

## TEMPORARY EXHIBITION POLICY

July 2009

### 1 Temporary Exhibition Programme

- 1.1 The temporary exhibition programme at Dorset County Museum is intended to reflect the Museum's diverse collections, including geology, natural science, photography, art, archaeology, literature, social history and textiles. The programme is also intended to complement the Dorset County Council Cultural Strategy, striving to improve accessibility and social inclusion, increasing community involvement and creating a strong cultural identity for Dorset. The exhibition programme will normally be planned at least one year in advance with major exhibitions planned up to four years in advance.
- 1.2 Exhibitions at the Museum should aim to fulfil at least two of the following criteria:
- i. attract large numbers of visitors
  - ii. generate income
  - iii. attract new and different audiences to the Museum
  - iv. show items from the Museum's reserve collections
  - v. show a high standard of work
  - vi. be of exceptional quality
  - vii. be accessible to disabled users
- 1.3 Audience development is a key part of the work of the Dorset County Museum and exhibitions should reflect and embrace this. Target audiences include:
- i. members of the Dorset Natural History and Archaeology Society
  - ii. families
  - iii. tourists
  - iv. school groups as KS1-4
  - v. 16 – 25 year olds
  - vi. ethnic minorities
  - vii. social groups as outlined by DCMS
  - viii. academics, researchers and educated amateurs
- 1.4 Each yearly programme will be comprised of approximately four exhibitions, including a mixture of sales exhibitions, loan exhibitions and 'in house' exhibitions curated by Museum staff and volunteers. Each year should include at least one major loan exhibition or "in house" exhibition. These exhibitions should be of a high curatorial standard.
- 1.5 Exhibitions with more popular appeal should be staged during the summer months, ensuring high visitor figures and a consequentially high income. Sales exhibitions, where possible, should involve established artists with a proven track record, unless the standard of the work is particularly high.
- 1.6 A pro-active approach will be taken to planning loan exhibitions or 'in house' exhibitions, ensuring that a broad range of themes is covered, repetition is avoided, and demands on staff time are monitored and minimised.

- 1.7 A range of smaller ‘rapid response’ displays housed within a single exhibition case will also be undertaken. Up to four of these per year will be curated ‘in house’ or in collaboration with local community groups / individuals / organisations to tie in with commemorative dates, newsworthy events, community histories and significant Dorset peoples’ stories.

## **2 Temporary Exhibition Display Space**

- 2.1 The Museum maintains a well equipped modern Temporary Exhibitions Gallery designed by Michael Brawne. This gallery has floor space for displays of up to 1500 square ft. Up to seventy framed works can be hung from steel rods and hooks in the Exhibition Gallery’s 136 ft of wall space. Twenty-eight 4ft wide portable floor set screens are available, by arrangement, to supplement wall-hanging space in the Temporary Exhibition Gallery. Screen-mounted exhibits must be fitted using projecting flat mirror plates and screwed to the screens.
- 2.2 The Victorian Gallery, built as the main Museum Gallery in 1883, is used as a subsidiary exhibition space. A considerable space in the middle of the gallery is available for exhibitions mounted in low free-standing display cases sympathetic with the space.
- 2.3 Smaller display spaces are occasionally available elsewhere in the Museum, most notably in the foyer and entrance hall.

## **3 Temporary Exhibition Committee**

- 3.1 The Temporary Exhibition Committee will be comprised of staff from across the Museum including:

- i. Exhibitions Officer (chairman)
- ii. Director
- iii. Curator
- iv. Learning Officer
- v. Marketing Officer

Other members will include individuals from across the Dorset Natural History and Archaeology Society with a range of expertise across all disciplines, including art, natural sciences, geology, social history and archaeology. The Committee is also entitled to co-opt relevant experts from outside the Society for the duration of individual exhibition projects.

