

Report to Heritage Lottery Fund – Seeking Board Approval for Amendments to the Opening Hours of Harborough Museum.

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- 1. Purpose of the Report.** To seek approval from HLF board members to approve the proposed reduced opening hours of Harborough Museum. In brief these include:-
 - a. Seasonal variations to the opening hours
 - b. The Museum closing on a Monday all year round (including Bank Holidays)
 - c. The Museum additionally closing on a Wednesday (November to March)A full copy of the proposed hours can be seen in Appendix A

- 2. Background information.** Harborough Museum is operated as a partnership between Harborough District Council (HDC), Leicestershire County Council (LCC) and Market Harborough Historical Society (MHHS). The respective responsibilities of each partner are briefly summarised as:-
 - HDC – provision of Museum Assistants, premises and associated costs
 - LCC – provision of curatorial support, and collections
 - MHHS – make available its collection for the use of the museum.As part of the business planning process during 2010, HDC identified that it had to make £1.4M savings for the 2011/12 financial year. After lengthy discussions between all partners, HDC approved a budget of £48,000 for Harborough Museum for 2011/12 financial year to cover the direct costs of Museum Assistant salaries and Non-domestic rates. In order to meet the budget allocation to it was necessary to reduce Museum Assistant salary costs by 19%, whilst being mindful of minimising the effect of this on opening hours.

- 3. Proposal.** To reach the current proposal on reducing opening hours the patronage of the museum was analysed on a month by month / day by day / morning to afternoon basis to identify the quieter periods. From this process Mondays were identified as the quieter day followed by Wednesday. It was also identified that during the winter months there was a drop off of users towards the latter part of the afternoon. Therefore it is proposed that the Museum is closed Mondays throughout the year, with a further closing on a Wednesday during the winter months (Nov – March). Currently the Museum is open to the public from 10.30 – 4.15 all year round, the proposed opening hours are 10.30 – 4.30 (April – October) and 10.30 – 4pm (Nov – March). The net reduction of opening hours to the public is from 1794 per annum to 1384 which equates to a 22% reduction.

- 4. Consultation.** To reach this point of proposing the amendments to the Board, there has been full consultation there has been full consultation within the partnership. MHHS fully support the proposal, and LCC do not offer any objections.

- 5. Implementation.** It is proposed that the proposed amendments to the opening hours are implemented as soon as possible if approved by the board. This will take into consideration the legal requirements changing Museum Assistants

contracts of employment, and giving sufficient time to advertise and promote the changes to the public and visitors.