



Association of  
Independent  
Museums

# AIM Bulletin

December 2021

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**Facing the  
future with  
confidence –  
The Scottish Crannog Centre**

# Welcome to AIM Bulletin!

## Focusing on your mental fitness

We all know that looking after ourselves and our teams is more important than ever, but what can we all do to make genuinely positive steps for change and give ourselves the best chance of maintaining mental fitness?

I consider it a real privilege to work for St John Ambulance, and whilst a First Aid charity may not seem like the most obvious members of AIM, St John's heritage spans 900 years and the world. Our museum in central London tells the story of our global history. When I took on the job at St John it was because I was excited about working alongside clinical colleagues to create new opportunities for our audiences to encourage better mental health. Our strategy includes a community garden, cross-generational oral history projects, social prescribing, social networks for new parents and tackling loneliness. My commitment to good mental health has led me to become the Chair of the Wellbeing Network at St John, providing 1,700 staff and almost 50,000 volunteers with the tools they need to look after themselves and each other.

My key observation is that so many of our team in St John feel very confident at looking after each other (quite reassuring considering our mission!) but that we're perhaps not as good at taking time out for ourselves. This has led me to think more deeply about what we choose to make time for, and why we often consider ourselves too busy at work to invest in our continued wellbeing. I don't think this is just true of my current situation – I've been recalling several conversations with former colleagues and associates who feel as though they 'just don't have time'. And let's face it, we all know that working in museums and heritage always keeps us busy. We need to adjust what we value and prioritise to not only encourage our teams and colleagues to take part in more



St John's Gate in Clerkenwell is home to the Museum of the Order of St John.

positive activity, but also to show them and give confidence that it can be done.

My pledge to my team is to ask them each week what they are planning to do that will give them a decent amount of space to reflect, or to take some time out with a colleague, or engage in some learning (professional or personal), perhaps take a long lunchtime walk and maybe take some time out with the sole intention of being inspired. Very importantly, I'm going to tell them what I am going to do, so that they can see that leaders can choose to make time for themselves too and share what has been learned and enjoyed.

We all need a bit more time and care. You deserve it, and it's good for everyone.

**Sarah Duthie**  
 Director of Priory and International Affairs  
 and AIM Trustee, St John Ambulance  
[sja.org.uk](http://sja.org.uk)



## Front cover

2021 has been hugely challenging for The Scottish Crannog Centre, whose beautiful replica Crannog was destroyed by fire in midsummer. However, as we found out when in an inspiring conversation with Managing Director Mike Benson, innovation, strong partnerships, community support and teamwork have laid the foundations for a bright future, recently recognised by winning a Museums Change Lives award. See more on page 19.





# AIM National Conference – a welcome return!

**Member feedback always highlights the inspiring, friendly, social atmosphere of AIM conference so we are delighted to be planning for a return to a physical event for AIM National Conference 2022.**

Dates and location are set for **16-18 June at Port Sunlight**, on the beautiful Wirral peninsula and just over the River Mersey from Liverpool.

The conference theme '*Making it happen*' will see colleagues from across the UK explore the vision for independent museums as we recover from the challenges of the pandemic and more.

We'll explore where recovery and opportunity meet; the importance of building relationships and resilient teams; how best to sustain the support of volunteers; the needs and expectations

of returning visitors; decolonisation and diversity in collections, audiences, boards, and staff; co-creation and the role museums play at the heart of their communities; and how to best respond to the urgent demands of climate change.

Sessions will highlight how to implement the changes sector debates call for, moving on from the rhetoric and bridging the gap between talking and doing with practical and relevant examples from museums of all shapes and sizes. Speakers will be announced early next year, but delegates can look forward to a schedule packed with inspirational and practical advice, debate, and discussion.

Working closely with AIM member Port Sunlight Village Trust, we're delighted to be returning to where we had hoped to run our 2020 event before the pandemic changed all our plans.

The village was founded by 'Soap King' William Hesketh Lever in 1888 and was built to house Lever's 'Sunlight Soap' factory workers. Today it is home to a fascinating museum, beautiful architecture, a world-class art gallery, stunning parkland, and a thriving community.

Hulme Hall will house the main conference stage, exhibition area and catering, and offers several breakout spaces. Designed by William Owen and his son, Segar, and built in 1901 as a women's dining hall, Hulme Hall has a large spacious capacity. It became an art gallery from 1911, housing some of the collection of William Lever, 1st Viscount Leverhulme, prior to its removal to the purpose-built Lady Lever Art Gallery (now part of National Museums Liverpool) around 1922. It was also the venue for Ringo Star's first gig with The Beatles!

The planned Thursday evening social event will be a drinks reception at the Lady Lever Art Gallery followed by an informal dinner at the Leverhulme Hotel. Delegates joining us for Friday's social event will enjoy an entertaining evening at the National Waterways Museum.

Online booking opens in January 2022 with early bird rates available.

*If you're interested in exhibiting at the AIM National Conference or our range of attractive sponsorship opportunities, please contact Catrin or Matt on [aim-admin@aim-museums.co.uk](mailto:aim-admin@aim-museums.co.uk)*



# Reflections on a year of change

It's that time of year again: long nights, cold days, and reflecting on the year with a Baileys. It's been a year of considerable change for me, going from an interim appointment as head of the Culture Recovery Fund team at DCMS in January to finishing up six (flown-by) months at AIM in December.

For all of you in museums and heritage, too, I know it's been a tumultuous year. From the blow of the January lockdown, to a cautious return to reopening, to October half-terms that were popular but still some way below pre-covid numbers, it's been a year of constant rewriting of expectations.

And a return to normality still seems distant. As I write, the Prime Minister has declined to rule out another winter lockdown. Energy prices and the cost of living are soaring and the effects of supply chain and Brexit disruption rumble on. Museums are wrestling with how much has changed, while at the same time we are trying to make even

more of the changes the sector needs, and urgently, for example around climate and working with collections to be ever more relevant and welcoming of diverse audiences.

However, the time of year for looking back is also the time when we look forward. To a busy Christmas and New Year break with plenty of seasonal activities and eager visitors spending their hard-saved holiday money! We also celebrate the cultural investment in this year's government Spending Review and the much-needed CRF Round 3 funding support for those who have been successful. We're encouraged to see details of next year's Arts Council England National Portfolio applications, and the refreshed Project Grants, which re-opened in November with non-Accredited museums eligible for the first time.

