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'Treasure: History Unearthed', opening at Museum of Liverpool from 13 September 2025 - 29 March 2026. Castle Esplane Hoard. Loaned from West Cheshire Museums. © West Cheshire Museums

## NMDC news

### NMDC Executive Assistant opportunity

NMDC is seeking a part-time Executive Assistant to join our small friendly team. They will provide efficient and effective executive and administrative support to the NMDC staff team and Chair and ensure the smooth running of the NMDC virtual office. This hybrid role has the option to be based at home, office-based at National Museums Liverpool or to hot desk at museums in London (or for a combination of these). The role is for 22.2 hours per week and the days and hours worked can be flexible, with some travel required between Liverpool and London. The closing date for applications is Thursday 7 August 2025 at 12 noon. [NMDC](#)

## Members' news

### Bayeux Tapestry to be displayed at the British Museum after historic loan agreement between UK and France

The 70-metre Bayeux Tapestry that depicts the 1066 Norman invasion and Battle of Hastings will go on display at the British Museum in the autumn of 2026. This will be the first time that the tapestry has been shown in the UK since it was made almost 1,000 years ago, after an agreement was announced by UK Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer and French President Emmanuel Macron, and signed by British Museum Director Nicholas Cullinan. In exchange, treasures from the British Museum that represent all four nations of the UK – including Sutton Hoo and the Lewis chess pieces – will travel to museums in Normandy. Nicholas Cullinan said: "The Bayeux Tapestry is one of the most important and unique cultural artefacts in the world, which illustrates the deep ties between Britain and France and has fascinated people across geographies and generations... This is exactly the kind of international partnership that I want us to champion and take part in: sharing the best of our collection as widely as possible – and in return displaying global treasures of the world never seen in London before to a global audience." [British Museum](#), [Gov.uk](#), [BBC](#), [Museums Association](#), [Guardian](#), [Times](#)

### Royal Observatory Greenwich announces £77m redevelopment plans

In July Royal Museums Greenwich (RMG) revealed plans to transform the Royal Observatory as the London landmark celebrates its 350th anniversary in 2025. The £77m project will add an entry pavilion and garden walk, accessible routes to the Great Equatorial Telescope and Planetarium, alongside refreshed galleries and new event, retail and café spaces. £50.5m of the costs have been secured and planning permission from the Royal Borough of Greenwich, listed building consent and scheduled monument consent have all been achieved. The project is set to begin in autumn 2025 and be complete by spring 2028. During construction there will be some phased closures, beginning with the south side of the site and the Peter Harrison Planetarium from Monday 8 September 2025. [RMG](#), [Museums Association](#), [Greenwich Wire](#)

**Also:** Stamps mark Royal Observatory's 350th anniversary, [BBC](#)

### Norwich Castle sets opening date after £27.5 restoration

Norwich Castle Museum & Art Gallery, part of Norfolk Museums Service, will reopen on Thursday 7 August 2025 following a major National Lottery Heritage Fund supported redevelopment of the medieval keep. Originally commissioned by William the Conqueror, the 900 year old former royal palace has been restored, reversing centuries of alterations that occurred during its time as the county prison and subsequent conversion to a museum in the Victorian era. For the first time in the building's 900-year history, new lifts will provide access to all five floors, from the basement to the rooftop battlements, making it the UK's most accessible castle. A new Gallery of Medieval Life has been created in partnership with the British Museum, displaying nearly 1,000 medieval artefacts and treasures. The exhibition aims to present East Anglia's medieval history alongside broader historical contexts. [Norwich Castle](#), [BBC](#), [M+H Advisor](#), [Museums Association](#)

## Sound and Vision galleries open at the National Science and Media Museum

Marking the culmination of a £6.8 million transformation, the National Science and Media Museum's Sound and Vision galleries opened to the public on 10 July 2025. Featuring over 500 exhibits covering 200 years of media technology, the galleries are themed around four areas—Innovation, Identities, Storytelling and Everywhere. The permanent galleries were supported by a grant from the National Lottery Heritage Fund and opened to coincide with Bradford's City of Culture status for 2025. There is a look at the new galleries with Director, Jo Quinton-Tulloch, on [BBC Front Row](#) (podcast, from 23.15mins) [National Science and Media Museum](#), [BBC](#), [Telegraph & Argus](#)

## Kew Garden's Palm House set for major renovation

Kew Gardens announced plans for a £50m renovation of their 1848 Palm House and Waterlily House. There is a need to restore the deteriorating structures as well as transform the Grade I and Grade II listed glasshouses into the first net zero buildings of their kind. The ambitious project scheduled to start in 2027 will mean the closure of the glasshouses and moving over 1,300 plants and replacing 16,000 panes of glass. Planning permission for the project has been submitted and almost a third of the funds have been raised. The Palm House and Waterlily House account for more than a fifth of Kew Gardens' carbon emissions, the work is part of Kew's plan to become climate positive by 2030. Other carbon reduction changes will reduce energy use by 49% across the 200-hectare (500-acre) site. [Kew](#), [BBC](#), [Guardian](#)

