

# Culture and Sport Committee

Tuesday, 10.00am, 8 March 2016

## Museums and Galleries Volunteering Programme and Internships

Item number	7.4
Report number	
Executive	
Wards	All

### Executive summary

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This report provides an update on volunteer coordination within the Museums and Galleries service, and summarises the work of volunteers and interns.

### Links

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Coalition pledges	P24
Council outcomes	CO2, CO20, CO23, CO25, CO26
Single Outcome Agreement	SO1, SO2, SO3

## Museums and Galleries Volunteering Programme and Internships

### Recommendations

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- 1.1 To welcome the funding award by Museums Galleries Scotland to fund a Volunteer Coordinator over two years.
- 1.2 To thank all those who work as volunteers and interns with the Museums and Galleries Service for their valuable contribution.

### Background

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- 2.1 Volunteers assist the Museums and Galleries service with a range of activities. These include delivering outreach in care homes and day centres, carrying out visitor research within galleries, acquisitioning and cataloguing objects, helping to care for collections, presenting living history performances, developing handling boxes, assisting with educational workshops and developing research.
- 2.2 From September 2013 for one year, the volunteering programme was managed by a Skills for the Future intern, who acted as the Volunteer Coordinator. The Skills for the Future intern scheme is funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund and managed by Museum Galleries Scotland. Since the conclusion of that internship, the Museums and Galleries staff have jointly managed the volunteers who work across all parts of the service.

### Main report

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- 3.1 The Museums and Galleries service has secured funding from Museums Galleries Scotland (MGS) for 75% of the cost of a two-year part-time Volunteer Coordinator post. This grant of £29,070 is one of five awards that MGS has made under its Strategic Investment Fund, which is designed to boost the impact of Scottish museums and help them progress their development plans.
- 3.2 The postholder will manage and develop the volunteering programme and explore options for the long term sustainability of the programme. The post was advertised in January 2016 and at the time of writing, the recruitment process is under way.
- 3.3 There are 39 volunteers currently working with the Museums and Galleries service. The number of volunteers changes regularly as placements are often short term and new placements are regularly developed. Once the Volunteer Coordinator is in place, the service will be able to develop more volunteering opportunities; over 160 people have expressed an interest in volunteering with the service. The full time Volunteer Coordinator post will also free up the time of

other Museums and Galleries staff, who have recently been managing volunteer placements.

- 3.4 These volunteers do not replace paid staff roles; rather, they give added value to the service and offer help with activities which would otherwise be left undone. Volunteering is not without some cost (staff time, travel expenses etc) but still offers value for money. Volunteers contribute to the work of all teams within the Museum and Galleries service. Some examples of their contributions are described below.
- 3.5 Jointly run by the Museums and Galleries service and Health and Social Care, **Museums Alive** brings museum collections to older people. Since 2011 the volunteers have visited care homes, day centres and sheltered housing where they lead reminiscence, art and music activities and develop exhibitions. Many of the participants would struggle to visit museum venues due to ill health, mobility issues, visual impairments, hearing loss or dementia. Museums Alive allows service users to actively participate in museum activities and provides social contact for participants.
- 3.6 The project has won the Scotland regional award at the Marsh Trust Award for Volunteers for Museum Learning and an Inspiring Volunteering award, and has featured within conferences by Museums Association and Museums Galleries Scotland. Museums Alive has been highlighted in several case studies including the Museums Galleries Scotland document '[Realising the Vision: Delivering Public Value through Scotland's Museums and Galleries 2015-2019](#)'.
- 3.7 Initially trialled in 2014, **Museum Boot Camp** was repeated in July 2015. Boot Camp is a two-week intensive training course for volunteers who wish to gain practical skills and experience in collections management. The volunteers learn museum skills by assisting with tasks, visiting venues and taking part in workshops run by museum professionals. The eight participants worked 480 hours and catalogued over 300 items. Boot Camp 2015 culminated in an exhibition at the People's Story Museum.
- 3.8 Feedback from Boot Camp 2015 was very positive: all participants stated that they had improved their skills and knowledge through taking part. Museum Boot Camp has attracted interest across the museums sector and was highlighted at a recent East of Scotland Museums Partnership event on volunteering.
- 3.9 The **Writers' Museum** volunteers supervise the Robert Louis Stevenson rooms at the Museum and offer a friendly and knowledgeable welcome to visitors. Their service was recognised at the Museum & Heritage Awards 2014, where they won a Highly Commended award in the Customer Service category
- 3.10 Thanks to Museums Galleries Scotland's Small Projects funding, and a successful application to the Scottish Graduate School for Arts & Humanities for an internship, a dress and textiles specialist is continuing to volunteer at the Museum of Edinburgh as part of the team working on a **new costume gallery**. This project will see an under-used part of the Museum of Edinburgh

transformed into a display space for the dress history collection, most of which has never been displayed. The intern will catalogue, interpret and install two sets of four costumes for display, in a project which runs until mid-2017.