And we hope for a slow return to full enjoyment of museums and heritage with no restrictions on numbers and interactivity – while mindful of those

who might want to come to us but who remain vulnerable to covid, and those who engaged with museums more easily when activity moved online.

AIM is also looking ahead as an organisation. We're finishing off a recruitment round and hope to start the new year with two new members of staff. We are continuing to support museum trustees, leaders, and professionals, not least through our new Spark! Programme. We look forward to another round of ACE-supported Tackling Inequalities Hallmark grants and are also planning our own re-application to the ACE National Portfolio. Over the coming months we will be working hard to develop our plans to support our members from 2023 onwards. Please do share any thoughts you have on this via [lisa.ollerhead@aim-museums.co.uk](mailto:lisa.ollerhead@aim-museums.co.uk).

Otherwise, the AIM team and I would like to wish all our members, your staff, boards, volunteers, and visitors a safe and happy new year!

**Funded by a National Lottery Heritage Fund grant of £950,900, a ground-breaking work placement programme for D/deaf and disabled curators aims to be transformational for the museum sector.**

## Curating for Change

Accentuate's *Curating for Change* will provide a programme for D/deaf, disabled and neurodivergent people wanting to pursue a career within museums.

Hosted by more than 20 partner museums across England, fellows and trainees will research and curate new exhibitions and events across nine locations, developing a network of activities to tackle the under-representation of disabled people in museums.

19% of working age adults are disabled (Family Resources Survey, 2018-19) yet only 4% define as D/deaf or disabled within the museum sector workforce.

The programme seeks to address the fact that without D/deaf, disabled and neurodivergent people in curatorial roles, telling authentic narratives that relate to disability history provides significant challenge. It will provide a platform for D/deaf, disabled and neurodivergent curators to demonstrate their

skills and unique insights, encouraging a new lens through which to consider heritage narratives and audience engagement.

*Curating for Change* will start to address the gap in access and employment across the heritage sector, embedding change within host museums and generating learning and action that can be shared.

Esther Fox, Head of Accentuate

"We are privileged to be working with a range of wonderful museums from small community museums such as Hastings Museum and Art Gallery to Nationals including the Museum of Liverpool and the National Railway Museum in York. There is commitment from across the sector to improve equity and representation and *Curating for Change* will deliver the activities that will make this change a reality."

Find out more at [www.accentuateuk.org/Curating-for-Change](http://www.accentuateuk.org/Curating-for-Change)



It has been a busy few months for AIM Biffa Award History Makers projects with new exhibitions opening to visitors, and funding announced for the final round of projects.

# New AIM Biffa Award History Makers exhibitions



From top; AIM's Margaret Harrison (right) and Catrin Salvatore visit the new Lily Parr gallery at National Football Museum; Visual of the AR experience at Milton's Cottage; Clare Balding enjoys a tour of the new exhibition as part of the Gilbert White birthday celebrations; New interpretive display at The Pankhurst Centre.

AIM Biffa Award, part of the Landfill Communities Fund, gives grants to museums, galleries, and cultural facilities so that they can tell the stories of lesser-known historical figures through the History Makers Scheme.

## Now open

**National Football Museum** have given Lily Parr – one of football's first female football superstars – a new permanent museum display dedicated to her life and legacy. Since opening in July, the exhibition has had great feedback from visitors and garnered press coverage around the world.

**Gilbert White's House** used their AIM Biffa Award History Makers funding to give their Gilbert White displays a makeover. The project was finished in time for Gilbert White's 301st birthday back in the summer with a party held in the gardens to celebrate.

New technology has transformed **Milton's Cottage** as visitors can now enjoy a unique augmented reality experience, which takes them on a voyage of discovery around Milton's only surviving residence.

AIM Director, Lisa Ollerhead, joined the team at **The Pankhurst Centre** to celebrate the opening of their new permanent displays, a fantastic reinvention of the space to mark the contributions of the Pankhurst family and encourage radical thinking and action of all kinds.

## New projects

AIM is pleased to announce the latest round of grants awarded by AIM Biffa Award History Makers. Round 5 applications were made in early 2021 with these new exhibitions expected to open in summer 2022.

**Elizabeth Gaskell's House** in Manchester has been awarded £39,184 for their Amazon's of Ardwick project. This will promote the achievements and the work of Elizabeth Gaskell and her daughters; showing how they influenced social and cultural change nationally and internationally, and how the themes explored in Elizabeth's writing are still relevant today.

**Biggin Hill's** project is Women of the Battle of Britain: Uncovering the Hidden Histories of Women during World War Two. Funding of £68,530 will help show the hidden histories of wartime women by creating an exhibition to share inspiring stories of women during WWII, to offer fresh interpretation of the site's heritage, and provide an immersive journey back in time.

# News in brief

## BBC invites museums to participate in Art That Made Us Festival, 1-30 April 2022

Coinciding with a major new BBC Two series of the same name, the Art That Made Us Festival celebrates creativity in partnership with museums, galleries, libraries, and archives.

The *Art That Made Us* series is a major new cultural history of the British Isles, exploring how pivotal works of art, literature, design, and music have helped shape our creative story.

Focusing on artworks that emerged at times of turbulence it covers the constant flux of migration and conquest in our early history; the trauma of the Black Death in the Middle Ages; the religious upheaval of the Reformation; the Civil War; the Industrial Revolution; the explosive growth of the city during the 19th Century and divisions between town and country; and the generational impacts of world war in the 20th, a youth culture challenging the old establishment and the rise of a multicultural society.

The festival will highlight events exploring the amazing creativity included in UK collections. All museums, galleries, libraries, and archives are welcome as Festival Partners and no institution is too big or event too small.

By becoming a Festival Partner you will be able to access programme synopses to help you plan events that explore the theme of creativity and align with the series. You'll be able to access festival branding, upload events

to Culture24, and benefit from the promotion of the festival across the BBC.

To sign up as a partner and take part in the festival visit [bbc.co.uk/arts](https://bbc.co.uk/arts)

## New Chair for the Heritage Alliance

Pam Alexander OBE has been appointed by the Heritage Alliance Board as a Trustee and Chair going forward for formal election in February 2022.



