national museum directors' council

October 2026

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Tullie in Carlisle, run by Tullie House Museum and Art Gallery Trust, are celebrating their Culture for All Campaign which will provide 900 families struggling with the increased cost of living with free access to the arts, heritage and education. Photos by Hufton + Crow.

Members' news

Scottish collections expanded with key acquisitions

58 items have been allocated to **National Galleries Scotland** via the UK Government's Acceptance in Lieu scheme from collector Charlie Nairn. The collection includes paintings and drawings and features work by Scottish artists such as William McCance, James Cowie, Edward Baird and William Crosbie. Nairn said: "It's a delight to know that these paintings and drawings, which I've known for so many years, are now being looked after by the National Galleries of Scotland for the benefit of the public." Nairn became assistant to Scottish photographer Oscar Marzoroli, then worked for Granada TV for nearly four decades. He began collecting Scottish art in the 1980s, partly at the encouragement of Oscar and his wife Anne Marzoroli, the sculptor who taught at the Glasgow School of Art. Museums Journal (Nairn acquisition), Herald

Glasgow Life Museums have been chosen as the custodian of the collection and archive of the internationally renowned artist Peter Chang (1944-2017), who is well-known for his innovative use of plastic and other modern materials in sculpture and jewellery. Peter moved with his family from Liverpool to Glasgow in 1987, a year when he was gaining an international profile for his exuberant sculptural use of plastics and wearable art. A selection of Peter's works from across his career will go on display at Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum later this year. Barbara Santos Shaw Chang, Peter's wife, said of the gift of the collection and archive: "Wherever the bulk of Peter's remaining work would go, the museum had to be educationally involved and active; warmly accessible to a full range of public and age groups and outside visitors and be involved in a full range of research which would be of benefit nationally and internationally. Above all it should be considered by the surrounding public, as loved and totally accessible and belonging to them." Glasgow Life , Herald

Horniman Museum sets a date for the return of the walrus

The Horniman Museum and Gardens, in south east London, has announced its Natural History Gallery will reopen as the Nature Gallery on Friday 5 February 2027. The opening is the final part of a £12.5m Nature + Love transformation project, supported by The National Lottery Heritage Fund, and marks the end of the Horniman's 125th anniversary year. The famous walrus, alongside over 2,300 objects from the Horniman's collection will share space with artist commissions and multisensory interactives, that explore our connection to and reliance on nature, stories of extinction and climate change. Adjacent to the Gallery will be a new hands-on Nature Discovery Den focused on local wildlife that has been developed with and for families with young children to inspire a lifelong love of nature. Horniman Museum, M+H Advisor

Graves Gallery to move to new interim home during redevelopment

The Graves Gallery in Sheffield, first opened in 1934 and home to the city's visual art collection, will close its doors this autumn on Saturday 31 October ahead of a move to an interim new home in 2027. Sheffield City Council plan to undertake investigative work on the heating system during the closure and prepare for a future major redevelopment. Work is almost complete on a feasibility study which will inform plans to safeguard the future of this landmark building and secure the eventual return of the gallery to its original home. Kim Streets, Chief Executive at Sheffield Museums, said: "As always, our foremost priority is securing the long-term future of the gallery in its rightful home, on Surrey Street. Our ambition is to work with the City Council to fully realise the huge potential of the city's art collection and support the transformation of the building into a leading destination for the city, the region and beyond. The future, transformed Graves Gallery will help showcase Sheffield's ambition on a national stage, serving the people of Sheffield through meaningful, inspirational experiences, while driving tourism and putting culture at the heart of a reimagined city centre." Sheffield Museums, BBC

Royal Navy Museums cancel plans for new £25m expansion

Royal Navy Museums has concluded that developing a major new gallery at the Vision Retail Park site in Hartlepool would not provide the sustainable return on investment or attract the level of external funding required to proceed. The Museum has therefore worked closely with Hartlepool Borough Council and Tees Valley Combined Authority to identify an alternative approach which supports the wider regeneration of the Waterfront while enabling Royal Navy Museums to concentrate its future investment on its core maritime heritage offer. With the proposed sale of the Vision Retail Park, the original £3.4 million funding will be repaid to Hartlepool Borough Council in accordance with the terms of the funding agreement, allowing the Council to retain the value of its original investment while the site moves forward as part of the next phase of the Waterfront's regeneration. Matthew Sheldon, CEO of Royal Navy Museums, said: "By repaying the Council's original £3.4 million grant and enabling the site to contribute to wider Waterfront regeneration, the sale allows Royal Navy Museums to focus its resources where they can have the greatest and most sustainable impact." RNM, M+H Advisor

