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...and much more.

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NMDC news



Meredith Greiling with The Extinction Bell at the National Museum of Scotland. Photo: Neil Hanna

Green Museums: Tackling the Climate Crisis

NMDC has published a new report 'Green Museums: Tackling the Climate Crisis' demonstrating the contribution that museums are making to safeguard the future of the planet – as partners in research, through public engagement programmes and by making changes to the running of their estates and operations. Examples include:

- Manchester Museum is a partner in a £580k Natural Environment Research Council (NERC) funded project which looks at how the meteor that killed the dinosaurs impacted temperatures on earth – and created levels of CO₂ which the planet may again see in 2100 for the first time in 34-100 million years. The research will be central to the museum's new dinosaurs display and public engagement programme, as well as giving scientists insights into our own future in a warming world.
- Programmes to activate the public include The Royal Albert Memorial Museum's 'Growing Together' project, which put planting and growing at the heart of wellbeing in Exeter, and a 'Beat Plastic Pollution' display which placed plastics in the Horniman Museum's Aquarium, reaching 17,500 in-person visitors and many more online.
- Practical changes to museum operations include a focus on decarbonising visitor and staff travel at National Galleries Scotland, a 'virtual first' courier policy and water saving irrigation project at Tate and a £4.3m zero carbon technology plan at the Science and Industry Museum in Manchester.

Maria Balshaw, Chair of the National Museum Directors' Council and Director of Tate said: "*Green Museums: Tackling the Climate Crisis* shows the positive strides that museums across the UK are making to address climate change. As the world focusses on climate during COP26, I hope this report demonstrates to museums, funders and governments the important work already underway within the sector and forms a basis of discussion of what more we can work together to achieve." [NMDC](#) (full report)

Budget and Spending Review

Exhibitions Tax Relief and infrastructure support among 'notable wins' for museums in Budget

Chancellor Rishi Sunak announced the Budget and a Spending Review covering three years to 2024-25, which was previously delayed by the pandemic. Relevant announcements for museums include:

- The Museums and Galleries Exhibition Tax Relief (MGETR) will be extended for a further two years, with the rates of relief at least doubling for one year (from 20% to 45% for non-touring productions, and from 25% to 50% for touring productions). These rates will then taper back and the relief is currently planned to end in March 2024. From 1st April 2022, changes will be made to ensure that MGETR and other similar cultural tax reliefs are better targeted and ensure they continue to be safeguarded from abuse.
- There will be an additional £52m for museums and sport in 2022-23 to help with the recovery from Covid-19, and £49m in 2023-24. This will be shared between ACE and other cultural and sporting bodies.
- £77m has been committed to the MEND fund over three years, to help regional museums and libraries upgrade buildings and develop digital facilities. Originally, £100m was committed in the 2019 Budget, but progress was halted by the pandemic. This spend is part of a wider £153m investment in the Cultural Infrastructure Fund.
- The Budget also reiterated previously announced commitments to £300m for estate maintenance of national museums; £125m for the Natural History Museum's new research centre at Harwell; and £14m to move national collections out of Blythe House to new storage sites.
- DCMS core budget rose by 2.9% with most ringfenced for capital spending. The Charity Finance Group comments "*because certain bits of funding have been moved from day-to-day spending to capital budget, and given uncertainty about how much, it is hard to tell if this is a budget cut or increase.*" In turn, it is not yet known how this will affect national museums' or ACE's budget for 2021-22 to 2024-25.
- Core spending for local authorities will increase by an average of 3% each year until 2024-25.
- Retail, hospitality and leisure properties will receive 50% relief on business rates for 2022-23, however it is not yet clear how this will apply to museums.

- DEFRA's plans to make the UK a 'scientific superpower' include funding the digitisation of Kew Gardens' Herbarium, making it available to biodiversity researchers worldwide.
- The Levelling Up Fund is also supporting a number of museum projects including an additional £3m for the Burrell Collection in Glasgow and £20m for the Liverpool Docks cultural regeneration project. This will allow National Museums Liverpool to proceed with its 10 year masterplan to transform the waterfront, and Tate Liverpool to update its galleries to accommodate new forms of contemporary art.
- The Treasury will also review 'museum freedoms' – a package made permanent in 2015 which gives operational freedoms to national museums on issues such as access to finance, pay, procurement and more.
- However, a £270m arts premium for secondary schools, which originally included £90m for 2021-22 has been shelved due to 'new priorities' post-pandemic.

In a statement, Tate Director and NMDC Chair Maria Balshaw said *"I'm particularly grateful to see the extension of tax relief that has already made a huge difference for the sector, and much-needed investment in the public museum buildings, which make up such a vital part of our cultural infrastructure."* MA Director Sharon Heal praised 'notable wins' for the sector in the package, and said that it *"welcomes this package of support for museums which recognises the difficulties that the pandemic is still causing"*. [Gov.uk](#) (Budget overview) [Museums Journal](#), [M+H](#), [Evening Standard](#), [FT](#), [Art Newspaper](#), [Charity Finance Group](#), [AIM](#) (Director's comments), [Arts Professional](#), [Gov.uk](#) (exhibitions tax relief), [Liverpool Echo](#), [Museums Journal](#) (Liverpool), [NML](#) (waterfront project)

Local authority museums report shows 27% decline in spend since 2010

The MA has published a report on local authority funding of museums since 2010, based on independent research. The data covers both museums directly run by local authorities and trusts which receive their financial support.

- At individual local authority level there is a very varied picture, from zero investment to significant investment – but the overall spend on museums and galleries declined between 2009-10 and 2019-20 by 27% in real terms, from £426m to £311m.
- That figure was 23% in Scotland and 31% in Wales; figures are not available for Northern Ireland.
- The amount of income per head generated from museums by local authorities has also declined in almost every region over the past decade, from 17% (South West) to 56% (West Midlands). The one exception is the East of England where revenue generated has increased by 21%.

