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The Weaver - Ulster Folk Museum, National Museums Northern Ireland.

## NMDC news

### Save the date - ICOM UK Conference May

The ICOM UK annual conference will take place on 1 and 2 May 2025 in Liverpool. The event titled 'Regenerative Museums for Sustainable Futures' will discuss ideas, share inspirational projects, and reflect on challenges related to climate and social emergencies through sustainability, sustainable development and regenerative design frameworks. The conference is a collaboration between ICOM UK and NMDC, with support from National Museums Liverpool, Marketing Liverpool and Barker Langham. Information on the programme and how to book will be available on 17th February. NMDC and ICOM UK members will get priority booking at a discounted rate. [ICOM UK](#) (Ticket link will be here) [ICOM UK](#) (more information)

## Members' news

### Tate St Ives awarded £2.8 million from National Lottery Heritage Fund

Tate will be restoring and reopening the historic Palais de Danse in St Ives thanks to a £2.8m grant from the National Lottery Heritage Fund. Closed for 65 years, the building, once a cinema and dance hall, later became Barbara Hepworth's second studio from 1961-1975. The building will be reimagined as a cultural and community space, it will include an immersive recreation of Hepworth's workshops spaces and the first floor dance hall space will host performances, screenings and community archives. [Tate](#), [Art Newspaper](#) (£), [Historic England](#)

### Science and Industry Museum to explore Manchester's links with cotton and transatlantic slavery

Manchester's Science and Industry Museum has partnered with The Scott Trust Legacies of Enslavement programme to develop a free exhibition that will open in early 2027. Featuring new research and a public engagement project, the exhibition will be developed with African descendent and diaspora communities through local and global collaborations. The project which will run for a year will have a collaborative city-wide events programme, with a new permanent schools programme and permanent displays in the future. The Scott Trust, owner of the Guardian newspaper, set up the Legacies of Enslavement programme in 2023 after a commissioned academic study revealed the links between cotton merchant John Edward Taylor, who founded the title, and the transatlantic slave trade. [Science and Industry Museum](#), [Guardian](#), [Museums Association](#)

### RAF Museum secures £650k from the Wolfson Foundation

The RAF Museum announced a £650k grant from the Wolfson Foundation to support the 'Inspiring Everyone: RAF Museum Midlands Development Programme' which will deliver a major regional engagement programme, alongside a site transformation. The funding from Wolfson will be specifically directed towards the creation of a new Learning Centre which will be co-designed with students and teachers. The new facilities will include two analogue and two digital classrooms, lunch spaces for up to 120 students, and spaces for outdoor learning. [RAF Museum](#)

### Birmingham Museums Citizens' Jury take first steps to reshaping the future of museums

Birmingham Museums Citizens' Jury, a group of people representing Birmingham's diverse communities, have been brought together to shape the direction of the city's cultural heritage. The initiative, the first of its kind for a UK museum, have presented their recommendations. The 26 jurors spent more than 30 hours engaged in learning and collaborative discussions, supported by the community interest company Shared Future, which culminated in a set of collective recommendations to inform the future direction for Birmingham's museums. The jurors identified and agreed four broad themes for their recommendations:

- funding and marketing
- attracting new audiences, accessibility and inclusivity
- community engagement and collaboration
- exploring diverse perspectives in museums

Birmingham Museums Trust have published a report outlining the process involved including selection of participants, group guidelines, and the topics of each session the Jury took part in. The

recommendations detailed in the report will inform Birmingham Museums' wider transformation strategy. A statement from the Jury on the process reflects their involvement and understanding of the role museums play. "We acknowledge our museums are fighting for their survival; they must take risks in their bid to be inspiring, educating, engaging to all. It is important for our museums to involve and represent the communities they are responsible to, that is, the people of Birmingham and they shouldn't be precious about doing so. We deserve museums that are proud of us, that we can be proud of, that celebrate what's unique about Birmingham." [Birmingham Museums Trust](#) (press release), [Birmingham Museums Trust](#) (report, pdf, 60pgs)

### **Van Gogh exhibition the most popular ticketed exhibition in National Gallery's history**

The 'Van Gogh: Poets and Lovers' exhibition which closed on 19 January 2025, proved to be the most popular ticketed exhibition in the National Gallery's history with 334,589 visits. For only the second time in the Gallery's history, the exhibition was open through the night from Friday 17 January to Saturday 18 January to meet demand. Over the 125 day run there was an average of 2,676 visits per day. There is still an opportunity to enjoy the exhibition in cinemas across the UK and Europe in the 90-minute film 'Exhibition on Screen: Van Gogh Poets and Lovers', directed by David Bickerstaff. [National Gallery](#), [Museums Association](#)

**Also:** National Gallery announces the partners for The National Gallery Masterpieces Tour 2025-7, including the Sainsbury Centre, Norwich, South Shields Museum and Art Gallery, Grundy Art Gallery, Blackpool and Ferens Art Gallery, Hull. [National Gallery](#)