Pam has many years' experience of leading strategies and schemes in economic development and urban regeneration. After two decades, she left the senior civil service to become Deputy CEO of the Housing Corporation, with a £2bn annual social housing programme, and then CEO of English Heritage and of the South East England Development Agency.

Lizzie Glithero-West, The Heritage Alliance's Chief Executive, said:

"We are delighted that Pam will be leading the Heritage Alliance Board into what will be a pivotal period for heritage, bringing her experience in multiple agendas so important to the current conversations, from planning and regeneration to climate change. Pam's professionalism, energy and enthusiasm for the Alliance and our work is already clear and I very much look forward to working with her."

## Powering our People

Industrial Museums Scotland has launched a nationwide project to address skills gaps. The £230,000 *Powering Our People* project will ensure the 14 member museums have a trained and knowledgeable workforce, best equipped to care for their Nationally Significant collections both now and into the future. The project will centre on training, workplace exchanges, a conference, and conservator shadowing, as well as creating online resources to benefit the future workforce.

Industrial Museums Scotland will employ a conservator and industrial conservation intern to work alongside 100 employees and volunteers to develop skills, particularly in the care of large industrial objects, important paper archives, and innovative and historic engines.

Caroline Clark, Director Scotland of the National Lottery Heritage Fund, said

"Scotland's industrial heritage, from shipbuilding to coalmining, is a vital part of our nation's story, and it is essential that we keep the skills alive to care for the important industrial



heritage collections we hold around the country. We are delighted that, thanks to funding from National Lottery players, we have been able to support the Powering Our People project to ensure the continued preservation of collections, and of traditional skills, for years to come."

[www.goindustrial.co.uk](https://www.goindustrial.co.uk)





### Up and coming curator? Two Temple Place are seeking proposals

The Two Temple Place Exhibition Programme celebrates museums and galleries outside London by showcasing their collections in their neo-Gothic home in central London. For its 11th major spring exhibition, running January-April 2023, they are offering a significant development opportunity for an up-and-coming curator or curatorial team that will engage, animate, enliven and provoke visitors to think differently.



Work on themes or practices such as decolonisation, community-led curation or collecting, political-social engagement, dynamic collecting and the use of digital media to stimulate contemporary relevance are of particular interest, but the Two Temple Place team are looking to be inspired by urgency and uniqueness.

Costs for the exhibitions are paid for by Two Temple Place, including production, materials, transport, publicity and management costs, and a fee is paid to the curator.

Interested? Read the Exhibition Report [www.twotempleplace.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/2TP-Exhibition-Report-2011-20.pdf](http://www.twotempleplace.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/2TP-Exhibition-Report-2011-20.pdf)

and send proposal ideas (a maximum of three pages excluding images) to Rebecca Hone, Head of Exhibitions, [rebecca@twotempleplace.org](mailto:rebecca@twotempleplace.org)

### Full steam ahead!

The Forncett Industrial Steam Museum has recently reached its £14000 target appeal, enabling it to purchase the seamless steam pipes and certified fittings to rebuild its centralised pipe network. Keep up to date with their work on this and more through some great videos at [www.forncettsteammuseum.co.uk](http://www.forncettsteammuseum.co.uk)

### Entries now open for Museum + Heritage Awards

Celebrating the very best in museums and heritage across the globe, the 20th edition of the Museums + Heritage Awards, sponsored by Chargeurs Creative Collection, is making its return.

After two years of virtual ceremonies, the 2022 Museums + Heritage Awards will take place in person with a glittering, live ceremony on the evening of 11th May 2022. AIM continues to support the awards by partnering on the Volunteer(s) of the Year category. This award shines a spotlight on the vital contribution that volunteers make to museums, recognising their extraordinary dedication, energy, and skills.

And with 17 categories to choose from, there's something for everyone, including the new Visitor

Welcome Award sponsored by Tyg Tickets as well as the inaugural Café or Restaurant of the Year award. Making its return alongside these new categories is the Sustainable Project of the Year award sponsored by the National Lottery Heritage Fund plus other favourites including Permanent Exhibition of the Year sponsored by Displayways.

Open to all museums, galleries, archives and heritage visitor attractions, organisations, charities and bodies plus their suppliers, contractors, and partners, regardless of budget, size of organisation or location, the Museums + Heritage Awards give opportunity to all.

The awards have become the gold standard in the sector and the recognition that shortlistees and winners receive is a key motivator for staff and volunteers alike, helping to boost confidence by having their work recognised and promoted on a global scale. Entering the awards is a great way to benchmark against sector peers and to share success with key stakeholders.

For the first time, a special Early Bird entry rate is available during November but for anyone wanting to nominate individuals or teams for Volunteer of the Year, entry is entirely free of charge.

Closing date for entries is 1 February 2022 and details and guidance for entering can be found at <https://awards.museumsandheritage.com>


**NOW OPEN!**  
**ENTER BY**  
**1 FEBRUARY 2022**

**MUSEUMS  
+HERITAGE  
AWARDS**

**VOLUNTEER(S)  
OF THE YEAR**

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH  
**AIM** Association of  
Independent  
Museums

**VOLUNTEER**



**Roald Dahl Museum is taking the longer view on online delivery. We talked to their learning team and Director Steve Gardam to find out more.**

# Livestreaming for the longer term

Since opening in 2005, the Roald Dahl Museum schools programme has welcomed an average of 10,000 schoolchildren every year, typically from schools within an hour and a half driving distance from their home at Great Missenden.

Naturally constrained by physical capacity to around 10 sessions per week across the school year (pre Covid), the team realised the on-site offer couldn't grow to meet potential demand. Now – with development spurred by the pandemic surge in use of Zoom, Teams and more – alongside real-world visits, schools can book for an hour-long livestream video session led by the museum's skilled facilitators, exploring how Roald Dahl created his characters.

Director Steve Gardam explains

“Online, we think we could eventually deliver 1600 sessions per year, to around 50,000 pupils: a staggering 357% increase. It needs more investment and time to get there, but it's not impossible; there are 16,000 primary schools in England alone, so only one in 10 needs to book with us and Roald Dahl's stories are likely enjoyed in every single one. Crucially, these sessions are for schoolchildren to experience together, in their classroom, so this is not a lockdown offer, it is for the long term.”

