

In this month's edition:

- [Art Fund Museum of the Year shortlist announced](#)
- [NMDC members benefit from £4 million to improve accessibility to arts and culture](#)
- [MEND grants announced as part of the Arts Everywhere Fund](#)
- [Brighton & Hove Museums repatriate 45 artefacts to Botswana](#)
- [Martyn's Law guidance published](#)
- [MPs launch inquiry into the future of UK's tourism industry](#)
- [Northern Ireland Museum Policy Consultation opened](#)
- [DCMS sponsored museums' visitor numbers and performance indicators](#)
- [ICOM UK research on global museum partnerships](#)
- [Round up of pressures across the sector and funding news](#)
- [New Sustainable Suppliers form and webinar](#)
- [Preparing to Borrow with TEG](#)

...and much more.

Section headings | [Members' news](#) | [Government news](#) | [Sector news](#) | [Sector reports](#) | [Cultural sector funding](#) | [Collections and conservation](#) | [Climate and sustainability](#) | [Digital](#) | [Inclusion and accessibility](#) | [Awards](#) | [Openings](#) | [Funding opportunities](#) | [Conferences and events](#) | [Appointments](#) | [Catch up](#) | [International news](#) | [Jobs](#) | [Subscribe](#)



'Setting the Stage: 70 Years of the Eurovision Song Contest' at the National Science and Media Museum.

Members' news

Art Fund Museum of the Year shortlist announced

Congratulations to NMDC members Norwich Castle Museum & Art Gallery, the Fitzwilliam Museum, the National Gallery and V&A East Storehouse who have been included in the shortlist for this year's Art Fund Museum of the Year Competition. Norwich Castle Museum is nominated following its major redevelopment which has made it the most accessible castle in the UK; the Fitzwilliam for its bold exhibitions, innovative partnerships and record-breaking visitor numbers; the National Gallery is recognised for its bicentenary UK-wide programme and an entire rehang of its collection; whilst V&A East Storehouse is a new museum experience which invites visitors to walk among half a million creative works on a scale and in ways not possible before. Completing the shortlist is The Box (Plymouth) which celebrated its fifth birthday in September 2025 having welcomed over one million visitors.

The winning museum will be announced on 25 June at a ceremony at the Cutty Sark in London and will receive £120,000. Each of the four other finalists will receive £20,000 – an increase of £5,000 for each museum – bringing the total prize money to £200,000. The judges for 2026 include NMDC member Tony Butler, Executive Director of Derby Museums. [Art Fund](#), [BBC](#), [Guardian](#), [Museums Association](#)

NMDC members benefit from £4 million to improve accessibility to arts and culture

24 local museums have received a share of £4 million through the DCMS/Wolfson Museums and Galleries Improvement Fund which supports local people by improving displays, enhancing collection care and making exhibitions more accessible to visitors. NMDC members who have benefitted from the funding include:

- The Black Country Living Museum - £272,000 for a project which will revive the Museum's historic but currently inactive electric trolleybuses and extend the route into the local 1940s-60s High Street.
- Bristol Museum and Art Gallery - £317,100
- Manchester Museum - £200,000 towards a major redevelopment of its Vivarium.
- Norwich Castle (Norfolk Museums) - £228,900 to help bring to life its wealth of nationally significant archaeological finds and to tell the compelling story of Boudica and her rebellion.
- Segedunum Roman Fort (North East Museums) - £213,100 to enhance the heritage site and visitor experience.

Smaller grants will also go to Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery - £183,100, The Booth Museum of Natural History (Brighton & Hove Museums) - £139,000 and Pitt Rivers Museum - £55,000. Museums Minister, Baroness Twycross said: "We want to ensure that everyone, everywhere can experience arts and culture in the area they call home and this fund plays a key role in making that possible." The Fund brings together £2 million in match funding from the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) and independent, grant making charity, the Wolfson Foundation. [Gov.uk](#) (press release), [Wolfson](#)

MEND grants announced as part of the Arts Everywhere Fund

130 cultural venues, museums and libraries are set to benefit from a £127.8 million funding boost, helping to ensure that everyone can access arts and culture in the places they call home. Administered and delivered by Arts Council England on behalf of DCMS it is made up of three funds: The Creative Foundations Fund (CFF), The Museum Estate and Development Fund (MEND) and The Libraries Improvement Fund (LIF). Culture Secretary, Lisa Nandy said: "Arts and culture aren't a luxury for a privileged few. They are for everyone, everywhere. They bring people together, open doors, and support our shared sense of belonging. That's the role they can play as we build a stronger future for our country." 28 organisations received MEND funding including £3,567,713 to Bristol Museums and £454,159 to the Black Country Living Museum. [Gov.uk](#), [Guardian](#), [Museums Association](#)

