



**B A R N E T**  
**MUSEUM**  
**& Local History Society**  
**STRATEGY PAPER 2015-2017**  
**2016 update**



# **BARNET MUSEUM & LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY**

## **Strategy Paper 2015 -2017 – update 2016**

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

This document outlines the strategic direction for Barnet Museum & Local History Society (“BMLHS”, “The Museum”, The Society”).

BMLHS is a charity registered with the Charity Commission (no. 295950), with a largely local, but by no means exclusive, membership of over 300.

### **2. WHY? - OUR VISION**

Since 1938, the Trustees and volunteers of the Barnet Museum & Local History Society (BMLHS), supported by eminent citizens (including local Members of Parliament) and locally elected representatives (from Hertfordshire County Council, the former Barnet Urban District Council and, since 1965, the London Borough of Barnet), deliver a local history Museum and local history society:

- to inspire an interest, understanding and appreciation of the history and rich heritage of Chipping Barnet, East Barnet, New Barnet and the immediate vicinity (“Barnet”);
- to record and explain the impact of Barnet on, and to, its community and beyond;
- to celebrate the historic contributions made by the people and organisations of Barnet.

### **3. WHAT? - HERITAGE ASSETS**

BMLHS comprises three groups of Heritage Assets:

- the Collection, donated by and held in trust for the community and citizens of Barnet;
- Intellectual Capital, that is, the knowledge, skills and disciplines of the Trustees, volunteers and members of the Museum and History Society;
- 31 Wood Street – the Museum Building, itself a part of the collection by dint of its central location, age, conservation area status, integrated Museum facilities (e.g. archive racking, display equipment, library), and historical connection with BMLHS.

### **4. HOW? - OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVES**

- To collect, catalogue and conserve artefacts, documents, maps and photographs *etc* pertaining to the history and development of Barnet and the surrounding district;
- To interpret and research the collection;
- To offer the collection to the public through permanent display, temporary exhibitions, lectures, publications, events and outreach programme, online presentation and responding to requests for information from the citizens of Barnet town, the Borough of Barnet and the County of Hertfordshire, and to a national and international audience.

## 5. SUCCESS INDICATORS

BMLHS looks for success to be an ongoing, rather than a finite, aim. The Society fills a gap in the cultural and heritage life of the town of Barnet; therefore indicators of success include:

- the continued survival of the Museum and Society as key aspects of Barnet life;
- the maintenance of the BMLHS's reputation for the recording, conservation and care of heritage assets (evidenced by ongoing Museums, Libraries & Archives Council accreditation and completeness of catalogue);
- the maintenance of the schools/education/work experience offer (evidenced by uptake and feedback);
- the development of membership and the volunteer cadre (evidenced by year-on-year comparison);
- the maintenance of the Museum's reputation for scholarly research (evidenced by feedback and published work);
- the maintenance (and, where manageable, expansion) of visitor numbers (evidenced by daily tallies, and web hits);
- the maintenance of a strong internet and social media presence (evidenced by web hits and Facebook/blog responses);
- the maintenance and development of relationships with local businesses, press and media and other organisations (evidenced by contacts and media success);
- continuing enhancement of the visitor experience and the maintenance of the Museum's reputation for assisting visitors (evidenced by feedback, media success and ongoing MLA accreditation).

The above indicators are the topics reported to and reviewed by the Trustees to gauge the success of the Museum and inform continuous improvement.

Crude or simple indicators, such as visitor numbers or cost per visitor, are important but the Museum's focus is on the quality of service. The relatively small size of the Museum and the limits of a volunteer workforce dictate that any growth must be carefully managed.

Apart from the ongoing activities of the Museum, which are monitored by the above success indicators and are only subject to marginal change in year, the Museum is also involved in five specific "projects". These are: (i) Registered Museum Accreditation; (ii) Extension to the Premises; (iii) Security of Tenure (Lease/Asset Transfer); (iv) The Battle of Barnet Project; (v) The Physic Well. Each of these has its own project team and is reported on to the Management Committee. In this document these projects are featured in italics, in text boxes.

