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Enjoy unforgettable Festive Celebrations at Beamish, The Living Museum of the North, from Saturday 22nd November to Wednesday 24 December.

NMDC news

New research on museum land and outdoor spaces management

NMDC, AIM, and Welsh Government have published research that explores the opportunities and challenges presented by land and outdoor spaces. Produced by MEL Research, the report seeks to capture a snapshot of practice across museums and investigating the multitude of roles land plays within these organisations. This includes examining land as a component of business models; as a medium for audience and community support; and as a tool for climate resilience and adaptation. The report includes a number of case studies from AIM members as well as a toolkit that allows museums and heritage organisations to start putting the recommendations into practice in their own land management strategies.

AIM are also hosting a webinar on 22 January to present these research findings and give you an opportunity to ask your questions of the researchers, MEL Research (you don't have to be an AIM member to attend). [AIM](#) (research, pdf, 59 pgs), [AIM](#) (webinar)

Members' news

Young V&A wins the 2026 Council of Europe Museum Prize

Congratulations to Young V&A which has been selected as the winner of the 2026 Council of Europe Museum Prize which was announced on 2 December. According to the committee representative for the Museum Prize, Luz Martínez Seijo (Spain, SOC): "The Young V&A Museum is a clearly outstanding museum in terms of its mission to engage visitors with the themes of human rights, equality, participation and cultural democracy. It conveys a strong message of empowerment of young generations, particularly those from deprived areas who may have limited contact with mainstream and institutional cultural offerings, with experiences that can help them embrace the future with confidence and participate fully in democratic societies."

Being an important part of the European Museum of the Year Award scheme, the Council of Europe Museum Prize is awarded to a museum which puts particular emphasis on European perspectives and the interplay between local and European identities, on a commitment to and presentation of key value of democracy, human rights, intercultural dialogue, of bridging cultures and overcoming social and political borders. The 2026 winners in other categories will be announced at the EMYA2026 Annual Conference and Awards Ceremony that will take place in Bilbao from 10 to 14 June 2026. [EMYA](#), [Independent](#)

Tate artwork loans reach nearly 3 million

Across the 2004-2025 financial year Tate has loaned 564 artworks to 78 UK institutions reaching 2,819,115 visitors from across the country. Data from the 66 institutions that shared their viewing figures for those exhibitions and displays shows that Tate reached more people through their regional UK loans than visitors to the Rijksmuseum last year, and nearly as many visitors as MOMA had in 2024.

Petersfield Museum and Art Gallery who borrowed artwork for their Peggy Guggenheim: Petersfield to Palazzo exhibition said: "The experience of borrowing from Tate gave us, as an organisation, the confidence to consider further requests from Tate in the future to support our developing temporary exhibition programme. Ensuring that the national collection can be seen outside of cities is very important." Tullie in Carlisle said of their Sheila Fell Exhibition: "It was amazing having these wonderful loans from such significant collections. I have met several people who are still talking about the exhibition and who came many times. Sheila Fell's family were delighted with the way we celebrated her work. It was the generous loans by the lenders that made all the difference, many thanks for your support." [Tate](#) (loans policy)

Discovery Museum awarded £193,000 by the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF)

Newcastle's Discovery Museum, managed by North East Museums, is celebrating a £193,000 Heritage Fund award to develop a new flexible space to host high profile temporary exhibitions.

The new space will replace the Working Lives gallery which will close at the end of 2025. The Discovery Museum tells the story of Tyneside and showcases world-class collections in a large

Victorian building, once the headquarters of the Cooperative Wholesale Society (CWS). Keith Merrin, Director of North East Museums said: "We know how important it is to keep the visitor offer fresh and interesting. These funds will allow us to create a new flexible space that will enable us to deliver more high-quality exhibitions, experiences and events. We'd like to say thank you to the National Lottery Heritage Fund and all Lottery players for supporting this development which will improve the museum experience for our visitors." [North East Museums](#)

Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery celebrates 140 years with fundraising campaign

'Your Museums, Your Move' the new fundraising campaign from Birmingham Museums Trust, the charity which looks after sites across the city, appeals to residents and businesses to donate to protect the city's cultural heritage. The Trust looks after Birmingham's collection of around one million objects across their nine museums, and whilst they are supported by funding from Birmingham City Council and Arts Council England only half of the trust's costs are covered, meaning that for every pound it receives it must raise the same amount from donations and sales. The campaign aims to raise £2m over the next two years and was launched on the 140th birthday of Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery. Sara Wajid and Zak Mensah, Co-Chief Executives of Birmingham Museums Trust, said: "Your Museums, Your Move is a call to action to the people of Birmingham and beyond, including businesses and organisations, to invest in the city's greatest cultural asset, helping us to create a world class museum service which can be at the forefront of making Birmingham a great place to live, work, play and visit." [Birmingham Museums](#), [BBC](#)