**Also:** Border control: an agile agenda for Kew's new director of gardens, [Financial Times](#)

## Tate extends weekend opening hours

Tate Modern is to stay open until 9pm every Friday and Saturday from 26 September 2025. The extended opening hours are intended to contribute to the vibrancy of London's night-time cultural offering, giving many visitors the chance to enjoy art after work on a Friday and Saturday. Karin Hindsbo, Director of Tate Modern, said: "Over the last decade, Tate Modern Lates have become a cornerstone of London's nightlife. They have proven the huge demand for access to our galleries outside of regular hours, especially among young Londoners who want to make the most of their city's dynamic cultural scene. So I'm delighted that Tate Modern will soon be open late every Friday and Saturday evening, making the world's most popular modern art museum even more accessible." Tate currently closes at 6pm. The monthly Tate Modern Lates series will also continue with the next events scheduled for 28 August and 26 September. [Tate](#), [BBC](#)

**Also:** Will the Tate's endowment drive pay off? [Apollo Magazine](#)

## Members in the news

- Can a Museum Be the Conscience of a Nation? Nicholas Cullinan, Director of the British Museum interviewed in the Freakonomics podcast on his background, funding for renovation and repatriation, 6 June 2025, [Freakonomics](#)
- Black Country Living Museum breaks new ground as football team shirt sponsor, [M+H Advisor](#), 22 July 2025,
- Ziggy Stardust, wedding suits and Nile Rodgers as curator: V&A announces David Bowie Centre details, 4 July 2025, [Guardian](#)
- Strategic Investment Advances Visitor Experience at IWM Duxford, 30 June 2025, [ExperienceUK](#)
- RAF Museum Awarded Armed Forces Covenant Gold Award in recognition of its outstanding support for the Armed Forces. [RAF Museum](#)

## Images this month

Images this month come from 'Treasure: History Unearthed' which will open at Museum of Liverpool on 13 September 2025 until 29 March 2026. On display will be archaeological treasures from Bronze Age gold and Viking silver to hoards of coins, and it will feature the largest collection of archaeological treasure ever shown in the region including finds from the North West and Wales. [Museum of Liverpool](#).

## Government news

### What will the impact of devolution mean for UK culture?

As the English Devolution and Community Empowerment bill is discussed in parliament this July the Museums Association published a piece looking at what devolution could mean for local and regional museums and cultural services. Ahead of the bill, six areas will join a Devolution Priority Programme, fast tracking them to becoming mayoral authorities: Cumbria; Cheshire & Warrington; Norfolk & Suffolk; Greater Essex; Sussex & Brighton; and Hampshire & Solent. Museums Association president Steve Miller, the head of Norfolk Museums Service and NMDC member said: "The creation of mayoral authorities could bring a helpful focus to the work of museums and their intrinsic value in shaping strong and resilient communities, and also in supporting the local economy, particularly the visitor economy. There is the potential to build new narratives around heritage and culture, and possibility of creating funding programmes and projects that the sector could support and even provide leadership around." The Local Government Association have also written a factual summary of the bill. [Museums Association](#), [LGA](#), [Gov.uk](#)

### 'Non-use value' of UK culture and heritage explored in new research

DCMS commissioned Alma Economics to conduct exploratory research into the 'non-use value' of UK culture and heritage. Individuals attribute value to culture and heritage even if they do not directly consume it themselves, known as 'non-use value'. This typically includes the value people get from the existence of a cultural good (existence value) and from others being able to benefit from a good or service, either in the present (altruistic value) or for future generations (bequest value). These values can make up a substantial part of the importance of culture and heritage organisations but are often overlooked in decision making. Experiments found that individuals who had not visited the Natural History Museum in the past three years were willing to pay an average of £11.95 as an (indefinite) annual donation to preserve the museum. This provides a clear illustration that 'non-use value' is not only conceptually important, but also economically significant, with meaningful implications for public policy and investment decisions. The research focused on survey-based experiments of three UK-based museums – the Natural History Museum (NHM), the World Museum (Liverpool), and the Museum of Liverpool – and tested with a large sample of the UK general public, capturing responses from over 13,000 UK adults. [Gov.uk](#)

### Visa changes will impact skilled workers

Arts Professional reported on UK government changes to Visa rules that come into force from 22 July 2025. They highlight a number of professional roles that will be removed from the skilled worker visa route including sculptors, picture restorers, hand-drawing animators, glass and ceramics makers, and art technicians working outside education. The government is also introducing a temporary shortage list of occupations. [Arts Professional](#), [Gov.uk](#)

**Also:** Former Shadow Culture Secretary Thangam Debbonaire delivered her maiden speech in the House of Lords and warned the UK was at risk of losing its global reputation for arts excellence. She also urged museums to be "honest about the stories behind their objects". [Arts Professional](#), [Hansard](#)

**Also:** Nigel Huddleston has been appointed as Shadow Culture Secretary replacing Stuart Andrew. [Parliament.uk](#), [Arts Professional](#)





'Treasure: History Unearthed', Museum of Liverpool. Knutsford Hoard, © National Museums Liverpool.

