



Arts, Museums & Heritage Forum Newsletter

13 September 2013

GOOD NEWS

I am delighted to report that the development of the new North Hertfordshire Museum and refurbishment of Hitchin Town Hall is now underway. This week saw the award of the Construction Contract, finalisation of the Development Agreement with Hitchin Town Hall Ltd, and purchase of 14 and 15 Brand Street by Hitchin Town Hall Ltd. We hope that work will begin on site in around five weeks time.

I would like to invite you to a meeting of the Arts, Museums & Heritage Forum on Tuesday 1 October, in the Council Chamber, Gernon Road, Letchworth Garden City, at 6.30pm. This is a change from the provisional date of 25th September, as mentioned in the last Newsletter.

At this meeting the NHDC Project Manager Steve Crowley will give an update on the building side of the work, and then the museum fit out designers, Mather & Co., will talk about their ideas for the new museum displays. They will explain the themes that we have chosen for inclusion, and the methods that they could use to interpret our museum objects. Staff from Mather have visited the museums on a number of occasions now, and have a good overview of our collections. From a museum point of view, we all feel that Mather have an excellent understanding of what we would like to see displayed, and the various different ways in which this could be done. They have also met Jo Ward, who consulted with many groups and individuals before writing our Audience Development report, and have incorporated her findings in their initial designs.

The next step on the museum side is to complete the second stage of our Heritage Lottery bid, which will be submitted in November. We are applying for over £800,000, taking the whole bid to just under £1million. Mather & Co's design ideas and strategies will form the basis of this application, together with various museum and audience development documents. Meanwhile conservation cleaning continues apace at both museums, and our two paid interns have now photographed over 8000 items in store at Burymead; a wonderful achievement.

If you have any questions regarding this newsletter, please contact Ros Allwood, Cultural Services Manager on 01462 435197 or ros.allwood@north-herts.gov.uk