The report also captures recurring themes in interviews with staff. These include:

- It is easier to get capital funding to build new cultural facilities, than the revenue funding needed to run them in a good state. Where there are good funding opportunities, staff may lack the capacity to apply.
- Services have already been so extensively cut that further cuts are likely to cause museums to become a different type of service.
- Redundancies have tended to fall on learning, community engagement and outreach teams.
- Local authorities are looking to divest from heritage buildings with high maintenance costs making co-location of services more likely, especially in health and wellbeing hubs.

MA Director Sharon Heal said *"we know that local authorities are under enormous pressure to provide statutory services, despite sustained cuts to their budgets, which often means that museums lose out. Throughout the pandemic museums have supported home schooling during lockdowns, provided safe spaces to overcome the impacts of social isolation and supported communities to come to terms with challenges they face. If they are to continue to provide this support and to play a critical role in the recovery, then they need fair and sustained funding."* [Museums Journal](#)

COP26: museums act for the climate emergency



RSS Sir David Attenborough moored on the Thames at Greenwich as part of the Ice Worlds festival. Courtesy of Royal Museums Greenwich

Museums must engage people as 'active agents in a mass movement' to live sustainably

Nick Merriman, Director of the Horniman Museum has written for *The Art Newspaper* about the changing uses and responsibilities of museums in the face of the climate emergency. He says that holding collections relating to the 'five other mass extinctions' in Earth's history, while enjoying a high degree of public trust and a huge audience, means that museums have both the ability and ethical obligation to speak out. He argues that museums should shift from the 'broadcast mode' of simply sharing information, to "*engag[ing] people as active agents in a mass movement to live more sustainably. Simply presenting the facts is no longer enough; many people report feeling overwhelmed in the face of the enormity of the challenges and succumb to climate exhaustion and anxiety.*" Excellent exhibitions such as the Natural History Museum's 'Our Broken Planet: How We Got Here And Ways To Fix It' instil hope, and encourage people to believe that active citizens can shift the culture. Nick also discusses ways that museums can rethink their own operations. Although 'net zero' has a place in the picture, museums have to be sure that the 'net' does not mean business as usual while buying credit through the alleged green activities of others. For example, IWM is planting its own woodlands, sidestepping problems of validation when buying offsetting from a third party. He adds that museums must themselves move away from a model of constant growth – of income, visitors, collections and buildings – as the primary metric of success to a more sustainable model, valuing their social and environmental role. [Art Newspaper](#), [NHM](#) (Our Broken Planet)

Images this month: museum events for COP26

The global cultural response to COP26 is being collected on the Culture at COP website, and there is still time for museums to add climate-themed activity. Just a few of the exhibitions and interventions by UK museums over the fortnight include:

- The National Maritime Museum was part of a three day Ice Worlds Festival of polar science and exploration in Greenwich, which included a chance for the public to visit the arctic scientific vessel RSS Sir David Attenborough moored in the Thames. [RMG](#)
- US artist Jenny Holzer projected the words of Sir David Attenborough, Greta Thunberg and 40 other climate leaders onto the chimney of Tate Modern for her work 'Hurt Earth'. [Art Newspaper](#)

- The Design Museum's 'Waste Age: what can design do?' runs to February and showcases a new generation of designers rethinking our relationship to everyday things from fashion to food, electronics, construction and packaging. [Design Museum](#)
- The National Museum of Scotland's Extinction Bell is ringing 150-200 times a day to represent the rate of species lost. It runs to January 2022 alongside the small exhibition 'Scotland's Climate Challenge' which looks at technology developed in Scotland to reduce carbon emissions. [NMS](#) (Extinction Bell), [NMS](#) (Scotland's Climate Challenge)
- The Science Museum is hosting a new photography exhibition, Amazônia, by Sebastião Salgado, which documents the social and environmental issues facing the Amazon. It runs to March 2022. [SMG](#)

Some of Glasgow's major museums have been closed for some or all of the period of COP26, to help with delivering the socially distanced major event. [Culture at COP](#), [Museums Journal](#), [MuseumNext](#)

NHM's tracker reveals that the UK is in the bottom 10% of countries for biodiversity

The Natural History Museum has published a Biodiversity Trends Explorer, drawing on extensive data to help negotiators at the COP15 Convention on Biological Diversity compare the state of ecosystem biodiversity among countries. The tracker also predicts the effects of different economic futures on the natural world. Currently with only 53% of its biodiversity remaining, the UK is in the bottom 10% globally, and far behind China on this metric. NHM's Professor Andy Purvis said that the excessive loss is because the agricultural and industrial revolutions began first in the UK. He commented *"basically, that triggered the mechanised destruction of nature in order to convert it into goods for profit. As a result, the UK has been among the most nature-depleted countries in the world for a long time."* Worldwide, global biodiversity intactness was at 75% in 2020, much less than the 90% needed to avoid dangerous tipping points in the environment. NHM Researcher Dr Adriana De Palma said *"the negotiations at COP26 and COP15 can only be successful if the validity of both sides' positions is clearly understood. The Biodiversity Intactness Index shows this clearly, by providing each country with accurate information, not only on its recent biodiversity trend but also how much nature it has retained. [This data] can help negotiators reach equitable agreements."* The first half of COP15 took place in October – conversation continues in a second half in 2022. [NHM](#), [MuseumNext](#), [Guardian](#)

'Heritage Responds' – case studies of reducing the carbon footprint of heritage buildings

A new report 'Heritage Responds: Taking Positive Action on Climate Change', outlines how 26 heritage organisations including the National Trust are implementing greener approaches in response to the climate crisis. It calls for a commitment to decarbonise the sector, for open collaboration across institutions, and for public communication as well as investment in research and innovation. However, it mainly focuses on good practice already achieved that others can adopt and build from. For example:

- Gloucester Cathedral, which now has photovoltaic panels on its south roof.
- Smart sensors in Kenwood House offer environmental monitoring in real time, giving data that helps reduce gas, electricity and water use.
- The Jubilee pool in Penzance, recently restored and heated geothermally.

The report shows how even large, old listed buildings can make substantial progress on carbon footprint. Much of the bank of existing good practice will be useful to museums.