### **Tullie museum and art gallery due to reopen in Spring 2025**

Closed in December 2023 for a redevelopment project which will include a new entrance, cafe, shop and events space, Tullie museum and art gallery in Carlisle will now open in Spring 2025. Following the refurbishment, Tullie's Grade I listed Gatehouse building has also been removed from the Heritage at Risk register. The £4.5m project opening has been pushed back four times, part of the museum opened in November 2024. Project Tullie is a phased redevelopment programme, the first phase, The Costume Collection opened in July 2021. [Tullie](#), [Museums Association](#), [BBC](#)

### **National Railway Museum plans 50th birthday celebrations and 200 years of the modern railway**

2025 marks the 50th anniversary of the National Railway Museum with the September opening of Station Hall, closed since 2023. They will host a celebratory weekend on 27-28 September with visitors offered a chance to access behind-the-scenes areas of the museum. The National Railway Museum and Locomotion are key partners in Railway 200, a nationwide campaign to celebrate 200 years since the first fare-paying passenger journey on the Stockton and Darlington Line. There will be a rolling programme of exhibitions, events, and community activities showcasing the past, present, and future of rail. As part of the celebrations Art UK are also inviting members of the public to vote for their favourite UK railway-themed artworks. [National Railway Museum](#), [Art UK](#), [Railway 200](#)

### **Members in the news**

- Tate Liverpool 'flings open windows' to first phase of £30m revamp, 5 February 2025, [Guardian](#)
- Art to order? How the V&A East Storehouse is building a new future for museums, 18 January, 2025, [Financial Times](#) (£)
- National Gallery 'on wheels' to come to Bradford, 17 January 2025, [BBC](#)
- The long read. 'The ghosts are everywhere': can the British Museum survive its omni-crisis?, 16 January 2025, [Guardian](#)
- Plans approved for tallest City of London tower featuring London Museum partnership, 10 January 2025, [M+H Advisor](#)
- 'National Museum to reopen after mechanical fault', Amgueddfa Cymru - Museum Wales open again after closing for essential maintenance, 6 February 2025 [BBC](#)
- Q&A with Susan Deighan | 'Glasgow has always been at the forefront of contemporary innovation', 10 January 2025, [Museums Association](#)

## Images this month

Images this month come from the Ulster Folk Museum, one of the four museums looked after by National Museums Northern Ireland. The Ulster Folk Museum gives visitors the opportunity to reconnect with traditions, skills and customs from the past. First opened in 1964, the museum is in Cultra, three miles east of Belfast. The photos show their makers who show visitors traditional craft skills. [Ulster Folk Museum](#)

## Government news

### New UK 'soft power' advisory council announced alongside £60m investment in the creative industries

On 15 January, Foreign Secretary David Lammy and Culture Secretary, Lisa Nandy, launched the UK Soft Power Council to drive UK growth and security. The newly established council will identify opportunities across the sectors and industries represented where closer working with government can advance broader growth and security objectives. It will drive greater impact through government campaigns and a systematic approach to the global foreign policy, cultural and sporting calendars. Formed of 26 invited members the advisory board includes Director of Royal Botanic Gardens Kew Richard Deverell, Director of the V&A Tristram Hunt, and Founder and Chair of FSG and Chair of Tate Roland Rudd. The announcement included detail on £60m of investment, the first step on the Government's Sector Plan for the Creative Industries which included £40 million investment for start-up video game studios, British music and film exports and creative businesses outside of London. Four cultural projects received £16.2 million from the Cultural Development Fund. These are:

- The Centre for Writing, Newcastle (£5m)
- Glassworks, Sunderland (£5m)
- Harmony Works, a music education centre in Sheffield (£3.5 million)
- The Tropicana, a cultural venue in North Somerset (£2.7 million). [Gov.uk](#) (Council), [Gov.uk](#) (members), [Gov.uk](#) (investment)

### Parliamentary inquiry into soft power: a strategy for success?

The Foreign Affairs Committee has launched an inquiry to look at 'the extent and effectiveness of the UK's soft power in what is an increasingly challenging global environment'. The committee is keen to hear evidence relating to a range of questions including: what tangible benefits soft power provides to the UK's international relationships, what role it plays in conflict resolution, and what role regional and international organisations play in bolstering the UK's soft power. Evidence is being accepted until 3rd March via online submission. [Parliament.uk](#) (Inquiry homepage)

## Sector news

### Strikes continue at London museums

United Voices of the World (UVW) union members have continued strikes at the Natural History Museum, Science Museum and V&A in January. Around 100 members of the union walked out over pay and conditions from 17-20 January, the security guards work for external contractor Wilson James. The Art Newspaper reported that UVW have launched legal claims against Wilson James, a UVW statement says: "Security guards at the Science Museum, Natural History Museum, and V&A Museum are striking after years of stagnant pay and real-terms pay cuts and have already taken strike action over 16 days. They are demanding £16 an hour, sick pay from day one, and an additional week of annual leave." The January dates bring the total length of the ongoing strikes to 22 days across three months. The Museums Association also reported on 24 January that the union had planned strikes for the whole of February from 1-28th. [Museums Association](#) (Jan strikes), [Art Newspaper](#) (£), Museums Association (Feb strikes)



## Tickets released for Heritage Day 2025

Hosted at the Tower of London on 5 March, this in-person event from the Heritage Alliance brings together heritage professionals, advocates, and sector leaders for a day of insightful discussion and networking. This year's theme is 'Heritage Creates' a topic that will explore the many ways in which heritage drives creativity and change. The keynote speech will be from Nick Merriman, Chief Executive of English Heritage, key themes of the day will include:

- Effective policy and decision-making
- Youth opportunities and engagement in the sector
- Community involvement and fostering collaboration
- Sustaining heritage crafts and skills.