## 6. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

As a window to the town and its people, BMLHS prides itself on its openness to and acceptance of all. BMLHS's policy on diversity and equality of opportunity is that each and every individual involved with the Society (Trustee, volunteer, visitor etc) has the right to be treated with respect and dignity and that each and every individual involved with the Society also has the responsibility to treat others with respect and dignity.

## 7. GOVERNANCE

BMLHS is staffed entirely by volunteers. It is registered with the Charity Commission (no. 295950).

<b>HONORARY PRESIDENT</b>	Dr Ian Johnson
<b>HONORARY VICE PRESIDENTS</b>	Mike Jordan, Pat Alison, Brian Green, Peter Willcocks
<b>TRUSTEES</b>	Mike Jordan (Chairman), Terence Atkins, Mike Noronha, Carla Herrmann, Dennis Bird, Pat Alison

The Management Committee and Volunteer responsibilities are listed in a separate annex (held privately for Data Protection reasons)

All volunteers receive training to equip them to deliver Museum services; the Museum is a member of the National Council of Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) and CommUNITY Barnet, and has access to support from them in managing and developing staff. The Museum staff have achieved the appropriate CRB and other clearances to work with children and vulnerable adults. The Museum holds the requisite insurance certificates for Employer's and Public (e.g. Health and Safety) liabilities.

BMLHS is affiliated to:

- the Association of Independent Museums (AIM);
- Arts Council (through the Museum of London);
- British Association for Local History;
- London and Middlesex Archaeological Society;
- Hertfordshire Association for Local History (HALH);
- Hendon and District Archaeological Society (HADAS);
- Action for Archives;
- Barnet Arts Council.

In addition, the Museum works with:

- The Barnet Society;
- Barnet Residents' Association;
- East Barnet Residents' Association;
- Potters Bar Local History Society;
- Friern Barnet Local History Society;
- Museum of London;
- The Battlefields Trust;
- London Museum of Film;
- Hertfordshire Archive and Local Studies Centre (HALS);
- Hertfordshire University;
- University of the Third Age (U3A);
- Cambridge University;
- University of Huddersfield (battlefield research).

## **8. ACCREDITATION**

*In 2010 the Museum achieved full accreditation under the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA) Accreditation Scheme (Acc no.6 – 30/07/2009). MLA's Accreditation Scheme sets nationally agreed professional standards for museums in the UK. As stated above, accreditation covers both the “technical” aspects of Museum work (e.g. recording, care and conservation of heritage assets) and the “customer” aspects (e.g. delivery of the service, including the provision of adequate facilities for health and safety etc for visitors.) The Museum will be looking to renew its Accreditation when it lapses in 2015/16.*

*Barnet Museum has also been designated as a suitable venue to hold Manorial records by The National Archives.*

*Barnet Museum is a key location for research and interpretation of the Battle of Barnet, liaising closely with the Battlefields Trust, and Barnet Society (“The Battle of Barnet Partnership”) and the University of Huddersfield. With the recent discovery of the skeleton of Richard III (who fought at the Battle as an 18 year old) there is now worldwide interest in the Wars of the Roses period.*

## **9. ENVIRONMENT**

The Museum is housed in a Georgian house within the Wood Street Conservation Area. Therefore any adaptations to the building must, rightly, be carried out within strict conservation guidelines. This will limit the options available to the Museum when considering environmental issues. For example, energy saving actions such as double glazing and solar panels are not easily available. However BMLHS does take seriously its environmental responsibilities. The Trustees have appointed a Recycling Officer; heating systems will be reviewed (the Museum will be joining the AIM “Basket” in 2018); where possible low energy lightbulbs will be used; when new windows are fitted, insulation will be a major consideration; solar panels are being investigated but their installation awaits an environmental and roof condition survey; new hygrometers have been purchased so that atmospheric conditions can be monitored (this will inform the heating review and also help conserve the collection). The Management Committee will review these environmental matters regularly.

