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Women of Aberystwyth RNLI lifeboat station, 24th September 2016 by Jack Lowe © Jack Lowe
Photo: National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London.

NMDC news

Invitation to tender – Research into UK museum and heritage landownership

The Association of Independent Museums (AIM), National Museum Directors' Council, Welsh Government and Arts Council England are seeking a researcher or researchers to carry out a piece of work on how museums and heritage organisations care for, operate, use, and manage land assets in their ownership or otherwise under their control.

Looking at the land maintained by many museums and heritage organisations, such as open air museums, country houses operated for public benefit, city museums set in parkland and even small museums that have gardens, terraces, or other land which they can use. In some cases this land may be owned outright by the organisation and in others is cared for under lease arrangements. This land may have many uses, it may be part of the visiting experience, car parking or used in retail and catering.

The overall question is looking at the challenges and opportunities for museum and heritage organisations of owning land. Part of the research is to look at how that land could be used in the future as part of climate resilience and adaptation and understand the support needed to care and manage that land. The research should capture a snap shot of practice across museums in 2024. The budget for this work is £30,000 inclusive of VAT, beginning in Q1 2024, taking up to 6 months. The deadline for proposals is Thursday 29 February. [AIM](#)

ICOM UK Conference – Common Ground: the role of museums in divided communities

This year's ICOM UK Conference will be in Belfast at the Ulster Museum on Friday 12 April with opportunities for tours and networking on Thursday 11. The conference will explore the role of museums as important shared spaces, where differences can be ethically discussed and represented, and areas of commonality identified and valued. Hear from museum professionals from the island of Ireland, the UK and the global museum community, in a city that has been damaged by division but through the ongoing social peace process is embracing the opportunities of the present and looking to a more positive future.

Individual tickets for ICOM UK and NMDC members are £70. An Institutional Ticket (4 x conference places) is available. Student tickets are £40 and £75 Early Bird non-member tickets are available till 15 February. [ICOM UK](#), [tickets and programme](#)

Members' news

British Museum and V&A lend looted artefacts to Ghana

It was announced on 25 January that the British Museum and V&A had signed a long-term loan agreement with Ghana to return gold regalia taken in the 19th century during wars between the British and Asante. The 3 year loan agreements are part of a cultural partnership with the Manhyia Palace Museum. Tristram Hunt, Director of the V&A, who are loaning 17 items, said: "Objects with origins in war and looting in military campaigns, we have a responsibility to the countries of origin to think about how we can share those more fairly today." The British Museum is returning 15 items looted during a conflict in 1895-6, including a sword of state known as the Mpomponsuo. Many of the items will be seen for the first time in Ghana for 150 years as part of an exhibition to celebrate the 2024 Silver Jubilee of Asantehene, Osei Tutu II. [V&A](#) (press release, pdf), [BBC](#), [Art Newspaper](#) (£)

Tristram Hunt, Director of the V&A, wrote a piece of the [Observer](#) about the loan – 'V&A's 'return' of looted Ghana gold is a new way to tackle Britain's painful past'. Although not all coverage has been favourable – 'Our museums are now at risk of being looted', [Telegraph](#) and 'The danger of returning the Ghanaian 'Crown Jewels'', [Spectator](#).

Also: British Museum boss: Why I'm putting our stolen treasures on show, [Times](#)

Brighton's Royal Pavilion Gardens to be restored with £4 million Lottery grant

Brighton & Hove Council and Brighton & Hove Museums have been awarded a grant of £4,369,755 to restore the Royal Pavilion Gardens and enhance its accessibility. The Grade II listed garden was designed for George IV and plans include restoring the Regency planting design, improving irrigation and promotion of local biodiversity and wildlife. Alongside the restoration the heritage project will increase community engagement to the garden and include an outside learning space and changing places toilet. The project is part of a wider plan by the council to enhance the Royal Pavilion Estate. [Brighton.gov](#), [M&H Advisor](#). **Also:** Brighton: Museum unveils first new diorama in 92 years, [BBC](#)

Glasgow Life's People's Palace and Winter Gardens secures development funding

Development funding of £850,000 from the National Lottery Heritage Fund has been secured as part of a wider £7.5m request to restore the People's Palace and Winter Gardens as a museum and thriving community space. Eilish McGuinness, Chief Executive of the National Lottery Heritage Fund said: "This initial support paves the way for an award of up to £7.5 million, which would be amongst the largest Heritage Fund awards made to a single project in Scotland."

The cost of the People's Palace and Winter Gardens project is £35.9 million. Glasgow City Council has already committed £2.9 million to the project. A further £11m contribution will come from Glasgow City Council, while Glasgow Life continues to work with other public and private sector funders to secure the remaining investment required. [Glasgow Life](#), [BBC](#)

The Legacy of Duleep Singh family to be celebrated by Ancient House Museum in Norfolk

The National Lottery Heritage Fund has awarded £198,059 to Ancient House Museum in Thetford, part of Norfolk Museums Service, to celebrate its centenary and tell the story of Prince Frederick Duleep Singh who purchased the Tudor house and gifted it to the people of Thetford. The two year project will show case history of the Duleep Singh family and explore Anglo-Punjab history. The project also received funding from Thetford Town Council, the Friends of Thetford Museum, Norfolk County Council and Arts Council England. [BBC](#), [Hindustan Times](#)