Royal Observatory Greenwich to close for major refurbishment

The whole Royal Observatory site will close from Monday 2nd November and will remain closed until Summer 2027, whilst Royal Museums Greenwich complete a £77 million redevelopment to improve accessibility. The project, known as First Light, will bring the story of this historic site to life, and give everyone the chance to experience the wonders of space and time for themselves. It will include inspiring galleries and displays, innovative architecture, sensitive conservation and improved access that will all help unlock the Royal Observatory's full potential. The whole project is due to complete in Spring 2028 with the Meridian Courtyard re-opening in Summer 2027. RMG, Ian Visits

Members in the news:

- **British Museum** bans visitors from photographing Bayeux Tapestry, BBC / Bayeux tour to include audio account of tapestry, BBC
- **Imperial War Museum** rebranding because younger people can't relate to world wars, Telegraph (£) / Contemporary conflict and 'reimagining' museum practice: IWM sets out new research aims, Museums Journal
- **Tate Britain** and RHS to run 10-year learning programme from new classroom, M+H Advisor
- **V&A** considers voluntary exit scheme as strikes held, Civil Society
- National museums in the UK should expect more industrial action, Apollo (£)
- Gold beetles to Darwin's finds - the 70 million museum artefacts going online, BBC

Images this month

Images this month celebrate **Tullie House Museum and Art Gallery Trust** in Carlisle as they support families struggling with the increased cost of living, with thanks to nine Cumbrian businesses who have joined forces to provide 900 families with free access to the arts, heritage and education. Each ticket covers admission for one adult and up to four children, and refreshments in Tullie's newly refurbished café. Andrew Mackay, Director of Tullie, said: "Culture should be accessible to everyone, regardless of their circumstances. As the country goes through a cost of living crisis, we know that for many families the cost of visiting cultural venues can be difficult to justify when household budgets are stretched." Photos by Hufton + Crow show Tullie's £4m transformation project led by De Matos Ryan which opened in April 2025. Tullie

Government news

Government confirms free access for all to England's National Museums

On Tuesday 29 September the Culture Secretary Lisa Nandy confirmed that overseas visitors will not be charged to enter England's 15 DCMS sponsored national museums, after ministers decided against changing the universal free admission policy. Universal free entry to the UK's National Museums came into effect on 1 December 2001 and the policy celebrates its 25th anniversary this year. Nandy said: "Our museums are the places that light up the world. That's why they must be free, forever, for everyone to access." DCMS said national museums contribute more than £1bn a year to the economy and attract visitors from around the world, with the Natural History Museum and the British Museum drawing 7.1 million and 6.4 million visitors respectively in 2025. Earlier this year the government decided to explore whether charging overseas visitors could help museums' finances, as part of the response to Baroness Hodge's review of Arts Council England.

NMDC Chair and Director of National Museums Liverpool Laura Pye said: "We're delighted that universal free entry is being maintained. It keeps our collections accessible to everyone and helps national museums continue to draw visitors from across the UK and around the world, supporting tourism and bringing real benefits to our cities and communities." Sir Gabriele Finaldi, Director of the National Gallery, said: "Free entry to national museums is one of the UK's greatest cultural assets: it enables millions to visit, enjoy and learn. Thanks to free entry our museums are a deeply integral part of national life and free entry to museums is widely admired among our museum peers internationally". Sir Tristram Hunt, Director of the V&A, said: "The V&A knows the huge difference which free entry to our national museums makes: transforming visitor numbers; opening up the collections; celebrating our heritage of democratic access to art. It is a critical part of what makes the UK a cultural Superpower. I am delighted that the Government has re-committed itself to this foundational Labour Party policy." Karin Hindsbo, Interim Director, Tate, said: "The UK's cultural collections, and the model that permits anyone to access them, are a source of envy and admiration around the world. These rich artistic holdings are integral to the UK's national identity, fostering a genuine understanding of art, culture and heritage that has the power to bring us all together." Gov.UK, Art Fund (press release), Cultural Policy Unit (Free For All Research report) (pdf, 37pgs)

Round-up of press coverage:

- National museums to stay free for all visitors, BBC
- Ministers abandon plan to make overseas visitors pay for England's top museums, Financial Times (£)
- Is it time for our museums to choose between the state and rich donors? Times(£)
- England's national museums to remain free to overseas visitors, Guardian
- National museums in England to remain free for overseas visitors, government confirms, Independent
- 'Free, forever': Government rules out entry charges for overseas visitors to national museums, Museums Journal
- Britain thinks twice about free museums, Financial Times (£) (12 Sept)
- National museum leaders highlight risks of charging international visitors, Museums Journal (18 Sept)

Autumn Budget

A reminder that the UK Autumn Budget 2026 will take place on 28 October 2026, it will be the first budget delivered by John Healey as Chancellor of the Exchequer. The BBC have produced a brief 'What to Expect' page. BBC

