

**REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY  
COMMITTEE**

19th January 2011

**National Angling Museum Task and Finish Review – Monitoring Report**

Relevant Portfolio Holder(s)	Councillor Gay Hopkins, Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Tourism
Relevant Head of Service	John Godwin (Head of Leisure and Cultural Services)

**1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS**

The National Angling Museum Task and Finish review came to a conclusion in July 2009. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed at this time that the subject of establishing a National Angling Museum should be reconsidered by the parent Committee in January 2011, following implementation of a number of actions that had implications for the potential introduction of a National Angling Museum in the Borough. This report details the outcome of these actions for the Committee's consideration and will enable Members to determine whether investment in a National Angling Museum should be undertaken by the Council.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Committee are asked to **RESOLVE:**

- 1) **whether, given the lack of potential support for this undertaking, any further action be required; and**
- 2) **that subject to Members' comments, the report be noted.**

**3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 The National Angling Museum Task and Finish review was undertaken over a period of three months in 2009. There were five members of the Group: former Councillor Phil Mould (Chair), Councillors Gay Hopkins and William Norton and former Councillors David Enderby and David Hunt.
- 3.2 The review was launched because there were concerns about the extent to which the angling and fishing tackle heritage of Redditch was promoted locally, regionally and nationally.
- 3.3 The Group was commissioned to undertake the review in two parts. During the first phase the Group were tasked with assessing the feasibility of

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establishing a National Angling Museum in the Borough. Members were also required to identify potential sources of funding that could be utilised to pay for the introduction and ongoing running costs of a museum.

- 3.4 For the second stage of the review the Task and Finish Group would have been tasked with assessing the level of support amongst both local residents and within the angling community for the introduction of a National Angling Museum. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee clearly specified that the second stage of the review should only be launched if the Group demonstrated the feasibility of introducing a National Angling Museum in the Borough.
- 3.5 The Group discussed the potential locations where a National Angling Museum could be sited. They discovered that there were no suitable Council owned properties situated in a central location within the town. Members also addressed the possibility of establishing a National Angling Museum in a property which had formally been used in the local fishing tackle industry. However, the majority of such properties were either utilised for alternative business purposes; had been replaced by modern buildings; or had been converted into residential apartments. Members were also concerned about the potential financial costs which would be incurred by the Council in the form of capital expenditure for the purchase, refurbishment and ongoing maintenance of such a building.
- 3.6 The Group visited Forge Mill Needle Museum as part of their review. During this meeting Members viewed the museum's fishing tackle heritage collection. They also assessed the Forge Mill and Bordesley Abbey site and the potential to extend facilities at this location to establish a National Angling Museum. However, they noted that there was restricted space and therefore an additional building would need to be introduced, at a significant financial cost to the Council, to accommodate a National Angling Museum.
- 3.7 Members also discovered that an alternative National Angling Museum project was in the process of being developed in another part of the country. This alternative project would provide competition to any similar museum that might be established within the Borough and there appeared to be a significant degree of support for this alternative project within the wider angling community. This alternative National Angling Museum does not appear to have opened since the Group reported their findings in July 2009. However, commitment appears to remain to establishing the museum amongst the original supporters of the project.