Brighton & Hove Museums repatriate 45 artefacts to Botswana

Brighton & Hove Museums has announced the repatriation of 45 cultural artefacts from its collection to Serowe, Botswana. The return is part of a partnership with Khama III Memorial Museum in Botswana following the 'Making African Connections' project which was led with the University of Sussex and undertook collaborative provenance research in 2019 to 2021. The artefacts will be displayed in a permanent exhibition to open 27 May 2026 in Botswana. The opening will be accompanied by a two-day international summit hosted by Khama III Memorial Museum in collaboration with the University of Sussex and the University of Botswana, fostering dialogue on heritage, repatriation, museums, conservation and tourism. [Brighton & Hove Museums](#), [BBC](#), [Museums Association](#)

Architect chosen for Project Domani at National Gallery

Kengo Kuma and Associates with BDP and MICA have won the competition to design the National Gallery's new wing, part of the museum's £750 million Project Domani. Project Domani also includes the move to extend its historic collection beyond 1900, making it the only museum in the world which exclusively displays paintings, where visitors will be able to view the entire history of painting in the Western tradition. The Gallery launched an international architectural competition in September 2025 and 65 submissions were received, with six architects shortlisted to take part in a design competition. Kuma also designed V&A Dundee, the UCCA Clay Museum in China and Tokyo's Olympic stadium. [National Gallery](#), [Guardian](#), [Dezeen](#), [The Architects Newspaper](#)

Also: National Gallery meets voluntary redundancy targets, [Arts Professional](#) (£)

V&A East opening round-up

V&A East opened to the public on Saturday 18 April 2026.

- How to build a museum for young people, [Apollo](#) (£)
- V&A East director on following a generation's 'ethical compass', [M+H Advisor](#)
- 'How do we build a relationship with the sceptical generation?': V&A East opens its doors, [Museums Association](#)
- V&A East Launches With a Fresh Lens on a 2.8 Million-Object Collection, [Artnet](#)
- Step inside V&A East Museum, a new London cultural hub combining brains and beauty, [Wallpaper*](#)
- V&A East opens its doors with a beautiful history of Britain's black music-making, [Telegraph](#) (£)
- V&A East — how can a museum dedicated to beauty be this ugly?, [Times](#) (£)

Other NMDC members in the news:

- HMS Victory masts to be removed in conservation plans, [Royal Navy Museums](#), [BBC](#)
- Harrods activation aligns retail with cultural programming through Schiaparelli collaboration, [V&A](#), [Experience UK](#)
- [Thinktank](#) science museum introduces AI-powered digital guide, [Blooploop](#)
- Sandbox VR expands cultural partnerships with dinosaur experience developed with [Natural History Museum](#), [Experience UK](#)

Images this month

Images this month celebrate all things Eurovision with 'Setting the Stage: 70 Years of the Eurovision Song Contest' that opens on 15 May at National Science and Media Museum in Bradford. The free exhibition will be part of a wider programme of events and activities taking place at the museum throughout the year which bring to life themes of performance, stagecraft, and careers in broadcasting. [National Science and Media Museum](#)- 15 May 2026 - 21 February 2027.

Government news

2026 elections

Scotland and Wales head to the polling booths on 7 May as do voters in the English local elections. In Scotland all 129 Members of the Scottish Parliament (MSPs) are up for re-election, while in Wales the number of Members of the Senedd (MSs) will be expanded from the current 60 to 96 representatives from 16 newly devised constituencies.

Manifesto roundup Scotland:

- [Scottish Conservatives](#)
- [Scottish Labour](#)
- [Scottish Liberal Democrats](#)
- [Reform UK](#)
- [Scottish Greens](#)
- [Scottish National Party](#)

Manifesto roundup Wales:

- [Green Party Wales](#)
- [Plaid Cymru](#)
- [Reform UK](#)
- [Welsh Conservatives](#)
- [Welsh Labour](#)
- [Welsh Liberal Democrats](#)

What you need to know about the 7 May elections in England, Scotland and Wales, [BBC](#), 2026
Local Elections in Scotland: What could they mean for the cultural and creative industries? [Creative UK](#), All change? Welsh Elections 2026 and what they mean for culture and the creative industries in Wales, [Creative UK](#)

Martyn's Law guidance published

The Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Act 2025, also known as Martyn's Law, is in recognition of Martyn Hett, one of the 22 victims of the Manchester Arena attack in 2017. The Act intends to improve organisational preparedness and protective security across the UK. The newly published guidance is intended to support those responsible for qualifying premises and events that fall within scope of the legislation, helping them to understand and prepare for their new statutory obligations. Publishing the guidance at this stage enables organisations to familiarise themselves with the requirements. As the substantive provisions of the Act have not yet commenced and are therefore not enforceable, the Government strongly advises against using third party providers who claim they can make premises or events compliant with the Act at this time.