The Heritage Alliance's Autumn Budget representation includes a call to protect the National Lottery Heritage Fund's 20% share of Lottery funding as a minimum, and support for the case put forward by the Fabian Society for a temporary, ring-fenced 5% reallocation of National Lottery Distribution Fund shares to address the backlog in cultural capital and infrastructure funding and support place-based capital priorities such as high street renewal. They also advocate for reforming apprenticeships in the heritage sector. The Local Government Association's submission setting out the steps the LGA believe the Chancellor should take, including an ask to reduce the number of short■term, low■value programmes and a shift towards long■term investment in places. Heritage Alliance, LGA

Also: Guide: Who's who and who's new in cultural policymaking? The new governmental landscape for culture under Prime Minister Andy Burnham, Arts Professional (£)

Scotland's museums plea for stable, multi-year funding

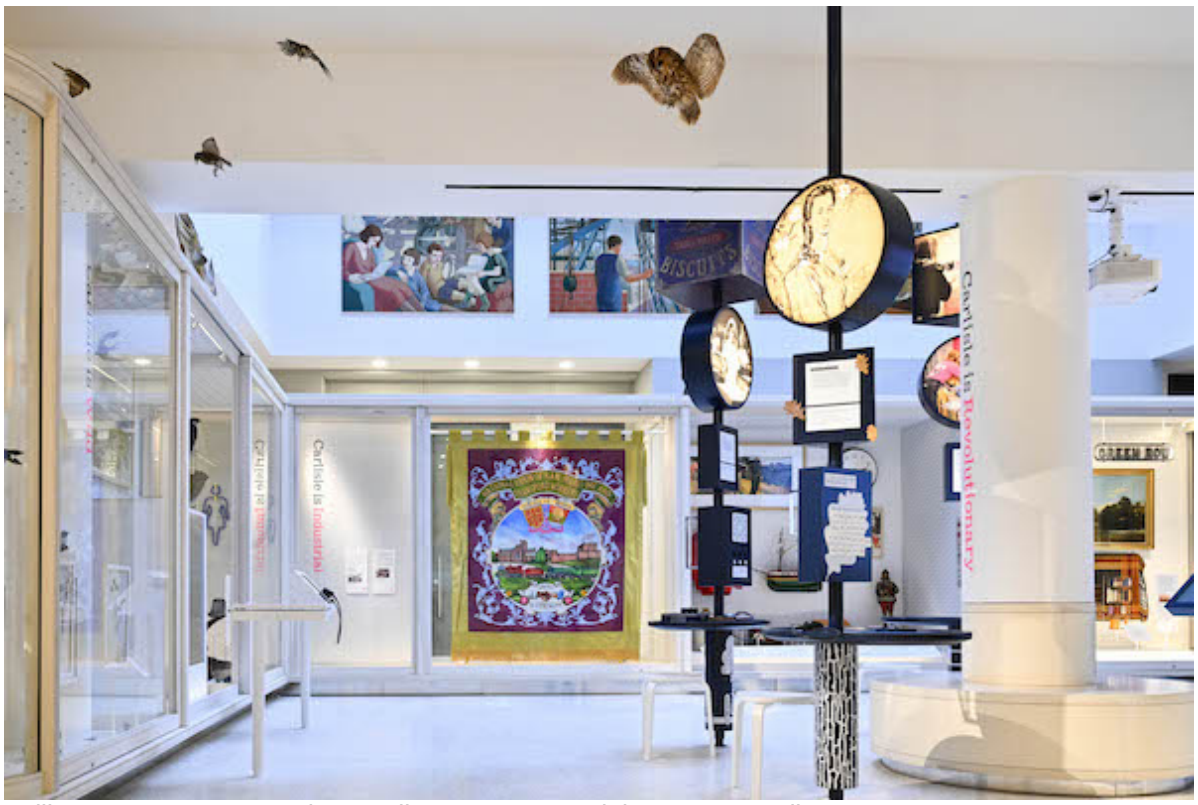
Giving evidence to the Scottish Parliament's Europe, External Affairs and Culture Committee as part of its pre-budget scrutiny, Lucy Casot, Chief Executive of Museums Galleries Scotland, called for continued investment in the sector, including a multi-year approach to funding. She highlighted the pioneering Museum Futures programme which after just one year is already proving that investing in organisational resilience enables museums to deliver greater long-term value for the people and places they serve. The committee appearance comes as new MGS research shows that while museums are attracting millions of visitors and expanding the range of services they provide, pressure is growing behind the scenes, with 40% of museums reporting having just three months' reserves or less, more than half are not able to keep up with routine maintenance and 17% believing a site they operate is at risk of closure within the next 12 months. Lucy Casot said: "Museums are delivering for Scotland. They are welcoming visitors, supporting schools, strengthening communities and contributing to our economy. But success should not be mistaken for security. The evidence we are seeing is clear: the challenge is not a lack of demand for museums. It is the growing gap between what museums are being asked to deliver and the resources available to do it." MGS (press release), MGS (Pre-budget scrutiny response), Herald, M+H Advisor (sector research)