[M + H](#), [Historic Environment Forum](#)

Science Museum announces Green Energy gallery – but sponsorship leads to two trustee resignations

The Science Museum has announced that it will open a new Green Energy gallery in 2023, exploring climate science and the energy revolution needed to cut global dependence on fossil fuels. However, its sponsorship by the energy company Adani, which has significant investments in coal, has led to two trustee resignations: mathematician and broadcaster Dr Hannah Fry and Dr Jo Foster, Director of the Institute for Research in Schools. Writing in *The Times* Hannah Fry said *“I share the concerns of many that energy companies present themselves as transitioning, while spending vast sums on creating new mines and finding new oil fields...I worry that the Science Museum gives the false impression that scientists believe the current efforts of fossil fuel companies are sufficient to avoid disaster”*. There have also been further protests by young climate activists at the Science Museum site. In a statement responding to the resignations, Chair of Trustees Dame Mary Archer said that big energy companies had a responsibility to ‘show more leadership’ in the transition to low carbon energy but that *“given the enormous expertise and wealth tied up in those energy companies, they need to play a much bigger role in urgent change to prevent a climate catastrophe. This potential explains the position taken by the Science Museum Group over the past decade that it would be counter-productive to rule out engaging with the entire sector; sponsorship decisions are made on individual companies, but with so much at stake there will continue to be robust internal discussion about where to draw the line. In the meantime, we need to work harder to engage everyone, including those who disagree with our position, on this vital topic.”* [Museums Journal](#), [Times](#), [Twitter](#), [Science Museum](#), [BBC](#), [Science Museum Group](#) (Mary Archer statement), [M + H](#), [Art Newspaper](#)

Museocycle (get some free fencing or a very nice reception desk)

Although Museum Freecycle has existed for some years as a way for museums to share and reuse materials, a majority of its listings have centred around London. Now Museums Development North West is experimentally launching Museocycle, to see if a more localised regional service increases listings, and offers a good model for the future. A jazzy reception desk which lights up in a variety of colours and a huge pile of fencing are among the early offers. [MDNW](#)

Visitor sentiment



HURT EARTH, 2021, Light projection, Tate Modern. © 2021 Jenny Holzer, ARS Photo: Adam Kenrick

Willingness to attend static since June – and engaged audiences more likely to be working from home

The Audience Agency has published figures gathered in September through the Cultural Participation Monitor on people's attitudes to cultural participation in the light of the pandemic. Findings include:

- An overall sense of wellbeing has grown from 67% in June to 70% in September, however the number worried about getting ill with Covid has increased from 52% to 57%.
- 67% think another lockdown is very or quite likely in 2021, with scarcely less (65%) expecting lockdowns in 2022.
- The number of people 'happy to attend' cultural events is unchanged since June at 29%.
- Large proportions of the audience think Covid safety measures are 'very important' including crowd management (46%), hand sanitiser (45%), attendance only for vaccinated or with a negative test (41%), masks (40%) and social distancing (37%). The Audience Agency adds: *"the importance given to hand sanitiser, over masks and distancing, is a little surprising, given that Covid-19 transmission is predominantly airborne, rather than from surfaces contact."*
- The most engaged audiences are the most likely to be working from home. Home workers also include younger, male demographics, disabled people, those with children under 16 and shielders.
- 90% of those working from home throughout the pandemic expect to continue to do so for the next three months – and 81% say they will do so when the pandemic is not a threat. These groups are likely to be looking for cultural engagement closer to home in the long term.
- Engagement is likely to decline in the future across culture – with film suffering the worst at -8% attendance. However, enthusiasm for outdoor historic parks, gardens and heritage places is up 12%, and indoor museums, heritage sites and galleries are slightly up by 1%.

[Audience Agency](#)

Rail commuting still at half of pre-pandemic levels, though at 90% for leisure travel

Figures from the Rail Delivery Group for mid-October show that the number of people commuting by rail is still only 45% of pre-pandemic figures, up from 33% in late August, but nevertheless demonstrating the difficulty that city centres have in attracting footfall back. Leisure train travel figures are much higher at 90% of pre-pandemic figures. They now account for 55% of all train journeys, compared to just a third in autumn 2019. [Guardian](#)

Better employment and career paths

Major £950k Curating for Change project offers work placements for d/Deaf and disabled people in 20 museums

The Curating for Change project is launching a new £950k Fellowship and Traineeship programme for d/Deaf, disabled and neurodivergent people who would like to pursue a career in museums across England. This addresses one of the most pressing disparities in the sector: 19% of working age adults are disabled in the UK, but the number working in museums is only 4%. The programme is managed by Accentuate, a long-term initiative on disabled people's history and empowerment based at Screen South, and backed by £950k in NLHF funding. Fellows and Trainees will be hosted by more than 20 partner museums, and will have space to research and curate a range of new exhibitions and events across nine locations. The 20 participating museums are of all sizes, and include Hastings Museum and Art Gallery, the National Museum of Liverpool and National Railway Museum, York. Head of Accentuate Esther Fox said *"we can at last tackle the huge problem of the under-representation of D/deaf and disabled people in our museums - both as staff, and in the collections and the stories that are told. We are privileged to be working with a whole range of wonderful museums to bring about this change."* Contact Jane Sparkes at cfc@accentuateuk.org to receive details of how to apply as they emerge. [Screen South](#), [MuseumNext](#)

MGS signs up to the Fair Work Manifesto and other better employment initiatives

Museums Galleries Scotland has signed up to the Scottish Government's Fair Work First initiative and will encourage high quality fair work across museums. This includes supporting the real Living Wage, workforce development, not using inappropriate zero-hours contracts, tackling the gender pay gap and supporting a diverse and inclusive workplace. Additionally:

- It is a strategic partner in The Disability Employment Gap Public Social Partnership, aimed at halving the gap by 2038.
- It also supports the Young Person's Guarantee, aimed to give 16 to 24 year olds the opportunity of a job, apprenticeship, education, training or volunteering.