V&A Dundee reduces public exhibition programme

The V&A Dundee will reduce the number of major exhibitions to one a year as part of a series of cost cutting measures to counter the impact of the pandemic and rising operational costs. The museum receives the majority of its funding from the Scottish government, for the 2024/5 financial year this funding has been raised by an extra £800,000. Research published on V&A Dundee's fifth anniversary showed it had generated more than £304m for the Scottish economy to date with more than £1.7m visits in its first five years. The V&A Dundee's next exhibition on kimonos will open in May. [Art Newspaper \(£\)](#), [Scotsman](#), [Courier](#)

Royal Cornwall Museum given funding boost

Following the loss of council funding in July 2022, the museum's planned transformation can now go ahead thanks to £2.1m funding boost. The investment comes from the Good Growth Programme which is managed by Cornwall Council and funded by the government's Shared Prosperity Fund. This follows financial support from Arts Council England with £1.5m through the Museum Estate and Development Fund to address infrastructure and urgent maintenance needs, £250,000 from the National Lottery Heritage Fund alongside investment from the Truro Town Deal government funding. Jonathan Morton, Executive Director of Royal Cornwall Museum said: "We're delighted with this support from Cornwall Council and the Good Growth Programme and the impact we know it will have on our local people and communities." [Cornwall.gov](#), [BBC](#)

Laing Art Gallery chosen as 'Number 10 Museum in Residence' for 2024

Nine artworks from the Laing Art Gallery in Newcastle, part of Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums, will go on display for a year in 10 Downing Street. For the past 20 years, the Government Art Collection has instigated an annual partnership with a museum or gallery to display artworks from their collection. Five of the paintings showcase Newcastle's cityscape, while others point to the diverse art scene in the North East. Artists include Edward Dickey, Byron Dawson and Florence Ward. [TWAM](#), [Government Art Collection](#), [BBC](#)

BFI award £3.3m to the UK independent screen sector through the UK Global Screen Fund

The British Film Institute has made 30 awards backing seven new international co-productions and supporting 23 UK content business. The fund is financed through the Department for Culture, Media and Sport. [BFI](#)

Also: Tate Liverpool appoints main contractor for £30 million transformation, [Experience UK](#)

Also: New firm appointed to Liverpool museums project following Adjaye allegations, [Museums Association](#)

Images this month

Images this month come from a free exhibition opening at the Royal Maritime Museum in Greenwich on Saturday 2 March. 'Women of the RNLI: Celebrating 200 years of lifesaving at sea' features the photographic work of Jack Lowe alongside personal testimony and films that mark the anniversary of the Royal National Lifeboat Institution which began in 1824. It spotlights the role women have - and have always had - in this vital charity. [National Maritime Museum](#)

Government and Parliamentary news

Lord Bragg addresses the contribution of the arts in House of Lords speech

On 1 February Lord Melvyn Bragg spoke in the House of Lords on the contribution of the arts to economy and society. He referenced the sector's commercial potential, highlighting that over 3 million people work in the creative and arts industries. His speech also mentioned recent arts cuts and Arts Council's decision to withdraw funding from the English National Opera alongside the impact of the reduction in arts education. Lord Bragg said "...if we recognised and reached the full potential of what is still considered too often to be the cherry on the cake. The arts are not the cherry on the cake—they are the cake. It is the opportunity this society needs to reform itself, to replenish all parts and pockets, and to stem the slide to the bottom of just about any listing that appears." [UK Parliament](#) (speech) [UK Parliament](#) (briefing paper – Contribution of the arts to society and the economy)

Local Government funding

In the midst of the crisis in local authority funding the [Government](#) has published the provisional local governance finance settlement for local authorities for 2024-25 totalling £64.1 billion representing a 6.5% increase from the previous year. There is also mention of making £1 billion in additional grant funding for social care in 2024-25.

The House of Commons Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Committee report on 'Financial distress in local authorities', published on 29 January 2024, highlights current levels of funding are not keeping pace with the demands on services and the increase in cost of living with an estimated funding gap already at £4 billion over the next two years. The report looks at the demands and pressures that social care, Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and homelessness are placing on council budgets. [Parliament.uk](#) (pdf, 52 pgs) The [Local Government Chronicle](#) reported on subsequent calls for a 'fundamental reset of local government funding'. The [Guardian](#) published an analysis of local government funding on 29 January with a look at 13 years of data and reported 'Between 2020-11 and 2022-23, net spending on cultural services was cut by 43% in real terms'.

Home Office publishes Martyn's Law consultation on Terrorism Bill

The Home Office has opened a consultation on the requirements imposed on standard tier premises under the Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Bill. [Gov.uk](#). It is targeted at organisations, businesses, local and public authorities, and individuals who own or operate publicly accessible premises or events that the Bill will potentially effect. 'Martyn's Law' will keep people safe, reducing the risk to the public from terrorist attacks at public venues. It seeks views from those responsible for smaller premises which would fall within the standard tier.