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### **4. KEY ISSUES**

- 4.1 The Group concluded that it would not be possible to determine the feasibility of a National Angling Museum without first acquiring additional information. Officers committed to undertaking three actions which would enable this assessment to be made. The outcome of these actions is outlined below for Members' consideration.
- 4.2 **Action 1: Temporary Fishing Tackle Exhibition at Forge Mill Needle Museum**
- 4.2.1 The Forge Mill Needle Museum held a fishing tackle exhibition to ascertain the interest in the town and wider area for the possibility of the Council investing in a National Angling Museum.
- 4.2.2 The exhibition was called Hook, Line and Sinker and took place from October 23rd to November 29th 2010. The museum advertised the exhibition in the two local papers; the Redditch Standard and Redditch Advertiser, and also generated free editorial in both papers. The exhibition was promoted on the website and all free website listings. As an added extra to attract more visitors an expert 'fly dresser' (fly tying) gave free demonstrations in the galley for four afternoons during the exhibition period.
- 4.2.3 The exhibition was also timed to coincide with the National Vintage Tackle Fair (Sunday 21st November 2010) held at the Abbey Stadium. An opportunity was used to promote the exhibition as well through a leaflet distribution at this event.
- 4.2.4 The fishing tackle exhibition attracted a total of 216 visitors. By comparison, another local history exhibition that was held February 2nd – March 14th 2010 (the Batteries Remembered - a history of Alcad) this attracted 500 visitors. This was a niche exhibition, also aimed at the same audience, local history enthusiasts. The figure of 216 visitors is comparably low despite considerable resources being allocated to it. Furthermore, in recent years the Museum has provided a show case summer exhibition which this year was around the theme of 'Dinosaurs' and attracted in excess of 4,500 people.
- 4.2.5 Based on the information submitted above and through attendances at previous exhibitions over the years, this would indicate that there may not be enough public interest to support a project of the scale of a National

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Angling Museum, which involves considerable capital and revenue resources currently unavailable to the Council at this point in time.

Forge Mill Needle Museum is currently involved in a scoping exercise being carried out to explore the possibility of a Shared Museum Service with other Museums in the County. Although this is at a very early stage and no decisions have been made about the future running of the museum it would be inadvisable to commit to any significant changes to the infrastructure of the museum as this may have detrimental implications on the feasibility of a third party taking on the management of the museum.

Due to recent outdoor extensions to the Play Area and landscape work to level the ground for weddings and general event hire there is little room to develop a new building within the grounds of the museum near to the visitor centre. Any adaptations to the existing Needle Museum building are unlikely to be supported as the building has listed status.

There is still the possibility of a privately funded National Angling Centre being built. If this was to happen, Forge Mill would be approached to loan artefacts and share history, so would ultimately have a presence in a new angling centre and promote Redditch history at no cost to the Council.

### **4.3 Action 2: Angling Competition – Arrow Valley Lake Action 2: Angling Competition – Arrow Valley Lake**

4.3.1 Members requested that an angling competition take place at the same time that the exhibition would be taking place at Forge Mill Needle Museum. This did not, in the event, take place.

4.3.2 On advice from the Redditch Federation of Anglers the decision to defer a competition until mid to late spring was taken for the following reasons:

- a) a local winter tournament would conflict with the winter weekend league and would be unlikely to generate sufficient support from its membership;
- b) lake fisheries suffer during the winter months due to fish semi hibernating during this period. Lake fish feed very rarely during the winter and this adversely impacts on the quality of catch for the anglers;

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- c) there has been a significant increase in the diversification of private land owners into the provision of private fisheries. These fisheries tend to be over stocked to guarantee large catches; and
  - d) the revised date would enable a positive link with National Angling Day which would enable the Council to supplement the event with a full coaching and development programme.
- 4.3.3 The opinion of the anglers that have been approached is that a museum would need to be adjacent to a well stocked, active fishery to have any chance of success. The rationale for this is as follows:
- a) the ability to demonstrate the practical application of any exhibits;
  - b) the ability to provide inter-active exhibitions;
  - c) the proposed facility would need repeat business to help sustain any business plan.
- 4.4 **Action 3: Discussion with the Regional Manager for the Heritage Lottery Fund regarding the feasibility of securing funding for the establishment of a National Angling Museum in Redditch**
- 4.4.1 Members were advised during the review that the former Head of Leisure and Arts was due to meet with the Regional Manager of the Heritage Lottery Fund in 2009. It was agreed that the feasibility of securing funding for establishing a National Angling Museum in the Borough would be discussed during this meeting.
- 4.4.2 Due to the changes to the Senior Management Team it is not known whether this meeting took place. Should Members decide to pursue this aim Officers will arrange to meet with Heritage Lottery Fund West Midlands representatives to establish the feasibility of securing any potential funding available to fund a project of this nature.