The Security Industry Authority (SIA) is the regulator for Martyn's Law and has opened a consultation on its role as a regulator for the act which closes on Friday 12 June. There are also a number of [SIA webinars](#) (various dates in May/June) and one from [Historic England](#) (Wed 10 June 1-2pm) to find out more. [Gov.uk](#) (news story), [Gov.uk](#) (guidance), [SIA](#) (consultation)

DCMS starts work on new strategic framework for museums in England

The Museums Journal reported on a Public Accounts Committee hearing into the financial vulnerability of England's national museums and galleries in which DCMS permanent secretary Sarah Storey gave evidence. Storey told the committee: "In Baroness Hodge's review, one of the things she talked about was a new strategic framework for museums, and we've accepted that recommendation [...]. In 2017 there was some work done at a more strategic level and we think it's about the right time to look at that, so we do want to look at the whole piece. And I think [...] the work is starting on that at the moment." She also answered questions on the distribution of government funding to museums and proposals to look at charging international visitors to museums. [Museums Association](#), [Parliament.uk](#) (includes transcript)

MPs launch inquiry into the future of UK's tourism industry

The inquiry, which will cover both domestic and international tourism, will explore how the UK promotes itself overseas, the role of culture and heritage in attracting visitors and how the UK competes with other destinations. It will also examine the impact of policy changes, including the proposal to give mayors powers to charge an overnight levy, alongside wider challenges such as energy price inflation and rising employment costs. Chair of the CMS Committee, Dame Caroline Dinenage MP, said: "The tourism industry contributes not only to the UK economy but also plays a vital role in supporting our arts, culture and heritage. That is why it is so important for the sector to be properly supported, and that government policy enables tourism to thrive." You can submit evidence until Monday 18 May 2026. [Parliament.uk](#) (inquiry), [Parliament.uk](#) (terms of reference)

Northern Ireland Museum Policy Consultation opened

The Department for Communities, with responsibility for the museums sector in Northern Ireland, has opened a consultation on the draft version of a new Museum Policy. The document sets out 12 policy aims around three principal aims - strengthening, connecting and innovating the sector. The consultation closes on 22 June 2026. [NI.Gov](#), [Museums Association](#)

Sector news

DCMS sponsored museums' visitor numbers and performance indicators

The 2024/5 annual performance indicators for DCMS-sponsored museums and galleries were published on 29 April. The data covers 15 museums and galleries across a number of metrics including visitors, learning and outreach, and self-generated income. Between April 2024 and March 2025, there were 42.0 million visits to DCMS sponsored museums and galleries, a 1.3% decrease in visits from 42.4 million in 2023/24, and a 16% decrease compared to the 2018/2019 financial year (pre-covid). Headline findings include:

- Visitor numbers for museums and galleries located in London are closer to returning to pre-pandemic levels than those outside of London.
- In 2024/25, there were a total of over 145 million unique website visits to DCMS sponsored museum websites. This is a decrease of 12% from 165 million recorded in 2023/24.
- There were an estimated 19.4 million visits by overseas visitors to DCMS sponsored museums and galleries. This is an increase of 2% compared to 2023/24 but a decrease of 17% compared to the figures recorded in 2018/19.
- In 2024/25, DCMS sponsored museums and galleries loaned their items to 1,078 venues in the UK. This is an increase of 7% compared to the 1,011 loan venues in 2023/24 and a decrease of 16% compared to the 1,279 loan venues in 2018/19.

Self-generated income metrics showed that in 2024/25 the total self-generated income for DCMS sponsored museums and galleries was £1.3 billion. This is the first instance since records started in the 2008/09 financial year where the total self-generated income exceeded £1 billion, without adjusting for inflation. This figure shows an inflation adjusted increase of almost 2.5 times higher than the figures recorded in 2023/24 and was 3.6 times higher than the total self-generated income from 2018/19, when comparing museums open in both time periods. This is largely due to a substantial increase in the self-generated fundraising income of the British Museum, which accounted for 81% of the fundraising income of all DCMS-sponsored museums. [Gov.uk](#) (performance indicators)

In April the total income for 2023/24 and 2024/25 DCMS funded organisations was also released. DCMS directly funds 19 cultural organisations via Grant-in-Aid. These include Arts Council England and their National Portfolio Organisations, the British Film Institute, British Library, Historic England and the 15 DCMS-sponsored museums and galleries. In 2024/25, the total income of DCMS-funded cultural organisations was £5.6 billion, up from £4.5 billion in 2023/24. Adjusting for inflation, this was a 17.8% increase compared to 2023/24 and an increase of 22.6% compared to 2018/19 (the latest financial year completely unaffected by the COVID-19 pandemic). Across the organisations overall, Grant-in-Aid accounted for 23.7% of total income, this represents a decrease from 27.7% in 2023/24 and from 29.3% in 2018/19 (the last financial year unaffected by COVID-19). [Gov.uk](#) (total income), [M+H Advisor](#), [Arts Professional](#) (£)