Government launches review of human remains guidance

DCMS has announced a review of its Guidance for the Care of Human Remains in Museums, which was published in 2005. The review is expected to take 12 months with revised guidance due to be published in autumn 2027. The statement announcing the review acknowledges that the legal, ethical, and moral conversations regarding the treatment and care of human remains in museum collections have evolved significantly since 2005. Baroness Sue Black of Strome has been appointed as the Chair of an independent working group tasked with overseeing the review. The decision follows news that Manchester Museum have taken an Egyptian mummified body off display in order to respect 'the wishes of the dead'. In July the museum asked visitors their view on displaying the ancient remains. Parliament.UK (statement), Museums Journal (guidance), BBC (Manchester), BBC (visitor views), Telegraph (£) (Manchester)

National Cultural Framework published by LGA

The Local Government Association (LGA) and Chief Cultural and Leisure Officers Association (CLOA) have commissioned the National Cultural Framework on behalf of the National Alliance for Cultural Services. This framework is not a request for additional funding, but a proposal to change how existing investment is designed, aligned and used, so it delivers more consistently for communities and places. It sets out a proposition for an integrated system of place based cultural development, providing the foundation for a future National Cultural Strategy co designed by the partners that fund it. It is also intended to provide an accessible guide to the cultural partnership landscape at a time of significant change. The framework describes how national, regional and local tiers of government can be better aligned to deliver a sustainable and resilient cultural ecosystem focused on people and place. The framework includes a look at four case studies locations and the range of funding that exists to support culture in those areas. LGA (website), LGA (Framework, pdf, 64pgs)



Tullie House Museum and Art Gallery Trust. Copyright Stewart Walker.

Sector news

National Portfolio Investment Programme opens

Arts Council England's National Portfolio Investment Programme for 2028-33 will open to applications on 20 October 2026 and will remain open until 15 December. Guidance and information for organisations wishing to apply can be found on the ACE website. They are also hosting a number of webinars for new applicants (14 Oct and 4 Nov) and existing NPO's (15 Oct and 5 Nov). There are also webinars for organisations applying for £1million or over (21 Oct and 10 Nov). ACE (applicant hub), ACE (NPO webinars)

Useful resources:

- 'World-class culture in every postcode': ACE unveils new National Portfolio process: Areas of focus for museums include collections stewardship, public value and business transformation, Museums Journal
- Post-Hodge ACE: slicker, clearer, fairer, Jordan Mullineaux, TAIT Mail This is a useful overview of the changes to NPO since the last round of applications and includes top tips for applicants.
- Arts Council England releases guidance for 2028-33 NPO applicants, Arts Professional (£)
- ACE's renewed emphasis on excellence will play to the strengths of museums. The sector will have more space to emphasise its unique qualities in the next funding round, says Aysha Afridi, 20 August 2026, Museums Journal

Also: 'I want us to be loud': Arts Council England's new chair aims to reconnect young people with culture, Guardian

ACE publish Museums Overview 2026 to inform NPO decisions

In September ACE published published Overviews about the artforms and disciplines they support, the places they invest in, and the resilience of the cultural sector. The Arts Council will use these overviews to help guide funding decisions across their programmes, and guide their future development work. Organisations applying to Arts Council funding might find these overviews useful. ACE (Museum Overview)

Also: Museum leaders call for 'transformation, not incremental change', Museums Journal

New Freelancers' Handbook from ACE

ACE has published The Freelancers' Handbook, a practical set of resources designed to help support the needs of the 30% of the cultural workforce who operate as freelancers. It has been created in response to the critical priorities identified in ACE's 2024 Cultural Freelancers Study and draws on the personal experiences of over 5,000 freelancers. While it is intended primarily as an aid for cultural freelancers, its combination of guidance and good practice can also act as a handy reference tool for cultural organisations who commission or work with them. ACE will continue to develop, expand and refine the Handbook's contents, and it is accompanied by an online resources directory which will be regularly updated. ACE

Heritage Fund sets out £1.4bn three year plan

The National Lottery Heritage Fund have set out a three-year plan for 2026-2029 which is projected to have £1.46billion backing. They have committed to supporting heritage to be more resilient and relevant to communities across the UK by continuing to invest in projects that deliver all four of their investment principles and the ambitions set out in Heritage 2033. In year 1 they plan to launch refreshed applicant guidance and publish new good practice guidance about digital and working with children and young people. Museum collections and resilience will be a new area of focus for Heritage in Need, with plans to develop a targeted intervention, to be delivered in collaboration with sector support organisations. NLHF, M+H Advisor