During the sessions, pupils get to see Museum highlights through pre-recorded videos and enjoy live interaction with the facilitators. Resources are sent out in advance so pupils

can undertake activities together in their classroom throughout the session.

“We knew from our evaluation that it's the facilitators that teachers really appreciate, and we also knew coming somewhere special was important, so we didn't just want to 'speak to a PowerPoint' – we're trying to show off the Museum, to get as close as we can get to the real thing.”

The learning team have taught themselves filmmaking techniques, and bought kit supported by funding from CRF, Art Fund and Southwest Museum Development amongst others. And the approach offers a good deal for schools too: sessions are charged at around half the cost compared to those that take place on site.

“We know a museum moving to deliver learning online because of the COVID pandemic is hardly limited to us,” explains Steve.

“There are other examples of great practice. However, we have worked hard to produce a high-quality offer that has the potential to transform our reach and impact as an independent charity.

We're not there yet but with livestreaming if we can deliver three or four sessions at the same time, that's how we can scale.”

[www.roalddahl.com/museum/schools](http://www.roalddahl.com/museum/schools)



A piloting project to match AIM members with conservation students took place over the summer.

# Conservation 'matchmaking' project

Prompted by CHEIN – a network of higher education institutions working with ICON – the pilot sought to build supportive networks for both students and museums and encourage the sharing of knowledge and experience related to collection care and management.

Whilst not an alternative to the qualified professional, as emerging professionals, students have the potential to bring current thinking, creative ideas, adaptability, problem solving skills and practical suggestions relating to conservation practices and collection care. At the end of their engagement they fed back their thoughts to their University teachers, shared below.

University College London student,  
Red House Glass Cone in Stourbridge:



Cleaning surface debris from the replica coracle at River and Rowing Museum.

*I've been working with the Red House Glass Cone in Stourbridge. The project is to compile recommendations for the conservation of the collection of industrial equipment at the Red House Glass Cone. I participated in a site visit and was able to view the objects in their current contexts and gain more information concerning the history of the site, as well as its current and future uses.*

*Since then, I have begun working on two documents: one containing general suggestions as to collections conservation, including a section focused on wood and metal objects; and the second containing suggestions specific to an object list. I have been drawing from course material from my degree programme (MA Principles of Conservation) as well as resources and published works from other sources, such as the Canadian Conservation Institute.*

University of Lincoln student, Historic Croydon Airport Trust (HCAT):

*It was a good opportunity to see the museum's photographic collection and highlight some areas to concentrate on. They have limited funds to implement the preventative measures on the whole collection immediately but have started to archive some of the collection.*

*Since my initial visit I have forwarded some useful information about the preservation of photographic material, and storage solutions and on the photographic material that needs prioritising due to how it deteriorates. I'm sure we will stay in contact.*

Cardiff University student, River and Rowing Museum:

*I undertook a week's placement at the River and Rowing Museum within their*



Sewing object numbers into a collection of ties at River and Rowing Museum.

*collections department. I received a Covid-19 CPD grant from the Anna Plowden Trust which enabled me to undertake this placement. I worked across the main museum building and the offsite storage area, providing preventative conservation support for their ongoing Collections Care Project. The placement involved working across a variety of objects including archive materials, wooden objects, ceramics, and textiles. I was able to use my knowledge of conservation to advise on improvements to their current storage methods, considering their environmental, time and budget restrictions.*

*Alongside the work I undertook for the Collections Care Project I developed a database of the taxidermy objects within the museum handling collections. Natural History is my specialism so being able to offer my skills to the museum in this way was a great way to use the knowledge I have gained. The team at the museum were brilliant at supporting me prior to starting and throughout the placement, allowing me to develop my professional conservation skills within a museum environment.*

Interested in future projects? Contact us at [aimadmin@aim-museums.co.uk](mailto:aimadmin@aim-museums.co.uk)

# Art Tickets\_

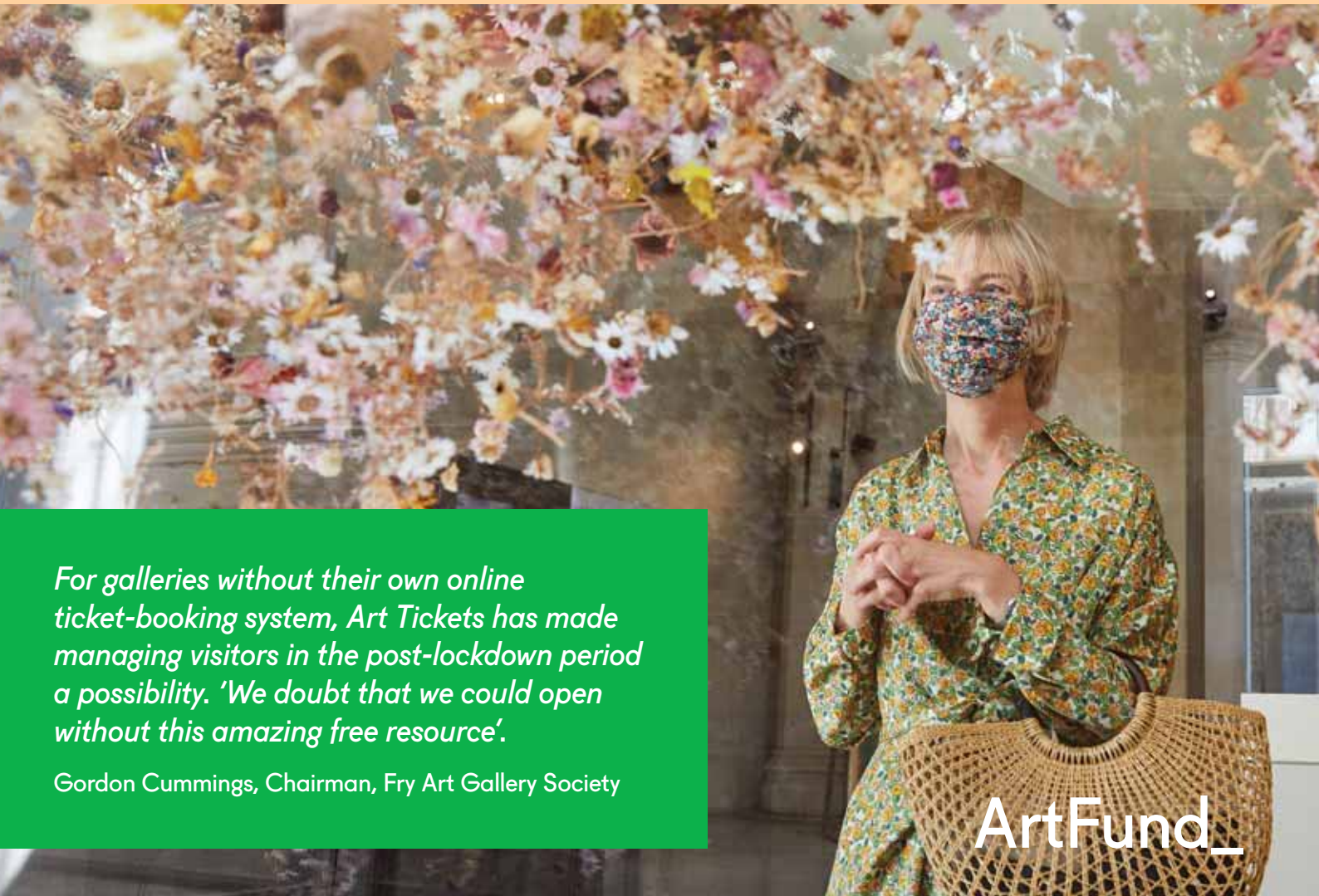
Plan for the future with Art Tickets, Art Fund's completely free ticket management system that makes things simple. Designed for museums by museums, we helped 120 museums re-open safely in 2020.

