

Museum of Farnham – Recovery Grant – Website update 10.09.20

The Museum of Farnham is delighted to have received £5,000 from the South East Museum Development Recovery Grant, supported by the Art Fund. This money will support a project which aims to reconnect the museum to its current users and seeks to engage with new users. Focused on discussion, action and a stronger digital presence, the museum will work with its community to respond to the events of 2020, mainly COVID-19 and the Black Lives Matter protests.

The project has three strands; 1. Create more digital content for the museum 2. Create opportunity for shared experiences 3. Build relationships.

As an organisation we are keen to increase our digital content, so we can engage with a broader audience both onsite and online. Working with a professional film director and editor, we intend to make two new videos for visitors to enjoy. One video will focus on the history of 38 West Street, a Grade 1 listed Georgian building, which is home to the museum. Throughout the years it has served many different purposes and housed lots of interesting characters! The second video will focus on one of our key objects within the collection, King Charles 1 morning cap, which he gifted to the Vernon family in Farnham, thanking them for allowing him to stay a night on his travels to London for his execution.

The museum offers local schools a dynamic loans box service. These boxes enrich children's learning of historical topics, through providing real artefacts for them to engage with, as well teaching notes to support teachers in their use. To enhance this service, we will make digital content that makes the artefacts and stories within our loan boxes more accessible and exciting. Christine, our learning and community engagement officer, will work with local teachers and students to develop the ideas and we cannot wait to see the results.

After a prolonged period of people being limited to interaction with only their household and in some cases being isolated, we want to help people reconnect and also share their experiences.

COVID-19 has affected us all and continues to do so. As a local history museum, we want to capture the stories of our community and have people participate in the development of displays that help bring people together around their experiences.

We are keen to hear from anyone about their experiences during lockdown. We feel anything and everything is important to capture! You can speak with us on a one to one basis, or attend one of our drop in sessions either at the museum or elsewhere, there will be more details to follow on this.

We hope the outcome is a display which people can contribute to over coming months, taking those individual experiences and presenting them as one community.

The Black Lives Matter protests have highlighted again the continual need to address racism within our society and institutions. Museums across the country are embarking on projects that will help them address issues such as colonialism within their collections and how to accurately display historical events and stories with information that provides a well-rounded view.

Having reflected on these events, the Museum of Farnham has acknowledged that it needs to develop projects that focus on its own displays and collections.

However, to ensure any projects that are developed are done so in collaboration with those from the BAME community, we must first forge relationships with members of those community's within Farnham. We must ensure the museum reflects all local people and now is the time for these connections to be built.

If you wish to share your story or support this project, please get in touch with the museum's Curator – Josh Godfrey. You can call 012052 715 094 or email josh.godfrey@farnhammaltings.com