Sector strikes update

The long running strike at the **National Coal Mining Museum** has finally ended after staff accepted an improved pay deal and change to employment contracts. More than 40 mine guides at the museum have been taking continuous industrial action since 20 August 2025 in the dispute. The museum has remained open throughout the strike but has been unable to run underground mine tours. **London Museum** staff have also ended their industrial action after members of the Prospect union accepted a 3.5% pay rise. Meanwhile on the 15 April the BBC reported on a strike by staff at **Brighton and Hove Museums** over pay and contracts. Brighton and Hove Museums said that it needed to alter staff contracts due to "significant rising costs on top of cuts to public funding". The striking workers care for the Royal Pavilion, Brighton Museum & Art Gallery, Preston Manor, Hove Museum of Creativity and the Booth Museum of Natural History. [Museums Association](#) (NCMM), [BBC](#) (Brighton), [Museums Association](#) (London Museum)

ICOM UK research on global museum partnerships

Museum Bridge is a new roadmap for sustainable global museum partnerships, formed from a partnership between ICOM UK and the British Council to explore why and what the UK Museum sector needs to build better, stronger, more equitable and effective connections with its colleagues around the world. ICOM UK have published an overview of the research and invite museums to get involved in the next stage of the programme. The research has evidenced demand across the sector for structured international collaboration as current contact relies on personal connections, coincidental encounters or ad hoc email introductions. It also found that many institutions lack guidance on restitution pathways, consultation with source communities, new legal contexts, trauma-informed practice and shared stewardship agreements. You can find out more by attending the upcoming Museum Bridge webinar – hosted by ICOM UK and led by City Global Futures – on 22 May 2026. [Webinar](#), [ICOM UK](#) (website), [ICOM UK](#) (Museum Bridge report, pdf, 17pgs)

Government publishes national vision for archives in England

'Archives at the Heart of Society' is a new national vision for archives in England, facilitated by The National Archives in its role as sector lead. The vision sets out a shared long-term framework to ensure archives are used and valued by everyone. It is shaped around three core themes: Sustainability, Accessibility and Inclusivity, that will guide archive services, funders and partners across England. [TNA](#) **Also:** Take part in the 2026 annual UK Archive Sector Survey which is closing on Friday 29 May 2026. [TNA](#)

Also: Following on from the sad news of the death of Sir Neil Cossons (reported in [last month's newsletter](#)) there have been further tributes from the sector. [TaitMail](#), [Guardian](#), [Times](#) (£)

Sector reports

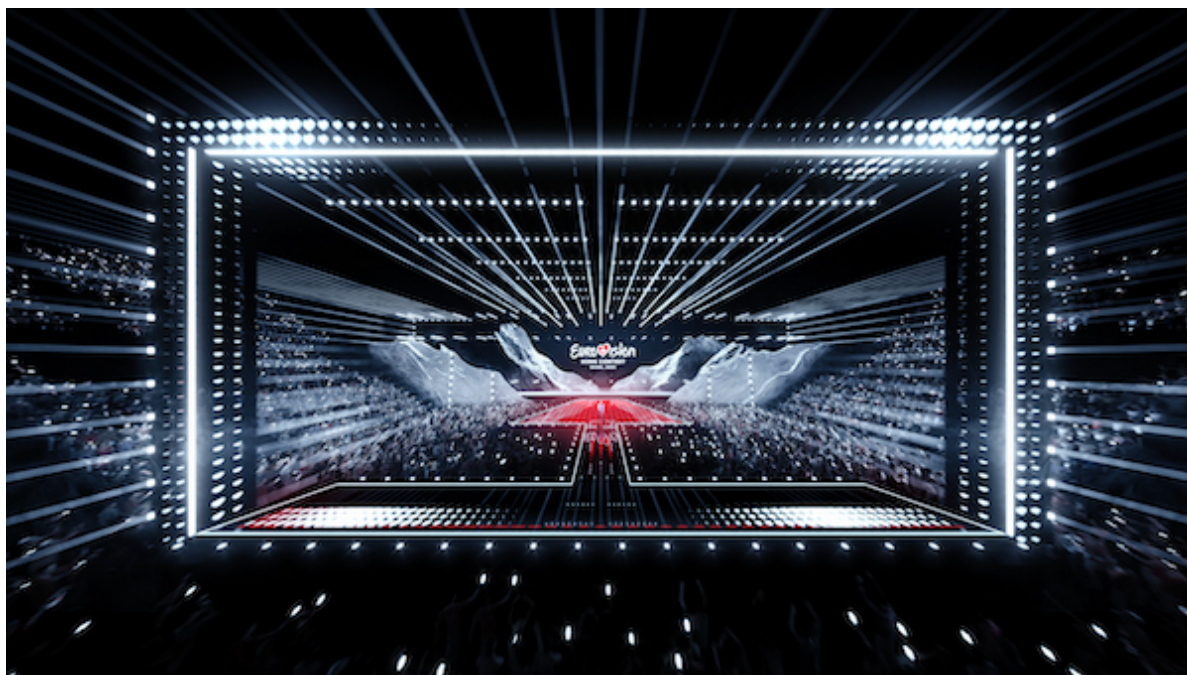
Audience Agency report on research, development and innovation