The proposals set out different requirements for:

- standard tier premises, which would have a capacity of 100-799 individuals
- enhanced tier premises and qualifying public events, both of which have a capacity of 800 individuals or more

The consultation closes on 18 March 2024. (consultation) [Gov.uk](#)

Culture funding cuts

More local councils sound alarm bells over their finances and threaten culture cuts

Culture funding continues to be under the spotlight, following on from mentions of Bristol, Hampshire, Nottingham and Suffolk that were covered in January's [NMDC Newsletter](#), the [Museums Association](#) reported that **Middlesborough** is proposing to withdraw from the Captain Cook Birthplace Museum and concentrate the town's museums offer in the Dorman Museum. The [BBC](#) also reported that the London Borough of **Havering** had six weeks left before they have to issue a Section 114 notice. On the 1 February **Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole** Council were also reported to be cutting arts and culture services in their 2024/25 budget as they faced a £30m deficit. [Arts Professional](#). The [Guardian](#) also did a deep dive into the 100% cuts proposed in Suffolk showing that council arts and culture spending in Suffolk had dropped by 28% since 2010-11.

On a brighter note the [Art Newspaper](#) reported that **Windsor & Maidenhead** are trying to retain their arts centres and museums. The **West Midlands** also received a funding boost for cultural events from the Commonwealth Games Legacy Fund with £1.4m given to events planned in 2024. [Arts Professional](#). Amongst a sea of cuts **Surrey** Cultural Partnership has been highlighted with a cultural strategy for 2024-2034 that acts as “a rallying cry to all those who believe in the power and the impact of the arts in changing lives in our society”. [Arts Industry](#)

Funding pressures extend beyond the local authority funded sector, as the [Scotsman](#) also reported on the current funding challenges faced at **National Galleries of Scotland** exacerbated by the impact of rising costs and public sector pay policies. Senior officials warned it is now at the ‘minimum resource level needed to care for and provide access to the national collection’. For 2024/25 it has forecast that 95% of allocated grant in aid will be spent on salary costs.

In a recent speech on philanthropy Culture Secretary Lucy Fraser welcomed BP’s £50m donation to the British Museum. [Gov.uk](#)

Also: Dorset Museum & Art Gallery – Museum ‘at risk’ of closure within 12 to 18 months without public support’, [Dorset Echo](#). **Also:** More money for the arts ‘my first priority’, Shadow Culture Secretary Thangam Debbonaire pledges to explore opportunities for additional funding in the arts, [Arts Professional](#). **Also:** Scrapping free entry to Welsh museums ‘inevitable’, [Arts Professional](#) (£)



The view from Moelfre RNLI lifeboat station, 5th April 2019 by Jack Lowe © Jack Lowe Photo: National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London.

Sector news

Arts Council England publishes research on levels of public investment in museums

New research commissioned by the Arts Council and carried out by DC Research and Wavehill to understand levels of public investment in museums has been published. The research was commissioned with the aim to produce a comprehensive set of data that can support museums, local authorities and stakeholders with budget planning, and encourage a strategic and collaborative approach to considering the funding challenges facing both museums and local government.

35 stakeholders from 30 museum services were consulted as part of the research. Key insights from the report include:

- Comparing budgets from 2009-10 with those of 2022-23, the report shows a cash reduction in local authority expenditure on museums and galleries from £286.45 million (2009-10) to £241.01 million (2022-23), a 16% drop.
- Local authorities serving the most disadvantaged communities have experienced the largest falls in spending power between 2010-11 and 2019-20.
- One museum trust highlighted a 47% drop in their funding from their local authority between 2011-12 and 2022-23, while another reports an 80% difference between 2009-10 and 2022-23. [ACE](#)

Art Fund Directors Survey opens

Calling all museum directors – today Art Fund opened their biennial directors survey, which will shape their future programme and support. With a general election coming up, it's more important than ever to voice your views as the findings will be used to advocate for the sector. The survey is open until 16 February and should take 10-20 minutes to complete. [Art Fund](#)

British Museum invites partners to help engage young people across the UK

Applications from all types of museum and cultural space are invited, as are those from any registered third sector organisation that works with young people, for this national programme for 16-24 year olds to create arts and culture projects with-in their own local communities. Part of the British Museum's National Programme – 'Where we are...' , it is in its 4th year and can bridge many barriers that prevent young people from engaging with arts and culture locally. Interested organisations should apply by 26 February. [British Museum](#)

Contested histories

Scottish Government responds to Empire and Slavery recommendations

The recommendations made by the Empire, Slavery & Scotland's Museums (ESSM) Steering Group, set up to advise on how Scotland's museums and galleries can better reflect the country's role in empire, colonialism, and historic slavery, have been accepted by the Scottish Government. The decision was marked by an event at the Hunterian in Glasgow which included speakers from the Delivering Change programme, a 3 year initiative set up in response to the ESSM research which aims to put people at the heart of museum work. [MGS](#) (recommendations), [MGS](#) (Delivering Change), [Museums Association](#)

Collections

Freedom of Information requests on missing collections prompt headlines

After the British Museum revealed a number of items from their collections were missing or stolen there have been an increased number of freedom of information requests to museums and galleries that receive public funds. In total 1,700 items were 'absent' from collections, no suggestion was made that these items have been stolen, they are currently 'not found' in the vast collections that the national museums hold. For example the National Portrait Gallery listed 45 items as 'not located', this figures represented 0.02% of the collection which comprises 12,700 portraits and 164,000 images. The Museums Association responded that the headlines were 'misleading and damaging' as the numbers represented a tiny fraction of the collections held by UK museums. [Guardian](#), [M+H Advisor](#), [Museums Association](#)