V&A East Museum announces April opening date

On Saturday 18 April 2025 the V&A East Museum will open at the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park with two free permanent 'Why We Make ' galleries that spotlight global culture through the V&A's collection. 'The Music is Black: A British Story' will be the first temporary exhibition at the new site which includes Joan Armatrading's childhood guitar, fashion worn by Little Simz and newly acquired photographs by Jennie Baptiste, Dennis Morris, Eddie Otchere and Sam White plus a partnership with BBC Music and East Bank. V&A East Museum will be free to all and opens seven-days-a-week, with late night openings to 22:00 every Thursday and Saturday. Tickets to the paid for temporary exhibition will go on sale in 2026. [V&A East Museum](#) (press release, pdf), [Museums Association](#), [Art Newspaper](#) (£)

Also: 'Young people can come in and have life-changing moments': Gus Casely-Hayford on V&A East, a new museum for Gen Z, [Guardian](#)

National Gallery recruit Citizen Assembly and name expert panel

The National Gallery has recruited the first round of participants for NG Citizens who will help shape the future of the National Gallery. Meeting for the first time in November 2025 they will continue to meet across five sessions to March 2026. The Gallery has also named an expert panel who will support the process with 17 members including Nusrat Ahmed, Curator, Manchester Museum, Andrew Ellis, Chief Executive Art UK, and Rebecca Lyons, Director, Pitzhanger Manor & Gallery. [National Gallery](#)

Industrial action continues at Tate and British Library

Over 150 members of the Public and Commercial Services union (PCS) at Tate Galleries were on strike from 26 November to 2 December following a vote and dispute over pay. The current offer of between 2% and 3% has been rejected by PCS members in Tate Britain, Tate Modern, Tate Liverpool, and Tate St Ives. Whilst at the British Library it was announced on 2 December that over 300 PCS members will strike from Monday 8 to Friday 12 December 2025 in their ongoing dispute over pay. Chief Executive of the British Library Rebecca Lawrence stepped down on the 4 November after less than one year in post. [PCS](#) (Tate), [Guardian](#) (Tate), [M+H Advisor](#) (Tate), [PCS](#) (BL), [Guardian](#) - Does Britain value culture any more? Ask the striking workers at the British Library.

Members in the news

- **Hull Maritime Museum** Fit-Out Progress Marks Major Phase in £27.5m Cultural Investment, 24 November 2025, [Experience UK](#)
- **RAMM** welcomes 12 community residents to guide museum programming, 11 November 2025, [M+H Advisor](#)
- Q&A | 'Appealing to the love of future generations is the most powerful incentive for action', **Horniman Museum and Gardens**, 7 November 2025, [Museums Association](#)

- **National Army Museum** and House of Memories launch dementia support app for veterans, 7 November 2025, [M+H Advisor](#)
- City centre museum gets new flood barriers, **Derby Museum of Making**, 1 November 2025, [BBC](#)

Images this month

This month we are enjoying the festive celebrations at Beamish, The Living Museum of the North. Winner of Art Fund Museum of the Year for 2025, the museum was founded in 1970 and brings the region's history to life at 1820s Pockerley, 1900s Town, 1900s Pit Village, 1940s Farm, 1950s Town and 1950s Spain's Field Farm. You can enjoy Christmas magic from the past from Saturday, 22nd November to Wednesday, 24th December. [Beamish](#)

Government news

Autumn Budget and sector responses

The Autumn Budget was delivered by the Chancellor Rachel Reeves on 26 November with headlines focused around the removal of the two child limit on Universal Credit and personal tax implications. Although no direct announcements were made on museums, heritage or culture, impact will be felt through the rise in national living wage for over 21s and the increase in national minimum wage for over 18s. You can read more on the budget impact on the sector from [AIM](#), [Charity Finance Group](#), [Museums Association](#), [Arts Professional](#) (£), and [Campaign for the Arts](#). [Gov.uk](#), [House of Commons](#) (Budget summary), [Guardian](#) (general budget impact), [Financial Times](#) (general budget impact)

Curriculum Review responses

Following the final report of the Curriculum and Assessment Review which was welcomed by NMDC in the November Newsletter, you can catch up with the Museums Association response which summarises sector comments and the Campaign for the Arts has produced a very clear breakdown of the changes and their likely impact. [Gov.uk](#)(final report), [Museum Association](#), [Campaign for the Arts](#), [NMDC](#) (response)

Also: Fewer than 100 schools offering art history A-level, report finds, [Arts Professional](#)