## Cultural funding

### Government committees debate funding as more closures announced

Two Culture, Media and Sport Select Committee sessions have focussed in on the problem of protecting built heritage, with oral evidence heard on 17 June and 15 July with speakers including Andrew Lovett, Director and Chief Executive at the Black Country Living Museum and Hilary McGrady, Director General at the National Trust. MPs heard from heritage building operators and those working in restoration before evidence was also heard from representatives of the National Trust and Historic Houses. The time restricted nature of grant funding was said to be leading to a 'boom and bust' funding landscape with a lack of continuity and sustainability. Andrew Lovett referred to the balance between funding the building or 'heritage asset' alongside the need to fund programming, collections care and public programming. He also talked about the importance of MEND funding. [Arts Professional](#), [Parliament UK](#) (full transcripts are available)

The Petitions Committee also debated the use of fossil fuel advertising and sponsorship triggered by a public petition signed by over 1,000 which was also back by environmental broadcaster Chris Packham. The debate took a wide-ranging look at advertising and 'greenwashing' sponsorship across different sectors. [Arts Professional](#) published a look at the background of contested sponsorship by Chris Garrard from Culture Unstained. The debate is available to watch as well as the transcript. [M+H Advisor](#), [Gov.uk](#)

Following announcements earlier this year of financial pressures, the River & Rowing Museum in Henley-on-Thames is to close to the public from September. The [Museums Association](#) reported that the foundation's few remaining team members would focus on "finding new homes for the museum's extensive collections, following heritage sector best practice". Its four core collections amount to more than 35,000 items. The museum's final weekend on 20 and 21 September will coincide with the Heritage Open Days festival. [River & Rowing Museum](#). The news comes as the National Trust announced at least 550 job cuts ([Guardian](#), [Telegraph](#)) and Arts Council Wales announced 18 jobs were at risk after restructuring, [Arts Professional](#). York Archaeology are also closing their exhibitions department as part of a restructure with Chief Executive David Jennings stepping down after 12 years in post. [Museums Association](#).

To end on a more positive note, Auchindrain Township open-air museum has announced it is reopening with a new board and management team. The rural museum in Argyllshire announced it was closing last year after losing its regular grant from Historic Environment Scotland. Following efforts by the local community to save the museum it will reopen on 20 July. [Museums Association](#), [Auchindrain Township](#)

**Also:** Nearly 90% of Brits fear losing arts venues. The local facilities people most feared closing were libraries (46%), music venues (37%) and museums (35%). [Arts Professional](#)

### Private Investment in Culture report highlights mixed funding models in the sector

The Private Investment in Culture survey was commissioned by ACE from the Audience Agency in partnership with MyCake and Eric Lab to better understand the funding models that exist in the cultural sector, focuses on the role that private investment plays. The report covers three financial years from 2021/22 to 2023/24. For a representative group of 3,548 organisations contributed income was stable (16-18%) as a proportion of total income, whilst public funding reduced significantly (from 38% to 25%) and earned income increased (from 45% to 58%). Trusts and foundations make up the majority (£266m, 58%) of contributed income, with individual philanthropy a third (£151m, 33%) and corporate income from individuals the smallest (£43m, 10%). Major and large organisations are much more likely to make use of corporate sponsorship or donations (80% and 60% respectively) than medium or small organisations (35% and 32% respectively). A crucial insight emerging from this research is that public investment remains the catalyst that attracts private money. [ACE](#), [ACE](#) (executive summary, pdf, 6pgs), [ACE](#) (full report, pdf, 145pgs), [Arts Professional](#)

### Disparity in North-South funding revealed in 'State of the North' report

IPPR North's new 'State of the North' report has revealed that London still receives twice as much culture funding as the North, with the gap put at £450 million. Analysis contained in the report shows that in the Arts Council's current funding round (between 2023 and early 2025), the North received £450 million, or £28 per person. At the same time, London received £519 million, or £57 per person. This gap has shrunk from the previous funding round between 2018 and 2022, when IPPR North identified a £700m disparity. [IPPR](#) (press release), [IPPR](#) (report, pdf, 38pgs), [Museums Association](#)

## Sector news and surveys

### Have your say on temporary and touring exhibitions

The Exhibitions Group is conducting a research project to review how temporary and touring exhibitions have evolved across the UK and internationally over the last decade. Over the past ten years, the sector has seen huge change including:

- New models of collaboration
- Innovative partnerships (like MAGNET or Going Places)
- Creative funding solutions
- Responses to challenges such as Covid-19 and Brexit
- Fresh approaches to sustainability, diversity, and audience engagement

Your insights will help TEG understand these shifts and shape recommendations for the future. The survey takes just 10-15 minutes to complete. They are looking for responses on behalf of the organisation rather than personal views. The deadline for the survey is Friday 8 August. All responses are anonymous. If you have questions or need an accessible version, please contact Tamsin Stewart at [tamsin@culturalassociates.co.uk](mailto:tamsin@culturalassociates.co.uk). [TEG](#) (survey)

