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V&A East Museum © Niall Hodson - opening Saturday 18 April 2026 in the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, Stratford.

NMDC news

Advocacy win on Digital Markets exemption for museum memberships

Following concerted cross-sector advocacy efforts, the Government has announced that museum and other charitable membership schemes will be exempt from the implementation of the new Digital Markets, Competition and Consumers Act (DMCCA), which aims to make subscriptions clearer and easier to manage or cancel. Concerns had been voiced across the sector around the potential for abuse of membership schemes under proposals for refunds, as well as major additional administration costs and impacts on charities' ability to claim Gift Aid. The implementation will now exclude charity contracts which allow consumers to attend performances, see collections, or visit places related to their charitable purpose, meaning there will be no additional regulation for museums or any impact on Gift Aid.

NMDC joined AIM, Art Fund and national museums in highlighting concerns from across the museum sector, and lobbied alongside wider arts, heritage and charity bodies for an exemption. NMDC Chair Laura Pye said: "We are delighted to hear that museum membership schemes will be exempt from the new DMCCA rules, which will ensure that this essential source of income for all types of museums is protected and can continue to grow. We are extremely grateful to Ministers and officials from the Department for Business and Trade and DCMS for listening to sector concerns, and to colleagues across museums and the wider charitable sector for working together so successfully to make the collective case for our vitally important work." [Gov.uk](#) (press release), [AIM](#), [Arts Professional](#) (£)

Government news

Government and ACE respond to Baroness Hodge's review

On the 26 March the Government responded to Labour Peer Baroness Hodge's independent review of Arts Council England (ACE), published in December 2025. Government has accepted all the recommendations made in the review, and where Baroness Hodge has suggested ideas for further consideration it has committed to doing so in collaboration across government departments. The response reiterated that the Arts Council will remain an independent and politically-impartial champion of freedom of expression.

The response accepts all recommendations for museums, including a strategy and long-term plan for the sector, raising awareness of cultural property schemes, and exploring the issue of risk for Government Indemnity. It also commits to working with the museum sector to 'explore the potential opportunities that charging international visitors at national museums might bring' - sector feedback to this suggestion can be seen in the next section of this newsletter.

Other areas of comment on the review include steps to ensure ACE is citizen-focused and to reform ACE's systems, structures and processes to enable a streamlined approach to applications, monitoring, collection and sharing of data. [Gov.uk](#) (response press release), [Gov.uk](#) (response), [Parliament.uk](#) (Nandy response), [Gov.uk](#) (Hodge review)

Baroness Hodge also appeared in front of the Culture, Media and Sport Committee on 17 March to give oral evidence on her review of ACE. She reiterated that "there has to be a radical review of the way Arts Council England works" and that "the time was right for a radical review". During the session Baroness Hodge repeated her findings that ACE is "incredibly bureaucratic and time-consuming, and it is far too detailed" in terms of the way it distributes funding. [Parliament.uk](#) (Hodge evidence), [Guardian](#)

ACE also posted a response to the independent review on 26 March which sets out what it will do to address the feedback and outlines what their key commitments will be. Over the next year its five immediate priorities are:

- A new Strategic Framework
- A new National Portfolio Process
- A new Service for Individuals
- A new online platform, where people can apply for our funding and access services
- A renewed focus on growing investment for England's cultural sector. [ACE](#) (response)

Also: Reading the Hodge Review through a place-based lens, [Arts Professional](#) (£) / Don't frighten the Hodge - Simon Tait, [Arts industry](#)

Charging for international visitors and a tourism tax

The Hodge review also proposed that the Government explore the potential for charging international visitors to national museums and galleries – based on the premise that ID cards achieve universal coverage, which would provide an efficient mechanism for maintaining free admission for UK citizens and children. This was part of a longer term view of financially supporting arts and culture and discussed alongside a tourism levy. The Government's response states that: 'The government believes charging international visitors at national museums could provide significant benefits. It could underpin our commitment to ensure art and culture is accessible, representative and shared across the country, and support the long-term financial resilience of these organisations. We will work with the museum sector to explore options for charging international visitors that will deliver benefits for the sector and we will provide an update before the end of the year.'

There have since been a flurry of statements and opinion pieces from across the sector, many with 'serious reservations' about this proposed policy. A statement released by the Royal Armouries in Leeds, one of the 15 national museums and galleries in England directly sponsored by DCMS, was reported in the [Museums Journal](#): "The Royal Armouries is proud to offer free access to the world's oldest collection of arms and armour to every visitor, regardless of where they come from. We hold this collection on behalf of all people, everywhere. We remain wholly committed to that principle." Nat Edwards, the Director and Master of the Royal Armouries, said: "Museums like the Royal Armouries are powerful drivers of economic regeneration, pillars of soft power, and engines of national pride. This proposal is a superficial, short-term response to a deeper problem and offers considerably more challenges than benefits."

