



Association of  
Independent  
Museums

# AIM Bulletin

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partnership launched



**Seven Stories –  
Celebrating  
Britain's  
literary heritage**

# Welcome to AIM Bulletin!

## Making it happen

### Conference programme takes shape

#### Port Sunlight in June is the place to be as AIM National Conference returns to a physical event for the first time since 2019.

The Conference theme *Making it happen* explores the vision for independent museums as we recover from the challenges of the pandemic and address how we might implement the changes sector debates call for.

With practical and relevant examples from museums of all shapes and sizes, delegates can look forward to a schedule packed with inspirational and practical advice, debate, and discussion.

Speakers include

- Laura Pye, Director, National Museums Liverpool
- Arike Oke, Executive Director, Knowledge and Collections, British Film Institute (BFI)
- Mike Benson, Director, The Scottish Crannog Centre
- Nick Ralls, Chief Executive Officer, Ironbridge Gorge Museums Trust
- Rhiannon Hiles, Chief Executive Officer, Beamish Museum
- Victoria Reeves, Chief Executive, National Justice Museum
- Gareth Redstone, Chief Executive Officer, Manchester Jewish Museum
- Jenny Cousins, Director, National Museum of Food
- Gaby Lees, Barnsley Museums

- Shannen Johnson, Learning and Engagement Officer, The Peace Museum
- Grant Mackenzie, Director, David Livingstone Trust
- Liz Power, Director, London Museum of Water and Steam
- Alexander Goodger, Museum Manager, Dundee Museum of Transport
- Esme Ward, Director, Manchester Museum
- Martin Baines, Director, Bradford Police Museum
- Strategic updates from DCMS, ACE, MGS and the Welsh Government
- Hilary Barnard and Ruth Lesirge, Consultants

With more to be confirmed.

AIM Conference always provides an ideal occasion for networking and sharing ideas and there will be plenty of opportunities to meet and mingle with fellow delegates, speakers, AIM suppliers and exhibitors.

Social events include a drinks reception in the delightful setting of Lady Lever Art Gallery, a relaxed buffet dinner with wine at the historic Leverhulme Hotel on Thursday and an enjoyable evening at the National Waterways Museum, Ellesmere Port on Friday. Social events are included in your all-in-one ticket option too. Tickets are selling quickly so do take advantage of the current early bird rate and book yours today!

*AIM is grateful for the support of our Headline Conference sponsor Hayes Parsons Insurance Brokers, day one sponsor Meaco Measurement and Control and day two sponsor Art Fund.*

[aim-museums.co.uk/aim-national-conference-2022](http://aim-museums.co.uk/aim-national-conference-2022)



## Front cover

Seven Stories is dedicated to celebrating and protecting Britain's literary heritage, sharing how children and young people's books are made and highlighting their impact on the industry, peers, readers, and communities. Read more in our profile on p19.





# AIM survey highlights mixed views of challenges ahead

**AIM's recent snap survey on Covid helped gauge the feelings of members emerging from yet another challenging festive season.**

The survey, conducted in January 2022, explored the immediate impact of the Omicron variant, and painted a picture of a sector looking ahead to the rest of winter and the rest of the year largely expecting to survive financially, but with significant concerns.

Those concerns are focused on challenging visitor figures and related income, not just in the short-term but throughout 2022, and a need for support with core funding, capital (including maintenance) projects, one-off projects, and particularly to support staff resilience and wellbeing.

## Key findings included:

- 7% of respondents consider themselves at risk of closure this year.
- 15% planning restructures and redundancies.
- 70% expecting lower income up to the end of March, with a quarter expecting income to drop by half or more compared to 2021 projections.
- A similar proportion are expecting lower income throughout 2022, with 19% expecting income to drop by half or more compared to 2021 projections.
- Just over a third need core funding support to the end of the year. 2 in 5 are looking for one-off project funding and capital funding for maintenance needs.

- Just under a third identified a need for support with staff resilience, wellbeing, and mental health.
- The Omicron variant affected around two-thirds of respondents over the Christmas/New Year period, with over half experiencing reduced domestic visitors, reduced entrance income, and volunteer absence.
- 38% saw visitor numbers drop by half or more and 29% saw income drop by half or more compared to pre-Omicron projections over Christmas and new year.
- Around 70% reported some wellbeing impact on staff and volunteers, with around 40% managing this via informal organisational support.

AIM Director Lisa Ollerhead said

"Whilst it is great to see that many members have a sense of optimism that 2022 will be better than 2021, and in turn better than 2020, there were many short- to medium-term challenges highlighted across the survey findings.