[MGS \(Fair Work\)](#)

Also: Middlesbrough's MIMA School of Art and Design is offering the UK's first combined masters and higher degree apprenticeship (HAD) in curating, as a part of its commitment to access and social mobility. The course is a combination of online learning and week-long residencies in Middlesbrough. [Arts Industry](#)

Stockton Arts Centre invites organisations to copy its freelancers' policy

ARC, Stockton's Arts Centre has developed a freelancers' policy, outlining its principles for this part of its workforce. In a blog Chief Executive Annabel Turpin said *"one of the most striking aspects of the COVID pandemic for the cultural sector has been to highlight the value of freelancers – just how dependent organisations are on them, and how unequal the relationship often is."* The policy outlines transparency in hiring practices and principles underpinning pay rates. Turpin invites organisations willing to adhere to the principles to copy the policy. Christina Lister, co-director at Museum Freelance said *"this is the first time we've come across a cultural organisation's policy on freelancers and we're overjoyed to see it. Its existence, and more importantly its content, really highlights that Stockton Arts Centre understands freelancers and values them. It's full of concrete practices that are good practice (ranging from tangible examples such as paying invoices within 14 days of receipt, to principles such as fostering honest and open relationships and communication). We warmly welcome this leadership from Stockton Arts Centre and hope that other organisations in the sector follow suit."* [ARC \(blog\)](#), [ARC \(policy\)](#), [SWMD](#) (resources for working with freelancers)

AHRC and DCMS launch Policy Fellowships programme

The Arts and Humanities Research Council and DCMS are offering research Fellowships lasting up to 13.5 months. Fellows will work with policy officials and/or analysts in DCMS to lead on research and on generating new knowledge in some of the most pressing areas and challenges facing the cultural, heritage and creative industries sectors. Four fellowships are available, in the following areas:

- International Cultural Heritage Protection and Soft Power Policy (co-hosted with British Council)
- Digital and international audiences
- Implementing the Culture and Heritage Capital approach
- Media and creative Industries environmental sustainability

Placements would suit researchers interested in using their expertise to inform and influence the Department's policy work. Applicants must be based at an organisation eligible for UKRI funding (museums with IRO status), have a PhD or equivalent experience and meet AHRC's early career researcher status. The deadline for applications is 4pm on 6th January. [UKRI](#)

Resources and short course on sexual harassment in archaeology

Archaeology bodies including the British Archaeology Job Resource and Chartered Institute for Archaeologists have created a short course on understanding sexual harassment in archaeology, drawing from current legislation and recent sector research. [British Archaeology News Resource](#)

Appointments

Pam Alexander has been appointed as new Chair of The Heritage Alliance. A former CEO of English Heritage, she is also Chair of Commonplace, which uses digital technology to broaden community engagement. [Heritage Alliance](#)

DCMS reshuffle

In addition to last month's reshuffle announcements for DCMS, Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay, Lord in Waiting and Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, has now been appointed Minister for Arts, overseeing arts and museums, as well as DCMS business in the Lords. [CLA](#) (detailed reshuffle list for culture and education)

Surveys

Hybrid working: challenging or rewarding?

Culture24 has launched a very short survey to discover which parts of hybrid working are challenging or rewarding for museum workers. Part of its Let's Get Real action research programme, the insights will be used to shape Culture24's sector support programming. [Culture24](#) (survey link), [Culture24](#) (understanding hybrid)

ACE seeks experiences of engaging communities during the pandemic

ACE would like to hear about the experiences of cultural organisations in reaching, supporting and engaging communities during the Covid-19 pandemic. The seven minute survey will contribute to the creation of practical resources for the sector. [ACE](#)

Events



'Archipel fluvial de Mariuá, Rio Negro, Amazon, Brazil', 2019, by Sebastião Salgado/nbpictures. Part of his Amazônia photography exhibition at the Science Museum, London

2021 Achates Philanthropy Foundation Symposium: from climate to the myth of social mobility

Achates Philanthropy Foundation is holding a symposium over five evenings with creatives and thought leaders across the cultural sector, addressing issues including climate economics, the social mobility myth in the creative industries, and the lives of artists. The event takes place from 15th–19th November and is free. [Achates](#)

Free series begins on bringing communities and archives together using digital technology

The Audience Agency is holding a free series of events around digitally democratising archives. The first, 'Opening Archives: bringing communities and archives together using digital technology' will take place on 18th November from 1.30pm. [Audience Agency](#)

Museum as Host: inviting communities to take part in difficult conversations

Happy Museum is holding an event to explore how museums can act as hosts to communities and stakeholders to help them hold 'difficult' conversations, see the perspectives of others, engage with contested narratives and collaborate with others around the climate emergency. It will describe how museum spaces and collections can support deep listening. The workshop is led by creative activists Ruth Ben-Tovim and Sarah Woods and takes place on 30th November, tickets are free. [Happy Museum](#)

Museum iD announces free conference and year-long events programme for 2022

Museums Ideas has announced details of its conference, taking place virtually on 30th November, and a programme of events running through to autumn 2022. These include:

- Conference talks, which will be released online on 30th November cover how museums can be reimagined as ethical, people focused organisations in a time of growing inequality, environmental emergency, and economic and political crisis. With speakers from National Museums Liverpool, York Museums Trust, the People's History Museum and more, it is offered free to watch on-demand with no need for a ticket.
- The 2022 programme begins on 22nd March with a study day 'Designing Museum Experiences in the Digital Age' at National Gallery X, the National Gallery's 'infinite studio'. Tickets are £177.
- Topics later in the year include 'Curating with Feeling: Creating Relatable Exhibitions', 'Applying Class to Museum Collections', 'People Centred and Community Led Interpretation' and 'Decolonisation in Action', among many others.