Other NMDC members' views:

- The UK's free-to-access museums are the envy of the world. Charging for entry would be a big mistake, Karin Hindsbo, 29 March, [Guardian](#)
- Give bigger tax breaks to arts donors, Tate director says, Maria Balshaw, 13 March, [Financial Times](#) (£)
- The UK's museums desperately need a tourism tax, Tristram Hunt, 9 March, [Independent](#) (£)

General comment:

- The hidden costs of ending free museum admission, 3 April, [Apollo Magazine](#)
- Free museum entry is the mark of a civilised city — and one of the best things about London, 31 March, [Financial Times](#) (£)
- A tourist tax is a better way to fund museums, 27 March, [Financial Times](#) (£)
- 'Serious reservations' about proposal to scrap free entry for overseas visitors, 27 March, [Museums Association](#)
- Ministers consider charging tourists to enter national museums in England, 26 March, [Guardian](#)
- Charging entry at national museums 'within DCMS' remit', public accounts chair says, 16 March, [Arts Professional](#) (£)
- Solving the museums crisis by keeping them free, 13 March, [Arts Industry](#) - Simon Tait

Art Fund polling results on free entry

Ahead of the 25th anniversary of the landmark free entry for national museums policy established in 2001, new polling commissioned by Art Fund shows strong public support for protecting free admission for everyone. The research shows that most Britons back using a tourist levy to fund museums, rather than entrance fees. Nearly three quarters (72%) say that some revenue from a potential tourist tax should be used to help keep national museums free to enter for all, and three in four (76%) say the government should maintain or increase funding for national museums. Jenny Waldman, Director of Art Fund, said: "Our free national museums are one of the great success stories of UK cultural policy – opening up world-class collections to everyone, driving tourism, and enriching millions of lives every year. But they need additional funding in the face of rising costs and declining grant-in-aid."

The Art Fund summarised the results concluding that it is striking that the public does not want museums to start charging tourists but support the idea of a tourist levy. They state a levy, with some funds ringfenced, is a simpler way to deliver funding to keep the national museums free for everyone and ensure they continue to make the UK a vibrant tourist destination. Charging tourists at the door

risks putting up barriers for everyone; it would also require everyone to show ID and introduce a barrier to entry for UK citizens, particularly those struggling financially. Only 49% of those who struggle to make ends meet always carry ID. [Art Fund](#), [Museums Association](#)

Devolution Bill to include culture

The new English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill will now include culture as an official responsibility for Strategic Authorities for the first time under an amendment to the bill. This would mean Mayors could gain new powers to champion arts, heritage and the creative industries. The amendment will go before the House of Lords and face further scrutiny before culture is established as an eighth area of competence within the bill. The Minister for Devolution, Miatta Fahnbulleh, said: "Each region in England has its own unique history, culture and identity. It's right that we recognise that, champion it, and provide the people in those communities with the powers they need to make the most of the places they call home." The Lords Report Stage runs from 24 March to 13 April 2026. [Gov.uk](#) (press release) [Parliament.uk](#), [Museums Association](#), [Arts Professional](#) (£)

Also: Who is in the running for City of Culture 2029? [Museums Association](#)

Members' news

V&A East prepares to open

As V&A East prepares to open to the public on Saturday 18 April a new sculpture has been unveiled by London-based artist Thomas J Price outside the new museum, part of East Bank in Stratford's Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park. The 18ft sculpture, called 'A Place Beyond', will welcome visitors into the museum, which will feature two permanent 'Why We Make' galleries offering a new, topical lens on the V&A's global collections. The first temporary exhibition will be 'The Music is Black: A British Story' spanning 1900 to the present day, it reveals how Black British music has shaped British culture – and its global impact – to tell the story of Black excellence, struggle, resilience, and joy. The exhibition includes a partnership with BBC Music and kicks off The Music is Black Festival, a series of programming, displays and performances in collaboration with East Bank partners in summer 2026. [V&A East](#), [Vogue](#)

Also: This new east London museum has been crowned one of the best places to visit in the world in 2026 by TIME magazine, [Timeout](#)

Also: The V&A's Gilbert Galleries review – a fabulous treasure trove that must be seen to be believed, [Guardian](#)

The Ken Dodd Charitable Foundation gifts £1.5m to National Museums Liverpool

National Museums Liverpool has announced a landmark three year partnership with The Ken Dodd Charitable Foundation, which becomes the organisation's first Principal Partner through a transformational £1.5 million gift over three years to support projects that reflect Sir Ken Dodd's inclusive and uplifting spirit. Spread over three years, the funding will see the transformation of the Museum of Liverpool theatre into The Ken Dodd Auditorium, a vibrant and accessible space for events, performances and community activity. Visitors can also look forward to a new permanent Sir Ken Dodd display in the Wondrous Place Gallery, opening during his centenary year in November 2027. House of Memories, National Museums Liverpool's award-winning dementia awareness programme, will also benefit from the funding, which will support training, access to resources, and museum-based activities to enable carers to provide person-centred care for people living with dementia. The gift will also help to grow NML's under-26 membership scheme and strengthen links with schools, colleges and universities. [NML](#)