Recovery is on the horizon thanks to the support received to date, but ensuring it continues beyond the short-term will be vital if we are to make a return on that investment. To this end we are already using the findings of the survey in our discussions with sector stakeholders. I

would like to thank everyone who took the time to take part – informing and evidencing those discussions with data like this really is invaluable."

## What next?

AIM is using the survey findings to inform calls on the government and funding bodies for support, which could include:

- Acknowledging that recovery will need time beyond the end of restrictions, particularly building domestic and international visitor confidence and numbers, and keeping support needs under review throughout this year.
- Making funding available to support core costs over the 2022/23 financial year – whether this is new money, or expanding the scope of grants offered by public and Lottery funders.
- Making it easier to access project funding for activities and capital works aimed at supporting recovery.
- Support schemes for wellbeing, mental health and resilience for staff and volunteers.

As ever, we encourage any organisation facing insolvency to contact [lisa.ollerhead@aim-museums.co.uk](mailto:lisa.ollerhead@aim-museums.co.uk) urgently.

You can access the full report at [aim-museums.co.uk/balancing-optimism-realism](https://www.aim-museums.co.uk/balancing-optimism-realism)



# Brighter Day grants awarded

Image by Frankiefoto on unsplash

**AIM Arts Scholars Brighter Day grants have been developed to help museums recover from the ongoing effects of the Covid pandemic, with a focus on small museums and others that have found it difficult to access other support.**



AIM is grateful to the Worshipful Company of Art Scholars Charitable Trust for funding the scheme, which consists of grants of up to £8,000 to help museums care for their collections and recover from the effects of Covid. The scheme is open to all museums that are registered charities as well as local authorities.

AIM Programmes Manager, Margaret Harrison

“It has been great to see the range of initiatives that we have been able to help, thanks to the funding support provided by the Worshipful Company of Arts Scholars Charitable Trust. I am equally delighted that AIM can now offer collections care support to all our museums. Even with a tight turnaround, there was strong interest with applications received from across the UK, narrowing down to the successful organisations highlighted below.”

## Spode Museum Trust

Creating a long-term strategy for the conservation, storage, cataloguing and display of the Spode copper plate archive

£1,500

The Spode factory was founded in 1770 and has extensive collections. Included are approx. 18,000 engraved copper plates dating from c.1780 to 2009. The plates were all hand engraved and used to decorate ceramic pieces. The copper plates remain uncatalogued and require assessing and a long-term conservation plan to be prepared.

### **The Saltaire Collection at Shipley College**

Saltaire Collection: Refreshed and Reopening

£4,688

The project aims to replenish collections management and conservation materials; re-motivate staff and volunteers through training and bring them together to produce an exhibition. The funding will allow the trust to further their goal of providing access to the collections, both digitally and physically and complete the interpretation of a fourth historic building.

### **RAF Air Defence Radar Museum**

Library and Display Storage

£2,288.50

The project involves digitising important archival records including the original plans and technical drawings for RAF Neatishead. The current archive racking is full, and funding is sought to extend storage racking and to purchase a second display cabinet to improve display of the archival material.

### **Royston & District Museum and Art Gallery**

Refreshing Royston Museum's Archaeology Displays

£7,398

The museum is seeking funding to purchase a Glasshaus cabinet as part of their programme to refresh the archaeology display at the museum.

### **Louth Museum**

Security and Sustainability (Doors) Project

£2,944.24

Two doors require replacing urgently so that the collections are to be held securely. One is an emergency exit door to their museum, library, exhibition area and the second is a fire exit door to the entry point of the premises.

### **Berkhamsted Local History & Museum Society**

Public Learning from Berkhamsted Treasures

£3,000

Founded in 1950, the society has a collection of 30,000 items. Funding is sought to facilitate a digitisation programme focused on their hidden artwork. Out of the 1500 potential works, it is envisaged that the funding would enable 30% to be prioritised, scanned and digitised.

### **Bassetlaw Museum**

Textile Care and Conservation Restart

£6,083.60

The museum had suffered from a pest infestation and sought advice pre pandemic from an ICON conservator on how to deal with the problem. As a result, staff were trained and the stores renovated and a programme of auditing, treating, and re-packing affected textiles commenced. The pandemic prevented this work from continuing and now the museum is seeking funding to increase the hours of an existing member of staff who can recruit, train, and manage new volunteers to complete the audit, cataloguing and preventive conservation treatment required.