## Upcoming sector challenges and opportunities

The Museums Association published a useful overview of the reviews and government proposals that face the sector over the coming months and their potential impact. The article summarises the Museum Accreditation Scheme review and Arts Council England review. The Museums Association have also published their response to the Arts Council England review including a call for the arms-length principle to be strengthened to prevent direct interference from government and greater transparency around how and why decisions are made. Arts Industry also took a look at the ACE and Wigmore Hall situation, where the London arts organisations decided to stop seeking funding as a National Portfolio Organisation. [Museums Association](#) (overview), [Museums Association](#) (ACE response), [Arts Industry](#) (TAITMAIL)

## EHRC guidance on sex and gender risks discrimination

Museums Galleries Scotland has responded to the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) Code of Practice consultation on the Equality Act following the UK Supreme Court ruling that the legal definition of a 'woman' for the purposes of the Equality Act 2010 is one based on biological sex. They have expressed concern at the lack of information on how to actively include trans people and highlighted the lack of acknowledgement or reference to intersex people. Further concerns are based on the practical and financial implications of implementing the guidance. [MGS](#), [Museums Association](#), [Telegraph](#), [Times](#), [The Herald](#)

## Are family tickets failing families?

A national study commissioned by ALVA (Association of Leading Visitor Attractions) suggests traditional pricing structures at UK attractions are failing to serve all family demographics with 41% saying a standard family ticket does not match their household structure. The survey had responses from over 1,000 UK adults who regularly care for children under 16. While 41% of respondents said family tickets "usually work out as a cheaper option" for their family, another 41% said family tickets "rarely match my family structure". [M+H Advisor](#)

## Art Fund Teachers Guide

The Museums Trips Guide is a free digital resource from Art Fund which highlights 20 museums that can enrich the school curriculum whether you're organising your first class trip or refreshing your regular offer. The guide includes the curriculum links and costs involved. [Art Fund](#) (press release), [Art Fund](#) (guide, pdf, 26pgs)

## Tourism tax and visitor data

### DCMS museum and galleries performance indicators published

On the 17 July DCMS published their latest annual performance indicators for DCMS sponsored museums and galleries for 2023/24. The data covers visits, visitor satisfaction, regional engagement (including number of UK loan venues) and self generated income of the 15 DCMS sponsored museums and galleries. Headline findings include -

- Between April 2023 and March 2024 there were 40.8 million visits to DCMS sponsored museums and galleries, an increase of 17% from 34.9 million in 2022/23.
- Visitor numbers for museums outside of London have recovered at a slower rate since the COVID-19 pandemic than those within London.
- There were an estimated 17.5 million visits by overseas visitors. This figure is an increase of 53% compared to 2022/23 but a decrease of 23% compared to the figures recorded in 2018/19.
- In 2023/24 there were approximately 1.5 million visits to DCMS sponsored museums and galleries where visitors under the age of 18 participated in onsite organised activities. This is a decrease of 4% compared to the 2022/23 figure and is a 44% decrease compared to the figures recorded in 2018/19, when comparing museums open in both time periods.
- In 2023/24, DCMS sponsored museums and galleries loaned their items to 1,017 venues in the UK. This is a decrease of 5% compared to the 1,069 loan venues in 2022/23 and a decrease of 20% compared to the 1,279 loan venues in 2018/19.
- In 2023/24, the total self-generated income for DCMS sponsored museums and galleries amounted to over £448 million. This is an inflation adjusted increase of 51% over the figures recorded in 2022/23 and an increase of 32% from 2018/19. [Gov.uk](#)

## Participation Survey results show 91% of adults engaged with the arts in the last 12 months

The annual Participation Survey for 2024/25 covers a period from April 2024 to March 2025. It looks at a representative sample of adults in England and asks about their engagement with DCMS and digital sectors in the last 12 months. Headline data includes:

- 45% of adults engaged with museums or galleries at least once in the last 12 months, no significant change from 2023/24 (46%).
- 91% of adults reported that they had engaged with the arts in the last 12 months, a small, but significant, decrease from 2023/24 (from 91.4% to 90.6%).
- 67% of adults engaged with the heritage sector at least once in the last 12 months, a 2 percentage point decrease from 2023/24 (69%), with the most popular places to visit being a park or garden open to the public with historic or artistic features (41%). [Gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk)

## Visitor data published from VisitEngland

VisitEngland's Annual Attractions Survey 2024 data shows that the growth in visits to England's attractions has slowed, with a 1.4% annual increase in visits from 2023 to 2024. Overall, visits to attractions in England were still down 27% compared to pre-pandemic (2019) levels. The most visited free attraction in 2024 was the British Museum with 6.5 million visits (up 11% on 2023). The most visited paid attraction in 2024 was the Tower of London with 2.9 million visits (up 4% on 2023). The biggest growth in visits were to farms and 'visitor/heritage centres' up 11% and 6% respectively. The survey, which gathered information from 1,373 English attractions, shows that the growth seen was fuelled by overseas visitors. International visits to England's attractions overall were up 6% last year compared to 2023. Domestic visits to attractions in 2024 meanwhile were down 1%. [VisitBritain](https://www.visitbritain.com), [VisitBritain](https://www.visitbritain.com) (top 20 most visited free and paid attractions England and Regional 2024). [VisitBritain](https://www.visitbritain.com) (pdf, 31pgs), [M+H Advisor](https://www.m+h.co.uk)