'Valuing Creative and Cultural R&D and Innovation' is a 91 page report produced by the Audience Agency, Arts Council England and Careful Industries. It aims to build the case for the importance of research, development and innovation in the creative and cultural sector, highlighting its current landscape and challenges and making policy recommendations to unlock its full potential. It shows that RD&I remains significantly underrated in the creative and cultural sector and in national policy. As well as recommendations for the sector and government it looks at case studies across RD&I in artistic, technological, place and societal and business spheres. Birmingham Museums Trust is used as an example of an organisation that has unified its ticketing, retail, and food and beverage sales using Shopify, a mainstream e-commerce platform not traditionally used in the cultural sector. [AA](#)

Management Practices in the Creative Industries

This State of the Nations Research Report from Creative PEC presents the evidence that training for managers in the creative industries is 11% lower than across the wider UK economy. The findings suggest there is significant room for improvement in management practices in the creative industries, and shows that greater investment in management training is essential to bolster the creative industries. Key findings include:

- There is considerable variation in the take-up of different management practices, suggesting scope to strengthen formal management practices, such as the use of KPIs, mechanisms for employee consultation and adoption of accredited management standards.
- There has been sustained underinvestment for nearly a decade and managers in the creative industries are amongst the least likely staff to receive training compared to other occupations.
- SMEs in the creative industries with stronger management practices perform better across the board of business indicators. [Creative PEC](#) (press release), [Creative PEC](#) (report, pdf, 69pgs)



Setting the Stage: 70 Years of the Eurovision Song Contest' at the National Science and Media Museum. Image credit: Eurovision Song Contest Basel 2025 Stage Render Credit: SRG SSR.

Cultural sector funding

Round up of pressures across the sector and funding news

Baroness Hodge has clarified her position on charging international visitors to museums, confirming such plans were contingent on the introduction of a universal identification system - [Museums Journal](#). The [Financial Times](#) (£) reported that top arts donors are split on plans to potentially charge tourists for access to museums.

The [Financial Times](#) (£) also ran a piece on the news that the [Whitechapel Gallery](#) have employed their first Economist-in-Residence to examine the role of cultural institutions in an era of rising costs and declining funding; while a [Guardian](#) opinion piece celebrated the opening of V&A East and DCMS Arts Everywhere funding highlighting the importance of funding outside of London.

As local elections begin and Scottish and Welsh voters head to the polls the [Times](#) (£) reported on Kent County Council run by Reform UK which has sold an Antony Gormley statue, and on 'X' Reform UK's Shadow Chancellor Robert Jenrick criticised museums and organisations such as London Zoo that offer reduced price entry for families in receipt of Universal Credit.

The [Museums Journal](#) published an analysis piece on the reasons behind museum closures, drilling down into Museum Mapping research from Birkbeck University and including a run-down on some of the museums that have closed recently. News also came from [M+H Advisor](#) that Tramtown the Blackpool heritage tram museum will close permanently after an independent structural survey found the building was unsafe.

Collections and conservation

Find an Object website

The Collections Trust is the new home for the Find an Object website, previously hosted by the Museums Association. The site allows museums to list items from their collections for disposal, the list is then searchable by other museums and public domain organisations who may wish to acquire the objects. It is free to upload items to the listings but you will need to register in order to do this. The website offers space to detail each item's condition and location, along with any warnings. [Find an Object](#)

Call for Hosts: Tapestry Conservation Internship

Icon are seeking expressions of interest from organisations interested in hosting an intern specialising in Tapestry Conservation. This placement will offer exposure to the breadth of tapestry conservation practice - depending on project availability, interns may work on large-scale tapestry treatments, preventive care and display preparation, condition assessment, and the development of handling, storage, or environmental strategies. Host organisations must have access to in-house expertise to support the placement and enable the intern to develop their knowledge and skills in the conservation modern materials. Placements may be 3, 6, or 12 months in duration, depending on the projects available and the host's capacity. Twelve-month placements are preferred. This fully funded programme provides £25,000 to support the delivery of each internship. To apply for funding, hosts should complete the Host Application Form and submit it to accreditation@icon.org.uk by Monday 18 May 2026 and 10am. [Icon](#)

Museum thefts

Details were released to the public about the theft of the Lipton Cup from Glasgow's Riverside Museum in October 2025. The historic Glasgow artefact worth nearly £500k was presented to merchant Sir Thomas Lipton in New York in December 1930, following his fifth and final attempt to win the Americas' Cup. It was gifted to the city of Glasgow two years later, after Lipton's death. [BBC](#) (theft), [BBC](#) (cup). At the end of April two classic mopeds were stolen from the Norfolk Motorcycle Museum, which houses a collection of over 200 machines spanning more than a century of history. The missing machines are a 1977 Honda SS50, owned by the museum itself, registration TVF 755R, and a Suzuki AP50 belonging to a volunteer staff member. [MCN](#)