### **Gordon Russell Design Museum**

Design Stories

£7,820

The museum explores the life and work of influential furniture designer Sir Gordon Russell and his company. Design Stories is a digitisation and engagement project that will provide access to the archives and provide a new funding stream for the museum. The project costs sought will cover salary and professional imaging of object costs.

### **The Novium Museum Chichester**

Condition Assessments and Conservation of Archaeological Metalwork

£5,601

The Novium Museum houses a large collection of archaeological material including an important collection of metalwork. The museum is seeking funding to pay for an ICON approved conservator to audit the metalwork collection over three days and identify objects requiring conservation and subsequently treat them.

### **Castle Bromwich Hall and Gardens Trust**

Out of the Cupboard

£4,841.72

Train volunteers to assess collections, conserve two books (a 1789 illustrated edition of Culpeper's English Physician and Complete Herbal, which belonged to the Bradford Family who originally owned Castle Bromwich Hall and Gardens, and a 1772 edition of Miller's Abridged Gardeners Dictionary), purchase collections care and display equipment.

[aim-museums.co.uk/for-aim-members/grants](http://aim-museums.co.uk/for-aim-members/grants)





Image by Jonny Gies on Unsplash

# Making the case – independents and Levelling Up

**Valuable feedback from our Membership Insight Group supported AIM's response to a recent DCMS Select Committee inquiry on Levelling Up.**

## How can culture reanimate our public spaces and shopping streets?

Culture can play a significant role in the renaissance of an area, either directly through the repurposing of dormant sites or as a broader catalyst to connect people with opportunity. The presence of a museum on a high street not only adds to the cultural value of a place and its sense of civic identity but can deliver a measurable multiplier effect to the local economy, as AIM's most recent report on the economic impact of the independents highlighted. Culture on the high street can also create a feeling of public ownership, positioning it as a civic space where people come to socialise, engage in cultural opportunities without necessarily needing to spend money.

*"Our artistic community runs a number of events to enliven the townscape and to lengthen the dwell time in the town, such as in the early evening."*

*"(Our) recent museum-led local history festival took place across six venues, allowing audiences to engage with displays in unexpected places."*

## How can creatives contribute to local decision-making and planning of place?

AIM believes creatives can support decision-making and planning across three contexts:

- The *strategic* – helping embed culture in social and economic progress and ensure placemaking initiatives draw on existing heritage and community knowledge
- The *institutional* – 'anchor' institutions can provide jobs, bring in visitors and support skills development, as well as provide civic and community space
- The *local* – museum collections tell the story of an area's past and its potential, and can act as a nexus for creative energy to e.g., improve high streets and town centres

*"(We need to) ensure that creatives are invited as members of LCEP or similar planning forum."*

*"(We have) a cultural consortium. The museum is one of the centres of memory and resource for the history of the town."*

## How can the Government support places without established artistic infrastructure to take full advantage of the opportunities that the levelling up agenda provides?

Supporting nationally active umbrella organisations offers Government a route to aid the delivery of the levelling up agenda without having to generate new infrastructure. Organisations like AIM exist to connect museums with each other, and ensure they are aware and take advantage of all the opportunities available to them.

Strengthening the mandate of public funding bodies to support culture around the country is another obvious route. Government can further leverage networks too – areas with limited infrastructure could benefit from the institutions and expertise in areas with higher infrastructure through e.g., partnerships such as mergers, consortia, and combined trusts. Using regional or national organisations to provide specialist support such as curatorial and conservation expertise could leverage economies of scale on

issues such as storage provision, and clusters of cultural organisations could come together to provide tourist offers.

Part of this would involve funders re-envisioning the purposes and procedures for accessing funding, for example supporting more back-of-house work which enables increased public-facing activity.

*“Close collaboration with local council-run and other independent museums (sharing exhibitions, coordinating collection development policies) could be improved with more shared services, e.g., marketing, design.”*

*“Museums (can act) as a hub for self-help heritage forum at community level for smaller local history/arts/cultural organisations”*

*“We are at the start of a collaborative journey (so) it has taken an inordinate amount of time to find the right person, contact details, set up meetings etc. We would really like to see a central online system – something like “Tinder for Arts and Culture” – swipe right if you’re interested in working with (or funding) this organisation, artist, can respond to this proposal etc.”*

Whilst 90% of AIM’s current museum membership is located outside the capital, many London based members may share this member’s

*“concern over perception that London is ‘ok’ and that those of us in deprived London areas might be left behind.”*

Those organisations that do enjoy significant public funding, including the DCMS-sponsored museums, should

be challenged to maximise their regional and national roles and to support the cultural ecosystem around them. It is, however, important that areas without an established artistic infrastructure are not dictated to by more powerful national organisations, and to recognise where there may be a grassroots creative infrastructure below the radar of public agencies.