**Also:** Tate director blames Brexit and Covid for slump in visitors, [Guardian](https://www.theguardian.com)

## Calls for tourist tax to support cultural ecosystem

A coalition of mayors from Liverpool city, Greater Manchester, London, the North East, the West Midlands and West Yorkshire, representing 21 million people, have written to Chancellor Rachel Reeves to highlight the fact that England's town and cities could benefit by £1.2bn a year from a tax on tourist accommodation. [Arts Industry](https://www.artsindustry.com) Whilst in Wales the Welsh Government has announced that parliament has voted through legislation that will allow local councils to apply a tourism tax from 2027 at the earliest. [Gov.wales](https://gov.wales), [Western Telegraph](https://www.westerntelegraph.co.uk)

The Museums Association also published a piece looking at the pros and cons of introducing a charge for overseas visitors to museums which includes a look at the idea of an Accommodation Levy. [Museums Association](https://www.museumsassociation.org)

**Also:** Without a tourist tax, we can wave goodbye to free museum admission, [Times](https://www.thetimes.co.uk)





'Treasure: History Unearthed'. Museum of Liverpool. Peover Hoard. © National Museums Liverpool.

## Decolonisation, collections at risk and ethical display

### Decolonisation in museums with a focus on Ukraine

A new free museum guide is available aiming to support museum and cultural heritage professionals globally to include Ukraine in their decolonisation practice. Split into two parts it includes a guide providing practical information and useful resources, with a set of essays further developing key themes. Ukrainian cultural heritage is often mislabelled or misrepresented in cultural, heritage and memory institutions globally. The guide provides an historical overview of Ukraine and also suggests a five-step approach for including Ukraine in your daily practice. The publication is an international partnership by the Ukrainian Institute in collaboration with ICOM UK, ICOM Ukraine and the Museums Association, with support from the British Council. [British Council](#)

**Also:** Inside the ghost museums of Ukraine: exhibits replaced by fragments of war and occupation, Charlotte Higgins in *Illum* and Sviatohirsk, [Guardian](#)

### Manchester Museum asks the public for their thoughts on ethics of display

Following on from their European Museum of the Year Award win which recognised Manchester Museum's work on decolonisation, the museum has been asking members of the public how they feel about the display of human remains in a museum context. Views are being sought on whether the museum should continue to display the mummified remains of an Egyptian woman who lived around 700 BCE. The body of Asru was unwrapped in 1825 and presented to the museum by cotton traders Robert and William Garnett, the sons of a former trader in enslaved African people. People can share their thoughts in the gallery and online. [Manchester Museum](#), [Museums Association](#)

**Also:** Proposed changes to human remains law could have 'unintended consequences', [Museums Association](#)

## Parthenon marbles debate returns following Liz Truss intervention

The former Prime Minister Liz Truss is one of a number of signatories to a letter addressed to Keir Starmer and the Culture Secretary, Lisa Nandy, as well as trustees of the British Museum on the subject of the Parthenon marbles. Organised by campaign group Great British Pac, the letter claims there is a 'covert' plan to return the Parthenon marbles to Greece. The Guardian reported that a spokesperson for the British Museum said: "Discussions with Greece about a Parthenon partnership are ongoing and constructive. We believe that this kind of long-term partnership would strike the right balance between sharing our greatest objects with audiences around the world, and maintaining the integrity of the incredible collection we hold at the museum." [Guardian](#), [Art Newspaper](#), [Sky news](#)

The legalities of returning museum objects are still being played out in the media with an article from Tristram Hunt, Director of the V&A in the [Times](#) on the 6 July entitled 'V&A can't return looted objects. Our hands are tied by law' and arguing that trustees should be allowed to decide what happens to items in their collections. Meanwhile Times journalist Richard Morrison compared the UK approach to French attitudes following an interview with Louvre Director Laurence des Cars. [Times](#)

The debate continues at a time when the Museum Accreditation Scheme is under review by Arts Council England and there are calls for requiring a policy within that scheme that would normalise the practice of repatriation. 'Repatriation is urgent work – it needs to be part of the Accreditation scheme', [Museums Association](#)

**Also:** Why the Benin Bronzes Are Being Returned—and Who Gets Them, [Artnet](#)

## Scotland project to safeguard intangible heritage

Museums Galleries Scotland have launched a new project to raise the profile of the nation's living traditions. Funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, the 'Protection Through Connection: Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) in Scotland' initiative aims to build stronger relationships between cultural and heritage organisations and communities that maintain intangible cultural heritage. The first phase will support the creation of a National ICH Inventory due to be published later in 2025. [MGS](#), [Museums Association](#)