Tickets for the day cost £145 and £165 with drinks reception included. [Heritage Alliance](#)

## Museum Accreditation scheme set for review and Government Indemnity Scheme updated

Arts Council England have announced plans for a review and redesign of the Museum Accreditation Scheme. Emmie Kell, Director of Museums and Cultural Property at Arts Council England, said: "We will work to better understand both the function and form of Accreditation. We want the process to be as effective and intuitive as possible for colleagues putting their time into completing it." The review will focus on co-design, user-focus, improved communication and collaboration, access to the scheme will remain uninterrupted throughout the review process. ACE have already published improved applicant guidance (Nov 2024) to support museums in their application process. [ACE](#) (blog), [ACE](#) (accreditation), [Museums Association](#), [M+H Advisor](#)

The Government Indemnity scheme website has also had a refresh with plans for a user-focussed redesign of the service during 2025. The website restructure and move away from pdf guides to HTML pages will ensure users can find information and use the most up to date version. If you'd like to get involved in user research and testing, please contact the via email: [government.indemnityscheme@artscouncil.org.uk](mailto:government.indemnityscheme@artscouncil.org.uk) The next areas to be redesigned are the Online application for non-national exhibitions and reviewing the evidence required for application decisions. [ACE](#)

## The future of museums discussed on BBC's Rethink programme

Tony Butler, Executive Director of Derby Museums, Sara Wajid, Co-Chief Executive of Birmingham Museums Trust and Stephen Bush from the Financial Times debate the purpose of museums and why they should receive public funds in this fascinating edition of the BBC podcast Rethink. Topics discussed include displaying controversial exhibits such as the human remains at the Pitts Rivers Museum, there is also a segment with Sharon Ament, Director of the London Museum, on the new ways and thinking that are at the heart of their redevelopment at Smithfield Market. [BBC](#) (28 mins)

## NEMO release research on political influence on museums in Europe

The Network of European Museum Organisations (NEMO) have shared their barometer findings from the survey they carried out towards in 2024 on political influence on museums. It highlights how societal polarisation is placing intense and often uncontrollable pressure on museum operations, threatening their independence and reputation as impartial institutions. Over 70% of respondents felt that polarisation is rising in their countries. The four main themes of political influence that emerged include:

- Funding and budgetary constraints
- Influence on public actions
- Political influence in governance
- Pressure from interest groups and public opinion influence

The survey captured 153 responses from 31 countries. [NEMO](#) (press release), [Barometer results](#) (pdf, 11pgs)



The Willow Weaver - Ulster Folk Museum. Photo by Johnny Frazer.

## Cultural funding

### 251 cultural organisations in Scotland receive 3 years funding

Creative Scotland's multi-year funding programme has resulted in 251 organisations sharing a £200m budget supported by an uplift to the grant-in-aid funding that Creative Scotland receives from the Scottish Government. 141 organisations are joining the portfolio for the first time. Robert Wilson, Chair of Creative Scotland, said the funding would bring "a renewed sense of stability and certainty" to the cultural sector: "Thanks to the vote of confidence in the culture sector, demonstrated by the recently announced budget from the Scottish Government, Creative Scotland can offer stable, year-on-year funding to more organisations than ever before," he added. [Museums Association](#), [Arts Professional](#) (£)

The funding comes as [Arts Professional](#) (£) reported that Aberdeen Performing Arts and Dundee Contemporary Arts both report large deficits. [The Scotsman](#) reported that National Galleries of Scotland warned at least £40m was needed to address the declining condition of its buildings and the BBC outlined the crisis over a £40m funding gap. [BBC](#)

**Also:** Chair named for Creative Scotland review, [Arts Professional](#) (£) / [Scot.gov](#)

### British Council and English Heritage announce cuts

British Council Chief Executive Scott McDonald commented on the need to make £250m in budget cuts that could see the British Council 'disappear' within a decade. The Art Newspaper also reported that the British Council art collection was at risk although around 50% of the collection cannot be sold due to legal restrictions. [Guardian](#), [Times](#) (£), [Art Newspaper](#) (£)

It was also widely report that English Heritage is planning to make up to 200 redundancies alongside the winter closure of a number of properties to save money following a formal consultation period. The move would affect up to 7% of the workforce with the Guardian reporting the move would mainly affect curators. English Heritage cares for more than 400 historic monuments, buildings and places, English Heritage said: "All organisations need to review their structure from time to time and English Heritage has not done so for several years. In that time, our world has changed dramatically. "The pandemic and its aftermath led to lasting changes in visitor expectations and behaviour, both domestically and internationally, while many of our visitors and members are facing challenges with the cost of living." [Guardian](#), [Guardian](#) (opinion), [Museums Association](#),