A supportive operating environment in which independent museums can thrive is also essential – people need to have money in their pockets to visit local culture; museums need a consistent

*working with an independent heritage site and across borders with environmental groups – makes sense for Zero Carbon creative initiatives . . .”*

**How should Government build on existing schemes, such as the UK City of Culture, to level up funding for arts and culture?**

Project streamlining or the simplification of application processes could have considerable impact on future initiatives. A reduced focus on competition would be helpful for smaller organisations, who often lose out as they do not have the resources to

**“I believe the real strength of levelling-up is in the personal energy it can unleash to allow people to better control their own destinies.”**

**AIM CHAIR, ANDREW LOVETT OBE**

and enabling tax and business rates regime; support for historic buildings needs to be maintained and re-used; and our education system must support creativity and the humanities.

*“Successful community engagement depends to a great extent on other immediate needs being met to enable people to have sufficient resources to prioritise culture.”*

*“Continuity of funding on the ground is always the only way to make investment, ensuring teams of skilled creative practitioners are embedded in communities/ areas for at least 3 years at a time.”*

*“Encouraging cross sector working across local authority boundaries. (e.g., a library*

dedicate to a complex application. And competition challenges resources right across the country, yet only one region benefits. Careful consideration of the focal points (city or region) for initiatives would be valuable too, alongside an understanding that organisations based in remote regions face considerable challenges comparative to those in more urban areas yet can deliver significant local impact.

*“We, voluntary organisations cannot always compete evenly with larger funded organisations.”*

*“More support for quality initiatives and innovation in remote and fragile areas, support which bears in mind the additional costs and travel time involved e.g., current Ideas Fund.”*

*“The focus here could be on regions, rather than just cities. Cultural events could spread across different council areas under shared themes, like Olympic Cultural games.”*

*“The ACE Jubilee funding is a good model, allowing organisations to work together and with creatives to develop events with a community focus, without a cumbersome application process.”*

**We would be delighted to hear your view of the debate? Do tell us what you think, or let us know if you’d like to join colleagues in our members insight group at**

[aimadmin@aim-museums.co.uk](mailto:aimadmin@aim-museums.co.uk)





# News in brief

## The Bowes Museum appoints Director

AIM member, The Bowes Museum has announced that Hannah Fox has been appointed to take up the role of Director in May 2022. Prior to this appointment Hannah led the successful £18m transformation of The Silk Mill, the world's first factory and a UNESCO World Heritage site, into the UK's first Museum of Making.



She is active in the cultural world as a practitioner and mentor for international arts and culture social impact programmes with US-based National Arts Strategies and the Center for Social Impact Strategies, University of Pennsylvania.

Hannah has been an Advisory Board member for museums including Manchester Museum of Science and Industry, The Horniman and the Museum of Homelessness. She is a Board member of The Thackray Medical Museum, Leeds.

## New project seeks 'citizen researchers'

A new project which aims to involve people across Yorkshire and Scarborough Borough in conversations about colonialism

and the environment is seeking volunteer 'citizen researchers'.

From Local to Global will forge links with researchers and conservationists across the UK, and in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). The project, which has received £130,000 in funding from The National Lottery Heritage Fund, will use as its focal point Scarborough Museums Trust's Harrison Collection, named after Colonel James Harrison (1857-1923) of Brandesburton Hall, East Yorkshire.

The project is keen to involve local people as 'citizen researchers' – volunteers who may wish to investigate relevant subjects ranging from the history of the Congo, our shared colonial past, life in Scarborough at the time, human rights, objects in the Harrison Collection and environmental conservation, to folk music and art.

The project also aims to encourage environmental action and advocacy, and includes a schools learning programme for primary, secondary and sixth form students.

It will culminate in an exhibition at Scarborough Art Gallery this autumn which will draw on the community-led research and provide a range of alternative viewpoints.

Find out more at [www.fromlocaltoglobal.co.uk/citizen-researchers-help-and-hints](http://www.fromlocaltoglobal.co.uk/citizen-researchers-help-and-hints) or [global@smtrust.uk.com](mailto:global@smtrust.uk.com)



Researchers examining items from the Harrison Collection.

## 65% of MEND funds awarded to AIM Members

Galleries, museums, libraries and cultural venues across the country are to benefit from £48 million of funding to improve access to the arts, safeguard cultural assets for future generations and power economic growth through culture.