ICOM UK Conference call for proposals

The 2027 ICOM UK Conference, "Gwydnwch/Resilience: Museums Adapting to Change in a Complex World," will take place on 29 and 30 April 2027 in Cardiff. This conference will explore how museums around the world are responding to the complex challenges of our time. How do museums deliver on our missions and retain public trust, while adapting and innovating to new, unpredictable realities? The conference will be co-produced in partnership with Ngaire Blankenberg, Founding Director of the Institute for Creative Repair and the A42 brand whose work centres on repairing people, places, communities and institutions through new models of arts, heritage and cultural institutions. The call for proposals particularly welcomes ideas based on a specific project, initiative, partnership or experience where there are practical approaches and lessons learned to share. You do not need to present a finished or wholly successful project: they are also interested in what museums can learn from challenges, failures, adaptation and unexpected outcomes. The deadline for applications is 9am on Monday 2 November. ICOM UK

Museums Change Lives Shortlist announced

Congratulations to the 12 projects and people named in the 2026 Museums Association shortlist for their annual Museums Change Lives Awards. Best Museums Change Lives Project Award nominations includes The Whitworth, Linen Hall Library, part of Ulster University's School of Art and Glasgow's Hunterian Museum for their Museum of Things. Brent's local authority run museum is in the mix for Best Small Museum Project Award, and newly opened Showtown is recognised for their co-production with UK charity Little People. The winners will be announced at the Museums Association conference in November. MA

Sector reports and surveys

How has extreme heat affected you or your organisation?

The National Heat Risk Commission is seeking evidence from businesses, public bodies, institutions, and voluntary and community organisations across England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. How has extreme heat affected you or your organisation? What have you tried? What is getting in the way? What would help? Evidence can be submitted to the Commission by 30 October 2026. The Commission will spend the next year examining practical pathways to implementation, identifying priorities for action across sectors, and assessing where further policy development is needed. They are building on existing work, including 10 recommendations already made by others that could significantly strengthen heat resilience. Call For Evidence

Digitisation Priorities in Cultural Heritage Survey

The National Research Infrastructure for Cultural Heritage (N-RICH) Prototype is a two-year UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) funded project delivered by the Towards a National Collection programme in collaboration with Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC). It aims to reduce investment risk and build the evidence base for a full National Research Infrastructure by testing whether UK cultural heritage data can be created, connected, accessed, analysed and reused at scale. The survey is intended for collections professionals involved in prioritising or identifying collections for digitisation, or those with a strong understanding of their organisation's digitisation activities and policies. It will take about 15 minutes to complete and it is inviting cultural heritage organisations to share how they make digitisation decisions and what support would help them do this more effectively. The closing date is Friday 27 November 2026. Survey

Museums and Insurance report from ACE

This report developed by CultureRunner and commissioned by Arts Council England was informed by a sector survey (104 responses), partner interviews (10), insurance broker consultations (2), and interviews with museum staff for the purposes of developing case studies. It looks at the insurance market challenges and opportunities for museums as well as making recommendations for the sector. The report shows the sector is making a clear call for better guidance on insurance. The museum curators and collections managers consulted during this research described how they are often 'working in the dark' and yet they are tackling the same challenges, often in similar ways. The recommendations for ACE include commissioning guidance and training, and promoting a 'risk-first, insurance-second' framework across the sector. Other recommendations include reforming and simplifying the Government Indemnity Scheme. The report also includes case studies. ACE (press release), ACE (report, pdf, 25pgs)

Resource on collections reviews and disposal

Manchester Art Gallery have produced this resource inspired by discussions at a January 2026 event at Manchester Art Gallery, where 50 museum professionals came together to examine the language used around the complex processes of review and disposal of museum collections. The resource looks at terminology around disposal and includes case studies. It also has a section on how to deal with public reaction to disposal decisions and tips around communication. Manchester Art Gallery (collections review information), Manchester Art Gallery (resource, pdf, 66pgs)

Accessibility

Welsh Museums Accessibility Audit Toolkit

Published in September 2026, the Welsh Museums Accessibility Audit Toolkit provides a structured framework to help museums in Wales assess and improve accessibility across their sites, services, and collections. Welsh Museum Accreditation requirements in Wales include the provision of an Access Plan to be accessible to the public. Museums must be committed to improving physical, intellectual, and sensory access to their museum sites and collections, and the Access Plan will help with identifying priorities. The toolkit is designed as a practical, self-assessment resource covering all aspects of the visitor journey—from travel to the site through to exhibitions, facilities, and emergency procedures. Gov.Wales

Also: other new resources for improving accessibility in museums include:

- Capturing Culture: Live subtitling in museums and galleries, free webinar presented by Stagetext from the Digital Culture Network on Wednesday 21 October 12-1pm. DCN
- VocalEyes have lots of advice and training available on providing audio description and touch tours in museums, VocalEyes
- Examples of Audio Description, VocalEyes
- An Introduction to Audio Description in Museums, Galleries and Heritage Sites, a comprehensive guide that explores Audio Description (AD), published 2026, Routledge



The new Carlisle Gallery at Tullie, Carlisle, Cumbria. Copyright Stuart Walker.

