

Report on alteration to the Opening Hours of Epping Forest District Museum

1. Currently the Epping Forest District Museum has public opening hours of;

Monday 2-5 pm
Tuesday 12-5pm
Friday 2-5pm
Saturday 10 -5 pm
and seasonal Sunday openings of 2-5pm (May to September)

Two 'front of house' staff are employed to invigilate the galleries and the reception/ sales area during week days when there are normally additional staff in the building to support. At weekends there is a duty officer and three 'front of house' staff members to invigilate on Saturdays.

Members of the public find the opening hours confusing. The Museum shares a common entrance with the library service and although Museum opening hours are advertised, the library staff continuously receives enquiries from people who have dropped in hoping to visit but find the Museum closed.

Throughout the year Saturday attracts the most visitors and we extended the opening hours on this day while closing on Sunday afternoons in the winter months as part of an opening hours review which took place in 2000.

Seasonal Sunday opening 2 - 5 pm has always required additional effort by the Museum to attract an audience, as the Museum is the only building open within the town centre open on Sunday afternoons. The extension of weekday opening hours will provide increased access at times that are more suited to service users.

2. The proposed new opening hours for the Museum from 1st February 2012 are;

Monday 10 - 4 pm

Tuesday 10 – 4 pm

Friday 10 – 4 pm

Saturday 10 – 5 pm

The Museum will cease to operate the seasonal Sunday openings.

During the week one member of front of house staff will be based at the Epping Forest District Museum and one member of staff will be based at

Lowewood to cover the public opening hours. These staff members and the Site duty Officers will be supported by body of volunteer gallery assistants.

On Saturdays there will be two members of front of house staff based at the Epping Forest District Museum and one based at Lowewood supported by Volunteer assistants. A duty Officer will operate between both venues.

3. The additional weekday opening hours will be funded through the re-rostering of weekday staff hours, the re-deployment of the seasonal Sunday hours, funding from the agreement to operate the Lowewood Museum for Broxbourne Borough Council, aligning the opening hours of both Museums will make it easier to roster staff between the two buildings.
4. While staff will be required to work across both sites. A body of volunteers already exists supporting the work off both museums and Epping Forest District Museum is currently expanding the opportunities for volunteer and work placement staff to support the core Museum team in a range of Museum functions from visitor services to collections care.
5. It is envisaged that there will be some saving in energy and overtime and mileage payments resulting from these changes.
6. These changes have been discussed with the staff affected all of whom are in agreement with the proposals