



Press Release – Embargoed until 1500hrs 20/09/2024

Board of Trustees vote to fight on

Essex, September 20th, 2024: The Board of Trustees of Stow Maries Great War Aerodrome have made a difficult but brave decision about the future of the museum and the Charity that operates it.

The museum, located between Chelmsford and Maldon, has seen rising costs and lower-than-usual visitor numbers in 2024, largely due to closures on their main access road. With no funding from any authority, the Charity relies almost exclusively on visitors to cover the costs of operating.

Faced with ever decreasing financial reserves, the Board of Trustees have met to discuss the future of the museum, specifically for 2025. In doing so, the Trustees have remained conscious of the fact that they are accountable to the Charity Commission, a national body that is responsible for making sure that all charities operate competently.

Faced with the potential loss of the nationally important heritage site, the Trustees have voted unanimously to remain open, committing to battle on and save the site.

Chair of Trustees, Martyn Gill, said,

“We have received some excellent advice from the Hertiage Lottery Fund’s business consultant, as well as examined every possible expense we face. Following hours of work by the leadership team, the Board were able to face some very difficult decisions with clarity and understanding. I am very happy indeed that the museum will remain open for the remainder of 2024, as well as reopening in Spring 2025.”

The Trustees have acknowledged that there is a lot of work to do to progress - but are committed to the future of the museum.

Mr Gill continued,

“We will be making more announcements in due course. These will give an overview of the steps we plan to take to secure the future of the museum. We have a great deal of work to do to get us out of the woods, but if we get the support we need, we believe it is achievable.”

To grab tickets for any upcoming events at the museum, visit www.stowmaries.org.uk/events

For details of how to visit the site, or to donate to their funds, go to www.stowmaries.org.uk

Ends

Further information from CEO Ian Flint on ian.flint@stowmaries.org.uk

Notes for editors:

- Stow Maries Great War Aerodrome, Hackman’s Lane, Purleigh, CM3 6RN is open from 10am until 4pm, on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays. To check out their packed events programme or to make a donation to their survival, visit www.stowmaries.org.uk

- A campaign to save the site in 2012 led to its purchase, following a generous grant from the Heritage Memorial Fund. It was placed in the care of Stow Maries Great War Aerodrome, a registered Charity.
- Today the museum, still an operational airfield, is supported and maintained by over 100 volunteers.
- More information about Stow Maries Great War Aerodrome can be found at www.stowmaries.org.uk
- Images Credit: SMGWA