Climate and sustainability

New Sustainable Suppliers form and webinar

A Sustainable Suppliers form has been created by cultural sector organisations including the Royal Ballet and Opera, Theatre Green Book, National Theatre, Royal Baths, GLAM Oxford & Opera Europa, who have been trying to improve their supplier sustainability information. Completing the form will allow eligibility to attend a webinar, run by Jenn Taillefer and sponsored by 3LR Lighting, which will help organisations identify their next steps for continuing to improve their environmental sustainability - including areas that many businesses are not currently tackling such as water in supply chains, biodiversity and social sustainability - as well as the opportunity to tap into Jenn's specialist knowledge in all areas of sustainability. The session will be held on Tuesday 19 May 9.30-10.30am online. Contact Rachael O'Sullivan, Environmental Manager Operations, Royal Ballet & Opera to find out more rachael.osullivan@roh.org.uk, [Sustainable Suppliers Form](#)

MA Climate Justice Steering Group seeking new members

The Museums Association are seeking new members for their Climate Justice Steering Group. The group meets up to four times a year online to consider and advocate for how to take climate justice forward in the UK museum sector. They are particularly interested in candidates who have experience working in Northern Ireland or Wales, or who have skills and experience in partnerships, social and climate justice, programming, decarbonisation or workforce and training. The deadline for applications is 31 May 2026. [Museums Association](#)

Digital

Let's Get Real (LGR) collaborative action research project

The LGR report brings together learning from a group of 32 leaders and practitioners from 16 organisations who made up the 2025 cohort of The Audience Agency's collaborative action learning and research programme. Focussing on experimenting, learning and strategising around the use of artificial intelligence (AI) in their work, the 83 page report includes recommendations for other cultural organisations looking to make sound ethical, strategic and practical decisions around how they might integrate AI tools and processes. The five recommendations are:

- Ensure processes are people-centred, not led by AI
- Create clear guardrails that can flex and evolve as AI tools and context change
- Nurture small-scale, low-stakes experimental approaches

- Strengthen your data before scaling your use of AI
- Learn with peers and share knowledge

The 2025 cohort included Art UK, Bristol Museum, London Museum and The National Gallery. [AA](#) (LGR cohort), [AA](#) (report, pdf, 83pgs)

Digital Leadership programme from The Space

This opportunity from The Space offers cultural leaders dedicated time, expert guidance, and a small group of peers working through similar challenges related to digital change. It is structured into a six-month learning journey designed to evolve how you think and act as a leader. Applications are open to Executive Directors, Creative Directors, Chief Executives, and equivalent roles in organisations that are eligible for Arts Council England funding and have at least ten FTE employees. Running from September 2026 to February 2027 it is free to attend with a time commitment of about four to five hours per month and mainly delivered on Zoom. The deadline for applying is Monday 8 June 2026 at 12pm. [The Space](#)

Also: National Gallery of Art launch AI generated visual descriptions, [LinkedIn](#)

Also: From messages to conversations: AI agents are changing how we find culture, [Arts Journal](#)



Marconi Mk III Camera Head that will be going on display in the exhibition 'Setting the Stage: 70 Years of the Eurovision Song Contest' at the National Science and Media Museum.

Inclusion and accessibility

EDI road map

Museum Development South West have shared the fruits of their 'Growing Together: Embedding Inclusion and Collaboration in our Museums' project which aims to increase awareness, knowledge and confidence in Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) among museums. Funding by the National Lottery Heritage Fund has contributed to an E-learning Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Roadmap. The free online tool aims to help museums understand some of the steps they need to take to become more inclusive organisations. It can be used by staff and volunteers, including trustees of museum and heritage organisations. [MDSW](#)

Also: 'Ignorance, othering and snobbery': Are museums struggling to reflect working-class lives? [Museums Association](#)

Awards

Museums Change Lives Awards open

The Museums Change Lives Awards from the Museums Association take place at their annual conference each year, recognising and celebrating outstanding work by UK museums delivering social impact. The awards promote best practice from museums and individuals that support communities and engages with contemporary issues. Institutional awards cover three categories including Best Museums Change Lives Project, Best Small Museum Project and Inclusive Spaces Award, which is new for 2026. There is also an individual award for Radical Change Maker. Winners are awarded £500. The deadline for nominations is 9.00am on Monday 29 June 2026. [Museums Association](#)

2026 Art Explora award

The Art Explora Académiedes Beaux-Arts European Award is open to all non-profit European cultural organisations from all artistic sectors and supports innovative practices in audience access, participation and engagement that can be shared across Europe. There are three awards worth €30,000, €40,000, or €50,000, alongside a Special Jury Award of €30,000 and Audience Choice Award of €30,000. The 2025 winners included the Thames Festival Trust for their 'Turning the Tide' project led by artist Catherine Yass, Turner Prize nominee, aimed at increasing the visibility of young disabled creatives in public spaces. Applications close on 26 June 2026. [Art Explora](#)