Art Tickets can help you:

- Manage social distancing with timed ticketing
- Reduce admin
- Improve visitor experience
- Get to know your audiences better

Get in touch at [museums@artfund.org](mailto:museums@artfund.org) to book a 121 with one of the team to find out how we can help you open your doors.

**Art Tickets. Ticketing made simple.**



*For galleries without their own online ticket-booking system, Art Tickets has made managing visitors in the post-lockdown period a possibility. 'We doubt that we could open without this amazing free resource'.*

Gordon Cummings, Chairman, Fry Art Gallery Society

ArtFund\_



# Funding paid student opportunities

**Since 2017 Art Fund has been providing its Student Art Pass members with paid opportunities in the cultural sector. Sarah Kaye, Senior Marketing Manager, Students and Robert Dingle, Programme Partnerships Manager outline their approach to connecting young people with museums, and the real benefits for both.**

In times of financial and staff constraints, museums are being asked to do more and to secure their future by creating relevance for everyone within the communities they serve. Management teams across the UK are asking themselves: 'How can we engage more young people, and what will happen if young people don't come?'

These have never been easy questions to answer. The drive for relevance becomes more acute with every funding round and with every grant application. Organisations under pressure can struggle to answer the fundamental question of *why* should young people engage?

At Art Fund we believe we can start by encouraging more voices to take part, and that solutions come from the source.

## Supporting organisations to offer placements

We listened and we learned that two thirds of students want to engage more with cultural organisations as fantastic resources to support their studies, personal wellbeing, and leisure time, but that the cost of visiting is a significant barrier. Furthermore, they want to be *involved* – going beyond visiting to become active collaborators and participants in the world of art and culture, now and in their future careers.

In response, to harness this passion and to match the needs of the sector, we created our Student Opportunities grants, born from Art Fund's popular Student Art Pass programme. Since 2017 the Student

Art Pass has been available to all full-time UK students in higher education, offering students admission benefits to museums, galleries, and historic houses in Art Fund's network, alongside regular paid opportunities funded by Student Opportunities grants. Art Fund's student membership has grown to over 25,000 members in just four years.

These paid opportunities with cultural organisations have fast become the most popular part of the Student Art Pass programme – with over 20,000 students clicking on an email featuring an opportunity.

The grants are not shorthand for a free internship. Rather, Art Fund will fund organisations up to £10,000 to be able to offer students paid opportunities, so that they can get real benefit from the energetic and skilled resource that students bring. The Student Opportunities grant programme allows for a transformative relationship for both parties and the funding ensures that all responsibilities are taken seriously and that there is accountability.

As Sophie Habour from Exeter's Royal Albert Memorial Museum and Art Gallery (RAMM) says: *"Working with this group of young people has benefited the museum enormously. Having a range of fresh perspectives and new ideas has enriched both the team and museum output."*

Not only did RAMM benefit from the students' energy and connections, but

the opportunity opened pathways for the students to find more paid work in the arts as well as build their own peer network, as student panel member Laura Fagan commented:

*"My initial motivation for applying was to gain some practical marketing experience alongside my academic study within the non-profit sector. However, I didn't expect that I would value the experience more because of the genuine friendships, enjoyment and connection to the city that I found throughout the year."*

Art Fund has helped to place over 230 students into 14 cultural organisations since 2019, and we want more organisations to take this chance to open their doors, invite different voices into their organisations and seek solutions from the source, so that young people ask themselves what they have been missing out on.

## New applications welcomed

Art Fund is now accepting applications for Student Opportunities grants for 2022. Find out more ([www.artfund.org/supporting-museums/programmes/student-opportunities](http://www.artfund.org/supporting-museums/programmes/student-opportunities)) and see how your organisation can harness the power of young people.

Art Fund's Student Art Pass programme has been made possible by private funders including the Stavros Niarchos Foundation, the Roger De Haan Charitable Trust and the 29th May 1961 Charitable Trust.

AIM administers grants including AIM Hallmarks Awards, supported by Arts Council England and the Welsh government; and AIM's Conservation and Collections Care and Collection Audit Schemes, supported by the Pilgrim Trust.

# AIM grants case studies

## AIM Conservation and Collections Care

### The Judge's Lodging

AIM grant: £2,395

#### *Returning 'Time' to the Period Rooms: Restoration of five clocks*

The Judge's Lodging's life as a working building ended in 1990, after being the setting for legal matters of Radnorshire (now central Powys) since the 1820s. Left with much of its original furnishings in the Grade II\* building, it was extensively restored to open as a museum in 1997. With working gas and oil lighting throughout, and a hands-on policy, visitors can immerse themselves in a Victorian house, exploring upstairs and down, making their way eventually to grim cells and a vast courtroom.