Renaissance painting by Fra Angelico and Shackleton's medal get export bar

A temporary export bar has been placed on a 15th century painting 'The Crucifixion with the Virgin, Saint John the Evangelist and the Magdalen' by Fra Angelico. Lord Parkinson, Arts and Heritage Minister said the painting had been in the UK for two centuries and the beautiful piece represents a key moment in the history of European painting. The asking price is over £5 million and the export bar ends on 7 April 2024. [Gov.uk](#)

Sir Ernest Shackleton's Polar Medal, valued at more than £1.7 million has also been placed under an export bar. The Polar Medal was awarded to Shackleton in recognition of his three polar expeditions (1902–04, 1907–09, 1914–16), the latter two of which he led. It is the most important of the UK medals awarded to him, given it is the only medal to recognise all three of his expeditions. It is also the last of Shackleton's medals still in the UK. The export bar expires on 1 May 2024. [Gov.uk](#)

Collections Trust request collection overviews for all UK museums

The Collections Trust are asking every accredited museum in the UK to submit their collections overviews and collections history from their most recent collections development policy with an aim of publishing the information in an online searchable database by Summer 2024. Working with the Museum Data Service and funded by AHRC the goal is to unlock this wealth of information from 1,700 UK museums. [Collections Trust](#)

Archives Sector Survey 2024

The National Archives are undertaking the first-ever annual survey of all archives in England. The survey will provide standardised baseline data needed in order to help the National Archives advocate to Government, national funders and other strategic bodies. If you have taken part in the Local Authority Archive Benchmarking Exercise you do not need to take part in the survey. Any queries please contact simon.mckee@nationalarchives.gov.uk The deadline for submission is Friday 15 March 2024. [Survey](#)



Natalie, Dungeness RNLI lifeboat volunteer, 20th September 2018 by Jack Lowe. © Jack Lowe
Photo: National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London.

Climate Crisis

World Monuments Fund announces \$15m for climate change initiative

The World Monuments Fund, the independent organisation devoted to safeguarding the world's most treasured places, will be focussing the \$15m on adapting to and mitigating the impact of climate change on cultural heritage sites. The creation of the Climate Heritage Initiative will include adapting historic gardens and building a global network of coastal heritage sites. Using heritage infrastructure to tackle water insecurity is another major priority. Coastal Connections established in partnership with English Heritage will use Hurst Castle in the UK as both a case study and centre for knowledge exchange. Another focus is the Palm House and Waterlily House, Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew with strategies aimed at reducing the carbon footprint, fabric conservation, upgrades to the structure, more efficient heating systems and integration of sustainable geothermal energy. [World Monuments Fund](#), [Art Newspaper](#)

London and UK “underprepared” for climate change impacts like flooding and extreme heat

The London Climate Resilience Review, an independent report commissioned by the Mayor of London, has published an interim report.

Findings confirm that London and the UK are “underprepared” for major climate impacts, including severe flooding, extreme heat and wildfires, with a “lethal risk” to the most vulnerable communities. The review makes urgent and strategic recommendations for UK Government and London, with a full report to come later this year.

The interim report's key recommendations include:

- London should conduct a multi-agency exercise to test the city's preparedness for a period of extreme heat.
- Whitehall should give councils more funding and powers to adapt their communities for climate change, instead of making local authorities compete for limited central money.
- Improvements are needed to housing standards to ensure homes are resilient against climate change, including heat and flooding.
- Action is needed now to prevent major flooding damage to London, including developing an action plan for where flood defences need be raised before 2050, installing sustainable drainage systems and creating a Strategic Surface Water Authority to tackle flooding caused by heavy rain.
- The Mayor should lead collaborative work with local authorities and the private sector to set out a clear strategic vision for climate adaption in London by 2030.

Emma Howard Boyd CBE, Chair of the Review and former Chair of the Environment Agency, says "London has many good plans and programmes to prepare for climate hazards but we need to recognise that Londoners now face lethal risks, and a step change is needed."

The Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan welcomed the recommendations and has proposed in the latest Budget an additional £3 million to accelerate climate adaptation work in London. [London.gov.uk](https://www.london.gov.uk)

Welsh museums survey on climate and nature emergencies

Welsh museums have until Sunday 18 February to respond to a survey from the Welsh government looking to capture concerns around the climate emergency. The aim is to collect views on the challenges faced by museums, the support the sector needs to achieve change and how much is action on the climate emergency a priority focus. The research is being conducted by Regen in partnership with Carbon Trust and the Energy Saving Trust. [Survey](#)

Art Fund publishes evaluation of the Wild Escape

Taking place over the first half of 2023, The Wild Escape was the largest ever collaboration between UK museums. Working with the Audience Agency, Art Fund has now published the evaluation of the project.

The report shows the impacts of the project including:

- 82% of families said that their experience of The Wild Escape activities had made them more likely to visit the same museum again in the next 12 months, and 77% said that it had made them more likely to visit other museums in general
- The Wild Escape helped to develop new skills in young people, with 92% of the surveyed teachers agreeing or strongly agreeing that their pupils had developed new skills as a result of their Wild Escape workshop
- 94% of teachers agreed that their pupils had learned something new about biodiversity loss
- 73% of museums, galleries and historic houses connected or built relationships with organisations outside their sector

A total of 530 museums, galleries and historic houses took part, together enabling over 103,000 young people to participate in this major creative project, which harnessed the art and objects in museum collections to start conversations about UK nature, wildlife, and biodiversity loss. [Art Fund](#) (Executive Summary)