Openings

Quentin Blake Centre for Illustration due to open on 5 June

The Quentin Black Centre for Illustration in Clerkenwell will open to the public on Friday 5 June, celebrating the 93 year old artist and becoming a permanent centre for illustration. The new museum, in a former waterworks, will house three exhibition spaces, a cafe, a shop, and free community spaces. The heritage site was redeveloped with support from the National Lottery Heritage Fund, Islington Borough Council, trusts and foundations and philanthropists. Newly announced exhibition 'Quentin Blake: Performance' will chart the artist's depiction of theatre through illustration, encompassing circus, panto, Greek comedy and Shakespearean drama. [Quentin Blake Centre](#), [Time Out](#), [Creative Boom](#)

Trent Park House of Secrets to open Summer 2026

Trent Park House in Enfield will open as a museum telling the story of 'Secret Listeners' – intelligence operators hidden in the basement – whose eavesdropping of senior German prisoners led to some of the most important intelligence breakthroughs of WWII. Trent Park was originally part of King George III's estate and the first house was constructed in the 1780s. In the 1890s the house was rebuilt in the Victorian style before an extensive refurbishment by Sir Philip Sassoon in the 1920s, transforming it into a luxury weekend retreat for hosting his fashionable and famous guests at elegant parties. Following the restoration, visitors will journey through restored and furnished rooms that were the backdrop to Sir Philip Sassoon's socialite and political world, where he hosted some of the most influential statesmen, journalists, royalty and politicians in the 1930s. [Trent Park](#), [M+H Advisor](#), [Time Out](#)



'Setting the Stage: 70 Years of the Eurovision Song Contest' at the National Science and Media Museum. Image credit: Eurovision Song Contest Basel 2025 Stage Render Credit: SRG SSR.

Funding opportunities

Deadline approaches for the Health and Wellbeing in Museums Fund

The Museums Association, funded by the Julia Rausing Trust, is providing a programme of grant-making, networking and learning dissemination for health and wellbeing programmes in museums. Grants will enable the development and continuation of groundbreaking health and wellbeing programmes in UK museums during a time of financial crisis and increasing demand for services. The fund is now open for applications with a deadline for enquiries of 20 May 2026. Around 30 organisations will be invited to apply from the enquiries received. There are around 10 grants of £50,000 to £75,000. [Museums Association](#)

FNL grants for the purchase of books, manuscripts and archives

Friends of the Nations' Libraries offer a rolling grants programme to support regional, national and specialist libraries, archives and museums purchase books, manuscripts and archives that they could otherwise not afford. Applications are considered in March, June and November with grants typically ranging from £200-£20,000. They usually contribute part of the cost of an acquisition, though they may be willing to meet the full cost if you do not have other funds available. [FNL](#)

TownsWeb Archiving Digitisation Grant

The TWA Digitisation Grant is offering 10 x £3,000 funding grants (an increase from 3 x £3,000 in previous years to celebrate their 10th year of funding). The funding is provided in the form of TWA's digitisation and software services of equivalent value. Funding covers the digitisation of: Bound Volume Collections, Archive Collections, and Photographic Collections. Applications opened on 22 April and close on 5th June 2026 at 5pm. [TWA](#)

Esmée Fairbairn Communities and Collections Fund

The fund offers core grants to single museum organisations for strategic development of their inclusive collections work; and partnership project grants for museums and community organisations working equitably with collections to achieve shared aims for inclusion. In the case of partnership grants, they encourage you to have this partnership in place before approaching them for an initial conversation. The fund is distributed through the Museums Association and expressions of interest are now open for December 2026 grants. The next deadline is 22 July 2026. [Museums Association](#)

Conferences and events

Preparing to Borrow with TEG

The Exhibitions Group have a live virtual training session over two days on the topic of Preparing to Borrow. Running on Thursday 28 May and 12 June, 10:00–12:30, the training covers the perspective of both the lender and borrower to provide a holistic understanding of the process, with an emphasis on building the knowledge and confidence of staff and volunteers in borrowing organisations. Arts Council England's Government Indemnity Scheme (GIS) team will deliver the session on GIS within this training, so it is an excellent opportunity to hear from them directly and ask questions. Tickets cost £73 for members and £103 for non-members. [TEG](#)

MuseumNext AI Summit

On 27-28 May MuseumNext will be hosting the online AI Summit with a deep dive into how cultural institutions are embracing the latest technology, with case studies from the people leading this work. Discover how AI is reshaping the museum landscape and gain an understanding of the opportunities and threats. Individual tickets cost £130 and unlimited tickets for multiple delegates from one organisation cost £260. [MuseumNext](#)

Oxford Cultural Leaders

Applications are now open for Oxford Cultural Leader 2026 Residential Programme at the University of Oxford, welcoming directors and senior professionals from across the arts and cultural sector. The programme runs from 20–25 September, with applications open until 8 June. Delivered by Oxford University's Gardens, Libraries and Museums (GLAM) in partnership with Saïd Business School, the programme brings together leaders from museums, galleries, performing arts organisations, heritage sites and cultural policy bodies. [OCL](#)