## **5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

Establishing a National Angling Museum in the Borough would require significant investment of financial resources, though it is likely that the costs would vary depending on the scale of the project. Members need to assess the viability of investing in such a project at a time when significant cuts to the local authority's budget are having to be made.

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Members were advised during the course of their review that in 2006 some consideration had been given to investing approximately £1 million in developing Bordesley Abbey and Forge Mill Needle Museum. This development work was not subsequently undertaken, however, it is probable that a similar level of investment would be required to develop the site to incorporate an enhanced role for displaying fishing tackle memorabilia at the site. Furthermore, it is likely that a significantly larger amount of investment would be required to establish a separate National Angling Museum elsewhere in the Borough.

In the absence of any external funding it is not feasible for Redditch Borough Council to invest in an Angling Museum as any funds to develop this would have to be borrowed capital which would incur ongoing pressures on revenue budgets. In addition, the running of such a building would require additional staff and premises related expenditure which would not be feasible for the Council to support at this time due to recent grant funding cuts.

### **6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no legal implications to this report.

### **7. POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

There are no direct policy implications.

### **8. COUNCIL OBJECTIVES**

There are no known links to any of the Council's objectives.

### **9. RISK MANAGEMENT INCLUDING HEALTH & SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS**

There are no direct risk management or health and safety considerations.

### **10. CUSTOMER IMPLICATIONS**

Significant investment would be required to establish a National Angling Museum which would involve diverting funds from supporting the delivery of existing services. Establishing a National Angling Museum would therefore have implications for existing customers as diverting funds could impact on

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the quality of existing services.

### **11. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

There are no direct equality or diversity implications.

### **12. VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS, PROCUREMENT AND ASSET MANAGEMENT**

The Council is currently in the process of making budget savings in response to a reduction to the local authority grant settlement over the next two years. Members may need to question whether investing in a National Angling Museum or in extending Forge Mill Needle Museum would represent value for money, both for the Council and for local residents, in this financial climate.

### **13. CLIMATE CHANGE, CARBON IMPLICATIONS AND BIODIVERSITY**

There are no direct climate change implications.

### **14. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS**

Staff would be required to manage a National Angling Museum. The number of staff would depend on the size of the museum.

Extension of Forge Mill Needle Museum to accommodate a space dedicated to angling would also potentially have human resources implications. Additional members of staff might be required to support the growth of the museum.

### **15. GOVERNANCE / PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS**

There are no direct governance or performance management implications.

### **16. COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS INCLUDING SECTION 17 OF CRIME AND DISORDER ACT 1998**

There are no direct community safety implications.

### **17. HEALTH INEQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

There are no direct health inequalities implications.

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**18. LESSONS LEARNT**

During the course of this review it became clear it would not be feasible for the Council to establish and manage a National Angling Museum in Redditch unless external sources of funding could be obtained to fund the project.

**19. COMMUNITY AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT**

The National Angling Museum Task and Finish Group did not consult with the community over either the possibility of introducing a National Angling Museum or any extension to Forge Mill Needle Museum. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee recognised in 2009 that consultation would need to be undertaken if establishing a National Angling Museum was considered to be feasible.

**20. OTHERS CONSULTED ON THE REPORT**

Portfolio Holder	No, although the Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Tourism was a member of the National Angling Museum Task and Finish Group.
Chief Executive	No.
Executive Director (S151 Officer)	No.
Executive Director – Leisure, Cultural, Environmental and Community Services	Not directly, though the former Director of Housing, Leisure and Customer Services was consulted during the course of the review.
Executive Director – Planning & Regeneration, Regulatory and Housing Services	No
Director of Policy, Performance and Partnerships	No



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Head of Service	Not directly, though the former Head of Leisure and Arts was consulted during the course of the review.
Head of Resources	No
Head of Legal, Equalities & Democratic Services	No
Corporate Procurement Team	No

**21. WARDS AFFECTED**

All wards, particularly Abbey ward.

**22. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

National Angling Museum Task and Finish Group – notes from meetings of the Group.

National Angling Museum Task and Finish Group Report – presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 29th July 2009.

Scoping Document – National Angling Museum Task and Finish Group.

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