

## Factsheet

June 2024

# Council's new Heritage Marlborough programme and withdrawal from Marlborough Museum, Brayshaw Heritage Park

## What is the background to this decision?

In March 2021, Council contracted Jim Crichton to conduct a review of the Marlborough Heritage Trust. The final report recommended that:

- a) The Marlborough Heritage Trust be disestablished;
- b) The Museum operation be enfolded into the wider Council organisation;
- c) The Council use its best endeavours to re-site the Museum facility within the CBD;
- d) The Council accept that some archive/storage facility may continue to be required away from the predominant Museum site and that archive/storage may continue to occupy a site at Brayshaw Park;
- e) Whatever the continued use of Brayshaw Heritage Park, the Council should seek to regularise the underlying designation of the land on which Brayshaw Heritage Park sits as it is two titles, one owned by the Crown and one by the Council;
- f) The Council should engage with the MHS to acquire, on behalf of the community, all the Museum collection which remains in the ownership of the society.

On 30 June 2023, Marlborough Heritage Trust ceased trading and from 1 July 2023, Council assumed the following:

- Ownership of the Edwin Fox Maritime Museum collection
- Site lease in Picton with landlord Port Marlborough
- The other assets of the Marlborough Heritage Trust which includes various assets used to run the museum and the Trusts collection, which consist of both objects and archives.
- Operational management of the Marlborough Museum, archives, Beavertown and Cob Cottage at Riverlands.

Approximately 90% of the object collection and 60% of the archival collection was owned by MHS but under the guardianship of MHT. Ownership remained with MHS and the guardianship transferred to Council.

The Marlborough Heritage Trust deed prevented it from transferring the museum building, Beavertown and Cob Cottage to Council ownership. They could however transfer the ownership to the Marlborough Historical Society. Initially the Council had a verbal agreement that the ownership would be transferred from MHT to MHS and then Council in a back-to-back transaction.

Initially, Council managed the museum on an interim basis while a memorandum of understanding was negotiated for building occupancy and collections management. Negotiations stalled in September 2023 when the MHS voted in a new committee at their AGM. Subsequently, the new committee rejected all negotiations to date, and Council had to begin again from scratch. In January 2024, MHT transferred ownership of the museum buildings, Beavertown and Cob Cottage back to MHS without MHS completing the back-to-back transfer to Council ownership.

Since then, Council has attempted to negotiate with MHS to secure a lease or ownership of the museum building.

In May, the MHS submitted to the Council's Long-Term Plan 2023-2024 asking it to:

- Establish an operating expenditure budget for Council occupation of the Museum for a period not exceeding three years;
- Within that three years ensure a capital sum (loan or reserves) is provided for purchase of the Marlborough Museum and the archives building at fair market value;
- Create a true partnership with the MHS to operate and develop both the Museum and the community heritage collection within. This included removal of Council direct management which would be replaced with a governance board, much like the trust model.
- Work towards making the Museum, Beavertown and Brayshaw Heritage Park a lively living family attraction that celebrates Marlborough's unique heritage in a way the whole community can share and be proud of.

In June 2024, MHS gave a verbal presentation to the LTP Special Hearing Committee asking council staff to vacate the premises and hand management of the museum to MHS. This request had not been mentioned in a recent negotiation meeting, with Council believing that MHS were prepared to lease the building to the Council for two terms of three years. This option was not placed before MHS members or formally agreed to at a MHS membership meeting.

#### **What improvements have been carried out on behalf of MHS by Council staff over the past year?**

- An audit of collections housed in the museum building - all objects now have a location and can be easily found.
- Repacking of some of the collection to make it less vulnerable to earthquakes.
- Re-boxing of archives, starting with those in the most damaged boxes.
- Refreshed and opened up the reception area.
- A complete tidy up and reorganisation of work areas so that we can work in an uncluttered space and are able to find the tools we need.
- Audit of library and reorganisation so that the books use a recognised system of cataloguing and can therefore be easily found.
- Hosted new exhibitions including Home Front Heroes and Peg Moorhouse - A Life in Colour
- Developed a new volunteer programme and Museums Out Loud speaker series.

#### **What will the new Heritage Marlborough programme include?**

- Development of an education programme that supports the Aotearoa New Zealand Histories Curriculum, in anticipation of applying to the Ministry of Education in their next ELOC funding round.
- Developing a Museum Without Walls programme (pop up exhibitions in vacant town centre spaces to support CBD revitalisation).
- Provide industry workshops and learning opportunities such as the recent eHive workshop.
- A focus on heritage sites and trails which need updating, and support iwi with the protection of wahi tapu sites.
- Host online exhibitions.
- Build an oral histories collection and work towards a more diverse heritage collection
- Development of a new heritage strategy, working collaboratively with iwi and all our partners in the heritage sector.

- Develop the Council-owned Edwin Fox Museum into a world class maritime museum and visitor destination.

**Which regional museums will Heritage Marlborough be able to assist, at their request?**

- Picton Heritage and Whaling Museum
- Renwick Museum
- Havelock Museum
- Flaxbourne Heritage Centre
- Marlborough Museum
- Omaka Aviation Heritage Centre
- Edwin Fox Museum (Council owned)

ENDS.