UK/Ireland Strategic Partnership announced

Following the UK-Ireland Summit in March 2025, DCMS has been working with the Irish Government on a strategic partnership which will provide opportunities for collaborations between leading UK and Irish cultural organisations. The British Council is now inviting applications for funding for joint projects through the UK-Ireland 2030 Cultural Co-operation Programme. Projects supported by the programme will fall into one of the following three strands:

- A. Joint programming & artistic collaborations in Ireland and the UK, and jointly in other territories
- B. Professional exchange & development for staff at all stages of their careers, and across a range of professions
- C. Joint research & policy initiatives

In order to apply, cultural organisations in the UK and the members of the Council of National Cultural Institutions in Ireland need to identify a bilateral partner or partner organisation they are interested in collaborating with. Once they have agreed to take forward a project together, proposals should be developed and sent to Cultural.Institutions@ccs.gov.ie by Thursday 8 January 2026. [British Council](#) (funding information), [British Council](#) (Partnership details)

Visitor Levy Consultation

The government has opened a consultation on the design of a new local overnight visitor levies system which will be in the control of Mayoral Strategic Authorities. The consultation will close on 18 February 2026. The Arts Industry has written about the implications of a 'Tourist Tax' and questioning whether it will aid the arts, also referencing the March report by The Cultural Policy Unit 'A City Tourism Charge: The Case for a Progressive Levy on Overnight Visitor Accommodation'. The Centre for Cities wrote a piece on the levy on the 19 August, 'Tourist taxes are not about keeping museums free'. [Gov.uk](#), [TAIT](#), [CPU](#) (report, pdf, 34pgs), [Centre for Cities](#)

Digital Markets, Competition and Consumers Act delayed until autumn 2026

The Department for Business and Trade has delayed implementation of the Digital Markets and Consumer Credit Act until autumn 2026 recognising the time needed for organisations with membership schemes to prepare for implementation. In August the Museums Association reported on concerns from the sector on the impact of the two-week 'cooling off' period for memberships which could have a potentially detrimental effect on admission fees and Gift Aid. [Museums Association](#)

Also: DCMS unveils criteria for £3.5m UK town of culture competition, [Gov.uk](#) (press release) [Gov.uk](#) (Expression of Interest information), [Arts Professional](#) (£)



Christmas at Beamish - See your favourite areas of Beamish decorated for the festive season.

Cultural funding pressures

Two more museums set to close as River and Rowing Museum is listed for £3m

The **Museum of Carpet**, in Kidderminster, Worcestershire, which has operated for 13 years, announced it would be closing permanently, as reported by the [BBC](#). The museum houses an extensive collection of objects, archives, books and photographs relating to 300 years of carpet history. Geoffrey Gilbert, Chair of the Carpet Museum Trust, said; "... we're getting to the stage where we don't see any revenue coming in one way or another, so we've had to decide as a business model we're not financially viable any longer and we have to close the museum." He also confirmed The Carpet Museum Trust would "still keep going" and look after the collections during the museum's absence, and he was hopeful the museum could reopen again in the future. [Carpet Museum](#), [Metro](#) (Carpet Museum).

The **Quaker Tapestry Museum** in Kendal, Cumbria, also announced it is to close on 13 December due to financial pressures. Despite winning the 2025 Small Visitor Attraction of the Year award at the Cumbria Tourism Awards the museum has been unable to raise enough funds to continue. Founded in 1981, they moved to a permanent site in Kendal's historic Quaker Meeting House in 1994. Six

permanent members of staff are being made redundant due to the closure. The museum also has 12 volunteers. [Quaker Tapestry Museum](#), [BBC](#), [Museums Association](#) (both closures)

The [Museums Association](#) reported that the **River and Rowing Museum** building in Henley, which closed to the public in September 2025, has been for sale with a price of £3m. A decision is still being made on the contents of the museum which amounts to more than 35,000 physical items. Expressions of interest in the collection are requested by 6 February 2026. [Museums Association](#). The [BBC](#) reported on protestors who fear the new entry fees at the **Museum of Oxford**, voted in by Oxford City Council, will 'kill off' the museum. Plans are set for a £4 entry fee with concessionary fee of £2 from January. Concerns are also growing in **Bristol** after the council proposed to reduce its funding for the Cultural Investment Programme by £635,000 by 2029. [Bristol 24/7](#). **Foxton Canal Museum in Market Harborough**, Leicestershire, which has been running for nearly 40 years has also set up a Crowdfunder to raise £20,000 with fears the museum could close after visitor numbers were badly hit earlier this year when Foxton Locks was closed to boats due to drought. [Foxton Canal Museum](#), [Harborough FM](#)

