



LEICESTERSHIRE  
COUNTY COUNCIL

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## **REPORT TO CABINET – 23 APRIL 2002**

### **LEICESTERSHIRE MUSEUMS, ARTS AND RECORDS SERVICE DONINGTON-LE-HEATH MANOR HOUSE: IMPLEMENTATION OF BUDGET DECISION**

#### **REPORT OF THE HEAD OF MUSEUMS**

##### **PART A**

##### **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1. To request approval for changes to the opening hours of Donington-le-Heath Manor House.

##### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

2. To request that members consider the new proposals for opening times.

##### **REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

3. The County Council agreed, as part of its Budget for 2002-2003, a saving of £20,000 for Donington-le-Heath Manor House as a result of 'a review of the current pattern of opening hours and income generation'. That review of opening hours and income generation has now taken place.

##### **TIMETABLE FOR DECISIONS**

4. The savings are effective from 1 April 2002 for a full year, and ongoing.

##### **POLICY FRAMEWORK AND PREVIOUS DECISIONS**

5. This proposal is presented to meet the decision of the County Council Budget meeting on 20 February, and the outcomes of subsequent consultation with local communities and stakeholders.

##### **RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

6. £10,000 will be found from the staffing budget for Donington-le-Heath Manor House (from a budget of £37,219). The savings will be made mainly by reductions to opening hours in the winter months. It is anticipated that the balance of savings (£10,000) can be found from

additional income at Snibston, including the affect of the price increases proposed in a report elsewhere on this agenda.

This report has been prepared in consultation with the County Treasurer.

**CIRCULATION UNDER SENSITIVE ISSUES PROCEDURE**

Mr P. A. Hyde, CC.

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## **PART B**

### **BACKGROUND**

7. Donington-le-Heath Manor House is probably the oldest domestic dwelling in Leicestershire, and possibly in the East Midlands. It is a listed building. Since 1997, the Museums Service has developed the House and the gardens as a whole, focusing particularly on the Tudor period, and enhancing the Barn Tea Room, which is run on a franchise basis. Special events are held monthly at weekends, and at certain other times of the year (e.g. summer holiday activities). (The budget for these in total is £1200 gross in 2001/2). In recent years, the site has attracted 24,000 people approximately per year. The site is free, although voluntary contributions are welcomed.
8. In 1998 the Friends of Donington-le-Heath Manor House (a registered charity) was formed to support the development of the site and to access funding which the County Council is unable to access, in order to enhance the site. To date the Friends have invested c. £2000 approximately in the site (garden furniture, plants etc) and have savings of £4000 which can be made available for further support and development of the site. The Friends fund-raise through subscriptions, special activities (such as cake stalls, tombola and the like) and donations. Because of their charitable status, they have also accessed Awards for All funding (educational resources and costume, garden features) for the Museum (c. £4000 value).
9. The site is popular with school and other educational groups during the Spring and Summer months particularly.

### **SAVINGS PROPOSALS**

10. The situation has been reviewed and the scope for income generation is very limited. It is proposed, therefore, that savings relate to staffing savings.

#### **Opening times**

A review of opening times has been undertaken and the proposals are based on maximising access during the most popular periods of the year. In order to reduce the staffing budget, it is proposed, therefore, to close the site 1 December - end February, excepting weekends, thus enabling weekend opening throughout the year, and the site opened for the peak periods from 1 March - end November.

The daily opening hours would be 11am-5pm summer, 11am-3pm winter (October - March). It is proposed that the special events would be retained throughout the year as at present.

## **Staffing**

11. A change to the rota patterns for the existing staff will need to be put in place and is currently under discussion. The consequences for staff are in the process of being addressed. The gallery assistant posts required for Melton Carnegie Museum from the end of April, provide an opportunity for staff to be transferred. Every effort will be made to avoid redundancy but that may be a possibility.

## **EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS**

12. Since 1997, significant steps have been taken to improve physical access at Donington-le-Heath, particularly for wheel-chair users.

## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

None.