## **10. OPTIONS FOR FUTURE**

In 2011 BMLHS, under the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act, requested sight and copies of all Barnet Council documents relating to the 31 Wood Street property especially those dealing with ownership and BMLHS occupation. There were no documents confirming the true ownership of the building (which was apparently bought by Barnet Urban District Council for Barnet Records Society – a former name of BMLHS – to run a museum “in perpetuity” on behalf of Hertfordshire County Council). The UDC became part of Barnet Council in 1965. Also absent from the documents released by Barnet Council was any covenant requiring the building to be used as a museum, however there were documents implying the existence of such a covenant. The Museum discovered that, in 2013, Barnet Council registered the property with the Land Registry without consulting the Museum or registering the Museum’s interest (BMLHS is pursuing this with our legal advisor)

There are two options for future operation of BMLHS that the Trustees would like to see considered by the Council. Previously, when presented with similar options, the Council quoted Section 123 of the Local Government Act 1972 as a reason for not proceeding with either of these options; the

Council claimed that it is forbidden to “dispose” of the asset at an “undervalue”. This was erroneous in two respects – first, the Council could have made a request to the Secretary of State and second (and more appropriately), a 2004 Statutory Instrument allowed the Council to make its own decision on “undervalues” of less than £2million.

Either option would lead to developments of the Museum that will enhance the value of the 31 Wood Street to the community (e.g. installation of disabled access/facilities, extension, better use of energy, damp-proofing, solar panels etc) and that the costs of these developments would not fall to the Council.

## **Enhancement of Assets**

### **Option 1 - Community Asset Transfer**

*The Trustees propose that **ownership of 31 Wood Street property (including a portion of the Museum Garden) be formally transferred to BMLHS under the provisions of the Community Asset Transfer Initiative** - whereby public sector property holdings are transferred to community ownership - ownership responsibilities pass to community groups with the consequent reduction of costs to the public purse. This option is encouraged and facilitated by the Localism Act which now replaces the Local Government Act in this matter. It is also a clear implementation of national Government policy. Whereas this option compared with a lease makes little substantial difference to the management of the Museum, it has the advantage to the Council of ending any involvement (and therefore the cost of any involvement) with the Museum. Conversely the Council may consider it a disadvantage to lose the building from its portfolio of fixed assets. In our opinion, BMLHS clearly meets all the criteria set out for an appropriate “community organisation” to receive an asset transfer.*

### **Option 2 - A Lease**

*An alternative proposal is that **BMLHS seeks a long-term lease (say, 99 years) on 31 Wood Street property at a peppercorn rent.***

*A lease at anything other than a peppercorn rent is not feasible given the Museum's limited potential for generating significant trading income. **It is Museum policy, enshrined in the earliest terms of service, that the Museum will not charge for entry.** The building is not large enough and does not have adequate facilities to enable the Museum to run major income generating events, such as conferences or contributing businesses such as a cafeteria or a substantial shop.*

*A long-term lease is essential. In order to meet the Council's requirement that Barnet Museum is run at zero cost to the Council taxpayer, the Museum will have to raise funds from other sources in the public, private and tertiary sectors for both running and capital/project costs. The Museum will therefore **need to demonstrate security of tenure.** It has been established that funding (especially for capital work such as the installation of disabled facilities) is available but only if the longer term future of the Museum is guaranteed. For example, the Heritage Lottery Fund will not consider applications from organisations without long lease security.*

*The lease option allows the Council to retain the building on its portfolio as an asset – however, this is with the attendant costs of administration.*

## 11. FINANCE

### *Income*

BMLHS has five main sources of income – membership subscriptions; sales (mainly of publications and photographs); fundraising events (eg tea parties, quizzes etc); donations (including speaking fees and smaller scale donations from visitors and members) and grants.

**The Museum has secured, through a local charitable trust, substantive assurances that, if long term arrangements are in place, funds will be granted annually to meet the shortfall between the amount raised by the BMLHS and its running costs – this offer specifically excludes, as an eligible “running cost”, the payment of any rent charged by the Council .**

This arrangement has been in operation since Financial Year 2012-13.