This funding, part of the government's Cultural Investment Fund, is awarded across three streams and includes: £24 million through round two of the Cultural Development Fund to help regenerate communities through improved growth and productivity; the Museums Estate and Development Fund (MEND) awarding £18 million to help museums improve their infrastructure and carry out urgent maintenance works; and £5 million in 25 library services to upgrade their buildings and technology, through the Libraries Improvement Fund.

£12,229,000, (65%) of the MEND funds were awarded to AIM Members, including £4,998,820 to support the Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery, £1,064,348 to Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust and £1,463,769 to the Royal Pavillion and Museums Trust in Brighton.

Lisa Ollerhead, AIM Director said

"It is great to see this significant investment in independent museums for desperately needed estates improvements. After developing this fund in my former DCMS role and seeing it delayed by Covid I am pleased to see it come to fruition. Congratulations to Arts Council England and other colleagues involved.

£18m is a fraction of the need however, and AIM will continue talking to sector stakeholders about supporting maintenance, including how to ensure small museums with lower but still significant needs benefit from future MEND rounds."



### Hockney at the Holburne Museum

A sumptuous collection of rarely seen drawings by one of the UK's most popular and recognisable artists goes on display at the Holburne Museum in Bath this summer.

Love Life, David Hockney Drawings 1963-1977 (27 May – 18 September 2022) will feature over 40 of Hockney's drawings on loan from private collections allowing visitors to marvel at his extraordinary power of observation and skill in using tiny, mundane details to help capture a situation, a sitter's character, or a place.

In 2017, prior to the opening of a retrospective exhibition at the Centre Pompidou in Paris, David Hockney (b.1937) painted the words 'Love Life' on the final wall of the show. Explaining his actions, he said: "I love my work. And I think the work has love, actually . . . I love life. I write it at the end of letters – 'Love life, David Hockney.'"

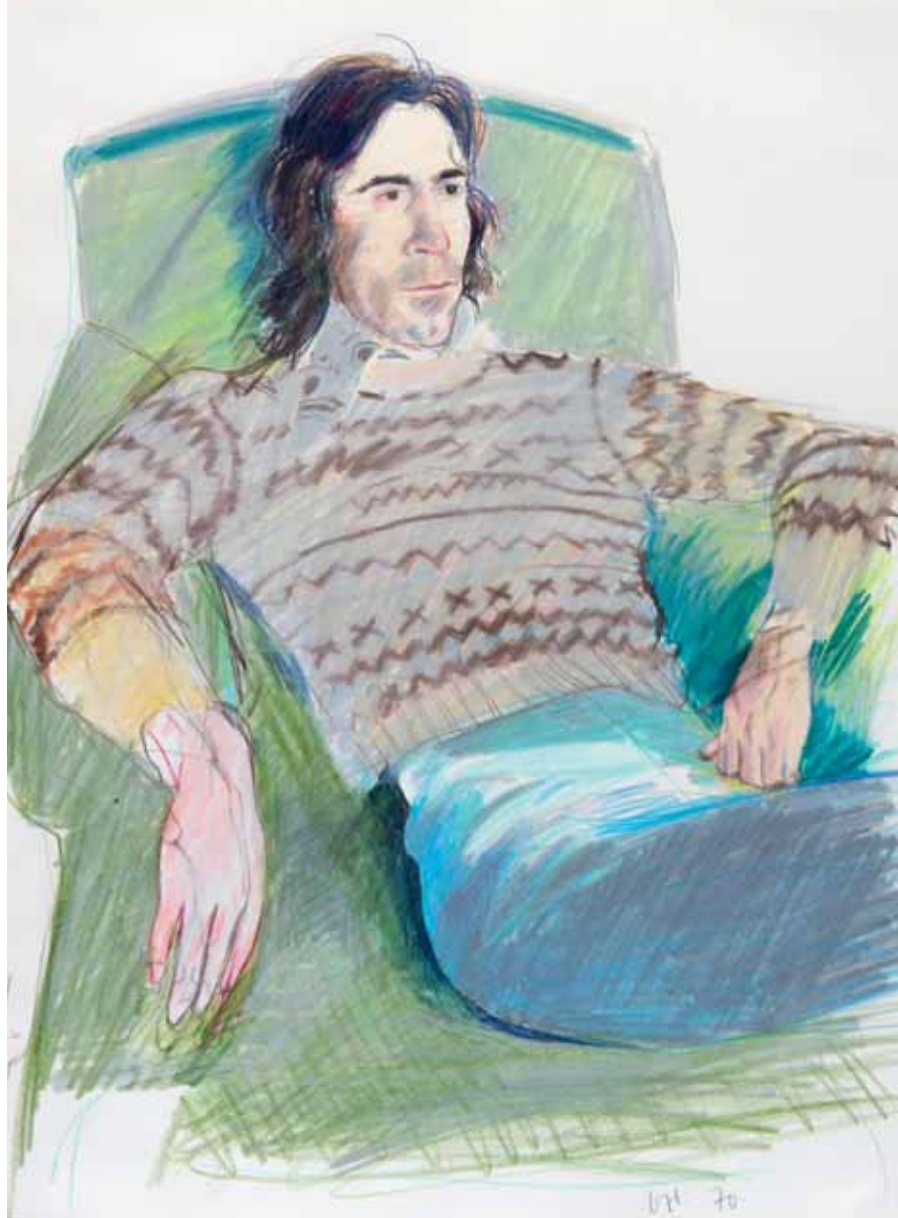
### Museums Galleries Scotland launch sector jobs and opportunities support