## Climate emergency

### Climate Outreach Case Studies

The charity Climate Outreach has published a number of case studies that look at how to engage the public on the topic of climate change. The 14 stories come from across the UK and beyond and explore examples of co-production, climate literacy training, community organising, futures and foresight techniques, and campaigning. They are grouped by local, regional and national impact. [Climate Outreach](#) (website), [Climate Outreach](#) (case studies, pdf, 51pgs)

### Website sustainability benchmark report from Supercool

Supercool's Cultural Website Sustainability Benchmark Report 2025 looks at the carbon footprint of cultural websites in the UK, tracking 66 organisations' websites including a mix of theatres, touring companies, festivals, museums, sector support organisations, education institutions and arts centres. The report highlights that homepages and event listing pages account for 80% of the page views tracked. Homepages account for some of the highest-weighted pages across the data set. Reducing the weight of these two areas of a website will likely have the biggest overall impact in reducing your website's carbon footprint. Optimising images to reduce monthly emissions and the importance of weighing the impact of digital content such as video is also a factor. [Supercool](#)

**Also:** Why 'devastating' climate control rules for museum collections need a rethink, [Art Newspaper](#) (£)

**Also:** Cool off in culture - Over two thirds of arts and culture venues in London are at higher-than-average climate risk, according to new mapping, [Arts Professional](#)

## Digital

### Call for involvement in the UK's first heritage focused AI platform 'Goose'

The Arts Marketing Association (AMA) is partnering with digital innovation agency, Make Sense Of It, to create the UK's first AI platform designed to support heritage organisations with marketing and audience development. The platform, supported by the National Lottery Heritage Fund's Heritage Innovation Fund, will provide heritage organisations of all sizes with an AI-powered 24/7 mentor, coach, and virtual colleague to address a critical marketing skills gap in the sector. Heritage organisations interested in participating in the co-design process or beta testing can express their interest by emailing Goose's Innovation Lead, Carol Jones: [carol@a-m-a.co.uk](mailto:carol@a-m-a.co.uk). [M+H Advisor](#)

### Responsible AI report and toolkit from ACE

Arts Council England have published a report on the responsible use of AI, alongside an AI Practical Toolkit made up of seven guides to help you take a thoughtful and collaborative approach to building AI policies and practices that match your organisation's purpose. The 24 page report written by Dr Oonagh Murphy and the New Technologies and Innovation Team looks at the internal use of AI within the Arts Council but also explores how Arts Council England can contribute to UK AI policy development. The toolkit has specific guidance on developing an AI policy and offers support on delivery a successful AI pilot project. [ACE](#) (report), [ACE](#) (toolkit)

### London Museum launches AI Collections chatbot 'Clio'

London Museum has launched a new AI chatbot which will answer questions about its collections. Clio 1.0 is a conversational search agent which will help users explore the museum's collections and stories more intuitively, using natural language. It only uses London Museum's trusted data to answer your questions. Countering questions on energy usage and sustainability, the Museum explains that asking 500–1000 queries using the new technology equates to using about the same energy as boiling one kettle of water. [London Museum](#), [M+H Advisor](#)

**Also:** Imperial War Museums makes 20,000 hours of oral history accessible with AI, [Blooloop](#)

**Also:** Is Google about to destroy the web? This article looks at the impact of a new AI tool on its search engine, [BBC](#)



Treasure: History Unearthed. Museum of Liverpool. Rosset lock ring. Bronze age lock ring - damaged and crumpled. © Wrexham County Borough Museum.

## Funding news and opportunities

### Museum Futures programme launched in Scotland

Museum Futures is new £4 million partnership programme developed by the Scottish Government, Museums Galleries Scotland, and The National Lottery Heritage Fund, that will support new approaches and collaboration across the museum sector. In a 2024 survey conducted by Museums Galleries Scotland and DC Research 11% of respondents reported that their organisation could be at risk of closure within the next year. Developed in direct response to the significant challenges faced by the sector, Museum Futures creates new pathways which will support the innovation needed to transition to a more sustainable way of working. It will offer support through a range of different grants that will test new approaches and address sector needs. The first scheme to open is the Leadership Capacity Fund which offers up to £60,000 to backfill or increase the hours of your leadership team in order to free up capacity for strategic thinking and development. The deadline for expressions of interest is 13 August. Further funds coming soon include Addressing Barriers to Progress and Innovation and Entrepreneurship Funds. There are also options for wrap around support offered in partnership with a number of organisations including the Arts Marketing Association and the Association for Cultural Enterprises. [MGS](#)

### Funding for digitising UK natural science collections

The Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) has opened applications for funding to establish a Digitisation Hub for Natural Science Collections as part of the Distributed System of Scientific Collections (DiSSCo). The project lead must be based at a UK organisation eligible for AHRC funding and projects must include organisations that hold significant botanical and entomological collections. AHRC will fund 100% of the full economic cost (FEC) of projects which can be from £200,000 to £2,500,000. The funding is for up to two years and must complete by 31 March 2028. The deadline for applications is 16 September 2025 at 4pm UK time. [UKRI](#)