### Summary of continuing impact of financial constraints on the sector

- **Nottingham** - The [Museum Association](#) reported on 9 January that Nottingham City Council had agreed visitor charges to Wollaton Hall as part of new plans to make savings and generate income for the council's museums service, the final decision will go to a council meeting in March. [BBC](#)
- **Bristol** - Bristol City Council have also considered the closure of Blaise Museum, Georgian House Museum and Red Lodge Museum as part of cost cutting measures in order to close a £52m funding gap over the next five years. [Guardian](#)
- **Leeds** - In more positive news it was reported on 4 February that Abbey House Museum in Leeds has been saved from closure following public consultation and a passionate response from local audiences. Leeds City Council said rising costs, pressures and demand for services meant it needs to save £103.8m overall. Proposals include a 'pay as you feel' admission charge at Leeds City Museum, Leeds Art Gallery and Leeds Discovery Centre. The budget will be presented to the full council on 26 February. [BBC](#)
- **West Midlands** - [Arts Professional](#) (£) also reported on the 'cultural funding gap' of £100m in the West Midlands, this is according to new research by the Regional Growth Enquiry into the Future of Cultural Investment in the West Midlands. The research was undertaken by the University of Birmingham's City-Region Economic Development Institute and released by Culture Central and West Midlands Cultural Compacts Network. [Report](#) (PDF, 7 pgs)

**Also:** The UK should take a leaf from France's book to boost arts funding, [Financial Times](#) (£)



## Reports

### DCMS publish 'Embedding a Culture and Heritage Capital Approach'

Released on 17 December 2024, this report from the Department of Culture, Media and Sport sets out DCMS' approach to embedding best practice for valuing cultural and heritage assets. This updated framework, which builds on the 2021 report, 'Valuing Culture and Heritage Capital: A framework towards informing decision making', will help the sector make a stronger case for investment in culture and heritage assets. The aim is to ensure the economic, social and cultural value is included in appraisals and evaluation, following best practice guidance set out by HM Treasury's Green Book. [Gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/131444/valuing-culture-and-heritage-capital-framework.pdf), [Full report](#) (pdf, 74pgs)

### Environmental Heritage and Place - a new research digest from the Centre for Cultural Value

The Centre for Cultural Value's latest research digest, Environmental Heritage and Place, is now available, written by John Wright, with Nina White, the digest draws together and signposts the current research on the relationship between cultural heritage, environments and place. The digest drills down on two areas of research: cultural ecosystems services and green heritage. As these two emerging fields are transdisciplinary, focusing on place, wellbeing and environmental issues, they represent a potentially fruitful space for policy and the heritage sector. [CCV](#) (available online or as a pdf download)

## Diversity and inclusion

### Creative UK Launches Create Diversity EDI Case Studies

Published to combat a fall in diversity across the creative industries, Creative UK have published over 40 case studies and launched a Creative Diversity EDI hub to shine a light on the value of pursuing greater equality, diversity and inclusion in the creative and cultural sector. The case studies are drawn from across the creative sector and include examples from the V&A which covers their whole organisational approach to a new EDI strategy. You can search the case studies by topics including Audience Access & Participation and Mid-Senior Leadership. There is also an accessible recruitment case study from Leeds Museums. [Creative UK](#) (press release), [Creative Diversity EDI hub](#)

### Access Museums Conference in Leeds this March

There is still time to book tickets to the Access Museums Conference which will be held at Leeds City Museum on 20-21 March. There will be plenty of inspirational ideas on gallery interpretation, education resources and employment. There will also be opportunities to network with other delegates and speakers. Tickets cost £50 per person for both days and £30 for one day. [Leeds Museums & Galleries](#)

### Designing accessible exhibitions

The Museums Association published a spotlight section on 23 January which focuses on designing accessible exhibitions. The five projects featured include Wonderlab: The Bramble Gallery at the National Railway Museum in York, the World Gallery at the Horniman Museum, and the Wellcome Collection. There are some valuable approaches and lots of inspiration for those considering building in more accessibility to their exhibitions. [Museums Association](#)

**Also:** 'Beyond the minimum: designing for neurodiversity in museums and galleries' this article in the International Journal of Architectural Research comes from a more architectural perspective that examines the conflicts and overlaps in design preferences between neurodivergent groups in relation to the materials and spatial layout of museums and galleries. Results showed that almost half of neurodivergent participants are avoiding museums and galleries due to sensory overload or underload. [Emerald](https://doi.org/10.1108/ARCH-05-2024-0206) (<https://doi.org/10.1108/ARCH-05-2024-0206>)



### Book - The Museum Accessibility Spectrum - Jan 2025

Published by Routledge, 'The Museum Accessibility Spectrum: Reimagining Access and Inclusion' is edited by Alison Eardley and Vanessa Jones. The book engages with discussions around access to museums and argues that what is impairing the progress of museums towards inclusion is the current ableist model of access. Esther Fox, Head of the Accentuate programme, contributes the chapter: 'Curating for Change: How can D/deaf, disabled, and neurodivergent curators drive change in museums in terms of cultural representation and inclusive interpretation?'. [Routledge](#),

**Also:** Museum quits LGBTQ+ trail over 'bad publicity', [BBC](#), [Telegraph](#)



The Printer - Ulster Folk Museum. Photo by Johnny Frazer.