The grant covered the restoration of five clocks to working order. Three of these are wall clocks purchased in the 19th century for the building; two from *Charles Millichamp, Clock & Gunsmith*, just 100 yards away, and the third from *W. Harris of Knighton*, the neighbouring town. A 19th century longcase clock by *Williams of Brecknock* and a French mantel clock came into the building later.

The premise of this project was to bring 'Time' back to the period rooms – to return an authentic background sound,

enabling visitors to further immerse themselves in the Victorian world portrayed. This became a particularly pertinent goal as the pandemic took away the usual visitors' experience of touching period furnishings and, more importantly, discouraged the use of the usual sound tour on personal handheld devices, which would normally create an atmosphere and without which, the house is silent.

Work was undertaken by *Tom Parry: Antique Clock Restoration & Conservation*. He worked with museum staff to hang the wall clocks, one of which had not been on display in the building in its 'museum' incarnation before, and another for which he helped identify a position to enhance its protection from environmental issues. He gave full training on basic maintenance to staff, including a designated volunteer whose task it is to check and wind them weekly.

The difference this project has made to the atmosphere of the building is striking (quite literally with three of them!) – low-level ticking and regular chiming can be heard throughout the three floors. Visitors love watching the weekly ritual of their winding and engaging with us in reminiscences about family clocks – time is something we can all relate to.

**Gabrielle Rivers, Development Manager**



From left; Millichamp clock in the servants hall, Harris clock in kitchen and French mantel in withdrawing room.



## Rustington Museum

**AIM grant: £3,050**

### *Pub sign conservation and mounting*

Rustington Museum focuses on the village's history from Palaeolithic to modern times. It explores the village's famous residents such as Sir Hubert Parry and those with a strong connection like JM Barrie. The first museum was founded in 1980s by the Rustington Heritage Association (RHA) and in 2019 a brand-new museum opened its doors following a grant from National Lottery Heritage Fund.

The pub signs conserved by the grant were originally displayed in the former museum gardens and their condition had deteriorated from exposure to the elements. Since the new museum opened both opportunity and space have been found for them to be permanently re-displayed inside as part of the exhibition on Rustington shops and businesses.

We selected the conservator, Stephen Umpheby from *Artefacts Conservation Services*, based on a recommendation from another local museum and his membership of ICON (as recommended by AIM). Stephen was able to stabilise the signs and clean them suitably for display. A full restoration was not required as the Museum wanted to maintain their authenticity.

The signs represent businesses past and present in the village and to have them restored and on display has attracted a lot



Smugglers Roost and The Windmill pub signs at Rustington Museum.

of attention. It has increased awareness of the type of work the museum undertakes to record and preserve the history of the village. This grant has given the museum confidence to seek out other conservation projects that can benefit the collection and future displays.

"The grant has enabled us to conserve and display two items that reflect so much of Rustington social history. They are instantly recognisable, and provoke much discussion, mostly along the lines of "do you remember . . .?", which is a large part of the Museum's aims – encouraging visitors' interaction with the exhibits," Sheila Marsden, Chair, RHA.

**Claire Lucas, Museum Manager**

## Royal College of Music Museum

**AIM grant: £5,000**

### *Conservation of the portraits of King George V (Arthur Stockdale Cope, 1926) and the Duchess of York, Queen Mary (Leonard Campbell Taylor, 1928)*

The Royal College of Music (RCM) Museum (founded in 1892) tells the story of music history through unique treasures and exciting learning opportunities for students and the public. It holds the most extensive music-related collection of its kind in the UK.

The portraits of King George V and Duchess of York, Queen Mary were commissioned for the RCM and are displayed in the main entrance hall, two of the most prominent portraits in the RCM Museum's collection.

The priority of this conservation work was to stabilise the frames while avoiding further losses, and to reduce



Royal College of Music Museum portraits in situ.

the environmental impact on the paintings, as they are exhibited in a space subjected to light, temperature and relative humidity fluctuations.

The gilding and preparation layers of the frames were consolidated and cleaned. Loose decorative elements were reattached to the surface and where necessary, losses were filled and toned with compatible and reversible materials.

A new acrylic glazing was added; lighter than if the appropriate glass had been used.

The surface of the paintings, back of the canvas and stretchers were cleaned, and minor losses and abrasion resulting from previous pressure caused by the frame were reintegrated. A backing of Alu-PV sheeting, a barrier against vapour and dust, was applied. This

option was more appropriate than using a hard backing, to keep the weight low and creating greater environmental buffering.

The frames and the paintings are now much more legible and dignified. Ultimately, it is our goal not only to conserve the RCM Museum works but also to continue promoting a conservation culture within the institution.

Long-term conservation plans may be the cornerstone for small museum collections at the service of institutions that do not have, by default, a museum culture. Aligned with the mission of the museum and of the RCM, the conservation plan for the paintings helped making prioritisation clearer and more effective. It bridges the institution and the collections by prioritising based on risk and importance for the institution.

We are most grateful to AIM and the Pilgrim Trust for the grant, as it enabled us to bring together the expertise and the necessary resources to conserve two of the most impactful paintings from the RCM Museum's collection.

**Susanna Caldeira**  
Royal College of Music Museum  
Conservator



Image by Clay Banks on Unsplash

# Save money on card payments

**Industry data suggests seven out of ten of all businesses pay unnecessary fees on their card payments.**

**Tom Faithful from AIM Associate Supplier Unyfi explains how merchant services work and how to save on them.**

## Merchant Services

The term merchant services is a wide-ranging description for the various card payment services built for businesses, including face to face payment processing, online payment processing and the hardware for taking payments itself. It is typically charged as a percentage of the transaction for different card types, alongside a pence per transaction authorisation fee. Museums take many transactions with a low average transaction value (ATV) across a wide

range of card types, so ensuring the overall cost of taking payments is kept low is key.

## What makes up the charge?

1. The Interchange fee – This is the fee the card issuer (NatWest, Lloyds, Santander etc.) charge for accepting an electronic payment. It's set by the bank and cannot be adjusted.
2. The Scheme fee – This is the fee the “scheme” charges, typically VISA or Mastercard, but you may see AMEX or Diners. The scheme fee varies based on the type of card (VISA debit, MasterCard Credit or VISA Commercial debit etc.) Again, these fees are set by VISA/Mastercard/AMEX and cannot be adjusted.
3. The Acquiring bank's margin – The acquiring bank accommodates the payment being processed (Worldpay, First Data, Barclaycard, AIB) and makes up a large portion of the total cost. *This is the area in which most museums are being overcharged and where companies like Unyfi can procure worthwhile savings.*

The above only expands on one aspect of the cost of processing card payments – as you can see, the process is not straightforward. Indeed 95% of

merchants do not understand their monthly statements.