## Mayor of London's Green Finance Fund

Launched in 2023, the Green Finance Fund (GFF) is open to London organisations, lending up to £500m to projects that help London meet its net zero ambitions. The GFF offers uniquely flexible loans with low interest rates. The minimum loan size is £1m, which could consist of aggregated expenditure for smaller projects. Loans are expected to be below £75m, however this can be discussed on a project-by-project basis. Loan terms are flexible and can be up to 25 years and can be used to support the decarbonisation of accredited museums. The expression of interest submission deadline is 4 September. [London.gov](https://www.london.gov)

## Four Scottish museums awarded over £225K

Museums Galleries Scotland has awarded over £225K to four museums to enhance visitor experience, sustainability and community engagement. Glasgow Life has received £60,000 to enhance the retail and catering space at People's Palace as part of the museum's redevelopment project; Nairn Museum has received £58,225 to support the development of a new collections cataloguing system, which will be publicly available; Glencoe Folk Museum has received £53,162 to fund a Project Director post to oversee the museum's transformational capital redevelopment project; and The David Livingstone Trust has received £54,200 to support the skills development of its 50 volunteers. [MGS](https://mgs.org.uk)

## Awards

### Volunteer Leader of the Year Award opens

Managing volunteers is an often overlooked but crucial part of the heritage and museum ecosystem. The Volunteer Leader of the Year Award, sponsored by TeamKinetic, celebrates the achievements of those who have made a difference and recognises innovative and outstanding examples of volunteering leadership and management within the sector. The Heritage Volunteer Group will announce the winner at their November Conference. Applications are welcome from all areas of the heritage sector. The nomination form can be downloaded from the home page and should be returned to [heritagevolunteeringgroup@gmail.com](mailto:heritagevolunteeringgroup@gmail.com) by 31st August 2025. [HVG](https://www.hvg.org.uk)

### Reminder of the European Heritage Awards 2026

The European Heritage Awards celebrate excellence in the protection, conservation, research, education, and promotion of tangible to intangible cultural heritage. The deadline for entries is 9 September 2025. You can see the previous UK winners via their website. [Europa Nostra](https://www.europa-nostra.org) (apply), [Europa Nostra](https://www.europa-nostra.org) (previous winners)

## Continuing Professional Development

### Spark! from AIM accepting applications

Spark! is for those in a significant leadership role including individual museum directors and other senior leaders. It aims to strengthen professional and personal resilience with a programme of support and development for independent museum leaders. Offered by AIM (Association of Independent Museums) for a cohort of 12 participants online, the sessions include action learning sets with groups of six people, workshops and two, one-to-one mentoring sessions. Spark! runs from 14 October 2025 to 9 January 2026. Participants are asked for a contribution of £100 to take part and there are a limited number of funded places for accredited museums in Wales (or working towards accreditation). The deadline for applications is 22 September. [AIM](https://www.aim.org.uk)

### GEM Emerging Leaders Programme

In November GEM will be running their Emerging Leaders Programme which supports anyone interested in taking their first step into a leadership position. Run over four weeks in November the course is delivered in a combination of in-person and online sessions. Topics include: what leaders do and how they do it, knowing the numbers, governance and driving efficiency, and persuasion. The course costs £275 for GEM members and £330 for non-members. [GEM](https://www.gem.org.uk)

## Governance Now 2025 Conference

The Clore Leadership flagship conference which explores cultural sector governance will be held on 4 November in London. Presented by Clore Leadership and the Cultural Governance Alliance, this year's focus is 'Power' and the day will navigate the interplay of power across culture, policy and practice in the context of a complex political landscape and challenging funding environment. Speakers including Darren Henley, ACE, Caroline Norbury, Creative UK and Jenny Waldman, Art Fund, will take part in a series of keynotes, roundtables, provocations and breakout sessions. Topics for discussion will range from governance and board dynamics to philanthropy and inclusive recruitment. Booking will open w/c 28 July. [Clore](#)

## Conferences and events

### International Cultural Heritage Law Course

The short course on International Cultural Heritage Law runs across five two-hour online sessions from 25 September to 23 October. The course from the British Institute of International and Comparative Law (BIICL) will help participants to understand:

- What is 'cultural heritage' under international law?
- How does international law protect cultural heritage?
- What is the role of States and non-state actors in protecting cultural heritage?
- How has the conceptualisation of cultural heritage changed overtime?

