

**Curators Report – Bursledon Windmill
Joint Management Committee Meeting – 17 October 2012
(Covering period June – September 2012)**

1. Providing a welcoming and well maintained Windmill



On 19 August, a significant milestone was reached for Bursledon Windmill. This was The Bursledon Bake Off – the first time since the original restoration of the windmill that food actually prepared and cooked on the premises has been enjoyed by visitors to the site. This a major step which reinforces the link between the preserved buildings and their original purpose at the heart of the local community as an centre for agriculture and food production.

The event was centred around the traditional, wood-fired Pizza oven which was built over several months by the team of volunteers under the supervision of James Brigden, Visitor Services Assistant at the site and Volunteer Co-ordinator for South East Hampshire.

The response from visitors to this event was incredibly positive – with comments such as “this is the best Pizza I have ever tasted”. Visitors of all ages were able to make their own Pizza and take it to the oven for firing, before sitting in the beautiful grounds with a cold drink to enjoy their pizzas.



This event was made possible by the support and organisational skill of the Learning and Community Engagement Team, who prepared the ingredients and oversaw the safe preparation of food on site as well as helping promote and organise the event. It was a challenging activity, with facilities at the mill being so limited it was pushing the boundaries of what is possible at present. But the life that it brought to the site was astonishing and an indication of what could be possible. Most of all, it demonstrated a clear appetite from the community to engage with the Windmill in this way.

This theme of broadening the scope of activities at the Windmill will be continued by the forthcoming and spectacular event, “*A Curious Christmas Circus*”, on the evening of 6th December. This magical and fantastic event will feature live circus performers, storytellers and magical characters to lead the audience on a truly magical journey. This outdoor theatrical performance has been created and led by Annabel Cook, Area Manager for South East Hampshire, who brings great expertise and experience in the creative and performing arts which is essential in order to transform a challenging site such as this in this way.

Alongside the ongoing restoration of the Windmill, which aims to return this iconic structure to full working order, this new way of interpreting the site has the potential to open up the site to new and diverse audiences and to inspire people in all sorts of ways above and beyond the central core of a working windmill.

Visitor figures 11/12

Although the visitor figures are lower than previous years, this is to be expected while the Mill is not working and the sails are removed. Despite this, there are some relatively good attendances at certain times and the strong events programme will place the Mill in a good position to return to strong numbers when repairs are completed after the planned restoration.

	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct.	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Total
Bursledon 2009 –2010	520	509	192	425	720	390	425	242	214	237	264	396	4534
Bursledon 2010 –2011	660	612	558	461	801	386	542	327	88	262	473	386	5556
Bursledon 2011–2012	581	645	389	435	408	244	261	258	86	159	227	173	3866
Bursledon 2012 –2013	385	285	227	251	332								1480 to date

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

2.1 Caring for the windmill

Throughout this period, the preparation work for the restoration funding bid has been progressing. Alongside this, Hampshire County Council historic buildings architects have been pursuing resources required by the planned restoration so that as and when funding becomes available, the restoration is in a position to commence.

Preparations are being made for a review of the collections and displays at the Windmill that will take place in October. The Collections Team will check on the condition of all objects and the environment in which they are displayed. All environmental controls will be reviewed.

2.2 Promoting access and providing specialist knowledge and advice

Over the summer months, the Collections Team supported the delivery of the 'Mini Beasts' workshop for schools, the Victorian Day and Mill Summer Murders. Victorian ceramics were selected from the County Council's extensive decorative arts collection to enhance the displays put together for the Victorian Day, having been professionally cleaned before being put on show to the public.

3. Inspiring Learning and Community Engagement

3.1 Formal Education Provision

Over the 6 month period April to September 2012, the Community Engagement and Learning Team (CEL) have worked with **9** school groups in the Windmill, a total of **244** pupils.

Date	School	Key Stage & Year Group	No. of children	Type of workshop
24 May	St Swithun Wells Catholic Primary	KS1 Yr 2	28	Little Red Hen
24 May	St Swithun Wells Catholic Primary	KS1 Yr 1	30	Little Red Hen
24 May	St Swithun Wells Catholic Primary	KS1 Yr 1	29	Little Red Hen
24 May	St Swithun Wells Catholic Primary	KS1 Yr R	29	Little Red Hen
14 June	Mill Hill Primary, Havant	KS2 Yr 3&4	27	Flour Power
19 June	Mansel Park Primary, So'ton	KS1 Yr 2	31	Minibeast Safari
10 Sept	Bursledon Infant	KS1 Yr R	26	Little Red Hen
10 Sept	Bursledon Infant	KS1 Yr 1	21	Little Red Hen
10 Sept	Bursledon Infant	KS1 Yr 2	23	Little Red Hen

Feedback forms were all very positive. A Year 1 teacher from Bursledon Infant School said, “I don’t think there is anything that needs to be improved as the children really enjoyed their trip to the Windmill.”

The Windmill is benefitting from the widening of the CEL Team to include Arts as well as Museums. A funding bid has been submitted for a Clore Poetry & Literature Award to work with a writer in residence and 2 local schools next spring. This term the local Arts Development Officer will be working with the CEL team on a project with one or more local schools to produce decorative banners for the barn, showcasing the Windmill’s history and use. This will be reported on next quarter.

The Community Engagement & Learning Officer has undertaken a review of schools’ use of the Windmill over the last 3 years (see separate report), which includes an action plan to further promote the new improved offer.

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 6 month period. **619** people took part in high quality community activities.

Activity/Event	Target Audience	Date	No. of participants
2 X Easter Bunny Hunt days	Families	1 & 8 April	221
2 X local community open days	Local community	3 & 4 April	39
Victorian Day (partnership with Bursledon Brickworks)	Families	15 July	77
Mill Summer Murders (clue trail with specimens & activities)	Families	5 August	106
Flour Power Workshop for 3rd Portchester Scouts	Children - Community groups	14 August	9
Great Bursledon Bake Off (pizza making)	Families	19 August	95
Harvest Crafts Day	Families	23 Sept	52
History Workshop for Waterlooville U3A group	Adults – Community groups	27 Sept	20

Sunday visitor figures are noticeably higher on the days when special activities are offered on top of the usual site tours. The highlight was the Bake Off day which utilised the new outdoor oven for the first time with the public.

The Assistant Community Engagement and Learning Officer is part of the project team for the planned restoration and re-launch and is inputting a range of innovative ideas for the future. In the meantime, more events are planned for the Autumn/Winter including the launch of the new interpretive film with a private view for local community group leaders, a half term family activity on Autumn Animals, and a Curious Christmas Circus! These will be reported on next quarter.

4. Marketing and management

Marketing

20,000 copies of 'What's On in Hampshire Museums and Archives', covering the period July to September, were distributed in June, which included events at museums across Hampshire. Distribution covered TICs, local museums, libraries and visitor attractions throughout the county.

20,000 copies of the new edition covering October to December was delivered in early September and is in the process of being distributed county-wide.

Online marketing

Events at Bursledon Windmill 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.

Social Media

The facebook page and twitter feed set up by the exhibitions team at Chilcomb House to promote exhibitions and events at Museums Service sites is becoming well established. Facebook now has over 400 "likes" and twitter nearly 550 followers. The Windmill also has its own dedicated Facebook page, which while it is less busy than the Exhibitions page, provides a more local interface and the two are linked together. The Exhibitions Team Facebook page includes a review of the pizza making event on 19 August and a preview of the film premier event on 12 October.