It is essential for any business to manage these costs and processes, not least as cash becomes more and more redundant. The majority of acquiring banks will not declare their margins and increase their charges annually throughout the lifetime of the contract. So, unless you are diligent, price increases can be missed.

At Unyfi we pride ourselves on the transparency and ongoing support we provide to our clients. Unlike going directly to a bank, where you only have one option, Unyfi conduct a comprehensive market comparison, ensuring the most cost effective and suitable solution for your needs. We ensure our bank's margin is declared at the quotation stage, and provide a full, transparent analysis of current costs vs future costings. This margin is also fixed for the duration of the contract, mitigating annual price increases.

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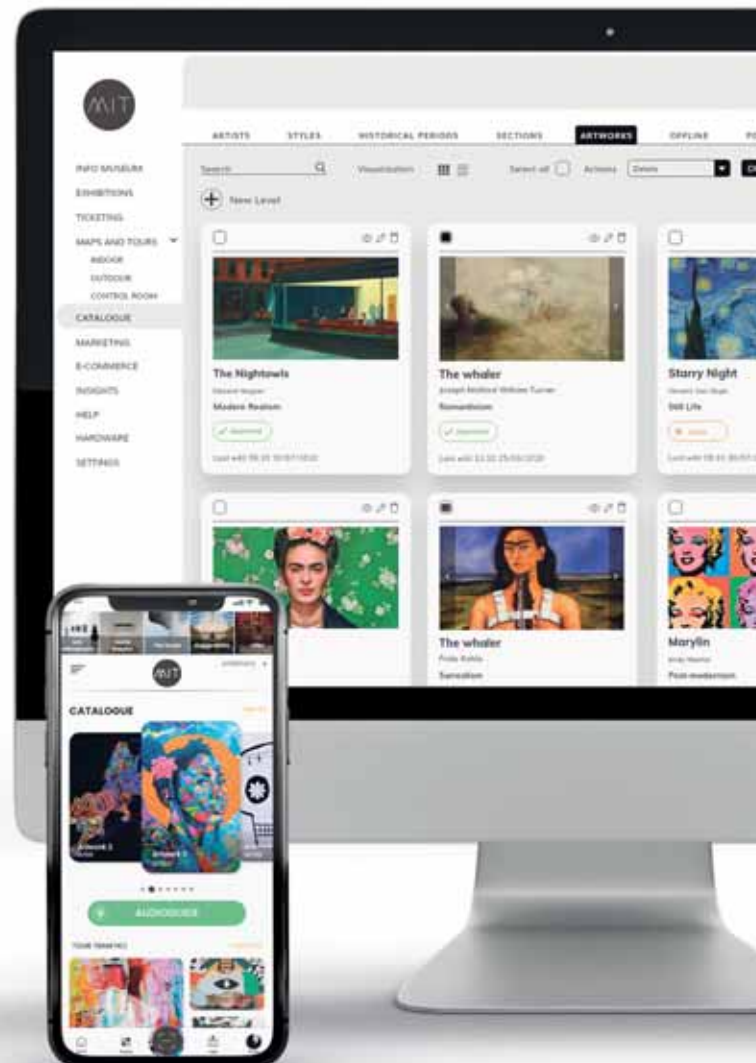
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## AIM Resources



Find helpful advice on a range of subjects on the AIM website –

**[www.aim-museums.co.uk](http://www.aim-museums.co.uk)**

including –

how you can join the Charity Finance Group for free +

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# Making the case for marketing

**In an era of budget cuts and constraints, marketing is often one of the first areas to feel the pinch. Yet, as marketing and audience development consultant Christina Lister explains, used strategically it can provide the vital bridge between museums and their audiences.**

Often a misunderstood and maligned field, marketing can be seen as a dark art made up of off-putting jargon, and an overwhelming, ever-changing digital landscape to keep up with. The term may also (wrongly) be used interchangeably with 'promotion' – marketing can be seen as something to be tacked on at the end of a process, once plans for a new exhibition or programme have been rolled out. And if that exhibition or programme isn't a success? Then that promotion is often seen as the issue.

Some museums can be hesitant to request adequate sums for marketing in funding applications, fearing that funders will be reluctant to pay and that the 'build it and they will come' mantra will suffice.

The stark reality is that there is vast competition for the public's attention, time and money from other cultural and heritage organisations, attractions and days out; an ever-growing range of digital experiences; as well as other personal and work commitments and pressures. Added to this, a range of barriers still exist for many people, preventing them from visiting and engaging with museums – these will not just be overcome by a bit of promotion such as a Facebook post or a flyer.

I view marketing as a vital way to build mutually beneficial relationships that provide something that both audiences and museums value. Museums get audiences' time, attention, money, support and input, and in return audiences get to learn something and have an enjoyable experience and so on.

For this to happen, museums need to understand who their existing and potential audiences are – their needs, preferences, behaviours, and crucially, their barriers – and segment them to allow tailored approaches to each group.

Museums also need to understand the competitive environment they operate in and how they can position themselves to stand out in a crowded marketplace.

And ultimately, museums must provide a compelling and relevant offer (a service and/or 'product') that their identified current and target audiences will want and value, at the right price, place and time. Is the potential reward to audiences from a museum visit or interaction enough for them to overcome potential

hurdles, hassle and risks they would face in doing so?

Done well, marketing can help museums to develop lasting relationships with audiences and ultimately drive visits, participation, donations, sales, as well as cement new partnerships and entice strong job applicants.

But effective marketing doesn't just happen automatically or overnight.

Having a clear purpose, mission and vision is a good starting point. It requires a plan with a clear direction and goals; an investment of time and ideally some – but not necessarily a vast – budget; and a sustained effort.

Making decisions based on insights drawn from data and research takes a lot of guesswork and subjectivity out of the equation, whilst monitoring and evaluation mean that approaches and activities can be finetuned and improved.