## Digital and data

### Online collections from Manchester Museum and The Wiener Holocaust Library

Manchester Museum have launched an online collections search which provides access to 750,000 objects, many of which may not be on display. Partnering with Manchester Art Gallery and the Whitworth the tool has been a decade in the making, part of the Manchester Museums and Galleries Partnership which unites the venues as part of a collaboration between Manchester City Council and the University of Manchester. The search includes past exhibitions and 'living labels' that evolve over time incorporating community knowledge and personal stories. [Manchester Museum](#), [Museums Association](#)

The Wiener Holocaust Library have also opened a new online portal to mark International Holocaust Memorial Day (27 January) which shares thousands of documents, photos, transcripts and testimonies. The portal provides free access to archives that have been digitised over the past three years, including over 150,000 digitised pages relating to 10,000 records evidencing the Holocaust. [Wiener Holocaust Library](#), [Museums Association](#)

## Changes and Challenges in Heritage and Open Knowledge

A new report hosted on the Arts Marketing Association Culture Hive Digital Heritage Hub outlines the discussions that took place at a Leadership Roundtable on 12 September 2024. Bringing together 70 heritage professionals, academics, technologists and open knowledge advocates from across the UK, the report outlines key discussions and recommendations from the day. Two sessions on the day facilitated discussions on 'Open Licensing and AI' and 'Equity and Ethics in Open Licensing'. The report touches on topics of financial remuneration and legislation and regulation, it also highlights sector anxiety of the impact of AI on the cultural sector in particular with reference to copyright, income and personal data. The report makes a number of recommendations including development of clearer organisational policies and practices around AI, working collaboratively across the sector, understanding and calculating the environmental costs of AI and access to funding to develop pilots and initial innovators in the AI space that are relevant to current and new UK collections. [AMA](#)

## Government consultation on Copyright and AI

UK Government is currently consulting on potential changes to the UK copyright framework to make it more accessible to the developing AI sector. The consultation seeks views on proposals to deliver against the government's objectives for this area, which are:

- Boosting trust and transparency between sectors, by ensuring AI developers provide right holders with greater clarity about how they use their material.
- Enhancing right holders' control over whether or not their works are used to train AI models, and their ability to be paid for its use where they so wish.
- Ensuring AI developers have access to high-quality material to train leading AI models in the UK and support innovation across the UK AI sector.

The consultation sets forward a range of 4 options, which are 0: 'do nothing, no legal change', 1: 'Strengthen copyright requiring licensing in all cases', 2: 'A broad data mining exception' and 3: 'A data mining exception with a rights reservation mechanism'. Government's preference is for option 3 but the consultation asks for views across the options. The consultation closes on 25th February and is accessible online, with a 'Citizen Space' survey for responses. [Gov.uk](#) (consultation) [citizenspace.com](#) (survey)

Some creative sector trade bodies have raised concerns with the proposed option. The BPI has argued against any watering down of copyright protections and makes the case for the UK's music industry to grow in tandem with the AI sector. [BPI](#) DACS representing artists rights, and secretariat for the APPG for Visual Arts and Artists suggests that 'consent, control and remuneration' should be central to UK goals for AI development. [DACS](#)

## Holistic audience measurement data in the digital age

NEMO (Network of European Museum Organisations) have published a new report that looks at how museums can integrate offline and online audience measurement. 'Connected journeys: Holistic audience measurement in the age of digital' addresses three main objectives:

- To deepen the understanding of the needs, motivations, decision-making processes, and expectations of digital audiences.
- To present a systematic approach for measuring both digital and physical audiences, enabling museums to develop meaningful research practices and strategies.
- To provide detailed methodologies from 8 good-practice examples across Europe, showcasing how museums successfully implement joint measurement of digital and physical audiences.

It supports organisations wanting to create a digital audience data collection and management strategy and includes case studies including the National Gallery, as well as small museum examples. It includes a practical roadmap that guides museums of all sizes in integrating Digital Audience Measurement (DAM) into their practices. NEMO are running a webinar on 13 February 11-12 CET for those interested to know more. [NEMO](#) (website), [NEMO](#) (report, pdf, 54pgs), [NEMO](#) (webinar)

### Still unsure about leaving 'X'?

As more organisations leave 'X' including the [University of Leeds](#) and [Museums Galleries Scotland](#) this timely piece from the Digital Culture Network poses 6 questions to ask yourself before leaving any social media platform. Tips include really thinking about where your audience is and are your followers engaging with you? [DCN](#) The BBC also recently wrote about the conflict brands face when wanting to leave the platform. [BBC](#)

**Also:** National Lottery Community Fund cautions use of AI in grant bids, [M+H Advisor / TNLCF](#) and National Lottery Community Fund and ACE 'not opposed to AI-drafted funding applications', [Arts Professional](#) (£)

**Also:** Museum app Smartify secures £1.5m funding, [Tech.eu](#)

**Also:** Ministers consider ban on all UK public bodies making ransomware payments, [Guardian](#)

## Continuing professional development

### Clore Leadership announces full line-up for major Tees Valley cultural gathering

Clore Leadership, the Tees Valley Mayor and Combined Authority has announced the full line-up for Clore Leadership's gathering of cultural and creative professionals in the Tees Valley region.