Museums Galleries Scotland (MGS) has announced new jobs and opportunities support to help the sector in Scotland to embrace and action the Scottish Government Fair Work First guidelines and create a more sustainable and diverse workforce.

Scottish museums, galleries, and those undertaking heritage activity in Scotland can now find guidance on how to implement Fair Work in employment practices and can advertise for free employment opportunities to the wider sector.

Those looking to enter the sector or explore new opportunities can find useful employment resources and search the jobs and opportunities listings. All jobs advertised will pay minimum the Real Living Wage.

The guidelines can be found at [www.museumsgalleriesScotland.com/workforcedevelopment/fair-work-resources-for-employers](http://www.museumsgalleriesScotland.com/workforcedevelopment/fair-work-resources-for-employers).



David Hockney, Ossie Wearing a Fairisle Sweater, 1970 © David Hockney.

### Sponsors line up to support AIM Conference

Meaco Measurement and Control have kindly offered to offer sponsorship support for the first day of AIM's June Conference, joining Day Two sponsor Art Fund and Headline Conference Sponsors Hayes Parsons Insurance Brokers. Meaco Measurement and Control provide a range of environmental monitoring and control equipment and specialise in environmental monitoring and control for museums, archives and galleries. Find out more at [meaco.co.uk](http://meaco.co.uk)

### LGA launches new Commission to promote role of culture in pandemic recovery

The Local Government Association is launching a new commission to promote the role of arts and culture in our recovery from the pandemic and as we look to level up communities across the country.

The Independent Commission on Culture and Local Government, chaired by Baroness Lola Young of Hornsey, will bring together national, regional and local organisations, to make the case for the unique role of council funded and supported culture in contributing to economic growth, and addressing inequalities in communities across the country.

It will publish a report in December 2022 which will set out the evidence for the value of essential cultural services and a vision for sustaining local cultural provision through shared investment and collaboration.

Councils remain the biggest public funders of culture, spending over £1 billion a year in England alone. They run a nationwide network of local cultural organisations, including 3,000 libraries, 350 museums, 116 theatres and numerous castles, amusement parks, monuments, historic buildings, parks and heritage sites.

**AIM and the National Army Museum (NAM) are delighted to announce a new partnership that will provide AIM membership to over 100 Regimental and Corps museums.**

# New AIM partnership with National Army Museum announced

Running from April 2022 and planned initially for three years, the partnership will see annual AIM membership fee costs for relevant, new and existing members generously covered by the National Army Museum.

As AIM members, museums enjoy an extensive and growing range of services including access to exclusive grants, micro-consultancies, Trustee support, regular on and offline events, representation, and regular sector insights and updates.

Colonel Brian Gorski MBE DL, Chair of The Fusilier Museum, AIM Trustee and initiator of the partnership said

“I am delighted AIM and NAM have agreed to establish this partnership. AIM Membership offers all museums a fantastic network of support and resources, as well as the strong representation crucial in these challenging times as we emerge from the pandemic.

As Chair of a military museum, and an AIM Trustee, I know how valuable the AIM offer can be and I look forward to working with both the AIM and NAM teams, and all our members, to deliver on this successful partnership.”

Justin Maciejewski, Director, National Army Museum, said

“The National Army Museum is very excited by the opportunities available to all of the independent military museums within the Regimental and



Corps Museums network through this partnership agreement with the Association of Independent Museums.

The creativity and entrepreneurialism of the Association's members offers a wonderful source of sharing best practice and learning for us all.