National Museums Liverpool opens micro-museum

Hartley Hut is a Grade II listed, octagonal granite cabin dating back to 1844. It has been opened to the public as part of National Museums Liverpool's Waterfront Transformation Project. The hut was one of three that were part of civil engineer Jesse Hartley's dock development and served as shelter and watching point for Dock Gatemen who operated the lock gates. An audio installation at the new 'micro-museum' will play to visitors the real accounts and experience of the Liverpool Dock Gatemen who previously worked there. The hut will offer panoramas across the docks and River Mersey, and a new artwork called 'Ebb and Flow' by mosaic artist Caroline Jariwala. [NML](#), [M+H Advisor](#)

Black Country Living Museum opens Woodside Library

Forming the final part of a multi-million-pound 1940s-1960s development project, Black Country Living Museum (BCLM) has moved and rebuilt Woodside Library, brick-by-brick, from its original location to the new high street of this award-winning living history attraction. From Wednesday 18 March visitors will be able to step inside the restored library for the first time, exploring shelves stacked with more than 6,500 donated and collected books spanning from how-to guides and classic fiction to children's favourites including Enid Blyton, Ladybird books and Biggles adventure stories. Originally gifted to the people of Dudley by the Earl of Dudley in 1894, this long-cherished hub for learning served local communities for over a century before closing in 2008. Carol King, Deputy Chief Executive at BCLM, said: "Woodside Library forms the jewel in the crown of our extensive 1940s-60s development. We're incredibly proud to have worked with so many communities, investors and stakeholders to save this iconic building and bring it back to life here at the Museum. Without their support, this simply would not have been possible." [BCLM](#), [BBC](#)

Members in the news:

- RAF museum awarded grant for new exhibition, [BBC](#)
- British Museum entrances scheme unanimously approved, [Building](#)
- Tate to present first garden at RHS Chelsea Flower Show, [M+H Advisor](#)
- British Museum to use AI-powered weapon detection at entrances, [M+H Advisor](#)
- Private Passions: Sir Ian Blatchford, Science Museum director, [Radio 3 BBC](#)

Images this month

Images this month celebrate the opening of V&A East, which opens on Saturday 18 April at the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park in Stratford. There are two free galleries exploring contemporary global culture and temporary exhibition 'The Music is Black: A British Story'. [V&A East](#)



The Long Goodbye by Carrie Mae Weems, 2026 © Carrie Mae Weems, video connecting east London immigration to transatlantic exchange. Image courtesy of Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

Sector news and reports

Polling shows museums important to national identity in Wales and Scotland

Art Fund have shared findings from recent polling in Wales and Scotland highlighting the civic and social value of museums and galleries to policymakers, both before and after the Scottish Parliament and Senedd elections in May. Eight in ten people in Scotland (80%) and nearly four in five people in Wales (79%) say arts and culture, including museums and galleries, are an important part of national identity. The polling also reveals strong public support for continued investment in museums. Four in five people in Scotland (80%) and almost three quarters of people in Wales (74%) say their governments should maintain or increase funding for museums and galleries. Support spans the political spectrum, and more than half of people in both Scotland (52%) and Wales (53%) say they would view a political party more favourably if it promised greater support and funding for museums and galleries. Ensuring schoolchildren can visit museums on school trips is a top priority for museum policy among the public. [Art Fund](#)

Museums Association members survey

Every year the Museums Association conducts a survey of its individual and institutional members across the UK. The Members Survey 2025/26 received 705 responses from people working in or with museums that reveal the challenges facing the sector. The financial pressures on museums of all types and sizes have remained high over the past year, with knock-on impacts to public engagement and access, collections care and management, and the wellbeing of the museum workforce. According to the Survey:

- 58% of respondents say their museum, or the museum they work with, is planning cuts in services in 2025/26, compared to 61% in 2024/25 and 52% in 2023/24.

Of the respondents whose organisations are facing cuts:

- 35% say this will result in a reduction in public programming (compared to 63% the previous year).
- 41% say funding cuts will result in job losses (compared to 55% the previous year).
- 32% say funding cuts will result in a reduction in learning and engagement (compared to 46% the previous year).