[Museum iD](#)

Inspiring radical action: Museums and Heritage Highland offers practical climate events

Recordings are now available of two recent Museums and Heritage Highland events, giving practical advice for museums addressing the climate emergency. The first looks at how museums can inspire radical action in their communities; a second looks at routes to a low carbon future for small and medium sized museums. [Museums and Heritage Highland](#) (youtube), [M&HH](#)

Touring Exhibitions Group – from economics to interpretation planning

The Touring Exhibitions Group is offering three events to help develop stronger exhibition planning:

- Strategic Interpretative Planning for Engaging Exhibitions looks at creating strong narratives, and then planning and implementing them well. It takes place over two workshops on 26th November and 3rd Tickets are £59 - £79. [TEG](#)
- The Economics of Touring Exhibitions Workshop takes place on 15th and 22nd November. Tickets are £59 to £79. [TEG](#)
- Partnership Agreement Workshop looks at agreements which involve two or more partners. It takes place over three two hour sessions on 10th, 17th and 24th February 2022. Tickets are £59 - 79. [TEG](#)

Creative People and Places Conference

The new 'Creative People and Places' conference is taking place online for those interested in inclusive arts, cultural engagement and the ACE programme of the same name. It will offer opportunities to see how engagement can happen in practice by experiencing artist-led workshops, and will also offer networks for those working more closely with communities. The programme brings together organisations from across culture, from poets to museums. The event takes place from 7th-9th December. Tickets are £36-£100. [Creative People and Places](#)

Museums + Tech 2021: Data Tales

The Museum Computer Group is holding its annual conference, with the theme 'Data Tales', looking at how it is gathered, stored and interpreted, as well as exploring the impact of the pandemic. Keynotes are from Rebecca Bailey, Programme Director of Towards a National Collection and One Further's Chris Unitt who talks on 'Museum Data: from collection to action'. The event takes place over two afternoons on the 1st and 2nd December online. Tickets are on a pay-what-you-can basis with new options for corporate membership. [MCG](#), [MCG](#) (corporate membership)

Neurodiversity and the cultural sector

Engage is holding an event on neurodivergence and the cultural sector, in partnership with the Neurodiverse Museum – a sector wide network and development organisation. The event takes place on 24th November from 10am, tickets are £16.76. [Engage](#)

Heritage Compass offers business development support to smaller organisations

The final round of the Heritage Compass training programme is now open to heritage organisations, including museums, in England. Aimed at small organisations with a turnover under £1m it offers:

- Six training courses, covering business planning, fundraising and income generation, governance, financial planning, earned income and audience development.
- A national symposium bringing together all organisations alongside expert guest speakers.
- Access to eLearning, including the accredited course 'Arts Fundraising and Leadership' developed in partnership with the University of Leeds.
- Mentoring, and access to a benchmarking dashboard.

The deadline for application is 12 noon on 16th December. [Arts Fundraising and Philanthropy](#)

Festivals and countrywide programmes



Faisal Ghani with his Solaris Kit, which is now on display at the National Museum of Scotland as part of its small exhibition Scotland's Climate Challenge. Courtesy of NMS

2022 Festival named as 'Unboxed: Creativity in the UK' as it announces programme

The national arts and sciences festival planned for 2022 has released details of its programme, alongside its new name: 'UNBOXED: Creativity in the UK'. Ten commissions taking place across the country have been unveiled, which have backing worth £120m from Governments of the four UK nations. The festival's Chief Creative Officer Martin Green said *"hundreds of creatives from across science, technology, engineering, arts and maths are creating extraordinary once-in-a-lifetime events and online experiences for millions in the UK's biggest and most ambitious public creative programme to date"*. Programmes include 'Dandelion', a Scotland wide reimagination of a harvest festival for the 21st century with plant giveaways, vertical farms and music festivals; Dreammachine in which the UK's four capitals will be offered sound and light shows 'experienced with closed eyes'; and GreenSpace Dark Skies in which 20,000 people will create huge outdoor artworks by lighting up landscapes. Meanwhile an immersive public artwork, SEE MONSTER, will be created on a decommissioned oil platform off the coast at Weston-super-Mare. The programme will run from March to October 2022, with an aim of supporting tourism and local economies as well as showcasing UK arts and sciences. [Times](#), [Gov.uk](#), [Guardian](#), [Arts Industry](#)

Take part in Museum Shop Sunday

The Association for Cultural Enterprises is inviting cultural attractions to join 1,600 others in promoting Museum Shop Sunday on 28th November. Participants are invited to create an event for their museum shops for the day – perhaps a demonstration, tasting, competition or craft event, and then promote it through the dedicated website and marketing toolkit. A webinar is also available on demand, showing how to promote Museum Shop Sunday on social media. [Association for Cultural Enterprises](#)

Kids in Museums organises climate-themed Takeover Day

The Kids in Museums Takeover Day on 12th November takes place on the final day of COP26, and participating museums are enabling climate themed events. At Perth Museum and Gallery, young people will be making and curating a display of climate protest posters, and at Jorvik Viking Centre, they will be creating content on how Viking artefacts can inspire environmental sustainability. There is still time for museums to sign up and create an event. Kids in Museums also offers a variety of climate resources for young people. [CHWA](#)

Holocaust Memorial Day – resources to run an event in January

The Holocaust Memorial Day Trust has produced resources and activity packs for museums and galleries planning to host an event on Holocaust Memorial Day on 27th January. [HMDT](#)

Podcasts

New series of Meet Me at the Museum features Horniman and National Museum of Scotland

The Art Fund has launched a new series of 'Meet Me At the Museum', the podcast where people in the public eye bring a friend to visit a museum and learn more about objects in collections. Recent episodes include actor Jack Lowden learning about the Jacobite uprisings at the National Museum of Scotland and actor and writer Lolita Chakrabarti at the Horniman Museum. [Art Fund](#)

What are museums for? – Fitzwilliam looks at 21st century museums in new podcasts

Over six episodes of a new podcast, the Fitzwilliam Museum will be asking 'What Are Museums For', gathering directors, curators, researchers, activists and writers to discuss the role of the museum in the 21st century. The first episode discusses the relationship between museums and nationhood, with guests National Gallery Director Gabriele Finaldi and The Courtauld's Sussan Babaie. [Fitzwilliam Museum](#)

Funds open for applications



Activities at the National Maritime Museum, Greenwich as part of the Ice Worlds Festival. Courtesy of Royal Museums Greenwich

More opportunities for museums in revised National Lottery Project Grants

ACE has revised its National Lottery Project Grants, with provisions making it easier for museums, including non-accredited museums and early career cultural workers, to apply. Provisions include:

- Grants from £1k to £100k are available, with a decision within eight weeks for applications under £30k, allowing ambitious work to get off the ground more quickly.
- More advice will be targeted at early career workers who might not previously have applied for funding.
- A greater number of museums, including non-accredited museums, will be able to apply, with grants available to make collections more relevant and accessible to their audiences.
- There will also be ringfenced programmes within the grants supporting place-making work, touring and projects of national significance.