Lincoln Castle and museum boosts economy by £15m

The [BBC](#) reported on Lincolnshire County Council's statistics that showed Lincoln Castle and other attractions were visited 1.5 million times, with the castle alone generating £11m. The council manages the castle, Lincoln Museum and Usher Gallery, The Battle of Britain Memorial Flight Visitor Centre and the Museum of Lincolnshire Life. The council said the economic impact would grow further when Lincoln Museum opens next year, after a £1.7m redevelopment. [Lincolnshire County Council](#)

Corporate sponsorship opportunities for the sector explored with new report

The European Sponsorship Association (ESA) has produced a 34 page guide to Arts and Culture Sponsorship for corporate organisations after a survey revealed that despite private companies and brands expressing enthusiasm about sponsorship opportunities, many remain uncertain about how best to do so. The survey which ran earlier this year from January to March found that 61% of brands reported never having sponsored a cultural organisation, but 62% were open to doing so. The guide which was launched at the National Portrait Gallery on 27 November highlighted one of the key barriers was lack of knowledge with only 32% of respondents saying they felt well informed about arts and culture sponsorship. There are a number of case studies listed in the guide including Historic Royal Palaces and the Courtauld. [ESA](#) (guide), [Arts Professional](#) (£)

Also: Case study | Corporate membership schemes, [Museums Association](#)

Also: National Trust reports 'solid financial position' despite economic pressures, [Museums Association](#)

Sector news

Art UK receive Lottery funding to lead the sector on public domain art

The National Lottery Heritage Fund has awarded Art UK £295,000 to fund vital investments in Art UK's digital infrastructure that will allow the website to show millions of artworks, implement IIIF and zoom, and enable high-res image downloads and the better sharing of object records. The ultimate programme will support UK public collections to adopt open access for images of artworks that are no longer protected by copyright with plans to apply for a full delivery phase grant of £1,695,355. The partners in this programme include GLAM-E Lab, who are working to create and share an improved interactive open-access guidance toolkit for collections, and the Institute for Digital Culture at the University of Leicester who will help with the development of AI-assisted image search that integrates support from Art UK's network of volunteers. [Art UK](#), [LinkedIn](#) (post from Art UK Chief Executive Andrew Ellis)

Museum Mapping Report highlights complex picture of museum closures over the last 25 years

Published by the Mapping Museums Lab at Birkbeck, University of London, the research which covered the years 2000-2025, found that the sector has grown with 870 museums opening over that period, with 524 closures. The data shows that museums are more likely to fail in their first decade of operation and over half of the medium museums closing were local authority museums. Although the sector is growing with respect to the total number of museums in operation, the organisations that open and those that close are not of the same type and the new museums do not have equivalent reach. Fiona Candlin, the Director of the Mapping Museums Lab, interviewed for the Museums Association, highlighted that the growth rate of museums has “flattened” in recent years and the sector is ageing, with fewer new museums opening every year. Prior to 2020, collections from closed museums were transferred to other local authority museums, and the museum buildings found alternative uses. Now local authorities are more likely to retain the museum buildings and to keep the collections in situ. Reassuringly, the report has found no irresponsible disposals of collections. Reasons for closure included -

- Financial / funding cuts
- Loss of premises
- Changes of support e.g. Ministry of Defence
- Problems with the museum building e.g. deterioration, poor facilities
- Amalgamation of museums

The report explores the complex nature of the sector and highlights that closures are not always a loss of collections but it does acknowledge the loss to local communities and the huge emotional fallout for staff and volunteers. Audiences and communities also deeply regretted the closing of their museums. Museum Closure in the UK 2000-25 was awarded £997,000 by the Arts and Humanities Research Council. Research began in October 2023 and will continue until September 2026 with a monograph due in 2027 featuring archival and interview based research. [Museum Mapping, Museums Association](#)

ACE report explores supporting the art ecosystem

A new report commissioned by Arts Council England and produced by ArtTactic explores the relationships between publicly funded museums and galleries, with collectors, philanthropists, commercial galleries and auction houses. Focusing on contemporary collecting, and regional museums and galleries in particular, the report examines where these relationships are strong, where gaps remain, and what steps could strengthen the ecosystem. Part of the key findings focuses are on Acceptance in Lieu (AIL) and the Cultural Gifts Scheme (CGS), which provide essential ways for important artworks and objects of cultural interest to enter public collections. It highlights that both are hindered by complexity, limited awareness, and outdated financial thresholds. Reform, simplification, and targeted promotion are needed to realise their full potential. ACE has published a response to the report. [ACE](#) (press release), [ArtTactic](#) (report, pdf, 32pgs), [ACE](#) (response)