Sharon Heal, Director of the Museums Association, said: "We know from the survey that museums continue to deliver transformative experiences with their communities and are making a positive impact on health and wellbeing, and learning and engagement. But constantly shaving budgets and cutting teams year on year is taking its toll on what museums can offer and how much staff can do." [Museums Association](#)

Sign up for the UK Arts and Creative Industries Conference in May

NMDC Chair Laura Pye will be speaking at Westminster Insight's annual UK Arts and Creative Industries Conference on Wednesday 6th May in London. Bringing together creative and arts sector experts alongside government representatives and policymakers, this full-day conference will explore next steps for growth and innovation in the UK's thriving creative industries. Sessions will cover the Creative Industries Sector Plan, CreaTech, creative skills pathways, place-based approaches to regional investment and growth, and more. Book now and use code SPKR5172 for 20% off. [Westminster Insight](#)

Temporary and Touring Exhibitions report

The Exhibitions Group has published a report on Temporary and Touring Exhibitions. Supported by ACE and delivered by Cultural Associates Oxford, the study offers one of the most comprehensive analyses of exhibition practice to date. Alongside highlighting key challenges, from skills shortages to funding barriers, the research sets out a clear roadmap of practical recommendations to help cultural organisations unlock the full potential of exhibitions and build a more sustainable, inclusive and evidence-led future for the sector. Key findings include:

- The Strategy Gap: 69% do not include touring exhibitions activity in their strategic plans.
- The Impact Evaluation Deficit: over 70% of organisations lack adequate research or data to understand the impact their exhibitions are achieving.
- Barriers to Realising Ambitions for Exhibitions – including: navigating the Government Indemnity Scheme (GIS) and claiming Museums and Galleries Exhibition Tax Relief (MGETR).
- Economic Models for Exhibitions: even ticketed exhibitions rarely cover costs.
- Future Exhibitions Trends: Partnership, Adaptation, and Digital Innovation – including partnerships, co-production and local adaptation. [TEG](#) (press release), [TEG](#) (full report, pdf, 101pgs)

Tributes to Sir Neil Cossons

The sector has come together to recognise the contribution Sir Neil Cossons made to so many museums and heritage organisations following his death at the age of 87. Sir Neil was Director of the Science Museum from 1986–2000, as well as being the first Director of the Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust, Director of the National Maritime Museum and Chairman of English Heritage, during a long career promoting Britain's scientific and industrial heritage that spanned half a century. Sir Ian Blatchford, Director and Chief Executive of the Science Museum Group said: "Neil had a profound impact on the Science Museum, ushering in an era of change and bringing a strong focus on effective interpretation for visitors, with interactivity at its heart. His legacy can be seen around the museum to this day, and I will be forever grateful for the steadfast friendship and wise counsel which Neil offered throughout my time at the museum." [Science Museum](#) (blog), [Museums Journal](#), [AIM](#), [Telegraph](#) (£)

Art UK completes landmark digitisation of public murals

Art UK, the art education charity, has completed a major national project to record and digitise murals and street art across the UK, with volunteers recording more than 6,600 artworks, bringing the total number of outdoor public artworks on the Art UK website to over 21,000. The project was launched in January 2024 and was principally funded by The National Lottery Heritage Fund. The project highlights disparities and opportunities in representation. While murals still depict more named men than women, murals show far greater diversity than public sculpture, better representing individuals from the global majority, community leaders, activists, educators and local heroes. The programme will continue throughout 2026 with more murals added to the online catalogue which are inside buildings and from collections such as the National Trust and Historic Royal Palaces and the Churches Conservation Trust. [Art UK](#), [Guardian](#)

MA Salary Report and Recommendations 2025-2026

The Museums Association has updated its salary research and recommendations report with new figures for 2025-26. The report outlines the MA's expectations of the sector and how to support employers, staff and funders to address the realities of low pay, as well as updated recommendations in light of the new Code of Ethics. Areas of focus include the Real Living Wage, inclusive practice, lived experience, wellbeing, apprenticeships and freelancing. In the next year the MA will be conducting further research into pay and conditions and will produce a fuller report with benchmarked pay recommendations. [Museums Association](#)

Museum and Heritage Awards shortlist announced

On Thursday 12 March the shortlist for the Museum and Heritage Awards was announced with a number of NMDc members named among the 19 award categories. The most popular category for applications this year was Community Engagement Programme of the Year which has been narrowed down to six shortlistees, including the Horniman Museum and Gardens for 'All Eyes on Her!: Community Stewardship for Institutional Change'. Organisations listed for the Sector Impact Award include National Museums Liverpool and Birmingham Museums Trust for their innovative Birmingham Museums Trust's Citizens Jury. The Natural History Museum 'Fixing Our Broken Planet' has been recognised for Permanent Exhibition of the Year alongside the Science and Industry Museum's Power Hall: The Andrew Law Gallery. The Visitor Accessibility Award has included the Royal Air Force Museum, Historic Royal Palaces, Castle Howard, the V&A and the Cartoon Museum for their sector leading work. The winners will be revealed on the evening of Wednesday, May 13, 2026. [M+H Awards](#)

Also: The cost of a cuppa: comparing coffee and tea prices at London's top museums, galleries and attractions, [Tangram](#)