Digital

How are you using AI? Museums Journal's new survey

This snapshot survey from the Museums Journal aims to build a picture of how museum and heritage professionals in the UK are currently using AI, what benefits or drawbacks they have experienced, their attitudes to the technology, and how they expect it to affect the sector in the future. The results will be presented at the Museums Association's forthcoming event, Intelligent Futures: Understanding the Impact of AI (Online, 9 December), and published in the January/February 2027 issue of Museums Journal. The deadline for responses is Tuesday 20 October 2026**.** Museums Journal (Survey), Museums Association (event)

The Hidden Cost of digital work

This new report from digital consultant Ash Mann looks at the unplanned, unseen workload that digital practitioners deal with every week, drawn from new research across 15 countries, and what it means for their wellbeing, their organisations and the wider sector. The report highlights that digital work is poorly understood across many cultural organisations. What it involves, what it requires, and what sustaining it actually costs in time and resource is rarely fully understood by the people who plan, fund, and make decisions about it. It also recognises that digital knowledge accrues to individuals informally and is rarely written down, partly because there is often no time to do so, and partly because documentation is rarely recognised as work worth doing. There is also sector wide learning including the fact that digital roles offer relatively limited opportunities for formal progression compared to most other professional functions. Senior positions are few in number and professional development is rarely prioritised. Report (email required to access)

The Impact of AI Overviews in the Cultural Sector

One Further, which specialises in digital services for arts and cultural organisations, charities, non-profits and councils, has updated their report showing how Google's AI Overviews were affecting search traffic for arts and culture organisations. The headline news from the report is:

- **Cultural websites now see less traffic from organic search**. In fact, search traffic is down 18% year on year. That's a second consecutive year of decline, and a steeper drop than reported

last time.

- **79 of the 100 organisations in the dataset saw their search traffic fall**. That's almost exactly the same proportion as last year. And as with last year's report, while some organisations have been less affected, most of these can be explained by particular circumstances.
- **Visibility within AI Overviews has grown**, which is a welcome bit of good news. Although, how useful this is isn't clear. It doesn't seem to be translating into significant levels of website traffic.

The report also contains advice for counteracting the impact of AI Overviews on your organisations website. One Further (press release), One Further (report, pdf, 14pgs)

Also: How are arts and cultural organisations actually using AI? By Jocelyn Burnham

Climate crisis

Free online screening of the People's Emergency Briefing: On the Climate and Nature Crisis

What does the climate and nature crisis mean for the organisations we work in and the communities we serve? On Thursday 15 October ICOM UK in partnership with the Design Museum, ICOM SUSTAIN and the Galleries Climate Coalition (GCC) are delivering a free online screening of the People's Emergency Briefing, a 50-minute film bringing together the UK's leading climate and nature experts to set out what the climate and nature crisis means for health, food systems, national security and the economy, and what a credible, hopeful response could look like. The film distils the evidence from November's National Emergency Briefing in Westminster into a single, accessible account for audiences everywhere.

This screening offers a chance to hear the evidence together, followed by facilitated discussion in small groups about what it means for the work of museums and cultural organisations. The session is taking place from 12.30-2pm and participants are asked to allow time to stay for the discussion as well as the film. Register for a free place on the ICOM UK website.

National Heat Risk Commission's report

A heat circuit breaker for the UK: Preparing for a hotter future: a framing report marks the start of the National Heat Resilience Commission's work. It explains the context for establishing the Commission and its mandate of providing independent expertise and strategy on how the UK can improve resilience to the growing risk of high temperatures. There is also a call for evidence (see also the Sector Reports and Surveys section in this Newsletter). The National Heat Resilience Commission was formed in March 2026 to help the UK prepare for the growing risks of extreme heat. It is based at the Grantham Research Institute on Climate Change and the Environment at the London School of Economics and Political Science. The Commission is independent of government and LSE. LSE Grantham Institute (report, pdf, 28pgs), Call For Evidence

Also: Heatwave causes sharp revenue drop for museums and monuments across France, Le Monde

Also: Rising costs force museums across North America to rethink climate control guidelines, Art Newspaper (£)

Also: York museums and galleries' collections face climate threat, The Press

Young people

Creative Young Lives Survey from ACE

The Creative Young Lives Survey is a new Arts Council England initiative to better understand how children and young people across England take part in creative and cultural activity. It was commissioned to give a clearer picture of what children do, where they do it and what motivates them to take part or prevents them from doing so. It gathered insights from more than 30,000 children and young people. Data from the report shows that children reported visiting a variety of cultural venues and places in the previous year, including libraries (74.81 per cent), fairs, fetes or carnivals (51.8 per cent) and museums (51.79 per cent). Children and parents were also asked what prevents them from making more visits to cultural places like theatres, art galleries and museums, almost two-fifths stated that they did not have time (39.82 per cent). Cost (32.13 per cent) and difficulty in getting there (31.71 per cent) were also among the most-selected answer options. The research also shows that engagement in cultural and creative activities varies significantly across England. ACE