'Together We Act' campaign brings Arts and Heritage Marketing community together

The Arts Marketing Association (AMA) has launched 'Together We Act: Building the skills we need' – a new campaign looking to bring cultural marketers and organisation leaders together to shape shared responses and solutions to three key challenge areas. The three challenge areas are Financial Pressures, Political Landscape and AI & Digital Confidence. The AMA has launched a survey which runs until 10am on Monday 15 December to build up a comprehensive picture of current concerns, support needs and hear about tactics and strategies that are working well. Data shared will influence AMA strategy, training and resources over the next year – while being used to highlight what's working and platform pressing concerns with the wider cultural sector. [AMA](#) (campaign), [AMA](#) (survey)

138 additions made to the 'At Risk' register

Historic England has identified 138 sites that have been added to the 'At Risk' register in 2025. They include 63 buildings and structures, 58 places of worship, 10 archaeology entries, 4 park and gardens and 4 conservation areas. These include the Hill Garden Pergola on Hampstead Heath in London, the birthplace of vaccination known as Dr Jenner's Hut in the Garden of the Chantry in Gloucestershire, the Church of St Wendreda, a medieval church in Cambridgeshire, and Cromford Mills in Derbyshire, known as the home of the modern factory system. Over the last year 129 entries have been removed from the register for positive reasons. [Historic England](#) (press release), [Historic England](#) (register, latest findings and searchable map), [BBC](#)

National Lottery Open Week 2026

National Lottery Open Week will take place from Saturday 7 – Sunday 15 March 2026. For 2026 they are asking Lottery funded projects to share 'hidden gems' – the unique and little-known things that make your project extra-special. Free or 2-for-1 entry is a popular and straightforward offer; for those venues already free to visit, guided tours, workshops, taster sessions, a free gift, digital offer, or access to a space or experience usually closed to the public have all worked well in the past. Take a look at their website for inspiration. [NLHF](#)

Awards

Art Fund Museum of the Year nominations open with increase in prize pot

Applications are now open for any UK based public museum, gallery, historic place, library or archive to apply for Art Fund's Museum of the Year. One outstanding winner will take home the £120,000 prize and the remaining four finalists will each receive £20,000, increased for 2026 from £15,000. All shortlisted museums also receive the support of Art Fund throughout the campaign, which includes national press coverage opportunities; bespoke marketing support and other exciting collaborations and partnerships. As long as the applicant has spaces for the public to visit and experience the visual arts or other object-based collections they can apply. Applications are open until 5pm on Monday 19 January. [Art Fund](#)

Blooloo Museum Influencer list for 2025 announced

50 museum professionals that lead the sector have been named by Blooloo in their annual influencer list that highlights 50 key individuals whose innovation and creativity are integral in shaping the future of museums. The global selection comes from museums, art galleries, cultural institutions and heritage sites and points to the vital role the sector plays in society. Included in the list are Tim Reeve, Deputy Director and Chief Operating Officer of the V&A, Rhiannon Hiles, Chief Executive at Beamish, The Living Museum of the North, Jenny Cousins, Director of the Food Museum in Suffolk and JC Niala, Head of Research, Teaching and Collections at the History of Science Museum, University of Oxford. [Blooloo](#)

Apollo Awards for 2025

The Apollo Awards celebrate major achievements in the art and museum worlds, commending remarkable work by individuals and institutions in historical and contemporary fields. Gabriele Finaldi (Director) and John Booth (Chair of Trustees) at the National Gallery were joint winners of 'Personality of the Year' in recognition of NG200 celebrations and the reopening of the Sainsbury Wing. 'Acquisition of the Year' went to the Ashmolean Museum for their purchase of The Crucifixion with the Virgin, Saint John the Evangelist and the Magdalen (early 1420s) by Fra Angelico. 'Exhibition of the Year' was awarded to 'Siena: The Rise of Painting, 1300–1350' a collaboration between the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the National Gallery in London. [Apollo](#)

NMDC members recognised in VisitEngland Visitor Attraction Accolades

The Visitor Attraction Accolades for 2024-2025 recognise excellence within the visitor attraction sector covering all aspects of what makes an outstanding visitor experience. 78 English attractions have been awarded Accolades across five categories. The Imperial War Museum, London, National Gallery and Black Country Living Museum received 'Gold' awards for overall excellence and Royal Air Force Museum was commended for 'Best Told Story'. [VisitEngland](#)

Repatriation and restitution

Ipsos poll reveals public attitudes to our colonial history

Focusing on the UK's changing 'culture wars' this Ipsos poll produced for King's College London has some revealing statistics on division, tension and common ground. In particular it is worth looking at the public's view on our colonial past which 34% believe is something to be proud of versus 23% who believe it is something to be ashamed of. Also the age breakdown behind those figures with 14% of women aged 16-29 agreeing our colonial past is something to be proud of and 31% of males in the same age group. [KCL](#)