Heritage

New report shows graffiti, anti-social behaviour and verbal abuse on the rise

Research commissioned by specialist heritage insurer Ecclesiastical of 500 heritage decision makers has shown a 9% rise in graffiti, 3% increase in anti-social behaviour and 4% increase in verbal abuse. Overall there was a slight decrease of 1% in organisations that experienced crime in the past 12 months with 9 in 10 reporting incidents. Almost half of respondents reported littering as a problem, up 12% on the previous year. [Ecclesiastical](#)

Funding news

Arts Council extends National Portfolio support to 2027

Arts Council England is extending the current 2023-26 National Portfolio Organisation investment by an extra year, the National Portfolio Investment Programme will now run to March 2027. All those who are currently supported by this programme will be able to apply for an extension to their funding. The aim is to give organisations more time to plan, look at new business models and increase collaboration. It will also give Arts Council more time to offer an improved and accessible application process for the next portfolio. More information will be shared in Spring 2024. [ACE](#) (NPO website), [ACE](#) (Darren Henley blog), [Arts Professional](#)

Fourth round of the Cultural Development Fund launches

Cultural venues in England are set to benefit from a £15m boost as part of the Government's Cultural Development Fund. For the first time projects in London will not be excluded from applying. The fund is proposed for capital investment in physical space (construction projects) for culture and creative industries purposes. The grant range is between £2 million and £5 million and eligibility is open to local partnerships led by a local authority, Local Enterprise Partnership, or other appropriate body. The deadline for submissions of interest is 12pm on Friday 15 March 2024. [Gov.uk](#) (press release), [ACE](#) (application materials), [M+H Advisor](#)

£10 million National Lottery Heritage Grants open

The new National Lottery funding programme with increased maximum grants up from £5m to £10m are now open for applications. Entry level grants have also increased to £10,000 with new application guidance and reporting requirements that are more proportionate to the amount of money applied for. All four Heritage 2033 strategy principles must be taken into account on applications, they are – saving heritage; protecting the environment; inclusion, access and participation; and organisational sustainability. Applicants can apply for grants from £10,000 to £250,000 and £250,000 to £10m (projects over £10m may be considered for truly exceptional heritage projects). [Heritage Fund](#)

Foyle Foundation will close to new grant applications in 2025

The Foyle Foundation, formed to implement the will of the late Christina Foyle, daughter of William Foyle whose family founded the bookshop Foyles on Charing Cross Road, have announced they are completing their grant giving in 2025. For 25 years the foundation has supported the fields of the arts, learning, community small grants, state school libraries and formerly health with more than £146.6 million in grants. In 2023 they supported the Horniman Museum and Gardens with a grant of £250,000 towards their Nature + Love project, the Imperial War Museum received £150,000 towards the Blavatnik Film, Art and Photography Galleries and the University of Manchester were awarded £100,000 towards transforming digital access at Manchester Museum. Applications to the Main Grant Scheme (less than £75,000) will close on 31 January 2025 and Capital Requests £75K and over will close for stage one enquiries on 31 May 2024. [Foyle Foundation](#)

AHRC/DCMS announce Culture and Heritage Capital Research Call recipients

Six projects have been funded following the AHRC/DCMS Culture and Heritage Capital Research Call, with the aim of developing a formal and multidisciplinary approach to valuing the benefits of culture and heritage assets to society. The projects are –

- Developing a taxonomy for culture and heritage capital, Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission for England, (Ms. Adala Leeson).
- Culture Heritage, People and Place: Understanding value via a regional case study, University of Liverpool, Dr Tamara West. (National Museum Liverpool's Waterfront Transformation Project).
- Understanding the Value of Outdoor Culture and Heritage Capital for Decision Makers, University of Exeter, Dr Amy Binner.
- Triangulation of values using different valuation methods, University of Glasgow, Dr Patrizia Riganti.
- Integrating Lifetimes in Heritage Capital, University College London, Dr Josep Grau-Bove (In collaboration with Imperial War Museum).
- Valuing Digital Culture and Heritage Assets, University of Portsmouth, Dr Karen McBride.

[Gov.uk](#)

National Lottery Project Grant Roadshows in February and March

These workshops are aimed at museums interested in applying to Arts Council England's National Lottery Project Grants for funding. They will introduce the funding programme, give advice and provide a platform for answering questions with a view to building confidence for those making an application. There are 5 free events offered regionally running from 10am to 1pm with the option to book 20 minute one-to-one sessions with an Arts Council Museums Relationship Manager in the afternoon. Session locations and dates are as follows-

- 28 Feb: Nottingham Central Library – Midlands
- 29 Feb: Leeds City Museum - Yorkshire
- 6 March: Swiss Cottage Library – London and South East
- 8 March: Royal Albert Memorial Museum and Art Gallery – South West
- 11 March: Manchester Central Library – North West [ACE](#) (Eventbrite page)

Esmeé Fairbairn Collections Fund awardees announced

Seven grantees have been selected to receive awards from the Esmeé Fairbairn Collection Fund in December, the grants are for demonstrating the potential to use museum collections to connect with communities and be guided by them to create more democratised and inclusive museums.