- 3.11 **Edinburgh Living History** performs at various locations throughout the city, but principally at Lauriston Castle, where the group brings history to life through drama. The group won an Inspiring Volunteering award in 2014. Other volunteers also work at **Lauriston Castle** taking on a range of roles including assisting with cataloguing, cleaning and checking books in the library.
- 3.12 **Collections Management** volunteers assist with a range of tasks. These have included data cleaning, digitising photographs, and carrying out detailed research on the Earl Haig and edged weapons collections. This has led to the identification of an important cavalry sword belonging to Earl Haig.
- 3.13 The Outreach service offers a range of **handling boxes** for community groups to borrow free of charge. These include loan boxes for schools and reminiscence boxes for older people's groups. The boxes require regular upkeep and redevelopment and this work has been assisted by volunteers who write new notes and develop the resources. In 2015 three boxes were redeveloped and others are currently in development.
- 3.14 In 2015 for the second year running a team of Volunteer Stewards/Gardeners was recruited specifically to help open, manage and develop the historic **courtyard to the rear of the Museum of Edinburgh**. They provided an individual welcome to visitors into the space, and information about the history of the courtyard and Canongate and the archaeological and architectural exhibits on display there. They also played an important part in helping to keep the space clean, weed-free and safe for visitors. In 2015 the volunteers were instrumental in designing and planting the new flowerbeds, and in supporting the work of the Community Payback teams to carry out some of the heavier work such as landscaping, creating new benches and painting work .
- 3.15 All the volunteers are local people, and one in particular has known the Canongate and the museum for many years. They all have a passion for sharing the history and stories of this area with visitors, and a stake in making the space a welcoming environment for local residents and visitors alike to explore.
- 3.16 In addition to the previous Volunteer Coordinator intern and the Costume Gallery intern, both discussed above, the Museums and Galleries service hosts other **interns**, usually students on placements as part of their academic courses. For example, since 2013, three Masters students from the University of Dundee have worked as interns on forensic reconstructions of archaeological finds. The work of one of these students was showcased in the Museum of Edinburgh's exhibition *Dark Goings On In Cramond*, which opened in October 2015.

## Measures of success

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- 4.1 The Volunteering programme actively seeks evaluations from service users, group leaders, volunteers and staff via evaluations forms, focus groups and discussion and other evaluation methodologies.

## Financial impact

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- 5.1 The Volunteering Programme is contained within the Culture and Sport revenue budget. As noted above, 75% of the cost of the two-year Volunteer Coordinator post is covered by a grant from Museums Galleries Scotland.

## Risk, policy, compliance and governance impact

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- 6.1 The Volunteering Programme is one of the many ways in which the Culture and Sport service implements the Council's Culture Plan, and is a priority of the Museums and Galleries Service Plan 2013-2018.
- 6.2 There are no risk, compliance or governance impacts arising from this report's recommendations.

## Equalities impact

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- 7.1 The Volunteering programme offers a free outreach service to communities and programming is designed to actively reach out to excluded communities and to foster inclusion in line with the public sector duties of the Equality Act 2010.

## Sustainability impact

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- 8.1 The Volunteering service works towards achieving a sustainable Edinburgh, by contributing to Edinburgh's high quality of life, promoting wellbeing and building confident communities.
- 8.2 Environmental impact of the Volunteering programme is controlled as staff and volunteers use public transport, walk or cycle where possible .

## Consultation and engagement

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- 9.1 A programme of evaluation takes place to ensure that activities meet the needs of staff, volunteers and service users and provide the best service possible.

## Background reading/external references

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[Inspiring Edinburgh's Volunteers- Building on Success 2012 – 2017](#)

A volunteering strategy agreed by the city's public agencies and the third sector Report to the Culture and Sport Committee [on 21 October 2014](#): Museums and Galleries Volunteering Programme

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## Links

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<b>Coalition pledges</b>	P24 Maintain and embrace support for our world-famous festivals and events
<b>Council outcomes</b>	CO2 Our children and young people are successful learners, confident individuals and responsible citizens making a positive contribution to their communities CO20 Culture, sport and major events – Edinburgh continues to be a leading cultural city where culture and sport play a central part in the lives and futures of citizens CO23 Well engaged and well informed – Communities and individuals are empowered and supported to improve local outcomes and foster a sense of community CO25 The Council has efficient and effective services that deliver on objectives CO26 The Council engages with stakeholders and works in partnership to improve services and deliver on agreed objectives
<b>Single Outcome Agreement</b>	SO1 Edinburgh’s economy delivers increased investment, jobs and opportunities for all SO2 Edinburgh’s citizens experience improved health and well-being, with reduced inequalities in health SO3 Edinburgh’s children and young people enjoy their childhood and fulfil their potential
<b>Appendices</b>	