Visitor statistics

Natural History Museum is the most visited attraction in the UK in 2025

The Association of Leading Visitor Attractions (ALVA) has released the visitor figures of its members for 2025. The total number of visits to 409 ALVA sites in 2025 was 165 million, which was a 2% increase on the previous year but still represented a decline of 7% on the 170 million visits in 2019 to the top ALVA sites. The most-visited attraction in the UK for the first time was the Natural History Museum (South Kensington) – which experienced a 13% increase in visitors to 7,116,929, an all-time record for any UK museum or gallery. In second place was the British Museum with 6,440,120 visitors; in 3rd place and the most visited outdoor attraction was Windsor Great Park (The Crown Estate) which welcomed 4,978,299 visitors, and in 4th place was Tate Modern with 4,514,266 visits. The top Paid for Attraction was the Tower of London in 9th place with 2,817,852 visitors. The figures also show that:

- The typical attraction in Scotland saw a 2.6% increase and Wales saw a 0.9% increase.
- The region of England outside London with the biggest year-on-year growth was the North West which was up 11.3%, followed by East Midlands, which was up 7.5%.
- V&A East Storehouse welcomed 416,300 visitors in less than 7 months, after opening at the end of May and exceeding visitor targets for the year (107th place).
- London Transport Museum experienced a record-breaking year with 449,599 visitors (97th place), its highest annual total since opening in 1980 and up 6% on 2024.
- In Scotland, the most-visited free attraction continued to be the National Museum of Scotland, which saw 2,318,305 visits and moved to 12th place.
- In Northern Ireland, Titanic Belfast continued to be the most-visited attraction with an 8% increase to 953,554 visitors and remaining in 35th place.
- In Wales the most visited attraction was St Fagans National Museum of History with 570,207 visits (77th place).
- New ALVA member the Sainsbury Centre in Norwich achieved a place in the top 30 with 1,162,650.

[ALVA](#), [Museums Journal](#), [NHM](#), The Natural History is now Britain's most visited museum. Its boss worries it's too busy - [Telegraph](#) (£)

Art Newspaper looks at world's 100 most visited sites

The Art Newspaper's annual visitor-numbers survey compiles figures from art museums around the world. The data for 2025 shows that some of the world's most venerable institutions are still struggling to attract the number of visitors they had before Covid, but there is enthusiasm for new museums, and in regions such as Asia and Latin America. The Musée du Louvre still tops the list with 9,046,000 visitors, with Vatican Museums in second and National Museum Korea, Seoul just ahead of the British Museum. Tate's museums have also been struggling since Covid, with Tate Modern still 26% down on 2019, Tate Britain 36% down, Tate St Ives 19% down and Tate Liverpool closed for renovation. At the National Gallery numbers have gone up since the re-opening, and the museum finished up on nearly 4.2 million for 2025 – about 30% up on the previous year, but still 30% down on 2019. [Art Newspaper](#) (£)

Also: Historic Houses visits rise 14%, but remain lower than pre-pandemic, [M+H Advisor](#)

Cultural sector funding

Round-up of news on the impact of current financial pressures on museums:

- MP joins protest against relocation of Walsall Leather Museum, 31 March, [Museums Journal](#)
- 'Stay of execution' for threatened Scottish museum, 27 March, [The National](#)
- Prison museum to close 'in its current format', 26 March, [BBC](#)
- Disappointment as Leicester museum to stay closed over Easter due to low staff numbers, 25 March, [Leicestershire Live](#)
- Strikes over pay cancel mine tours at much loved Yorkshire museum, 22 March, [Yorkshire Post](#)
- Rising costs force local museum to cut opening hours and staffing, Museum of Cambridge, 11 March, [Museums Association](#)

- Reform UK under fire for selling Kent County Council's art works, 6 March, [Kent Live](#)

Equity research shows council funding down 55% since 2010

New research from actor's union Equity, produced by the Autonomy Institute, shows that council arts and entertainment budgets are down on average from £1.19 billion in 2010 to £539 million in 2024-25. The analysis also shows an unequal fall in each nation:

- England council arts spending fell by 61%, with £660m less in real spending per year in 2024 compared with 2010. Current spending is a mere £6.47 per person, per year, or just over 50p a month. This is down from £18.67.
- Wales has seen a 46% fall, losing around £30m a year for the arts locally. This represents a nearly 50% cut in per capita annual funding on local arts and culture since 2010, from £21.03 to £10.85.
- Scotland's councils have reduced real spending by 18%, seeing £25m a year less invested in their arts. Scotland has the highest spending per capita, at £20.73 per person, per year, but this is still 22% lower than it was in 2010.