The event, Thursday 6 March 2025, 10am – 5pm, at Middlesbrough Town Hall, marks the culmination of three years of place-based professional development in the Tees Valley, which has brought together creative and cultural individuals and organisations to cultivate leadership within the Tees Valley. It is a unique opportunity for cultural professionals in Tees Valley to find inspiration and share ideas with creative individuals, cultural organisations and stakeholders in the area with speakers including Lisa Storey, Cultural Development and Programmes Manager, Redcar & Cleveland Council. The cost of the gathering is on a 'pay what you decide' basis with a recommendation of £8. [Eventbrite](#)

### Executive Master in Cultural Leadership

This MA course run by the Royal Academy of Arts and Maastricht University launched in 2018. The programme is designed for individuals who want to enrich their understanding of culture and creativity, in order to positively shape the arts and cultural sectors. Applications are open to those from the arts, creative sectors and beyond with prior work experience and an ambition for leadership roles. Eight intensively taught modules explore subjects such as: critical perspectives in arts and culture; art business; art law; technology and innovation; exhibitions and events; and collecting and collections management with a further leadership module. There is an online open morning on Thursday 20 February 10.30-11.15am to find out more. Tuition fees cost €44,000. Fees do not include travel or accommodation throughout the programme. [RA](#)

## Climate Emergency

### Julie's Bicycle name new cohort leading the decarbonisation charge

10 cultural organisations have been selected by Julie's Bicycle for the Capital Investment Readiness strand of Transforming Energy, as part of their Environmental Programme for Arts Council England. The organisations including: Tullie House Museum and Art Gallery and Birmingham Museums Trust will be supported on the next stage of their decarbonisation journey, advancing towards electrification and fully decarbonising their buildings by 2030. [Julie's Bicycle](#)

### Museums Association appoints Climate trustee to the board

Kinvara Jardine will join the Museums Association board as climate trustee succeeding Sara Kassam from 1 February. Kinvara is currently Education Director at Project Everyone where as a communications experts she specialises in youth, education and climate education. [Museums Association](#)

**Also:** How National Galleries of Scotland aced the sustainability transition, [Art Newspaper](#) (£)





The Carpenter - Ulster Folk Museum. Photo by Johnny Frazer.

## Young people

### British Council's 'Next Generation' report highlights young people's attitude to culture

The Next Generation report from the British Council was published at the end of 2024. The 47 page report is an in-depth look at young people and their attitudes to a changing UK, education and identity and expression as well as political engagement and representation. Young people in the UK place a high value on arts and culture, yet they perceive significant financial instability associated with careers in these fields. Participation in arts activities also reveals a socioeconomic divide, with individuals from higher socioeconomic backgrounds demonstrating greater engagement and appreciation for the arts which may not be surprising, but, interestingly, marginalised groups, including LGBTQI+ individuals and black respondents, exhibit higher levels of involvement in arts and culture, underscoring the importance of these spaces for identity expression and community building. The quantitative survey was nationally representative and included a sample of 3,084 young people aged 18–30 from across the UK. The report also highlights the issues young people are most concerned with, violence/conflict and mental health came out on top with 31% whilst climate change ranked 4th with 29%. [British Council](#) (website), [Next Generation](#) (report, pdf, 47pgs)

### Gateways into heritage for 11-25 year olds

Hosted by English Heritage this in-person event at Yorkshire Museum on Wednesday 26 February is aimed at providing ideas for bringing young people into your organisations. Talks are scheduled from a range of heritage, youth and creative organisations including Aardman Academy. Tickets cost £50 for professionals over 25, there are free tickets for English Heritage staff and volunteers and for young people 25 and under. [English Heritage](#)



## GEM research on children and young people engagement in museums: closing soon

GEM has been commissioned by Arts Council England to undertake research by the end of March 2025, to provide greater understanding of how children and young people are engaging with museums in England. To inform the research, GEM has developed a survey aimed at people delivering programmes and services in museums either as museum staff or as freelancers, the results will help reflect current practice and concerns across England. The survey closes on 14th February and is available online. [GEM - survey monkey](#)

## Funding news and opportunities

### £27 million announced for 7 heritage projects

The National Lottery Heritage Fund have awarded 7 projects a total of £27 million to save lesser-known heritage treasures across the UK. Projects that will receive funding include Tate St Ives (mentioned in member news), as well as a Jumbo Water Tower in Colchester, Kingsley Hall in Bristol, Marchwell Stables in Chichester, The Old Royal High School in Edinburgh, Canada House in Castlegate and the Strand in Belfast. [NLHF](#) , [M+H Advisor](#)

