

From Echo\_040216

The much anticipated Rayleigh museum has finally announced it will be opening to the public from early April.

The Rayleigh Town Museum, will open to the general public from April 9 and members of the "Friends" group will be able to visit from the March 16.

Entry to the Museum, full of historical artefacts of the town and exhibitions, is free to all, but there will be opportunities to make

donations, join the "Friends" group, and purchase Rayleigh related books, postcards and other items.

The museum, located on the 1st floor at 91 High Street, will open all year on Wednesdays, Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays between 10 am and 4pm.

Chairman of the museum, Mike Davies, discussed just some of what is on display.

"The Museum will display numerous artefacts all relating to the history of Rayleigh.

"We have a 1/24th working scale model of Rayleigh's Windmill.

"We have a baker's cart that once delivered bread to customers in Rayleigh. We have the history of the Rayleigh Speedway with two stained glass panels from the track.

"We will hold special events to mark significant Rayleigh anniversaries. We will have a rotation of exhibits to encourage return visits.

"We will have specific events for schools. We have a dedicated Children's area."

The official opening will be at 10 am on Saturday April 9.

The museum so far has 600 members of their "Friends" group who receive advance entry to special events, discounts in our shop, newsletters and member's events.

They are currently recruiting volunteer Museum Stewards.

Mr Davies explained how the museum has received its second batch of funding from the Heritage Lottery Funding which is speeding along progress.

"We have just received the second, of three payments from the Heritage Lottery Fund, £35920. Previously we received £44,900.

"These monies are to pay for all the Museum infrastructure all required before we can open.

"Our hard working group of 15 dedicated members of our management group (all volunteers) have been working flat out for the last 18 months to reach this stage.

Our dream is about to become a reality and we sometimes have to pinch ourselves to make sure it is really about to happen."

"This is only the tip of the iceberg. The Museum will continue to evolve and I am sure we will receive many more Rayleigh artefacts to share with the community. It is 'work in progress'."

More details can be obtained by visiting [www.rayleightownmuseum.co.uk](http://www.rayleightownmuseum.co.uk) or by telephoning Mike Davies on 01268785657.