Law change enables restitution on moral grounds

National museums have been excluded from new rules which were passed as part of the Charities Act 2022 and came into effect on 27 November. The changes were originally put on hold by the previous Conservative government amid concerns that they would override the statutes that prevent some museums, mostly nationals, from freely deaccessioning objects. For non-national museums established as charities, the legislation allows for authorisation of transferring property on a "moral basis" (known as an *ex gratia* transfer or payment). 16 museums are specifically excluded from the legislation, including the British Museum, Tate and the National Gallery, due to the existing statutory restrictions which prevent them from disposing of items from their collections except in very limited circumstances. [Gov.uk](#), [Museums Association](#), [Arts Professional](#) (£)

Museums Association shares best practice in repatriation

The Museums Association has published a number of case studies highlighting best practice in returning items from collections to their communities or countries of origin. Each case study includes a top tips section. [Museums Association](#)

Also: Interview: What's missing from natural history collections? Maria Dragoi, UCL Museum Studies alumna and current PhD candidate, discusses her research into the Grant Museum's entomology collection and the importance of interpreting collections through a decolonial lens. [UCL](#)



Christmas at Beamish Museum - Head to The 1940s Farm to discover how people celebrated a wartime Christmas.

Digital

Evaluating digital media on fashion

In this interesting blog from Georgina Brooke there are some great insights into an evaluation of the Fashion Museum in Bath and their online content. Currently closed to the public until 2030 whilst the collection is moved to a new building, work is underway to make the online collections accessible. To understand more about what might be most effective for new and existing users they presented a range of digital media for feedback – from TikTok videos to snippets from longer-form YouTube videos, through to blog posts and collections-related articles. The feedback is shared in this post.

[Cultural Content](#)

LinkedIn top tips from DCN

As LinkedIn continues to grow its influence as a social media platform following the 'X'/Twitter exodus it is well worth catching up with this webinar specifically for arts and culture organisations from the Digital Culture Network which has some really practical tips and quick wins for using LinkedIn. [DCN](#)

Health and wellbeing

Creative health in museums and heritage evaluated through the 'Working Together' Project

Working Together was an 18-month Creative Health programme (2023–2025), funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund and co-delivered by Culture, Health and Wellbeing Alliance (CHWA) and GEM to bring together the innovative work of the creative health and heritage sectors. Supporting six museums and heritage organisations the programme combined professional development, personalised mentoring and a supportive peer network, all designed to help partners move beyond one-off wellbeing projects and strategically embed health and wellbeing across their organisations. As part of the long-term legacy of the project, GEM and CHWA are launching A Culture of Care: Creative Health in Museum Practice, a new sector-wide training course that builds directly on the programme's findings. [CHWA](#) (Working Together), [GEM](#) (training)

Climate emergency

Decarbonisation guidance for historic buildings

Arts Council England and Historic England have co-funded the Cultural and Heritage Sector Decarbonisation Project Pilot to support cultural and heritage organisations responsible for historic buildings better understand the steps involved in developing decarbonisation plans. The website brings together factsheets, guidance and templates which support a Whole Building Approach to decarbonisation. There are also a number of case studies which offer detail on key aspects of the process. [Historic England](#)

Heritage crime and theft

Latest Pulse survey focuses on heritage crime

In October the Heritage Pulse survey focused on heritage crime with 147 responses which explored heritage crime and its impact. Key findings from the research exploring heritage crime and its impact show:

- 39% of respondents reported intentional damage (e.g. vandalism, graffiti, arson, unlawful alterations), and 31% of respondents experienced anti-social behaviour (e.g. fly-tipping, unauthorised camping/access, off-road driving).
- However, 30% reported that no heritage crime incidents took place at their site in the past two years.

- The financial cost of repairs and replacements is the greatest impact of heritage crime experienced by the panel.
- If they had the budget, respondents would prioritise installing video surveillance. [Heritage Pulse](#)

Icom and Interpol to combat cultural theft and trafficking

The International Council of Museums (Icom) has announced a new joint operational initiative with Interpol to combat theft and the illicit movement of cultural property. Announced during Icom's 27th conference, which was held on 11-17 November in Dubai, UAE, there was acknowledgement of high profile thefts and a commitment to strengthen strategies and operational measures aimed at protecting cultural property and combating illegal trafficking. [ICOM](#), [Museums Association](#)



Christmas at Beamish Museum - Head to The 1940s Farm to discover how people celebrated a wartime Christmas.