### *Expenditure*

By decision of the Trustees and Management Committee fully supported by the membership, BMLHS does not and will not include any market rent payment in its plans . The understanding that the Society will provide a Museum service in exchange for free use of the Wood Street premises has pertained since the opening of the Museum in 1938.

Regardless of rent, BMLHS has a number of running costs all of which, since 2012 (when LBB declared that the Museum would have to be “zero cost to the Council Taxpayer”), have fallen to the Society to meet. The main running costs are: Business Rate (at 80% charity discount); insurance; utilities; alarm/security; telephone/internet. The Museum also has to bear the costs of caring and conserving the collection to accreditation standards. The Council has discretion to waive the 20% Rate altogether; Barnet Council has declined to do so.

### *Charging for entry*

When the Museum was first opened in 1938, the Barnet Record Society (the original name of BMLHS) agreed with the Local Authority that it would provide a Museum service in exchange for the provision of the fully serviced building “in perpetuity”. The vision was then, as it is now, that local citizens would have free access to a collection held in trust for them by the Society. **It is, therefore, a non-negotiable BMLHS policy to allow free public access to the Museum during published opening times.** There is evidence that charging in a local Museum will act as a deterrent to casual visitors without raising significant cash (eg Redbourn Museum in Hertfordshire unsuccessfully trialled charging)

Similarly, the Museum will not charge for school visits (which are carried out when the Museum is closed to the public) – however, many schools offer donations which are gratefully received.

Most other group activities that take place during closed sessions are not charged for. However, donations are invariably made when groups visit. Levying a charge has been considered but the donations have proved a more effective source of income, in terms of both amount and administration.

The Museum runs some events for a small charge. Although the amounts raised are welcome and useful, the main aim of the Museum remains raising awareness - the levels of interest and knowledge in the community.

### *Fundraising*

The Trustees are aware that considerable and constant fund-raising will be required in the future. Several local fund-raising initiatives have been implemented. The Museum has been selected as the local Waitrose's charity of the month three times and will apply for further opportunities. We have held quizzes at local pubs, and three “Tea in the Park” parties. These occasions/events raise in the region of £250 to £500 net each and are a useful contribution to running costs and raising

awareness. The Museum received a £500 grant from the Hyde Foundation in 2015 to enhance the Photograph Collection storage.

### ***Funding for capital projects***

Previously without security of tenure, the Museum has not qualified for funding from a number of sources; these include public sector funding (e.g. Heritage Lottery Funding), charitable trusts and some private donors. However, with either an asset transfer or a long lease the Museum will be in a much stronger position to access third-party funds.

An application for capital funding for disabled access (lift and ramp) will be considered. The Museum has asked for a disability access assessment by the Council (not yet actioned by LBB) and will make every effort to comply with its recommendations. Consideration will be given to a number of capital projects that may need to be undertaken following the results of a structural survey.

The Trustees have a number of plans for the Museum to expand its promotional activities. However, without a lease or the transfer of the building – and the goodwill of the Council – these plans remain on hold.

## **12. BARNET MUSEUM'S CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE COMMUNITY**

### ***Contribution to the Community***

#### ***(i) Notional Pay Cost of Service (Salary element only)***

BMLHS is managed and run entirely by volunteers; therefore there are no staff salary costs. Based on a mix of plain-time payments at London Living Wage (approx £8ph) for volunteers and senior National Museum staff/management rates (approx £25ph) for others, the labour cost saved by using a totally voluntary staff is estimated at some £116,500 per annum. The Museum has a cadre of some 50 volunteers covering a wide range of roles – for example, many are allocated research and administration tasks which are continuously being carried out.