The Covid-19 pandemic has created both enormous challenges and opportunities for museums' marketing. So many museums have adapted creatively and with agility, and whilst the focus has had to be short-term due to ever-changing circumstances, I hope that attention can now shift to longer term thinking and planning to enable strategic marketing to support museums' recovery, and evolution.

*Christina is the author of AIM's Success Guide: Successful Marketing for Museums.*

[www.aim-museums.co.uk/resources](http://www.aim-museums.co.uk/resources)

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# Striding into the future with confidence

**The replica at the heart of the Scottish Crannog Centre was destroyed by fire in June this year. Yet, as Managing Director Mike Benson explains, innovation, strong partnerships, community support and teamwork have laid the foundations for a bright future, recently recognised by winning a Museums Change Lives award.**

Archaeologist divers from the Scottish Crannog Centre Trust have been exploring Loch Tay since 1980, and the Centre's first recreated loch-dwelling was based on excavation results from the 2,500-year-old Oakbank Crannog.

Accredited in 2017 and with staff at 22 FTE and 50-60 volunteers, in 2019 the Centre welcomed a record 26.5k visitors. Figures, Managing Director Mike Benson told AIM, they expected to exceed in 2020 until the pandemic struck.

But it's not just growing visitor figures that demonstrate the growing success of the Centre. A commitment to driving change through strong partnerships is also gaining wide recognition.

"We're based in Scotland's most deprived area for access to training for young people, so the museum is playing its part in putting that right. We started

an apprenticeship programme in August and are now accredited, so we can train our own. The scheme is used as an example of best practice and our basic principle is that if you're serious about engaging with diverse audiences, you need a diverse workforce. We're also working with young people with autism, co-designing a week's work experience that will be rolled out across the region, not just in museums, but the whole business sector."

The organisation has been seeking a more suitable location since 2002, recently settling on Dalerb, just along the loch. Detailed negotiations with the Scottish Government and the local authority followed, hard work that paid off early this summer, as Mike explains.

"The Minister decided to sell us the land for £1; it was a massive result, gave us a lift and re-energised everyone to keep going through the pandemic. At 11 in the morning on Friday 11 June, we finally got the paperwork through, telling us the land was ours."

That evening however, another challenge unfolded.

"At 11 o'clock that night on the CCTV footage you can see a little glow inside our thatched building.

By six minutes past, it had gone."

In a tearful staff meeting on site late that night, the team processed what had happened and expressed their determination to move forward.

"I said this is not going to be the end of our story, it's going to be part of it," recalls Mike.

"If this had happened two and a half thousand years ago they would have blessed themselves nobody was hurt, picked themselves up and built a new home somewhere else. And that's exactly what we're doing. We couldn't

get an electrician on site to make things safe until the Wednesday following the fire, and on the Thursday we reopened. We've remained open ever since."

The community response was instant, 'humbling' according to Mike. A local caravan park owner set up a Crowdfunder, still running on the Crannog website, raising almost £50k of the current £85k total within days, and the Scottish Government and Museums Galleries Scotland teams offered invaluable and immediate help.

"John Swinney, our MSP, and Scotland's Deputy Minister was here on the Monday, and we've had visits from Culture Minister Jenny Gilruth too. Museums Galleries Scotland have been brilliant to work alongside, calling the morning after the fire and establishing a team to help."

The situation has naturally accelerated relocation efforts, with planning submissions scheduled in February 2022 aiming for a June opening.

"Fortunately, we had put the time and effort in on the new site: starting talks, completing the first phase of the business plan and an early masterplan. We could evidence community support; MGS have called us a gold standard of museum practice. We've had a lot of pro bono help, too.

I feel we're going to be striding into the future with confidence as 'we've an armada of log boats behind us.'"

What advice would Mike offer to those feeling like they are facing crisis?

"There are always solutions. Take your time, take a breath. Know that you're loved, and don't be afraid to say when you need help."

[Read more on the Crannog Centre and find details on their fundraiser at www.crannog.co.uk](http://www.crannog.co.uk)

With five years passed since the signing of the Paris agreement and the latest meeting of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) COP 26 having taken place a month ago, there has not been a better time to think about how your charity can help aid in the transition to bring about net-zero carbon emissions.

# How can Charity Finance help in reaching Net-zero?

CFG, alongside our partners PwC and CCLA, will be launching a publication early next year which will provide charity finance teams, trustees and leadership teams with the information and guidance they need to help make the transition to net-zero carbon emissions.

The publication will enable finance teams and trustees to ask the right questions when looking to make the transition providing FAQs and jargon busting, and commentary from experts on the key topics to consider when looking to reduce the carbon impact of your finances.

Topics explored include how to align your investments in a net-zero world, guidance on how to meet existing carbon reporting requirements, and how to be ahead of the game in reporting your carbon impact to provide a benchmark when making any reduction in your emissions.

We will also consider the potential changes your charity should make in procurement, banking, and pensions. It will not seek to be too didactic on the exact approach that all charities should take, it is only right that trustees and finance professionals determine for themselves the approach which is most suitable for their charitable purpose. But we are clear that all charities must ask these questions, and ultimately take action to help reach Net-zero.

If you are a CFG member and interested in helping with this publication or would like to help shape the topics and questions that we should include to best help your charity, please email us at [policy@cfg.org.uk](mailto:policy@cfg.org.uk).

If you are not yet a CFG member, register for free at [www.cfg.org.uk/aim](http://www.cfg.org.uk/aim) – membership is open to everyone in your organisation.

## What's coming up

### VAT & Tax Conference, 18 January 2022

VAT is a complicated area at the best of times and can be particularly complex for charitable organisations. In addition, those charities engaging in further trading through a subsidiary may be subject to taxation with a new set of rules and complications.

This conference will offer updates for those already working with VAT and tax by providing:

- Introductory information;
- Tips for optimising your tax recovery;
- Advice on registering and administration of VAT and tax.

### Gift Aid Seminar, 19 January 2022

For many charities, raising income through trading activities and Gift Aid has become an increasingly important source of revenue. However, charities need to be aware that certain restrictions can apply regarding what they can and cannot claim, depending on the nature and level of activity.

This seminar is aimed to help charities identify those restrictions and help them with their Gift Aid management and covers the digitisation of Gift Aid.

## AIM Bulletin

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