### Esmée Fairbairn Collections grant winners announced

The Museum Association announced the latest round of Esmée Fairbairn Collections Fund grants awarding 8 organisations grants to work with communities and collections. These award are the last iteration of the fund before it changes its name to the Esmée Fairbairn Communities and Collections Fund. Grantees include;

- Derby Museums Trust - £94,634 for 'Coproducing the sustainable future of Derby Museums'
- Cambridge University Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology - £92,000 to engage the Caribbean diaspora in the East of England
- Leeds Museums and Galleries - £99,690 to work with charity Space2 and the herbarium collections
- Museum of Cambridge - £99,802 to place disabled individuals at the forefront of researching, curating and sharing histories
- Royal Armouries Museum - £100,000 to accelerate the implementation of a participation strategy. [Museums Association](#)

### 9 Scottish museums boosted by £456k to strengthen community links

Museums Galleries Scotland have awarded £456k to 9 museums with support from the Scottish government's Museum Development Fund. Organisations from across Scotland have been supported with funding, including;

- £60,000 to National Museums Scotland for their community-led research around South African collections
- £43,932 to Royal College of Surgeons for their project exploring and highlighting the historical and current barriers women face in the field of surgery
- £58,367 to the Scottish Crannog Centre to develop a new display for its 2,500 year old ceramic and textile collections. [MGS](#)

### Grants available for Jewish Museums

The European Jewish Heritage grants are now open until 19 February from Rothschild Foundation Hanadiv Europe. The grants cover categories including collections management, exhibition support, digital heritage projects, supporting organisations and institutions across Europe holding materials, records, books and objects relating to the Jewish experience throughout history. The grants are available to archives, libraries, museums, professional institutions and organisations. There are also rolling grants available across the year for scoping projects to survey a collection and to fund expert advice and guidance. Full details of grant amounts and time periods can be found on the website. [RFHE](#)

## Funding for Chemistry Outreach

The Royal Society of Chemistry's Outreach Fund is open for applications requesting up to £10,000 to support chemistry-based public and schools engagement activities. The funding aims to support projects or programmes that: develop chemists public engagement and science communication skills, engage with school students, engage with public audiences and provide under-represented audiences, communities and places with inspiring chemistry engagement opportunities. The Outreach Fund supports Small grants of up to £5,000 and Large grants of between £5,001-£10,000 and applications can be made using a single application form. The first deadline for applications is Friday 14 March 2025. [RSC](#)

## Movement for Good Awards

The Movement for Good Awards from the Benefact Group are back for 2025 providing £1,000 and £5,000 awards for charities helping those in need. There are 6 £1,000 awards across the year, individuals can nominate their favourite charity for the prize draws. There are also 4 special draws with 10 awards of £5,000, these are aimed at charities supporting different causes so sign up to find out more. [Movement for Good](#)

## Conferences and events

### Digital Culture Talks from The Space

The Space are offering a day of online digital culture talks on 12 February. The session features talks on Digital Accessibility, Inclusion and Community (10.30am-12.45pm) and a round table discussion on reducing online harms (2-4.25pm). They are also running a session on 4 March from 11am-12.30pm on managing social media and digital comms as a one person team. The talks are free. [The Space](#)

### Stormy Socials - ethical social media for museums

Happy Museum and the Museum of Homelessness are inviting museum professionals to join them on Thursday 27 February from 12.30-2pm to explore a more ethical use of social media for museums. The event asks the question- how we speak honestly and authentically with wider and online communities in this moment? it will also share best practice from museums confronting the issues with problematic social media platforms. Tickets cost £10. [Eventbrite](#)

### Art Fund webinar on tax reliefs

On 12 March 2025, Art Fund are running a webinar from 10-11.30am on 'How local authority museums and galleries can benefit from tax relief'. Organised by Art Fund and run by Azets, the webinar will explore how local authority museums and galleries can take advantage of this tax relief scheme. It is an opportunity to troubleshoot specific issues and comes with fact sheet to support your finance teams. [Art Fund](#)

### Spotlight on Freedom of Information requests

The Archives & Records Association have scheduled a 1-hour online session providing a 'Spotlight on Freedom of Information Requisitions, relating to Archives, Museums, Libraries or other collections'. The session on Monday 17 March will cover topics including effective and ineffective approaches to handling requests, considering real-world examples and understanding the role of the Information Commissioners Office. Running from 12 noon-1pm with a 10 minute Q&A, tickets cost £99 for non-members and £55 for members. [ARA](#)

### Family Arts Leadership Symposium - March

On the 18 March the Family Arts Campaign are running their Family Arts Leadership Symposium from 10-5pm in London. Taking place every 2 years it brings leaders together to discuss and change key issues relating to family arts engagement. This year the focus is on strengthening the impact of your work. Tickets cost from £125 + £4.50 booking fee for small organisations and freelancers to £185 + £4.50 booking fee for established leaders. [Family Arts](#)

### AIM Conference tickets now on sale

The AIM Conference which is in Portsmouth for 2025, will be held on 18 and 19 June. The theme of the conference is 'Museums in Motion: Building resilience for a changing world' and includes sessions from Queer Britain, the Food Museum, the Cartoon Museum and Brooklands Museum. There are also breakout sessions on museums and the climate crisis. There are 12 bursary places available for AIM members. Ticket prices cost from £150+VAT for Early Bird one-day entry for AIM members, to £270 +VAT for Early Bird entry for both days (excluding socials) for AIM members, to £336 +VAT for Early Bird entry for both days (including socials). Early Bird entry is available until 5 May 2025. [AIM](#), [Bursaries](#)



The Blacksmith - Ulster Folk Museum. Photo by Johnny Frazer.

