events at museums across Hampshire. Distribution covered TICs, local museums, libraries and visitor attractions throughout the county. A further edition for March to June 2012, with a print run of 15,000, was printed and distributed in February.

Posters were circulated locally for each new exhibition and press releases are produced and circulated to the local media for each show.

Online marketing:

Events were promoted on a monthly basis via the Hampshire County Council cultural e-newsletter, Showcase. With new people signing up all the time, Showcase is now reaching over 30,000 subscribers. It regularly features both an exhibition and an object of the month as well as signposting recipients to events in their local area. In addition, the monthly e-newsletter

Museums Monthly is sent to over 12,000 subscribers who have asked to receive museums specific information.

Other promotional activity

On the 27th March Bursledon Windmill was the subject of a 5 minute slot on ITV Meridian Tonight, in a feature that showed the sails being lifted off with a crane and a live interview with Area Curator, Tom de Wit, looking at the history of the Mill and the ongoing restoration work and plans for the future.

The windmill also received considerable coverage in The News and the Daily Echo on 28th March covering the first stage of restoration work.

Research:

Postcodes are now routinely collected from visitors at key which are profiled using Mosaic software. These provide ongoing information on which groups of people are using and not using our services and how individual visitor profiles compare to the local area. This feeds into the service and marketing planning processes.