Valuing Seaside Heritage Symposium

On the 26 June the Valuing Seaside Heritage Symposium will bring people together to explore the cultural, economic and community value of seaside heritage at the Saltdean Lido in Brighton, East Sussex. Jointly organised by the Seaside Heritage Network, Historic Buildings & Places and Heritage Network, tickets cost £38 and include a 'Chat and Chip Networking Session' on the beach. Bookings close on 1 June. [HBAP](#)

DAM and Collections Management for Cultural Heritage 2026

Taking place in London on 26 June, the conference will share how leading GLAMP (galleries, libraries, archives, museums, and performing arts) organisations are transforming their management of digital assets and collections. Designed with the special needs of cultural heritage firmly in mind, the most pressing issues are examined and the significant challenges addressed, including: metadata standards (ISAD(G) and EAD amongst others), digital preservation strategies to span centuries, copyright complexities with historical materials, and the art and science of making collections discoverable while, simultaneously, protecting sensitive content. Speakers come from organisations including Tate, The Postal Museum and Ashmolean Museum. Early Bird ticket prices ranging from £399 +VAT to £1,199 +VAT run until 15 May. [DAM Conference](#)

Booking opens for the Archives & Records Association Conference

The ARA Conference will be held in Glasgow from 5-7 August with a packed programme of workshops, panels and talks on the theme of 'Authenticity- how do we approach the practices of Record Keeping in an age where 'truth' feels increasingly under fire?'. Sessions include talks on digital archive collections strategies and recognising disabled lives in collections. Early Bird prices are available until 20 May, ticket prices for members range from £315 for one day to £325 for conference and accommodation. [ARA](#)

Appointments

The Museum Data Service has appointed **Mia Ridge** as Head of Service, a year and a half since Museum Data Service (MDS) was launched at the headquarters of Bloomberg Philanthropies. Ridge is currently the British Library's Digital Curator for Western Heritage Collections, she said on the appointment "I'm thrilled to work with the incredible partnership of Art UK, Collections Trust and the University of Leicester's Institute for Digital Culture to help deliver vital infrastructure for practitioners, researchers and anyone interested in a single point of access to museum data." She joins the Museum Data Service from April on a secondment from the British Library. [Art UK](#)

Tate has appointed **Daisy Desrosiers** as Britton Family Curator at Large, North America. Based in the United States, she will focus on the development of North American art in Tate's collection through research and acquisitions. Since 2021, Desrosiers has been Director and Chief Curator of The Gund at Kenyon College. Desrosiers will enable Tate to continue broadening its approaches to modern and contemporary art, forging new relationships with artists, scholars and curators in the region, and contributing to exhibitions and projects at Tate's galleries. [Tate](#)

Vice Admiral **Sir Martin Connell** will succeed Admiral Sir Trevor Soar as chair of Chatham Historic Dockyard Trust in November 2026. Connell will take up the position following retirement after 38 years in the Royal Navy. [M+H Advisor](#)

Catch up

Catch up with the 'Instant Classics' Podcast where classicist Mary Beard, Guardian journalist Charlotte Higgins and artist Grayson Perry discuss the architecture of museums. Perry doesn't want friendly museums as he feels we need to work on it to understand them whilst Beard thinks it is about time we got angry in museums. Instant Classics Podcast from 23.31 via [Youtube](#)

King's closes Science Gallery as it reviews 'strategic priorities', 22 April 2026, [Arts Professional](#) (£) / [Roar](#)

Vestry House reopening signals continued investment in local heritage infrastructure, 16 April 2026, [Experience UK](#)

Wiener Holocaust Library wins planning approval for major extension, 14 April 2026, [Museums Association](#)

Maldon Museum redevelopment signals growth in regional heritage investment, 3 April 2026, [Experience UK](#)

International news

The Newest Docent at this historic Italian palace is a robot, 28 April 2026, [Artnet](#)

National Gallery of Art receives \$116M donation to lend works nationwide, 22 April 2026, [Washington Post \(Yahoo!\)](#)

'Proactively fall in line': Holocaust Memorial Museum quietly changed content after Trump returned to office, 5 April 2026, [Politico](#)

Natural disasters and political instability hampered U.S. museum attendance in 2025, 4 April 2026, [NPR](#)

Italy's Uffizi Galleries targeted in cyber-attack but deny security breach, 3 April 2026, [BBC](#)

Jobs

Arts Council England are recruiting for two roles:

[Panel Member, Acceptance in Lieu \(AIL\) Panel](#) – Museums and Cultural Property, one position available, closing date 9am 11 May.

[Committee Member, Museum Accreditation Panel](#), six positions available, closing 5pm 15 May.

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

- [Collections Coordinator - Black Country Living Museum](#)
- [Lead Art Handling Technician - Tate](#)
- [Legacy Estates Records Office - British Museum](#)
- [Assistant Curator, Eighteenth-Century British Art - Tate](#)
- [Events Assistant - National Museums Liverpool](#)
- [Board Support and Compliance Officer - National Library of Scotland](#)

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