#### **Notional Pay Calculation**

<b>Officer</b>	<b>No of Hours</b>	<b>@ £/hr rate</b>	<b>£Total</b>
Chief Executive	10hrs	25	250
Archivist	20hrs	25	500
Volunteers	6 x 10hrs	8	480
Treasurer	20hrs	25	500
Web/other mgt	10hrs	25	250
School guide	4hrs	25	100
Curator	10hrs	25	250
	<b>WEEK TOTAL</b>		<b>2330</b>
	<b>ANNUAL TOTAL</b>		<b>116500</b>

## **Contribution to the Community**

### **(ii) Estimated Economic Impact**

The Association of Independent Museums' (AIM) has developed an Economic Impact Toolkit (using HM Treasury ready reckoner indicators and methodologies for assessing tourism, employment and procurement). According to this toolkit, Barnet Museum brings an estimated economic benefit of over £182,110 pa to the area. This is based on visitor figures of 5000 pa of whom 80% are adults. (Source: AIM/DC Research: 2014 Economic Value of the Independent Museum Sector Toolkit).

2008 audience research (last available) shows that the Barnet catchment had **266,000** active and potential visitors to museums and galleries - this compared with 226,000 in Enfield; 205,000 in Haringey; 171,000 in Waltham Forest; 204,000 in Brent; 166,000 in Harrow (Source: MLA "Insight: A survey of the London museums market").

BMLHS's position is that there is **educational and cultural significance** in researching, understanding and celebrating history; we also believe that the **economy of Barnet will benefit** greatly from investment and support in promoting its heritage. This view is evidenced by the success of Bosworth (Battle), Leicester (Richard III) and Tewkesbury (Battle) – all of which share the similar tourist/academic interests as Barnet. It is arguable that the combined topics around the Battle of Barnet are of even greater interest (Wars of the Roses/Military and weaponry history/monarchy/Richard III). Barnet Society, The Battlefields Trust, the local Member of Parliament, the Councillors for Underhill (The Museum's ward), the Chipping Barnet Town Team, the Mayor of Barnet (Cllr Shooter) have all expressed support for promotion of Barnet's heritage and particularly the Battle of Barnet.

## **Contribution to the Community**

### **(iii) Enhancement of Community Asset – Extending the Museum Building**

*The formal transfer of 31 Wood Street property to the Museum, whether by asset transfer or long lease, would maintain its status as a community asset. The Museum intends a number of improvements in the service it delivers to the public. Many of these improvements will involve updating, refurbishing and repairing the infrastructure of the property. Furthermore, the installation of disabled access and an extension of the premises is now in planning stages. The proposal extends the three floors of the Museum for three specific purposes and two overarching reasons.*

#### **Specifically:**

**Extending the Basement** will give more conservation and storage space;

**Extending the Ground Floor** will give more exhibition and display space;

**Extending the First Floor** will give more room for research and education work.

The two **overarching reasons** are:

First, so that the Museum can install **Disabled Access**; this is key to our application; **we are ashamed and embarrassed that we have to discriminate against people with mobility issues.**

Secondly, to provide the people of Barnet with a **top class Museum** that meets growing demand especially from schools now that **local history is on the National Curriculum.**

*It is intended that these improvements will be funded by grants from relevant private, public and tertiary sector (e.g Heritage Lottery Fund, charitable trusts etc) sources. These proposed improvements will enhance the value of, and access to, a community asset thereby contributing to the ongoing attraction of Barnet. Furthermore, the property has already benefitted from enhancements using funds raised by BMLHS; for example, the basement archive store has been fitted with up-to-date mobile shelving, entirely funded through donations.*

## **Contribution to the Community**

### **(iv) Education**

As well as hosting visits by groups of schoolchildren and other groups, the Museum holds sessions for local schools, particularly Key Stages 1 and 2 schoolchildren, using material devised by BMLHS members. The schools which have visited the Museum and which we have worked with and visited, include:

St Andrews Totteridge	Christ Church	St Mary's
Underhill	Christ's College Finchley	Livingstone
Whitings Hill	Pardes House	Totteridge Academy
All Saints	Tudor School	Friern Barnet
Cromer Road	QE Boys	Hollickwood
Moss Hall	QE Girls	East Barnet
Barnet Hill	Monken Hadley	Susi Earnshaw Theatre
Foulds	Sacred Heart	School
St Martha's Convent – Junior and Senior	St Catherine's	Wren Academy
Barnet College	Goodwyn	Danegrove
	Grasvenor	

The Museum's involvement in local education also includes close working with the University of the Third Age (U3A), Women's Institute (Totteridge, High Barnet, Hadley), Christ Church Fellowship, Underhill Baptist Fellowship, Cherry Lodge Cancer Support, St John the Baptist's Church, Scouts/ Guides/Brownies/Cubs/Beavers groups and Community Focus. The Museum also participates in work placement programmes giving opportunities for local students.