The new style grants open for applications on 22nd November. [ACE](#)

ACE gives initial guidance on becoming an NPO from 2023

ACE has published initial guidance for museums, libraries and arts organisations that wish to be National Portfolio Organisations, with regular funding, from April 2023. ACE encourages organisations to apply who have not previously worked with it, as well as those with previous relationships with the Arts Council, and stresses that *“this is a new portfolio, driven by a new strategy, and we genuinely hope a much wider group of organisations will consider applying.”* This round of NPO funding will cover either three or four years, and the overall size of budget will depend on the Government's Spending Review. Fuller details will be published in January 2022, with the application window opening in February. However, it encourages organisations considering applying for NPO status to start talking to their Boards now. [ACE](#) (overview), [ACE](#) (blog), [ACE](#) (Let's Create and investment principles)

New £150k round of Art Fund New Collecting Awards

The Art Fund has opened a new round of its New Collecting Awards, which allows early career curators to make new acquisitions for their museums, while developing their own knowledge and skills through research, travel and training connected to the collecting project. Between £30k and £80k is available per project from a total of £150k for this round. Applicants can either be employed in, or working in partnership with an accredited museum or one working towards accredited status. The deadline for applications is 16th November. [Art Fund](#)

£1m fund will offer grants to celebrate greater diversity in London's public spaces

The Commission for Diversity in the Public Realm, created last year by the Mayor of London to celebrate a wider range of people in London's streets, has launched the new £1m Untold Stories grant fund. Projects will improve representation of Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities, women, LGBTQ+ communities and disabled people. Currently only 4% of statues are of named women, and there are only three sculptures of women of colour and 14 of men of colour in the city. Up to £25k per project will be available to community-led organisations wishing to refresh public spaces through murals, street art, street names, play areas, gardens and other projects telling a fuller version of the capital's story. The fund will also be complemented by bespoke content on an interactive website. The first round of the fund is open until noon on 12th January. [Mayor of London](#)

Four Nations International Fund pilots creative work between UK nations and overseas partners

The four UK arts councils, plus other sector support bodies are piloting a new Four Nations International Fund. Grants of between £1k and £5k are available for individuals or organisations working in the cultural sector to co-create projects. Each project may be delivered in person, digitally or as a hybrid and must involve at least two of the four UK nations, plus an international partner from Europe or beyond. The deadline for applications to the pilot fund is 11th November. [ACE](#)

British Council opens UK-UAE Cultural Professionals Connect Grants for collaborative work

The British Council has opened the FCDO-funded UK-UAE Cultural Professionals Connect Grants, to encourage international networking around arts and culture. Grants of up to £5k are available for artists, cultural professionals, creative practitioners, art and cultural organisations and art institutions in the UAE and the UK to support face to face or digital networking and collaboration between the two countries, facilitating skill or knowledge exchange. Face to face work should be delivered in UAE, with up to an additional £2k available for exchange work in the UK. Interdisciplinary work is welcomed, with artforms accepted ranging from film to literature, music, theatre, dance and visual art. The contact for queries is iman.tarafa@britishcouncil.org, and the deadline for applications is 15th November. [British Council](#)

Evaluation

CCV seeks to change a culture of 'too much and too little' evaluation with new principles

Evaluation to satisfy funders can be a burden, especially on smaller organisations, while also taking away time that might be spent on more nuanced reflection. Meanwhile, 'evaluation as advocacy' – because the costs of acknowledging too many negative outcomes seem so high – undermines the credibility of evaluation reports in general. However, there is a genuine passion in the sector for more honest and more useful evaluations. This is the situation identified by the Centre for Cultural Value and Paul Hamlyn Foundation – who have been running a programme over the last year, asking how evaluation can improve, with input from 40 academics and cultural leaders. The result is a simple list of evaluation principles, identifying what changes these ask from both the evaluator and funder. There is also a series of blogs discussing the issues in more depth. Above all, the review calls for a wider range of perspectives, giving more of a voice to end users. CCV comments *"evaluation is too often seen as serving the needs of funders, rather than organisations or most importantly – users and the wider public. We argue for a vision of evaluation which centres the experiences, wants, values and viewpoints of the people who are at the heart of the purpose of cultural activity in the first place. This is what funders tell us they want too."* [CCV](#) (twitter thread overview), [CCV](#) (evaluation for the right reasons), [CCV](#) (evaluation principles), [CCV](#), (why evaluation needs rethinking)

Awards open for applications



Visitors to the Amazônia photography exhibition at the Science Museum, London

£150k award for Civic Arts Organisations opens for a second year

The Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation has opened its Award for Civic Arts Organisations for a second year. It is intended to shine a spotlight on organisations rethinking their relationships with the communities they serve after a period of exceptional change. The award is generously funded with one prize of £100k and two of £25k. Last year, Heart n Soul, an arts company working with people with learning difficulties won the main prize. The Foundation says that for the second award “we want to focus on how arts organisations are changing and how they are now embedding learning into their future plans as they interpret what it means to take their civic role seriously.” The deadline for applications is 1pm on 22nd November, with the winner to be announced in March next year.

[Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation](#)

Museums + Heritage Awards 2022 open for entries – with new categories including visitor welcome

The Museums + Heritage Awards 2022 is now open for entries, with 17 categories to choose from. For a third year, NLHF is sponsoring the Sustainable Project of the Year award, and there are two new categories – the Visitor Welcome Award and Café or Restaurant of the Year Award, both reflecting a return to in person visits. Other categories reward excellence in exhibitions, community engagement, marketing and comms, use of digital and museum shops. The deadline for applications is 1st February 2022. [M + H](#)

Hearts for the Arts Awards open, to celebrate local authority culture champions

The Campaign for the Arts has opened nominations for its 2022 Heart for the Arts Awards. These celebrate local authority and cultural trust individual and projects which champion creative and arts-based community projects. The awards seek to highlight the benefits of greater public investment in arts activity. The three categories are Best Arts Champion – Councillor; Best Arts Champion – Local Authority or Cultural Trust Worker; and Best Arts project. The deadline for nominations is 26th November and winners will be announced in March 2022. [Campaign for the Arts](#)

Prizes shortlisted or awarded

Bailiffgate Museum & Gallery wins Family Friendly Museum Award 2021

Bailiffgate Museum & Gallery, a small volunteer-run museum in Alnwick, Northumberland has won the Kids in Museums Family Friendly Museum Award 2021. It also won the Best Small Museum category, with an offer that includes Vikings, social history and arts and crafts. Opened in 2002, the museum based in a former church near Alnwick Castle beat 19 others on the shortlist. One family judge commented “*this was our first time here and we had no expectations really, but it was such a big hit. We loved how relaxed it felt. The children were actively encouraged to touch and play with the exhibits... The Viking exhibit was small and perfect... we had to drag them out for lunch otherwise I'm sure they would have stayed longer. We would definitely go back.*” London Transport Museum won in the medium sized museum category and the Horniman Museum was best large museum. There were two winners for Best Digital Activity - National Museum Wales’ ‘Museum Sleepover’ and The Whitworth’s ‘Play Live’. The Postal Museum won best accessible museum. [Kids in Museums](#), [M + H](#), [Bailiffgate Museum](#), [Arts Industry](#), [Museums Journal](#)

Eight cities and regions shortlisted to be next City of Culture – from Cornwall to Derby

Eight cities and areas have been longlisted to become City of Culture 2025, succeeding Coventry which holds the title until May 2022. Bradford, Stirling, County Durham, Armagh City (Banbridge and Craigavon), Derby, Southampton, Wrexham County Borough and the whole of Cornwall have been selected. Each will receive £40k towards developing the next stage of their bid, before a shortlist of four is chosen, with a winner to be selected in May 2022. There will be no further Government funding for the winner – instead it will be expected to draw from existing funding pots. However, previous title holders have brought in significant investment: Hull is estimated to have attracted an additional £220m in investment through being City of Culture 2017. [Guardian](#), [Gov.uk](#), [Arts Industry](#), [Art Newspaper](#), [Museums Journal](#)

Museums Change lives shortlist – from Barnsley’s new arrivals to supporting young creatives

The MA has announced the shortlist for its Museums Change Lives Award across four categories. Among the twelve shortlisted are the Barnsley Museum ‘Feels like Home’ project for those new to the town with English as a second language, consisting mostly of refugees, asylum seekers and migrant workers; V&A Dundee’s ‘Work in Progress’ which supported 72 early career creatives when opportunities dried up because of Covid-19; plus the start-up Mixed Museum’s ‘Brown Babies’ project which interviews with over 50 people who were born in Britain to Black GI fathers and white mothers during the Second World War. The winners will be announced at the MA’s annual conference next week. [Museums Journal](#)

British Museum announces winners of the 2020 Marsh Awards

The British Museum and Marsh Charitable Trust have announced the winners of their 2020 Awards for Volunteers in Museum Learning, which recognise volunteers who deal directly with the public in any capacity – from guided tours to helping with family activities:

- The overall winners for 2020 are the Interpretation Volunteers at Cleveland Pools Trust, Bath who win £2k.
- Thirteen regional winners include ‘The Preservative Party’ from Leeds City Museum, ‘Philosophy Café’ Volunteers at Manchester Art Gallery and Museum From Home’ activity pack volunteers from Colchester + Ipswich Museums, Suffolk.
- The ‘Diving Deep: HMS Invincible 1744’ volunteers at the National Museum of the Royal Navy won the South East award for work to get an exhibition launched, despite the pandemic, including making interactives Covid-safe.

[British Museum](#), [British Museum](#) (press release), [Leeds Museums](#), [Museums Journal](#), [NMRN](#)

Museum openings and closures

Sci Fi in Milton Keynes and the Great Tapestry of Scotland: 14 new museums which opened during the pandemic

The Museums in the Pandemic project has revealed that 14 new museums opened during the pandemic period of March 2020 to September 2021. Two are local authority run, the rest independent and most were at least at the planning stage before the pandemic began. They range from the tiny Malton and Norton Heritage Centre in North Yorkshire, which unites local history collections in a former betting shop, to the Bow Street Police Museum in Covent Garden and a major new museum on the Scottish Borders, The Great Tapestry of Scotland. Three museums focused on railway heritage including one at Glasgow Central railway station, and the National Film and Sci Fi museum opened in Milton Keynes. Mark Liebenrood, part of the AHRC Mapping Museums research group which runs the project comments *“we began our research into this period expecting it to be marked by permanent closures, so it has been a welcome surprise to see so many museums opening.”* [Mapping Museums](#)

Museum of Oxford reopens after £2.8m redevelopment

The Museum of Oxford has reopened after being closed for two years for a £2.8m redevelopment, which has tripled museum space and improved facilities for its hundred volunteers. It tells the long story of the city from the Romans to Cowley factory workers, including the infamous Cutteslowe Walls, built to divide public and private housing in North Oxford. Mary Clarkson, Cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure and Tourism at Oxford City Council said *“among such an abundance of museums, the Museum of Oxford is significant in that it is the only one that is exclusively about the people of Oxford. The £2.8m major investment has helped re-imagine the museum for a new generation and makes it an important cultural focus for our city and communities.”* [M + H](#), [Oxford Mail](#), [BBC](#)