You can also search by local authority using the arts funding tracker. [Equity](#) (press release), [Equity](#) (tracker), [Arts Professional](#) (£)

Heritage at risk

Iran's cultural heritage at risk

The Museums Journal reports on a group of cultural heritage professionals who have called for "urgent monitoring, documentation and safeguarding" of Iran's museums and heritage sites by international bodies in light of the escalating conflict and restricted communication in the country. The statement highlights recent incidents affecting historic urban environments—including the destruction of sections of Rasht Grand Bazaar, structural concerns surrounding Tehran Grand Bazaar, and damage reported to the UNESCO World Heritage site of Golestan Palace. The statement, which is directly addressed to international heritage bodies including Unesco, calls for a number of measures including remote monitoring and for international action to "facilitate professional exchange and information-sharing among independent heritage professionals, researchers, and civil society documentation initiatives" operating inside and outside Iran. [LinkedIn](#) (statement), [Museums Journal](#)

UK Government and European Commission join forces to help protect Ukrainian cultural heritage

The UK Government has announced £250,000 for the Ukrainian Cultural Heritage Fund which will be match funded by the European Commission to help to protect, preserve, and restore Ukrainian cultural heritage. The announcement was made at the first UK-European Commission high-level meeting on culture marking a step forward since the UK-EU Summit in May last year. Culture Minister Ian Murray said: "It is essential we strengthen and deepen our partnership with the EU in areas of mutual interest, such as culture. Today's meeting is an important step in strengthening that enduring relationship through focused co-operation on AI in the creative industries, artists working conditions, and how we can work together to support international cultural collaboration." [Gov.uk](#)

Also: 60% of Sudan's national museum looted, report says, [ICOM](#)



Jennie Baptiste, *Sepia Butterfly*, London, 1993 © Photo by Jennie Baptiste. From the exhibition 'The Music is Black: A British Story'. Image courtesy of Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

Inclusion and accessibility

All In access scheme for the cultural sector launched

All In is the new access scheme for creativity and culture in the UK and Ireland. It is helping organisations improve their accessibility with clear, structured guidance from new Accessibility Standards and tailored, expert support from access specialists. All In is now accepting subscriptions from organisations in England, including theatres, museums, galleries, art centres, cinemas, festivals, and libraries. Guidance included in subscription covers accessible Digital Communications, Creative and Cultural Experiences, Customer Service, and the Built Environment, with topics from Blue Badge parking and auditorium sightlines, to content warnings and immersive environments. All In Essentials is available now, with subscription rates ranging from £200 to £5,500 +VAT. Prices are based on turnover to make sure it remains achievable for organisations of all shapes and sizes.

Organisations with a ticket booking system will be able to add even more features when All In Plus goes live in Summer 2026. Those looking to get ahead can lock in the Early Adopter Offer: subscribe to All In Plus now for the price of All In Essentials, and get all the additional features of Plus when they become available at no extra cost. This offer runs until 30 April 2026. All In is a partnership between Arts Council England, Arts Council Ireland, Arts Council of Northern Ireland,

Arts Council of Wales, and Creative Scotland. [All In](#)

Digital

Government drops plans to introduce copyright exemption for AI training

On the 18 March Liz Kendall, Secretary of State for Science, Innovation and Technology, published a report and impact statement on Copyright and AI which sets out the Governments proposed steps. The Government has now dropped its intention for a copyright exemption for AI training which would put the onus on creators to 'opt out' and explicitly reserve their rights. It has also identified four areas of future focus including:

- Digital Replicas
- Labelling AI-generated content
- Creator control and transparency
- Independent creatives - exploring whether there is a role for government to support their ability to license their content

[Parliament UK](#) (Kendall statement), [Gov.uk](#) (report, pdf, 125pgs), [Museums Association](#), [BBC](#), [Guardian](#)

House of Lords report into AI, copyright and the creative industries

In its report published on 6 March, the Communications and Digital Committee says that the UK creative industries face a clear and present danger from generative AI. This is not because the UK's copyright framework is outdated or in need of reform – rather, widespread unlicensed use of protected works, coupled with limited transparency from AI developers about how their models have been trained, leaves rightsholders unsure about whether their content has been used and unable to enforce their rights when it has. In addition, the absence of a robust 'personality right' or specific protection for digital likeness in the UK means creators and performers are unable to challenge harmful outputs that imitate their distinctive style, voice or persona. The report sets out a number of key recommendations including:

- Rule out a new commercial text and data mining (TDM) exception with an opt-out model recommending that the Government should, in the next year, publish a final decision on its approach to AI and copyright.
- Close gaps in protection for identity, style and digital replicas.
- Make transparency about AI training data a statutory obligation.
- Create the conditions for a fair and inclusive UK licensing market.
- Prioritise the development and adoption of sovereign AI models.