The membership of more Military Museums from the fantastic network of Regimental and Corps Museums across all regions of the United Kingdom will offer further depth, breadth and new perspectives to AIM's thriving community of museum leaders”

## Simple joining process

AIM and NAM will be in touch with current and prospective Regimental

and Corps museum members with further details around the partnership. For those ‘new to AIM members’ joining is straightforward, all they need to do is complete the Join AIM form adding the code (NAM2022) as a suffix to their museum name.

Existing Regimental and Corps museum AIM members need take no action, as AIM will extend their membership by the relevant duration to ensure they do not lose out following the introduction of the partnership.

If you have any queries on the new partnership, please don't hesitate to contact us on [membership@aim-museums.co.uk](mailto:membership@aim-museums.co.uk)



# MUSEUMS +HERITAGE

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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

### Andrew Logan Museum of Sculpture

£6,410

#### *Conservation of The Red Biba Rose*

The AIM Pilgrim Trust Remedial Conservation Grant enabled the Andrew Logan Museum of Sculpture to carry out conservation work on The Red Biba Rose. AIM had previously awarded the museum a grant for a survey of this sculpture, which clearly showed that the rose was in dire need of conservation.

The Red Biba Rose made from fibre-glass was originally one of several flower sculptures made by Andrew Logan for the Biba Department store in Kensington, London, which opened in 1973. It was rescued from this site and moved to the museum in Berriew, Powys, where it was situated to the front on the museum building.

The conservation of the rose itself and the updating of its internal lighting to LED have meant that the sculpture is now in a stable condition, ready to welcome visitors to the museum for years to come.

What's more, as the conservation work was done in-situ both the artist himself, as well as staff and volunteers had the opportunity to discuss the work carried out with the conservator and to learn from him.

The application process was easy and straightforward, the project was made simple by the help and support received from AIM and the legacy will be the sustainability of this important sculpture in the oeuvre of Andrew Logan for future generations.

Eva Bredsdorff, Museum Mentor and Trustee



Biba Rose in-situ at Andrew Logan Museum of Sculpture.



## The Fry Art Gallery

£4,000

### Conservation of Isabel Rawsthorne paintings

The Fry Art Gallery holds work made by artists who lived and worked in North West Essex and who made a significant contribution to British art. Isabel Rawsthorne lived near Thaxted for her last forty years, and in the late 1980s donated four oil paintings to the Fry Art Gallery.

Isabel Rawsthorne (1912–1992), also known at various times as Isabel Nicholas, Isabel Delmer, and Isabel Lambert, was a British painter, scenery designer and occasional artists' model. During the Second World War she worked in black propaganda. She flourished in an artistic bohemian society that included Jacob Epstein, Alberto Giacometti, and Francis Bacon.

The Fry has been fortunate recently to have received several works by Isabel Rawsthorne from the estate of Warwick

Llewellyn Nicholas, Isabel's brother. However, after many years in storage they were not in condition to be displayed. Four of the images were on double-sided un-stretched canvas.

The conservation was undertaken by Radoslaw Chocha Paintings Conservation and included removing surface dirt, replacing missing stretcher keys, replacing corroded iron tacks with copper, and re-touching. Because the works had been stored in a barn, fly and spider droppings as well as bird guano were taken off mechanically with a scalpel under magnification. The double-sided canvases were mounted in bespoke stretchers made by Bird & Davis. The paintings were moderately keyed out, but the keys were not secured. These can be easily removed in case the reverse is displayed without obscuring the painted image around the corners.

The restored paintings will form the backbone of the upcoming exhibition, *The Many Sides of Isabel Rawsthorne*, which opens at The Fry in May 2022. This will include loans from the Sainsbury Centre in Norwich, and the Royal Opera House to create the first major exhibition of her works since 2012.

**Gordon Cummings, Chair**

## AIM Hallmarks

### The Silk Museum

£12,000

#### Collections at the Heart of Transforming The Silk Museum

The Silk Museum is the only dedicated Silk Museum in Northern England, which celebrates the silk heritage of Macclesfield and the surrounding area. This remarkable collection has 80 industrial machines, over 2000 textile samples; 1000 pattern books and 700 costumes from late 18th – mid 20th century, particularly women's costume 1850-1950.

Costume is a fantastic and relatable way to tell the silk finishing story in Macclesfield, but the museum struggled to use this collection due to muddled storage, sparse documentation, and a lack of collection knowledge.

The project aimed to combat this with a novel approach to storage, management, and interpretation of the collection, to transform the visitor experience and strengthen financial resilience.