Recipients include £100,000 to Sheffield Museums to engage communities with natural science collections and explore the environmental crisis, £99,213 for Mansfield Museum to improve people's mental health working with social prescribers and £70,000 to Beamish, The Living Museum of the North, to share collections with expert community panels to better represent perspectives of working class life. The Esmeé Fairbairn Collection Fund is now open for Spring 2024 applications, the deadline is 22 April 2024. [Museums Association](#) (December awards), [Museums Association](#) (Spring applications)

Museums and Galleries Scotland award £421K to 9 museums across Scotland

The 9 projects which have received a total of £421,857 are responding to different challenges including needs in their local community, increasing financial resilience, strengthening connections with their local area and attracting national and international visitors. Recipients include North Lanarkshire Council who will collaborate with local communities impacted by the legacies of slavery and empire, Stirling Smith Art Gallery & Museum which will focus on local schools and Kilmartin Museum in Argyll and Bute which will support visitor engagement with the collections. [Museums Association](#)

Digital

Bloomberg Digital Accelerator open for applications

The Digital Accelerator Programme is open to non-profit cultural organisations in the UK and US and provides support for projects in four areas –

- Content creation and distribution
- Customer Relationship Management (CRM)/Ticketing
- Digital Archives/Data Management
- Websites

The Bloomberg Philanthropies initiative helps cultural organisations strengthen technology and management practices to improve operations, generate revenue, fundraise, engage broader audiences and expand programming. They provide funding, expert technical assistance and leadership development over two years. The deadline to apply is 13 March 2024. To be eligible organisations must have a turnover of at least £500,000 in the 2023 financial year. [Bloomberg Philanthropies](#)



Leah, Whitby RNLI lifeboat volunteer, 15th June 2017 by Jack Lowe. © Jack Lowe Photo: National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London.

Governance and leadership

Kids in Museums launch programme on 'Engaging your first young trustees'

Kids in Museums are offering a free training and networking programme running from April 2024 to March 2025 to support trustees and staff from heritage organisations interested in appointing young people aged 18-30 to their boards and for young people interested in becoming trustees. There are six free places available to museums in England and six free spaces for museums in Wales with the aim of two spaces per museum, one of those places being taken by a trustee. Museums will need the support of the organisations Chief Executive or Chair of Trustees to take part. Application forms can be downloaded from their website and need to be completed by 5pm on 29 February 2024. [Kids in Museums](#) **Also:** Kids in Museums have released the dates of their programme for 2024 including a careers themed Takeover Day and new Family Friendly Museum Award category. [Kids in Museums](#)

Clore Fellowship programme opens for 2024

Applications are invited for the next Clore Fellowship which is a programme of tailored leadership development for a cohort of exceptional leaders in the cultural sector. Around 24 Fellowships are awarded each year to leaders in the arts and culture sector including performing arts, museums, libraries, archives and heritage, film and digital media and cultural policy and practice. The closing date for stage 1 applications is 12 noon, Thursday 8 February 2024. The cost of all Fellowships, with the exception of self or employer funded Fellowships, are fully funded and take place between September 2024 and May 2025. New for 2024 are the Culture & Climate Leaders Fellowship and Curator Fellowship. [Clore](#)

Inclusion and accessibility

Curating Visibility Fellowships deadline 8 February

Following the success of the Curating for Change programme, Curating Visibility is being delivered by Screen South's Accentuate Programme and funded by Arts Council England. There are 6 new curatorial fellowships being hosted in 6 partner museums across the country. The first 3 fellowships at Imperial War Museums Duxford, the Food Museum in Suffolk and Dover Museum have now been advertised and are funded for 15 months from April 2024 to June 2025, with flexible working options and access to an appropriate and comprehensive package to support access and participation. The fellows will curate their own exhibition or event using the latest digital technology to engage visitors.

[Screen South](#)

Sensational Museum seeks museums for funded partnership

The Sensational Museum project which aims to rethink the role and place of the senses in the museum is looking for a range of museums across the UK to become 'Funded Pilot Museums'. The pilot phase taking place between June 2024 and April 2025 covering two strands – Collections and Communication, exploring inclusive sensorially rich cataloguing process and working towards the production of a Sensational interpretation design brief. Staff costs cannot be covered but they will cover the costs of materials, workshops, evaluation and the time and travel of external attendees. The deadline for applications is 8 March 2024. [Sensational Museum](#) (project), [Sensational Museum](#) (application)

Concealed/Reveal: Disability as a creative force event in Bristol

The South West Fed are offering an exhibition, afternoon of talks and opportunity to network with sector peers all focussed around highlighting the vital contribution disabled people have made to society. Beginning with a tour of 'Concealed/Reveal' exhibition, curated by fellows from Curating for Change, the afternoon will include contributions from the National Trust on 'Everywhere and Nowhere: Exploring histories of disability across the National Trust in partnership with the University of Leicester' and South West Museums Development on 'Travelling Together: Museum journeys towards inclusion and collaboration'. Tickets cost £15 with concessions at £12 and the event will run on Thursday 29 February from 12.30-4.30pm at Bristol Museum and Art Gallery. [South West Fed](#)

AMA Inclusivity & Audiences Day is back in March

The Association of Arts Marketing's Inclusivity & Audiences day is dedicated to championing Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) work across the sector. In its 6th year the day will follow case studies with actions session in breakout groups with an aim of creating 7 pledges. The day is for those in senior and leadership positions with sessions on 'Wellbeing and Climate Change', 'Governing and Leadership', and 'Communicating to be understood internally and externally'. Tickets range from a members rate of £75 + VAT to non-members £155 + VAT. This event is online. [AMA](#)