[Parliament.uk](#), [Report](#) (pdf, 85pgs)

Marketing

Together We Act research results

The Arts Marketing Association's Together We Act initiative has gathered insights from arts and heritage marketers across the UK, revealing how the sector is navigating three critical challenges: communicating in polarised times, adopting AI responsibly, and generating income under financial pressure. The research captured perspectives from 336 arts and heritage marketers and leaders working across all four nations of the UK. The headline insights across the three areas include:

- Communicating in polarised times: the barrier is not skill or willingness of cultural marketers to communicate, but often organisational clarity and confidence.
- Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Digital Confidence: AI adoption is already happening, but largely without shared frameworks, safeguards, or confidence.
- Financial Pressures and Income Generation: marketing teams are expected to deliver growth without proportional investment and within organisational structures where financial pressures are adding to leadership challenges and affecting decision-making processes.

The initiative also points to approaches that are working in these challenge areas, for example for Financial Pressures and Income Generation shifting focus to marketing organisational brand. [AMA](#)

Also: Five key audience trends reshaping arts marketing in 2026, [AMA](#)



Dennis Morris, 'Aces Club, Count Shelly Sound System, Hackney', 1974 (photographed), 2010 (printed) © Dennis Morris. From the exhibition 'The Music is Black: A British Story'. Image courtesy of Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

Workforce and volunteering

Art Fund launches Empowering Curators programme to strengthen museums

Empowering Curators is a pioneering programme of curatorial fellowships hosted by museums and galleries across the UK. The major five-year initiative aims to support 20 multi-year curatorial roles for senior to mid-career curators from Global Majority backgrounds. The first host organisations and the 10 new curatorial fellows, who are recognised for their achievements, leadership and contributions to the field of curation, are:

- Autograph, London (Neicia Marsh)
- Chapter, Cardiff (Sim Panaser)
- Culture Coventry (Taniah Simpson)
- Glasgow Life (Nelson Cummins)
- Manchester Museum (Nusrat Ahmed)
- National Museums Liverpool (Dr Jill Sutherland)
- Royal Museums Greenwich, London (Hannah Cusworth and Dr Nydia A Swaby)
- Tate Liverpool (Carine Harmand)
- The Whitworth, Manchester (Dr Christo Kefalas)

Alongside hosting fellows, each organisation will undertake a programme of change to advance equity, diversity and inclusion, facilitated by external experts. [Art Fund](#)

Help transform volunteering across the heritage sector

The Heritage Volunteering Group (HVG) has announced a call for workshop hosts for its annual conference, taking place online on Tuesday 24 and Wednesday 25 November 2026. The theme for 2026 is 'From Passion to Purpose - Leading Volunteer Engagement' and will explore what effective volunteer engagement looks like and how to deepen the impact volunteers make across heritage organisations. Workshops should be engaging, interactive, and last 60 minutes. They may cover any topic related to volunteering but should explore the subject through the lens of community engagement. To apply, download the nomination form from the HVG website and submit by 5pm on Friday 17 April 2026 to heritagevolunteeringgroup@gmail.com, [HVG](#)

Funding opportunities and news

The Space digital funding

If you're an arts or cultural organisation based in England, including museums, libraries, community organisations and local councils with a cultural project, you can now apply for a digital commission of up to £16,000 (including VAT) to develop your project (£8,000 for audio-only projects). The commissions will help you deliver a creative digital project - video / audio / interactive / immersive experience – with not only funding but also support every step of the way. The deadline for applications is 30th April at 5pm. [The Space](#)

2026 Hallett Independent Acquisitions Award

The Hallett Independent Acquisitions Award is a purchase grant to enable a museum or gallery to acquire an original print or prints for their collection. Hallett Independent, who are generously funding the Award, are brokers specialising in fine art and heritage insurance, committed to supporting museums throughout the country. The winning applicant will receive a sum of £8,000 to spend at the London Original Print Fair, 14-17 May 2026, on a print or prints. Museums and galleries are invited to apply by 5pm, Monday 27 April 2026. [London Original Print Fair](#)

Lyme Regis Museum benefits from Airbnb funding

Airbnb has distributed £1 million to 25 organisations as part of its inaugural Best of British Fund, aiming to boost tourism and fuel community projects. In partnership with Visit Britain, the initiative aims to help tourists discover authentic local culture and support small businesses and organisations at the heart of communities. Lyme Regis Museum will use the funding to secure their Lyme Regis Fossil Festival for 2026 and 2027, the festival will take place on 13/14th June in 2026. [Airbnb](#), [Lyme Regis Museum](#), [Arts Professional](#) (£)



'A Place Beyond' by Thomas J Price unveiled outside of London's V&A East Museum ahead of its opening on East Bank in Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park on 18 April 2026. David Parry/PA Media Assignments for the V&A.