### New galleries, museum plans and closures

On 23 January [Milton Keynes Museum](#) opened their new Ancient History Gallery concluding an 8 year project, whilst approval was granted on a proposal to turn Huddersfield Library into a new museum and art gallery. [BBC](#)

The BBC also reported that the Keep Military Museum in Dorchester is facing a year-long closure due to an unsafe roof. [BBC](#)

### Sector moves

- The new Chair of the V&A has been named as **Baroness Minouche Shafik** commencing her term on 1 January 2025. Shafik an economist, policymaker and higher-education leader, follows Sir Nicholas Coleridge who stood down as Chair of Trustees in November 2023. The delayed appointment comes after the recruitment process was re-started in October 2024 after the preferred candidate Samir Shah was appointed as Chair of the BBC. [Gov.uk](#), [V&A](#)
- **Dr Xerxes Mazda**, currently Director of Collection and Curation at the British Library, has been named as the new Director of Collections at the British Museum. He will join the Executive team in Spring with responsibility for the stewardship and care of the collection. Mazda previously worked for eight years at the British Museum from 2005-2013 as Head of Interpretation and then Head of Learning, Volunteers and Audiences. [British Museum](#), [M+H Advisor](#)

- **Doug Gurr**, Director of the Natural History Museum, has been named as the Interim Chair of the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA). Gurr will oversee the CMA while they recruit or a permanent position. Marcus Bokkerink will step down after leading the CMA since 2022. Gurr previously held roles at Amazon UK and Amazon China. [Gov.uk](#), [Telegraph](#), [Financial Times](#)
- The Natural History Museum has appointed **Jessica Bradford** as its first Director of Collections to lead the Museum's collections and acquisitions strategy and ensure its collections continue to be a valuable resource for scientists and researchers worldwide. Bradford is currently Head of Collections and Principal Curator at the Science Museum, and will begin the role in early March 2025. [NHM](#)
- The Design Museum has made a number of senior appointments including **Josephine Chanter** as Deputy Director, Chanter has been Director of Audiences for the past seven years. **Lycia Lobo**, currently at English Heritage, will be joining the museum as Chief Operating Officer and **Liyun Lee** has been appointed as Chief Finance Officer. [Design Museum](#), [Arts Professional](#) (£)
- **David Gelsthorpe** has been appointed as the next Chief Executive of the Collections Trust. Gelsthorpe has been Chair of the UK Museum Accreditation Scheme for four years and was Curator of Earth Sciences at Manchester Museum for 18 years. He will take over from current Chief Executive Kevin Gosling in Spring 2025. [Collections Trust](#)
- Historic England Chief Executive, **Duncan Wilson**, has announced retirement. He has spent the last ten years at the head of Historic England and a total of twenty five years leading organisations including Alexandra Palace, Old Royal Naval College and Somerset House. Wilson will retire in October and the closing date for applications for a successor is Friday 28 February 2025. [Historic England](#), [Applications](#)

## Obituary

**Kirsty Archer-Thompson** (1987-2024), Curator at Abbotsford, home of Sir Walter Scott. [Museums Association](#), [Times](#)

## Catch up

- Turner 250- a year-long festival of special exhibitions and events to mark 250 years since the birth of painter JMW Turner, 22 January 2025, [Tate](#)
- Millennium projects, 25 years on: A cultural legacy?, 14 January 2025, [Museums Association](#)
- National Trust boss: I got death threats over our slavery report, 10 January 2025, [Times](#) (£)
- National Trust announces plans to address UK's mental health crisis, 3 January 2025, [Art Newspaper](#) (£)

## International news

- Three arrested after ancient Romanian artefacts stolen from Dutch museum, 29 January 2025, [Guardian](#)
- Smithsonian to close diversity office after Trump order, 29 January 2025, [Washington Post](#) (via MSN)
- Stories woven in cloth in Pakistan's first textile museum, 27 January 2025, [Guardian](#)
- Visiting leaky, crowded Louvre is 'physical ordeal', museum's boss says, 23 January 2025, [Guardian](#), [Art Newspaper](#) (£)
- What might a Trump presidency mean for the UK's creative industries? 20 January 2025, [Arts Professional](#) (£)

## Jobs

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

- [Ancient Iran Scholar - British Museum](#)
- [National Learning & Engagement Convenor - National Portrait Gallery](#)
- [Project Conservator - National Gallery](#)
- [Project Curator - Animal Mummies Exhibition - British Museum](#)
- [Senior Museums Manager - Glasgow Life](#)
- [Chief Executive - Glasgow Life](#)



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