Royal College of Music opens 'interactive' museum with regular performances

The Royal College of Music has officially opened its new museum on Exhibition Road, London, which it has 'built from scratch' to showcase the 15,000 items in its designated collection of musical instruments. The opening, part of a wider £40m campus transformation project, was held back because of the pandemic. Now objects including the world's oldest guitar are on display, alongside a regular programme of performances. Museum curator Professor Gabriele Rossi Rognoni said *"I can't wait to finally invite visitors to experience our quirky, living, breathing collection first-hand."* [Pianist Magazine](#)

Ad Gefrin Anglo-Saxon museum opens in Northumberland in 2022

Ad Gefrin, a new museum in Wooler, Northumberland will open in 2022 telling the story of an ancient Anglo-Saxon capital whose remains were discovered in the area in the 1950s. It will include AV and museum interpretation, as well as running a whisky distillery, creating a single malt, generating jobs and revenue and reviving a local tradition. £10.4m has been invested in the project, which will include a new museum building on a redundant site. [Ad Gefrin](#), [Museums Journal](#)

'Vertical' Munch museum opens in Oslo, exemplifying a new generation of cultural buildings

The new Munch Museum, devoted to Norway's most famous artist Edvard Munch, has opened on Oslo's waterfront. At 13 stories high, it offers space for extensive display of the 26,000 artworks as well as restaurants and touring exhibitions, without eating into the surrounding cityscape. It is also built from low carbon concrete and recycled steel, with a technical lifetime of 200 years, making it environmentally friendly. Work behind the scenes is also 'discreetly visible', giving audiences a picture of those who conserve and display the art. [MuseumNext](#)

Swindon Borough Council rejects offer to keep current town museum open

Swindon Borough Council (SBC) has rejected a local offer to take over Apsley House, current home of Swindon Museum, and keep it open ahead of long term plans to move the museum to a new Cultural Quarter by 2030. Chris Watts, Chair of South Swindon Parish Council which made the offer said *"the parish understands that Apsley House is not the ideal facility to house the town's museum and art gallery, but in the absence of a viable near term alternative we believe it is imperative for a town the size of Swindon, with aspirations of city status, to ensure such a facility remains open and accessible to the public."* However, SBC has rejected the idea on the grounds that the building would need significant improvements and remove the museum's two disabled accessible rooms. It said that it would rotate collections around council-owned venues until the Cultural Quarter is built. [Museums Journal](#)

Huguenot Museum to close at least temporarily through funding shortfall

The Huguenot Museum opened in Rochester in 2015, to tell the story of the French Protestants who fled to Britain in the 16th and 17th centuries. However, the museum suffered financially during the pandemic and, despite some emergency funding, had to close this October, at least temporarily. Its trustees are now working on a rescue plan which they hope will enable it to open again in Spring 2022. [Museums Journal](#)

Heritage debates



Activities at the National Maritime Museum, Greenwich as part of the Ice Worlds Festival. Courtesy of Royal Museums Greenwich

National Trust AGM airs culture wars – and reports record-breaking membership numbers

The National Trust held an unusually politicised AGM at the end of October, as the pressure group Restore Trust used elections to its council to raise issues about how history is told at National Trust properties, job losses among curators and its antipathy to the report on country houses and colonialism. In an in-depth *Guardian* piece ahead of the meeting, Director General Hilary McGrady said *“I never did this piece of work [on colonial links] to appease one community or annoy another. I genuinely did it because I think it’s a fascinating story – it adds more interest, more complexity, a depth of history that we haven’t told before. Why is that not a good thing?”* Restore Trust backed six people up for election, although up to five have disassociated themselves from its views, and in the event it won one of three resolutions it put forward: to disclose the pay of senior staff. A greater number of members voted on whether to ban drag hunting on NT lands, on the grounds that it is used as cover for hunting with dogs. Since the vote in favour of a ban was advisory the Board will now decide how to proceed. Meanwhile the National Trust, which lost only 1% of its membership during the pandemic, is now receiving record breaking numbers of new signups, including a new member every 23 seconds in October. [Museums Journal](#), [Guardian](#) (Hilary McGrady interview), [Guardian](#), [Spectator](#), [Twitter](#), [Sky News](#)

History Matters report suggests processes for considering ‘alteration to public history’

The think tank Policy Exchange has produced a short report ‘History Matters’ with guidelines that it recommends museums, schools and other public bodies should use when considering changes such as *“removal of statues, the renaming of streets, the re-evaluation of school curricula or the removal of museum exhibits”*. Written by Trevor Phillips OBE it says that a ‘rigorous and non-partisan approach’ has not been taken in a variety of situations that have been flashpoints in the culture wars. It argues that decision making bodies must be clearly identified, must be lawful and consistent with the aim of the institution, and must consult widely, including consulting taxpayers. [Policy Exchange](#)

Education

Creativity Collaborative pilots launched in schools – using creativity to enhance all areas of education

One of the proposals of the Durham Commission on Education was to set up a series of Creativity Collaboratives with schools, to trial using creativity as a way of enhancing teaching across all subjects. Post-pandemic, these pilots have now been set up in eight schools. They include Billesley Primary School in Birmingham, which will link its curriculum to local heritage, and The Duchess's Community High, Alnwick, which will embed creativity across all subjects, including STEM teaching. [ACE](#)

Jobs

Posts being advertised on the NMDC jobs board this month include:

- [Museum Manager, Great North Museum Hancock - Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums](#)
- [Head of Operations - Oxford Botanic Garden and Arboretum](#)
- [Ticketing System Executive - Royal Museums Greenwich](#)
- [Conservator, Aviation and Technology - National Museums Scotland](#)
- [Treasury Assistant - Birmingham Museums Trust](#)
- [Interpretation Manager - Reimagining The British Museum](#)
- [Social and Digital Media Manager, Unlocking our Sound Heritage - British Library](#)

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