National Centre for Arts Education

The Department for Education has awarded the tender for the National Centre for Arts Education to a consortium led by Etio in association with the Chartered College of Teaching and Birmingham City University. Funded by just over £29m from the government, the Centre will play a pivotal role in delivering the government's ambition to revitalise arts in schools in England, so every child can access a rich, high-quality arts education that nurtures creativity, confidence, cultural understanding, and personal expression. This ambition will be underpinned by close collaboration with leading arts and cultural organisations and sector bodies to ensure the Centre reflects the breadth, diversity, and excellence of England's cultural landscape. Gov.uk (tender announcement), Arts Professional (£)



De Matos Ryan re-designed Tullie. Photographs Hufton + Crow.

Funding opportunities

NHM grants for climate and health

The Natural History Museum, supported by charitable foundation Wellcome, is funding eight cultural organisations across the UK to support community action on climate and health. Interconnected: Climate and Health is an opportunity for UK museums and cultural organisations to join a cohort programme working with young people with online support that includes workshops with scientists, environmental advocates and peer-to-peer learning. Applications close on Monday 26 October. As well as support you will receive £3,000 for project delivery with an additional budget to cover participation fees for your group of young people. The project will also provide an opportunity for two young people to attend an event in Parliament and share their experiences and perspectives from their museum and community. NHM are looking for museums who have strong existing relationships with young people aged 16–25 in their community. You don't need to have worked with climate and health themes before. NHM

Inspiring London Through Culture grants

This funding from the City of London will support organisations with grants of between £500 and £10,000 for projects that are being delivered for the benefit of communities or beneficiaries within the City of London (the Square Mile). Applications have to meet at least one of four core criteria: Promote access for all to participate in the City of London's cultural offer, Enhance London's creative future through championing excellence in the development of innovative practice and/or skills, Deliver positive social impact through culture and/or heritage in the City of London or Support the development of cultural tourism to the City of London. The deadline for applications is 12 noon on Monday 30 November 2026. City of London

Freelands Art Fund Acquisition

The final round of the Freelands Art Fund Acquisition has launched an open call for museums and public collections interested in acquiring work by Joy Gregory. Joy is a graduate of Manchester Polytechnic and the Royal College of Art. She has developed a practice which is concerned with social and political issues with particular reference to history and cultural differences in contemporary society. Applications are welcome from public museums, galleries, historic houses, libraries and archives based anywhere in the UK that are open for at least half the week for at least six months of the year and accredited by Arts Council. The deadline for expressions of interest is 15 January 2027. Art Fund

Conferences and events

Culture and Heritage Capital Conference: putting theory into practice

The Culture and Heritage Capital (CHC) Programme is running an online conference from Tuesday 3 to Thursday 5 November. Panel discussions, technical teach-ins and workshops will provide an overview of frameworks, tools and methods used to measure and value the impact of the creative industries, culture and heritage sectors to better understand value for money and place-based impacts. The CHC Programme is a collaboration led by DCMS and the UKRI Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) in partnership with ACE, the BFI, Historic England and NLHF. The conference will also be a key opportunity for stakeholders to provide feedback and help shape the programme moving forward. Topics for the three days are:

- Tuesday 3rd November: Introducing CHC and the role of analysis in understanding place.
- Wednesday 4th November: Measuring growth and accounting for equity.
- Thursday 5th November: Valuing health and wellbeing, use and non-use, and maintenance of collections.

Sessions run from 9.30am to 1.30pm each day and attendance is free. For more information and to book a place visit the event page.

Digital Marketing Day 2026

The Arts Marketing Association are running this year's Digital Marketing Day on 11 November at Woolwich Works in London and online. With a title of 'Socially Motivated' the day will help attendees navigate the increasingly complex social and political landscapes. The event will showcase the latest digital marketing thinking through talks, case studies and keynotes. Speakers include representatives from IWM, Supercool and Counterpoint Arts. Tickets cost from £55 +VAT for online access for small organisations to an in-person non-member rate of £425+VAT. AMA

Heritage Debate 2026

This year's Heritage Debate from the Heritage Alliance will take place on Wednesday 18 November, 11:00-13:00 via Zoom. The free online event brings together the heritage sector's most influential voices to debate the policy issues that matter. This year, the focus is: how can heritage stay relevant today? Expect an interactive format with expert panel discussions, live Q&A and real-time polling, alongside 500+ heritage professionals, senior sector leaders, policy makers and academics. HA

What's new? Contemporary Collecting Showcase

The Contemporary Collecting Network welcomes you to a showcase of recent and ongoing work, giving you a chance to learn what is happening at the moment and make connections with your own work. Whether you're an experienced museum worker, visitor, freelancer, volunteer, student, or independent researcher you're welcome to join the online session and hear about what's new in contemporary collecting. Wednesday 18 November 12-1pm admission free. Eventbrite