Inclusion

Beyond the Visual - new exhibition prioritises touch

Beyond the Visual, the new exhibition at Henry Moore Institute in Leeds, is the UK's first major sculpture exhibition in which blind and partially blind practitioners are central to the curatorial process and make up the majority of participating artists. Opening on 28 November and running till 19 April 2026, it incorporates touch, sound, smell and movement, inviting visitors to encounter sculpture in ways that reach far beyond the visual. The exhibition is free to visit. [Henry Moore](#), [BBC Front Row](#) - talks to artist and co-curator of the exhibition, Dr. Aaron McPeake and Dr. Clare O'Dowd the research curator at the Henry Moore Institute. (from 15.24)

Free audio description training for museums and the heritage sector

Shortlisted for a 2025 M+H Award, this free training from the University of Westminster enables museums to produce one audio descriptive guide, which will benefit sighted, partially blind and blind audiences. W-**ICAD** (which stands for the Workshop for Inclusive Co-created Audio Description) provides museums with a tool (the workshop model) through which they can produce audio description based on co-created discussions between blind, partially-blind and sighted co-creators. To support museums and the heritage sector to use W-**ICAD** in their organisations, they have created a 7-module online training course. [W-ICAD](#) (online course)

Funding news and events

£600,000 award to Scottish museum leaders

Museums Galleries Scotland have awarded 17 organisations grants to increase capacity for their museum leaders and allow them to focus on future planning. The Leadership Capacity Fund is part of the Museum Futures programme which is supported by £4m investment from the Scottish Government. Successful organisations include The Tall Ship Glenlee, David Livingstone Birthplace Museum and Stirling Smith Art Gallery and Museum. [MGS](#)

13 Organisations benefit from the Museum Fundamentals grant

Funded by Pilgrim Trust and The Julia Rausing Trust, and distributed by AIM, the Museum Fundamentals grants encourages small and medium sized museum members to create projects based on their collection's needs, which improve knowledge, care and access to our nation's heritage. A total of £125,692.13 was awarded including £3,375.58 to Glasgow Printmakers to enhance their access to digital media, rehoming, and digitising project, £20,000 to The Jazz Centre to digitising BBC's golden age jazz broadcasts and £18,200.64 to Torquay Museum for collections care improvements in Torquay Museums Top Store. The closing date for expressions of interest for round three is 5pm on **Friday 6 February 2026**. [AIM](#)

Deadlines approaching for Freelands Art Fund Acquisition grant and Weston Loan Programme

The Freelands Foundation in partnership with Art Fund offer grants of up to £60,000 for museums to acquire contemporary art and increase public access to work by women artists in the UK. The open call for museums and public collections interested in acquiring work by Everlyn Nicodemus will be closing on **19 December**. Applications from public museums, galleries, historic houses, libraries and archives based anywhere in the UK are accepted as long as they are open for at least half the week for at least six months of the year, fully Accredited through the Arts Council Accreditation Scheme or other national equivalents and hold collections, which may include fine and applied art and design, archaeology and/or social history. [Art Fund](#)

Also: Applications for Art Fund's Weston Loan Programme, supported by the Garfield Weston Foundation, close on **12 December**. The Programme offers grants of up to £35,000 to regional and smaller museums to cover the practical elements of strategic loans projects and enable them to borrow high-profile objects. [Art Fund](#)

New accessibility grant scheme from The Exhibitions Group

The Exhibitions Group has today launched a new pilot grants scheme, offering its members the chance to secure up to £4,000 to improve access to exhibitions across the UK for disabled people. The new scheme reflects the social model of disability and guidelines state that the grant can be used to support a range of relevant work, such as:

- Access consultancy including by disabled people
- Activities by and co-creation with disabled people
- Accessible interpretation (This could include for example BSL, captioning, audio description, Easy Read, large print, tactile models etc)
- Physical adjustments to improve access to the exhibition experience
- Accessible programming such as events linked to the exhibition
- Relevant staff and volunteer training

This list is non-exhaustive. Each grant will be worth between £1,500 to £4,000 and there is a total fund of £40,000 for all the awards. The deadline for applications is **15 January 2026**. [TEG](#)

Art Fund support student opportunities in museums

The aim of the fund is to help museums, galleries and visual arts organisations provide paid opportunities for full-time university students to gain meaningful, developmental work experience that enables them to explore their interest in the arts, and related future career options. In turn, museums, galleries and visual arts organisations gain skilled and accountable resource to help realise projects important to them. The fund pays for costs associated with paying students for the time they spend supporting the organisation in delivering projects. This is based on the current national and London Living Wage rates. The grants cannot be used to cover: Core staff costs, costs relating to ongoing overheads or retrospective activity. Applications are considered for grants up to £10,000 and close on **Friday 16 January**. [Art Fund](#)



Christmas at Beamish Museum - As you travel around the museum, meet merry costumed folk and discover how they're getting ready for the festive season, from the 1820s to the 1950s.

Conferences and events

Thinking of joining the Museum Data Service (MDS)?