Course topics include intangible cultural heritage. The course costs £300 with discounts for members of BIICL and multiple attendees from one organisation. [BIICL](#)

### ICOM Conference - skills sharing between Europe and Africa

'Heritage, Museums, Collections: Professionals' Sharing of Skills between Africa and Europe' is an ICOM conference in Rome, Italy, running from 25-27 September 2025. The intentions is to exchange views about the better ways of considering African museum heritage in European museums by comparing concepts of museums and heritage in European and African thought and practice. For the preliminary programme and registration please see the website. [ICOM Italia](#)

### Essentials in Legacy Fundraising

Arts Fundraising and Philanthropy are running this online course across two half days on the 1 and 8 October. Suitable for all levels, legacy gifts can play a major role in organisational resilience, beneficiary impact and donor satisfaction. However, it is also a sensitive area that needs to be handled with care. Attendees will learn the hallmarks of good legacy fundraising campaigns and explore the opportunities for legacy giving in the current climate. The course costs £75 +VAT for both days and there is a concession rate of £50 +VAT for freelancers, sector partner members, charities and organisations with a turnover of £500,000 or less. [Arts Fundraising](#)

### Visitor Attractions Conference (VAC) 2025

Hosted in London at the Queen Elizabeth II Conference Centre in Westminster, the VAC will share the latest innovations, thinking and news from practitioners and the top consultants across the sector – whether your interest lies in parks and gardens, historic or heritage centres, theme parks, museums and galleries, zoos or science and discovery centres. Held on Thursday 16 October, confirmed speakers include Sharon Ament, Director of the London Museum and Kate Logan, Operations, Experience and Engagement Director at English Heritage. Sessions will cover crisis management best practice, sustainable transport and the latest tourism legislation and policy. The early bird rate until 29 August is £239 with a group rate at £215 and student fee of £75. [VAC](#)



'Treasure: History Unearthed'. Mount Making Action Shots. © National Museums Liverpool.

## Appointments and resignations

The University of Oxford has appointed **Gavin J. Svenson** as the Director of the Museum of Natural History, succeeding Professor Paul Smith who retired in September 2024 after 13 years in post. Svenson is moving from the Cleveland Museum of Natural History where he was Curator of Invertebrate Zoology, and since 2022, Chief Science Officer. He is one of the world's foremost experts on praying mantis and will take up his role in September 2025. [Uni of Oxford](#), [Museums Association](#)

**Peter Armstrong** has been named as the new CEO of the British Motor Museum in Warwickshire. The announcement comes after the retirement of Jeff Coupe who left the organisation in March after 23 years as CEO. Armstrong has been living and working in the USA for the last ten years and joins the Museum from the Mystic Seaport Museum in Connecticut, USA, where he has worked as President & CEO for the last 5 years. [British Motor Museum](#), [M+H Advisor](#)

**David Gaimster** has been announced as the new Director at Strawberry Hill House, Twickenham. He was most recently Chief Executive Officer of the South Australia Museum, Adelaide, prior to

which he was CEO of the Auckland War Memorial Museum and Director of the Hunterian in Glasgow. Strawberry Hill House was designed by the parliamentarian and antiquarian Horace Walpole around 1749 and houses Walpole's Strawberry Hill collection, comprising several thousand items. [Strawberry Hill House](#), [Museums Association](#)

After more than 30 years service, **Clare Lilley** is stepping down from the Yorkshire Sculpture Park. Appointed Director in 2022, Lilley was previously Director of Programming and held a range of curatorial posts. Deputy director Kevin Rodd will serve as interim director during the recruitment process. Lilley's concluding legacy is the opening of a landmark exhibition by South African artist William Kentridge. [Yorkshire Sculpture Park](#), [M+H Advisor](#)

## Catch up

New Skyscraper at 85 Gracechurch Street to Integrate Roman Basilica Into Office and Visitor Experience, 24 July 2025, [ExperienceUK](#)

Nationally important needlework collection donated to National Museums NI, 17 July 2025, [Museums Association](#)

What if every artwork you've ever seen is a fake? 10 July 2025, [Guardian](#)

Civilisations returns with unprecedented access to the British Museum's collection, 8 July 2025, [BBC](#)

Stonehenge begins work on new education centre, 2 July 2025, [M+H Advisor](#)

## International news

U.S. Withdraws from UNESCO as 'Woke' Culture Wars Go Global, 24 July 2025, [Artlyst](#)

Police rescue thousands of artworks From Haitian museum amid violence, 21 July 2025, [Artnet](#)

The Louvre makeover that will push up price of seeing Mona Lisa, 19 July 2025, [Times](#) (£)

Women born in East Germany have lived between two worlds. That's why we're shaking up art and politics. The stories of curator Kathleen Reinhardt and provenance expert Lynn Rother show how exclusion can be turned to powerful insight, 15 July 2025, [Guardian](#)

Creative and European values funding programmes set to merge in next budget cycle, 9 July 2025, [Euractiv](#), [LinkedIn](#)

## Jobs

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

- [Head of Adult Programmes - British Museum](#)
- [Web developer - National Museum of the Royal Navy](#)
- [Assistant Curator of Plants - Leeds Museums & Galleries](#)
- [Public Programmes Producer - Black Country Living Museum](#)
- [Works on Paper and Photographs Conservator - National Portrait Gallery](#)

This newsletter can also be read online at <http://www.nationalmuseums.org.uk/news/newsletters/>