I Am Festival returns for 2024

'I Am Festival' is the yearly celebration empowering Deaf, disabled and neurodivergent young people to explore their creativity. Taking place from 11-15 March the festival is run by charity A New Direction with events at Tate Modern, the National Theatre and Kensington Palace. As part of the festival there will be a free workshop for creative and cultural organisations who want to increase diversity in their workforce. 'How to recruit and support a disabled creative workforce' will be led by Access All Areas on 12 March from 1.30-4pm at the Sadlers Wells Theatre. The session will build upon A New Direction's [Inclusive Progression Routes toolkit](#). [A New Direction](#) (to book tickets)

Joseph Rowntree publish UK Poverty 2024 report

The latest UK Poverty report makes for sobering reading with nearly 4 million people experiencing destitution in 2022 an increase of 148% over five years. This included 1 million children, nearly three times as many as 2017. Headline data included –

- More than one in five people in the UK (22%) were in poverty in 2021/22 – 14.4 million people.
- 6 million people in 'very deep poverty', with an income far below the standard poverty line.
- Some groups had unacceptably high rates of poverty including larger families, many minority ethnic groups and disabled people.

- Poverty rates varied significantly between UK nations and regions, the latest data showed the West Midlands had the highest rate of poverty at 27%.
- Cost of living crisis continues to bite. In October 2023 - 3.4 million households reported not having enough money for food. [Joseph Rowntree](#) (Key findings), [full report](#) (pdf, 178pgs)

Conferences and events

Family Learning Conference: Maths Mindset this February

This year's Family Learning Conference from the Campaign for Learning will explore creative approaches to engaging family audiences in maths learning. One of the target audiences for the conference is museum and gallery practitioners and includes a workshop on 'Maths in Museums' with consultant Tom Briggs. This online conference is on Thursday 22 February from 9.30-2pm. Tickets cost £90 including VAT. [Campaign for Learning](#)

Events from the Touring Exhibitions Group in March and April

Introduction to Touring Exhibitions will run across two sessions on 14 and 21 March from 9.30am-12.30pm, online, aimed at individuals and organisations who wish to start producing and/or receiving local, regional and national touring exhibitions. It provides basic level skills and knowledge. Courses costs £59 for TEG members and £89 for non-members and offers an opportunity to network with other professionals interested in temporary, touring and partnership exhibitions. [TEG](#)

TEG Connects 2024 will be at Coventry Transport Museum on Wednesday 17 April, an all-day in person event it provides opportunity for networking and inspiration for colleagues nationwide. Featured key-note presentations include a session from Caro Howell, Director-General of IWM. Tickets start at £47 for TEG members and include lunch and refreshments. [TEG](#)

Cultural Enterprises Conference and Trade Show will be in Wales for 2024

From Wednesday 13 to Thursday 14 March the Cultural Enterprises Conference will cover a broad range of topics including; the role of a sustainable stately home in the 21st century, the dilemma of ticketing prices at cultural institutions including 'pay what you can' models, working with neurodivergence in your retail teams and diversifying income generation. Taking place at the in Newport at the ICC Wales ticket prices range from £235 for a members one day pass to £470 for a non-member two day ticket. 15 bursaries to attend are also available for member organisations. [Cultural Enterprises](#) (conference), [Programme](#), [Bursaries](#).

Pallant House and Engage collaborate on 'Creating Community Symposium' in March

On the 18 March, Pallant House Gallery are hosting an event exploring values led engagement following 21 years of their Community Programme. The day will look at best practice in community engagement, what are meaningful outcomes and how to engage with communities for the long term. The event is being co-hosted by Engage, a charity that promotes engagement and participation in the visual arts. Speakers include representatives from Kings College London, the Barber Institute of Fine Art, York Museums Trust and freelance artists. The event will be held at Pallant House Gallery in Chichester from 10-5pm with tickets costing £90. There is a 10% discount for Engage members, those who are self-employed and students. Limited bursaries are also available. [Pallant House Gallery](#)

Tourism Insights Conference 2024

On Tuesday 19 March the Tourism Insights Conference will be held at the Royal Aeronautical Society in London and will be followed by a parliamentary reception at the House of Commons. Hosted by the Tourism Alliance, speakers will touch on subjects including; 'Challenges and opportunities in the cost-of-living crisis', 'Harnessing Big Data and AI to optimise tourism, sustainability and destination dynamics' and 'VisitBritain – tourism trends'. Tickets cost £205 +VAT for members and £295 +VAT for non-members. [Tourism Alliance](#)

Advice for rural Collections in Wales

On Thursday 14 March the Rural Museum Network are offering free training on 'Rural relevance: How to identify, care for and share rural collections'. Supported by funding from Art Fund for Museum Development, Welsh Government. The session runs online from 1-3pm and will help participants feel more confident about using rural collections for a greater range of stories and activities as well as signpost routes for advice and information. Email Elizabeth.Bennett@gov.wales by 5pm Wednesday 13 March 2024 to book.