- 3.2 The Temporary Exhibition Committee will meet five times a year:
- i. January – general meeting / selection meeting
  - ii. March/April – meeting to evaluate the previous years’ exhibitions
  - iii. June – general meeting / selection meeting
  - iv. September - pre-budget meeting to agree exhibition costs for following year
  - v. December - post Management Committee meeting to confirm budgets

- 3.3 The development of the future exhibition programme and consideration of exhibition proposals will be standing items on the Temporary Exhibition Committee agenda. Exhibitions generally fall into four categories:
- i. Sales exhibitions (individual)
  - ii. Sales exhibitions (collaborative)
  - iii. Loan exhibitions
  - iv. Internal exhibitions curated by DCM staff and volunteers
- 3.4 Internal exhibition proposals from DCM staff and volunteers should be sent to the Exhibitions Officer who will (as far as is practicable) circulate them to members of the Temporary Exhibition Committee prior to the meeting at which they are to be discussed. Exhibition proposals should be no more than two sides of A4 in length and include:
- i. title
  - ii. key messages
  - iii. synopsis
  - iv. relationship to Dorset / DCM
  - v. target audience
  - vi. samples of work / reserve collections used
  - vii. outline costings
- 3.5 External artists proposing their work for sales exhibitions will be asked to provide a CV, a substantial number of examples or photographs of their work and an exhibition proposal (as outlined in section 3.4). The committee will consider all proposals within the guidelines outlined in section 1.2 – 1.3 of this document and vote on whether or not an exhibition proposal is accepted.
- 3.4 If the exhibition is a sales exhibition a contractual agreement will be drawn up between the artist / artists and the Society outlining the responsibilities of the Museum and the exhibitor. Generally speaking the Museum will undertake the marketing of the exhibition through the usual channels and the staffing of a preview evening. The exhibitor will undertake to insure their exhibits and pay 30% commission (plus VAT) on each exhibit sold.

#### **4 Temporary Exhibition Budgets**

- 4.1 Exhibition budgets will be proposed at the September meeting of the Temporary Exhibition Committee, and taken to the Board of the Society for approval. Any alterations made to these budgets at the full Board meeting will be reported at the December meeting of the Temporary Exhibition Committee.
- 4.2 Each year a sum of money should be set aside in the budget for contingencies. This sum will cover sundry expenses, emergencies and unforeseen expenses.
- 4.3 Budgets for loan exhibitions and 'in house' exhibitions will vary according to the exhibition and will be discussed and agreed by the Temporary Exhibition Committee at their September meeting. Where possible, costs will be kept to a minimum.

## **5 Temporary Exhibition Graphic Style and Access Standards**

5.1 All graphics should be produced using the Arial font as set out in DDA guidelines and follow these guidelines:

- i. Graphic panel text should be no longer than 140 words split broadly over 3 paragraphs. This text should be set at a minimum point size of 36.
- ii. Label text should be a maximum of 30 words in length, set at a minimum point size of 18.

5.2 Text and labels should be written in everyday language, keeping key information in plain English. Essential information in exhibition text must be accessible to all people, some of whom may have difficulty reading English. The maximum reading-age required for labels and graphic panels is 12 years, although this should be reviewed in mind of specific target audiences. In addition the following guidelines should be observed:

- i. Avoid colloquialisms, jargon or technical language, unless such language is explained within the text or in supplementary information.
- ii. Use a simple hierarchy of title, with the key information in the first paragraph, followed by more detailed information, allowing visitors to gather the gist of a story without having to read all of the text.
- iii. Provide illustrations that complement the text. This can aid comprehension for those with reading difficulties.

## **6 Monitoring and Evaluation**

6.1 Monitoring and evaluation of exhibitions is an integral part of the work of the Temporary Exhibitions Committee. Appropriate figures and reports should be sent out with the minutes of the January Temporary Exhibitions Committee meeting to be presented at the March meeting of the Committee.

Performance indicators will include:

- i. visitor numbers
- ii. shop income from related sales
- iii. press cuttings
- iv. comments in the Visitors' Book
- v. success of related events including educational events and school visits
- vi. numbers attending the private view

6.2 It is of primary importance that the Temporary Exhibitions Committee analyses this information and takes appropriate steps to enhance or alter the exhibition programme accordingly.

6.3 The Board of the Society will ensure that evaluation of Temporary Exhibitions takes place and will receive the minutes of the Temporary Exhibitions Committee as part of the monitoring process.

## **7 Policy Review**

7.1 This Policy will be reviewed at least every five years.