

Bishop Bonner's Cottage Museum Mentor Report 2017

To be presented at the AGM Thursday 15th February 2018

Megan Dennis

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The museum has made great progress in the archive move from the Rashes Green industrial unit to the new Archive Room at Dereham Town Council Offices in the centre of the town. This long-awaited move will bring the collection to a more accessible space that also has the benefit of better environmental control and closer relationships with the town council. This positive move has involved hours of preparation and documentation by the archive team and their sterling work on everything from wrapping objects ready for freezing, researching new homes for objects rationalised from the collection and the no-small feat of going through the entire collection stored at Rashes Green to properly document and record it. Well done!

In addition the ongoing application for Accreditation renewal has seen considerable work. Responding to enquiries and updating policies has taken time, but has given the new committee the opportunity to really understand how the museum works and to be more pro-active about maintaining these documents and ensuring they are current and accurate in the future. We await the results of the application shortly.

As always the museum couldn't open without the help and support of a loyal band of volunteers. Many thanks to the team who open the museum regularly and help out at events and the talk programme. One group of volunteers often unrecognised are the committee themselves – all giving of their time freely and often going above and beyond the call of duty. Many thanks to all committee members this year.

The museums website continues to impress – as has digital interpretation generally. Investing in these new forms of engagement are important to every museum big and small and Bishop Bonner's Cottage now has an excellent, up-to-date website complimented by active and interesting social media feeds. It is to be hoped that the conversations and discussions created by these new ventures will in time result in higher visitor figures and volunteer numbers for the museum. These new methods of interpretation are definitely engaging with a wider range of local people and involving them in their local heritage and history – for which the museum is to be admired and congratulated.

We look forward to an exciting new year – and the imminent move of the archive. It will be fabulous to see the collection in the heart of Dereham once again, closer to the museum and researchers and visitors.