On the 16 December there is a one-hour introduction to joining the Museum Data Service which is for those who want to understand more about what the MDS is and how the joining process works. It will look at the different types of data available on the service, adding collection overviews and a breakdown of the joining process as well as how data from the service can be used. The session is free and runs from 11-12noon. [MDS](#)

Want to make a commitment to greener practices for 2026? Start with your email marketing

This free one hour session from the Digital Culture Network is suitable for anyone who is already using email as a marketing channel; guiding attendees through sustainability top tips. The training will be practical and show participants ways to optimise efficiency and create campaigns that are both eco-friendly and effective. Topics include: contact list hygiene, ways to make your emails lighter through design and, segmentation to increase relevance and decrease your Carbon Footprint. The online webinar takes place on Wednesday 21 January at 2pm and will be hosted on Zoom. [DCN](#)

Online conference on radical curatorial practice

The Museums Association is running an online one day conference on 'Breaking Barriers: Radical Curatorial Practice' which will explore how the role of the curator is evolving. With a mix of provocations, panel discussions and breakout forums the day will explore the skills needed and ways to reflect the changing nature of communities. Speakers representing Bristol Museums, National Museums NI and Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery will touch on empire and colonial collecting practices, developing different narratives and collaborative community approaches. The event is on 28 January 11-4pm and costs £46 for members and £67 for non-members with a concessionary member rate of £36. [Museums Association](#)

Start 2026 off with a MuseumNext Wellbeing Conference

On 28-29 January MuseumNext will be running an online Wellbeing Summit with case studies and fresh research from around the world to explore how museums can strengthen the health of their communities. Across two days, you'll hear how institutions are working with NEET youth, supporting healthcare professionals, collaborating with prisons and social services, addressing climate emotions, and creating spaces for rest, mindfulness, connection and joy. Sessions include a look at Climate emotions in museums, the role of art and nature in wellbeing and, a look at supporting staff through Getty's museum mindfulness programme. Individual tickets cost £130, students £30 and £260 for an unlimited ticket for multiple delegates to attend. Both days from 12:00(GMT).

[MuseumNext](#)

ICON 2026 Conference programme revealed

The 2026 Institute of Conservation (ICON) Conference will be held across two days from 24-25 June at the Assembly Rooms in Edinburgh. The Conference will explore how the conservation profession shapes practice, challenges assumptions, and engages diverse communities across sectors. Sessions will look at future proofing conservation, how partnerships can shape impactful outcomes and projects that involve collaboration with local community groups. Early Bird Ticket sales end on 31 December and cost £265 for members, £150 for student members and £370 for non-members. Single day tickets are also available and an online only ticket price of £90 for members (£125 after 31 Dec), £50 for students (£70 after 31 Dec) and £125 for non-members (£175 after 31 Dec). [ICON](#)

Appointments

Dr John Chu has been named as Keeper of Western Art at the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford and is due to commence this role from February 2026. Chu is currently Senior Curator at the National Trust, where he is responsible for fine art collections nationwide – a vast portfolio spanning medieval panel painting to modernist kinetic art. He is a specialist in 18th-century European art. [Ashmolean](#)

Catch up

Ambitious £6m plans revealed to revamp Lancaster museum, 1 December 2025, [Lancaster Guardian](#)

Gardens Trust warns Government that proposed planning changes put parks and gardens at risk, 27 November 2025, [Gardens Trust](#)

Courtauld unveils plans for £82m new campus, 27 November 2025, [Arts Industry](#)

Museum races to raise £3.5m for almshouse triptych, Dorset Museum, 21 November 2025, [BBC](#)

Poole Museum and Lush collaborate on bespoke bath bomb, 19 November 2025, [M+H Advisor](#)

International news

Louvre to hike ticket prices for most non-EU tourists by 45%, 28 November 2025, [BBC](#)

Politician demands end to Grand Egyptian Museum ticketing system that leaves locals in 'secondary category', 24 November 2025, [Art Newspaper \(£\)/ART News](#)

Louvre closes gallery and office spaces due to structural problems, 18 November 2025, [Museums Association](#)

The Metropolitan Museum of Art announces the opening of the Condé M. Nast Galleries, designed by Peterson Rich Office, 18 November 2025, [Architectural Digest](#)

A third of American museums suffer cuts to government cash, 13 November 2025, [Arts Professional](#) (£)/[Guardian](#)

Jobs

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

- [Head of Community Partnerships - British Museum](#)
- [Interim Finance Business Partner - National Portrait Gallery](#)
- [Poor Law Research Assistant - National Archives](#)
- [Paper Conservator - Glasgow Life](#)
- [Creative Programme Manager - Royal Pavilion and Museums Brighton](#)
- [Exhibitions Manager - V&A](#)

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