## **Contribution to the Community**

### **(v) Battle of Barnet**

*A major recent development is growth in interest in the Wars of the Roses. This has been largely due to popular novels and television programmes and the exhumation in 2013 of the skeleton of Richard III and inclusion in the school curriculum. The Battle of Barnet was a key battle in the Wars of the Roses and research into it has grown. This interest is a huge opportunity for the Barnet area – military historians, mediaevalists and tourists can bring economic and educational benefits. Barnet Museum is part of a project management team (with University of Huddersfield, Barnet Society and the Battlefields Trust) proposing a full archaeological investigation of the potential battlefield site. Supported and encouraged by the local MP (the Rt Hon Theresa Villiers MP), the Mayor of Barnet (Cllr Mark Shooter) our local (Underhill) Councillors and the Chipping Barnet Town Team, Barnet Museum is formally representing the local community. The Museum is committed to providing administrative support, storage, display space and **the interpretative centre** for the findings of this major project. The project will bring much history and tourism related activity to Barnet and the Museum. Finds processing at the Museum started in late 2015 and will continue for the duration of the archaeological investigation.*

## **Contribution to the Community**

### **(vi) The Physic Well**

*The Physic (or Pepys) Well is a key historical feature of the locality. It has a long and interesting history including visits from diarist Samuel Pepys. The Well and its mock-Tudor housing are protected by various Conservation listings and are owned by the people of Barnet (London Borough of Barnet). The housing is in a state of disrepair but the well itself is in good condition. The Museum has a set of keys to the building (it is kept locked closed) and has conducted a number of viewings of the Well for local residents and interested groups in 2015. The Museum will continue to do this but will also be actively pursuing the authorities and others to try to have the housing repaired (at least weatherproofed).*

## **13. RISK ANALYSIS AND MITIGATION**

### **Financial Risk**

A key risk to Barnet Museum's proposals for a capital asset transfer/long lease is financial - that the Museum could be unable to sustain its existence financially once a transfer is realised.

In mitigation, the Museum has made considerable savings on current running costs as stated by LBB in the December 2010 consultation; LBB costs included overheads which did not apply to the Museum. Also, as stated above, the Museum has secured long-term financing commitments from external sources which have met and will meet any running cost shortfalls. Furthermore, there are no staffing costs as the Museum is run entirely by volunteers. The collection is already entirely owned by the BMLHS and therefore there is no extra cost implication in a transfer. Also a key mitigation is that any transfer agreement could be drafted in such a way that, should Barnet Museum fail, the property would revert to the Council.

### **Organisational and Operational Risk**

Two other risks to the future of BMLHS are organisational – that the Museum does not have the structure or support to maintain and manage itself or to accept the transfer of the building; and operational – that the Museum does not have the skills and competences to deliver a museum service.

Organisational and operational risks are mitigated by the quality and experience of its Trustees and volunteers who have the necessary range of competences to manage an independent Museum. The management of the Museum has a wide and deep range of appropriate experience, knowledge, skills and disciplines.

The Museum is registered as a charity and therefore has an established organisational status and governance structure to receive any transfer; the rules of the BMLHS, lodged with the Charities Commission do not preclude or prevent the Society from accepting the transfer. The Museum is a member of CommUNITY Barnet and the National Council of Voluntary Organisations and, as such, has access to their support, advice and assistance.

The Museum has attained Arts Council accreditation which confirms compliance with stringent professional and operational requirements. The ongoing work needed to maintain the

accreditation (which is externally and independently verified) mitigates the risk of operational failure.