Conferences and events

Museum Ethnographers Group Conference at the Pitt Rivers

The MEG's annual conference will be running at the Pitt Rivers Museum in Oxford on Thursday 23 and Friday 24 April. Hosted by the Rethinking Relationships project, this year's conference is a little different to previous iterations. Whilst there will still be papers and talks scheduled throughout the conference, there will also be a series of workshops on both days to allow delegates to learn, participate and disseminate knowledge in groups. The workshops include a session on mapping emotional responses to museum artefacts. Tickets cost £110 for a Standard 2 day ticket, Concessionary ticket £85 and International - Global Majority £50. You can also join online for £30 for the two days. [MEG](#) (programme), [Pitt Rivers](#) (tickets)

Business of the Arts Summit

The summit will tackle the critical questions facing arts leaders today: sustainable business models, funding strategies, and how to balance the books while staying true to your mission. Hosted by Conway Hall in London on Wednesday 13 May, speakers include Baroness Margaret Hodge, author of the independent review into ACE and David Reece, Chief Strategy Officer, Baker Richards. The summit has been organised in celebration of 25 years of Arts Professional. [Arts Professional](#)

All Inclusive: Championing Accessible Museums

All Inclusive is the Museums Association's annual online conference exploring how museums can become anti-ableist in everything that they do. Anti-ableism recognises abled privilege and actively looks to challenge and dismantle it through theory, actions and practices. Running online on 20 May from 11-4pm the day has sessions on how to challenge and dismantle ableism in your museum alongside ways to elevate the perspectives of D/deaf, disabled and neurodivergent people. Tickets cost £37 for Museums Association concessionary members, £42 for freelance and consultant members, £47 for members and £69 for non-members. [Museums Association](#)

Appointments

Janey MacRae-Tym has been appointed Chief Digital Officer at the Science Museum Group, after a decade holding senior roles in digital agencies and working for organisations including Diageo, Nike and Vision Express. MacRae-Tym will act as the Group's AI champion and advocate, utilising her experience in implementing AI at scale to enable the Science Museum Group to unlock the full potential of this technology. [Science Museum](#)

Helen Legg, currently director at Tate Liverpool, has been named as the Artistic Director of London's Royal Academy of Arts (RA). She will take up her role from June 2026 and will be joined by **Livia Evans** as Commercial Director, bringing over a decade of senior commercial leadership experience from The John Lewis Partnership, and **Lamia Dabboussy** as Director of Brand & Audiences, having been Director of Engagement at the Museum of Contemporary Art Australia. [RA](#)

Katrina Thomson will join OneRen, the leisure and cultural charity responsible for Renfrewshire's museums and collections, on 20 April 2026 as Head of Museums and Chief Storyteller. The role will oversee storytelling across Paisley Museum, The Secret Collection in Paisley, and Renfrew Museum. Thomson joins from the National Trust for England, Wales and Northern Ireland, where she held senior management roles in curation and visitor experience. [M+H Advisor](#)

Domenico Sergi has been named as Keeper of Africa, Oceania and the Americas at the British Museum. Domenico joins from London Museum, where he is Senior Research Lead, overseeing the establishment of the new museum's Research Centre. [British Museum - LinkedIn](#)

The Wiener Holocaust Library has appointed new co-directors, **Christine Schmidt** and **Barbara Warnock**. They are the first women to take the helm at the library in its nearly 100-year history and have worked at the library for a combined 23 years. [Wiener Holocaust Library](#), [Museums Association](#)

Tim Davie the out-going Director-General of the BBC will be joining the Creative Industries Council as Co-Chair from 1 August 2026. [Gov.uk](#), [Independent](#)

Catch up

£4.75m grant to support Sir Christopher Wren church transformation, 24 March 2026, [M+H Advisor](#)

Punk masks, Walkmans and Choppers: Museum of Youth Culture to open in London, 24 March 2026, [Guardian](#)

The world's biggest gallery for illustrations will open in London in May – and it's just revealed its first exhibitions, 19 March 2026, [Time Out](#)

Museum on course for 2027 reopening after restoration, Ipswich, 19 March 2026, [BBC](#)

Artillery museum secures grant towards new home, 19 March 2026, [BBC](#)

International news

How museum funding in Denmark has become reliant on visitor numbers, 31 March 2026, [Art Newspaper](#) (£)

National Geographic's new Museum of Exploration sets opening date, 27 March 2026, [Blooloop](#)

The Edo-Tokyo Museum is reopening March 31, 27 March 2026, [TimeOut](#)

Zurich transfers ownership of looted Benin Bronzes to Nigeria, 24 March 2026, [ARTnews](#)

Brooklyn Museum plans \$13 Million overhaul for New African Art Galleries, 24 March 2026, [Artnet](#)

Jobs

National Museums Scotland is looking for two board appointees, with priority criteria including experience of collections role and legal roles. The closing date for applications is 5pm on Thursday 9 April 2026. [NMS](#)

Posts being advertised on the [NMDC jobs board](#) this month include:

- [Marketing Officer - National Museums Liverpool](#)
- [Development Manager: Trusts and Foundations - Wallace Collection](#)
- [Events & Live Interpretation Manager - Royal Armouries](#)
- [Digital Project Manager - University of Oxford](#)
- [Assistant Frames Conservator - Tate](#)
- [Head of Marketing - Tate](#)

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