Understanding the Impact of AI with the Museums Association

Intelligent Futures: Understanding the Impact of AI is an online event from the Museums Association, aimed at anyone interested in what AI means for their organisation, practice and sector, this event explores the impact and opportunities on different aspects of museum practice including marketing, HR, collections management, learning and curatorial practice. This event will be recorded and available exclusively to delegates after the event, so if you can't attend on the day, you can catch up in your own time. The session will be held on 9 December 2026 from 11-4pm. Ticket prices range from £37 for concessionary MA members to £69 for non-members. MA



Tullie, Carlisle celebrate their Culture for All Campaign.

Appointments

The British Library has appointed **Dr Paul Bate** as Chief Executive, succeeding Interim Chief Executive Dr Jeremy Silver. Bate who was CEO of the UK Space Agency from 2021-2026, will take up his role on 4 November 2026. Dr Paul Bate said: "The British Library is one of the world's great libraries and a vital part of the UK's cultural and intellectual infrastructure. I am honoured to be leading an organisation of expert professionals that has shared knowledge at its heart, opens up ideas and information to millions of people, and is resiliently overcoming the challenges of recent years." British Library, Museums Journal

Shanaz Gulzar has joined Glasgow Life as Director of Culture and Events, following her time as Creative Lead of Bradford 2025 UK City of Culture. At Glasgow Life, Gulzar will play a key role in overseeing culture, leisure and sport services on behalf of the council across Scotland's largest city. The charity has seen several changes to its leadership team in recent years, with Susan Deighan retiring as chief executive after 18 years in 2025 and Billy Garrett, director of culture, tourism and events, announcing his retirement earlier this year. Glasgow Life, Museums Association

Horniman Museums and Gardens have appointed **Debbie Asbury** as Director of Finance and **Emma Evans** as maternity cover for Director of Audiences and Income. Evans was most recently Communications and Marketing Director at Cheltenham Ladies' College, and previously Chief Marketing Officer at the Eden Project Cornwall for many years. Asbury joins the Horniman from the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology where she was the Finance Director for Building Digital UK and has previously held senior roles at DCMS and Cancer Research UK. Horniman

Georgia Butters has been appointed as the new Head of Stonehenge, the UNESCO World Heritage Site, which is managed by English Heritage. Butters has been with English Heritage for almost 10 years, starting out as head of operations for Cornwall before becoming head of historic properties for Devon and Cornwall. Stonehenge is due to open a new Learning Centre in early 2027. Museums Association

Obituaries

Bonnie Greer, the writer and critic who was a trustee at the British Museum from 2005-13, serving as Deputy Chair at the British Museum from 2009. Guardian, BBC, Times

Joanna Mackle, publisher and Deputy Director of the British Museum from 2013-2019, Times

Catch up

From hotel suites to virtual reality, museums turn to licensing deals as costs rise, 5 October 2026, Guardian

What impact will the Turner Prize have on Teesside?, 24 September 2026, Museums Journal

Reach Volunteering reverses closure after nine funders and donors unite to fund it to 2028, 23 September 2026, UK Fundraising

UK's first donation made entirely through AI agent received by Trussell, 22 September 2026, Civil Society

Haverfordwest Castle redevelopment to create flagship heritage attraction, 16 September 2026, Experience UK

International news

George Lucas's $1bn Museum of Narrative Art uses the force of storytelling, 2 October 2026, Financial Times (£)

Doubts over financial sustainability of Brussels's new Kanal museum cloud upcoming opening, 1 October 2026, Art Newspaper (£) / Guardian (from Nov 2025)

'Every museum in the world is stressing': How brazen art heists are affecting visitors, 1 October 2026, BBC

Inadequate public funding may be the biggest threat facing world heritage, study finds, 30 September 2026, Art Newspaper (£) / Artforum

Rijksmuseum and Mauritshuis Go Dutch on $13M painting, 15 September 2026, Artnet

Jobs

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

- Cyber Security Operations Manager - British Library
- Conservation Fellowships (Lindsay and Gavron) - National Gallery
- Associate Curator (12-month FTC) - Science Museum Group
- Assistant Collection Manager (Heavy Objects) - British Museum
- Marketing Officer - Birmingham Museums
- Head of People and Culture - Horniman Museum and Gardens

Also: ACE are seeking a new Chair for the Acceptance in Lieu Panel when the current Chair, Michael Clarke CBE, stands down in July 2027. This is a unique opportunity to lead one of the UK's most significant public collections acquisition programmes, combining chairing an expert panel, strategic leadership and external engagement and advocacy. The process for the appointment of Michael's successor has just started. The closing date for applications is Tuesday 13 October and further details including a Recruitment Pack are on the ACE website.

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