## 14. SWOT ANALYSIS

### **Strengths**

- a BMLHS is an established community service provider with an eighty year, successful, track record;
- b There is no staffing cost as the Museum is run entirely by volunteers - a very clear example of 'the Big Society' community-based vision;
- c The Museum is rooted deeply in the local community and is very popular (as evidence, note the petitions drawn up in support of the Museum and Visitor Book comments);
- d The Museum is registered as a charity and therefore has an established organisational status and governance structure to receive any transfer;
- e The Museum has Arts Council accreditation which confirms that the Museum complies with stringent professional and operational requirements;
- f The collection is entirely owned by the BMLHS and therefore there is no extra cost implication in a transfer;
- g The Museum has access to a unique level of intellectual capital (in terms of experts, artefacts and documents) in the field of Barnet history;
- h In terms of location, 31 Wood Street is central to its target area and accessible by all forms of transport, the building is a source of local identity and pride, helping to maintain the fabric and uniqueness of the historic town of Barnet;
- i The Museum has an established online presence ([www.barnetmuseum.co.uk](http://www.barnetmuseum.co.uk) and on Facebook – [www.facebook.com/barnetmuseum](http://www.facebook.com/barnetmuseum));
- j Analysis shows that Barnet Museum has attracted visitors, web-hits and interest from around the world.

### **Weaknesses**

- a The Museum is a not-for-profit organisation with clear terms of reference which preclude trading activities likely to earn significant funds;
- b The Museum's small size and inability to diversify make it more vulnerable to external factors such as the downturn in the economy;
- c donations from its members and benefactors are also vulnerable to external economic factors;
- d The building is always likely to need a higher level of maintenance due to age
- e The Museum will need to provide disabled access;
- f The Museum is new to the field of local fund-raising (although help is available through MLA, CommUNITY Barnet, AIM and NCVO);
- g The Museum will need to expand its marketing and promotional activity;
- h The small size and voluntary nature of the workforce means that there is a great deal of reliance placed on individuals with experience and expertise. It is difficult to plan succession in these instances. The Trustees are aware of this and therefore keep aware of the longer term development potential of current staff and of new recruits.

### **Opportunities**

- a Having control over the Museum's running costs will give the Trustees the scope to make savings on various items (e.g. through energy audits and some discretionary expenditure);
- b It is intended that governance arrangements will be recast to embed the Museum in the community (e.g. through CIO incorporation)
- c With security of tenure there would be a wider choice of direct fund-raising sources (e.g. Heritage Lottery funding);
- d Greater control of the building will allow the Museum to continue to develop its services to the community, through different use of some space, holding small lectures, developing its school/group visit programme etc.;
- e The Council's Consultation Document states that Museum funding in 2010 from the Borough was approximately £28K. Transfer of the building will enable the Council to save this sum (indexed) annually;
- f Such a transfer would be good publicity for Barnet Council as this is a clear example of 'Big Society' community-based activity;
- g Proposed improvements to the Museum's service will also enhance the overall value of the building as a heritage asset.

### **Threats**

- a There may be building maintenance issues which would involve excessive costs; as the building is in the Wood Street Conservation Area this restricts what can be done in the way of extensions/alterations;
- b There is a great deal of work involved in maintaining Arts Council accreditation and sustainability of curatorial expertise that will always be a priority for a small Museum. However, this is the case regardless of ownership/tenancy of the building;
- c Should the Museum have to close, the collection – given freely by the citizens of Barnet over nearly eighty years and for which the Museum has a duty of trust - will be too costly to put into long-term storage. There are over 50,000 items. The consequence will be that the collection will be dispersed and never be assembled again. This will permanently deprive the community of an asset that illustrates their history and identity and which is much loved, much appreciated and much used.

## **15. CONCLUSION**

The community has been extremely supportive in its response to campaigns to secure Barnet Museum's future. The membership of BMLHS, which includes residents of all backgrounds has grown, as have visitor numbers. A quote from a petition in support of the Museum summarises the rationale behind this paper:

***“This Museum is vital to the identity and culture of this town”***

**This document has been approved by**

**The Trustees of Barnet Museum and Local History Society**

**(Signed):** *Mike Jordan, Chairman* 18th January 2016