The Digital Works Conference coming to Leeds in April

The two day Digital Works conference on Wednesday 24 and Thursday 25 April will include speakers from the V&A, Nesta, the Lego Group and Audience Agency. Covering topics including; digital transformation, why digital audiences matter and unlocking the power of editorial content. Taking place at Leeds City Museum, tickets cost from £299 +VAT to £399 +VAT. [Digital Works](#)

Tickets on sale for the AIM Conference in June

The Association of Independent Museums conference for 2024 will be held at the Black Country Living Museum on Thursday 13 and Friday 14 June. 'Heritage: At the heart of the community' will discuss how heritage organisations contribute to the development of thriving communities. Confirmed speakers include representatives from Brunel Museum, Museums Galleries Scotland and Historic Dockyard Chatham. For AIM members early bird tickets range from £110 +VAT to £260 +VAT and for non-members £170 +VAT to £350 +VAT. There is also an option for an online only ticket at £32.50 +VAT per person. Bursaries for AIM members are also available. [AIM](#) (tickets), [AIM](#) (conference programme)

Advanced Certificate in the Protection of Cultural Venues

The (CPD Certified) programme has been developed for those individuals within the cultural and heritage sectors who have responsibilities for the security protection of cultural venues and the assets within. The programme will examine the different threats that can impact cultural and heritage venues with a focus on the adversarial threats, alongside how they manifest themselves into criminal acts. Participants will look at proactive steps that can be taken to protect and reduce the risks being faced by organisational assets providing delegates with the knowledge and tools needed to undertake risk assessments at their venues. The 2-day programme offered by Trident Manor includes traditional learning activities, group discussions, and practical exercises that include operational and risk assessment activities. Tickets are £350 + VAT. [eventbrite](#) (tickets)

Arts Fundraising & Philanthropy increase capacity for bursary support on fundraising courses

Aimed at anyone who is from a background currently underrepresented in fundraising or governance, or who is unable to afford a full-price place. Arts Fundraising & Philanthropy have a full list of courses on their website which cover digital tools for fundraising, essentials in application writing and creating a winning fundraising strategy in turbulent times. Email artsfundraising@cause4.co.uk to find out more about bursaries. [Arts Fundraising & Philanthropy](#) (courses)



Janet, Retired Station Manager, Tower RNLB lifeboat, 29th April 2015 by Jack Lowe. © Jack Lowe
Photo: National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London.

Openings

- The Grant Museum of Zoology opens its doors after a year of closure and £300,000 refurbishment, 26 January 2024, [Evening standard](#)
- Chatteris Museum in Cambridgeshire reopens in former Barclays Bank, 23 January, 2024, [BBC](#)
- Compton Verney announces contemporary sculpture park, 12 January 2024, [M+H Advisor](#)
- Pollock's Toy Museum opening as a pop-up in Croydon, opening in the Whitgift Shopping Centre from 20 Jan, 11 January 2024, [Blooloop](#)

Appointments

Laura Pye, Director of National Museums Liverpool, has taken over as Chair of the Collections Trust replacing Camilla Hampshire who steps down after 6 years in the role. Laura is also a trustee of the National Football Museum. [Collections Trust](#)

Dr Melissa Buron joins the V&A as Director of Collections and Chief Curator from the Fine Arts Museum of San Francisco. Taking up her role in the Spring, she returns to the V&A where she previously worked as a Learning and Interpretation Research Assistant whilst completing her MA in 2007. [M+H Advisor](#)

The Peace Museum in Bradford has appointed **Joe Brook** as Director, he joins from National Museums Liverpool where he was Head of Creative Studios. The announcement comes as the Peace Museum plans a move to Salts Mill in Saltaire and also as Bradford prepares to become the City of Culture in 2025. [Museums Association](#)

Alex Sobel, the Labour (Co-op) MP for Leeds North West since 2017 has been elected to the Culture, Media and Sport Select Committee. He was Shadow Minister for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs until September 2023 and Shadow Minister for Culture, Media and Sport from April 2020 to December 2021. [Arts Professional](#), [UK Parliament](#), [Personal Website](#)

Catch up

Money matters: why museums could help Britain's poor financial literacy, 30 January 2024, [Guardian](#)

Is it ever ethical for museums to display human remains?, 19 January 2024, [BBC Future](#)

Charleston launches initiative to find privately owned Bloomsbury art, 11 January 2024, [Museums Association](#)

Jobs go at Crafts Council as revenue shrinks, 10 January 2024, [Arts Professional](#) (£)

How the Townley Collection became the British Museum's 'forgotten' marbles, 10 January 2024, [Art Newspaper](#) (£)

International news

Fire destroys almost entire Abkazia art collection of 4,000 works, 22 January 2024, [BBC](#)

The hangover after the museum party: institutions in the US are facing a funding crisis, 19 January 2024, [Art Newspaper](#) (£)

'Culture is fragile': Dutch art world figures express concerns for future under potential coalition government, 19 January 2024, [Art Newspaper](#) (£)

'Parthenon of Macedonia': site where Alexander the Great was proclaimed king reopens, 12 January 2024, [Guardian](#)

How is Basic Income for the Arts really doing?, 9 January 2024, [Irish Examiner](#)

France simplifies law on restitution of human remains, 20 December 2023, [Art Newspaper](#) (£)

Jobs

ICOM, the International Council of Museums, has announced its first open call for applications for the post of Director General. Deadline for applications is 17 March 2024. [ICOM](#)

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

- [Collections Moves Officer - V&A](#)
- [Customer Services Manager - British Library](#)
- [Patrons' Manager - Sir John Soane's Museum](#)
- [Vice Chair of Audit Committee - Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums](#)
- [AV Infrastructure Technician - IWM](#)
- [Learning and Access Officer - Leeds Museums & Galleries](#)

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