External Conservator Zoe Lanceley led the project and started auditing both the collection and consolidating conservation equipment spread across the museum. With the help of five volunteers and two staff members, Zoe completed audits for over 270 garments in the collection.

Zoe's expertise was vital in developing new hanging storage to replace cramped

boxing. Her knowledge gave the team confidence to make a radical change – creating a new conservation and storage room. Through reworking our current spaces, we completed this in an affordable, but time-consuming way due to unexpected but necessary building work.

Covid slowed the project down, limiting the team to remote working only. We developed new ways of working, with volunteers sewing 50 padded hangers and garment bags in their living rooms. We liaised with specialists online, connecting with six institutions and gaining insights in best practice and commercialising collections. Those connections led to online talks, reaching international audiences, and developing a new income stream.

Digital engagement was prioritised, requiring high-res images of mounted costume – which were lacking in the records. Mount training for staff and volunteers was crucial in this process and the development of guides to create bodily forms ensured that the team could continue this task beyond the project.

When lockdown was lifted, we worked with a local group of neurodiverse students from Project Inc to develop social media content. Their creativity developed into regular posts using #TextileThursday, which have doubled our online engagement.

*"The project was a game changer; revolutionising how we work and think about the collection and in the process ensured garments are safeguarded for*



**Project Inc working with The Silk Museum on digital content.**

*future generations. No longer is this collection hiding in stores, but digital content is raising its profile, reaching wider and diverse audiences,"* Curator, Kathryn Warburton.

For the first time in five years, we are finally in the position to work with textile and fashion students on a large scale, where we are looking forward to a new partnership with Manchester Metropolitan University in 2022. The results have informed funding applications to continue this work, such as the Madeline Ginsburg Grant. It also fed into the Macclesfield Stripe project – awarded by the Textile Society, becoming our primary focus of programming in 2021. The biggest impact has been the team's new appreciation of costume, putting it in the forefront of future development plans for the museum.

**Kathryn Warburton, Curator**

**How frequently do you evaluate your museum buildings and collections? It's an important question, particularly as values have increased considerably in the last two years. AIM Associate Supplier Hayes Parsons Insurance Brokers explain more.**

# The Value of Valuations: Museum Buildings and Collections

## Valuing Buildings

Most commercial buildings in the UK, including museums, are under-insured. Let's look at an example to see why this is important.

Imagine your insurance policy says your museum buildings are valued at £3,000,000 for rebuilding purposes. You think that sounds plenty, and at your insurance renewal each year the figure gets carried over without question, or maybe with a modest increase each time. You have not paid for a rebuild valuation in many years and it has not been raised by your broker.

Then a dreadful fire occurs, causing £500,000 damage. The Insurer sends the loss adjuster out to the site and reports back that the building has a true rebuild cost of £5,000,000. You are therefore 40% under insured and will in all probability see your claim reduced by 40%. That is a £200,000 shortfall in your finances.

Our advice is simple; it is worth employing the services of a Chartered Surveyor at regular intervals to value the rebuild cost of your buildings and update your insurance policy accordingly. Some argue a three-year interval is best due to rapid rises in rebuild costs (approximately 10% on average this year alone), and definitely worth considering if you have Grade 1 listed property, as the rise in material costs for Grade 1 property has outstripped other sectors. It is always wise to make sure your Chartered Surveyor has experience of valuing buildings like yours.

## Valuing Collections

From fine art to former aircraft, classic cars to ceramics, scientific objects to serene sculptures: what are any of these worth when we call them a collection?

Again, let us look at an example. You have a policy for the fine art at your museum and insure the collection for £2,000,000. Within that collection are some specific higher value items that are noted on your policy schedule. You have stayed with the same insurer and broker for many years, and your predecessor at the museum set up the policy over 10 years ago, and at the time had professional valuations carried out. The broker has not mentioned up to date valuations, and you seem happy with what is arranged.

Once again, taking the example of a fire, some of your fine art paintings in one room, are destroyed. The value of these items is £500,000. You thought the terms "agreed value" in your policy schedule meant you would get £500,000 and you could put the money towards other paintings to complement what is left of your collection. But the loss adjuster

asks to see your most recent valuations and from that point onwards the insurer points you to their policy wording which says they will only pay the "market value" of items that have not had up to date valuations. The market value

could be significantly lower and is a lot more subjective in terms of what the insurer will offer to settle the claim.

It is true that professional valuations of artwork, or other collections, can be expensive, but they are far less expensive than facing a much smaller pay-out than hoped for, from your insurer.



## Get in touch

The general advice given here is designed to create a conversation. We understand that each museum is different and has unique concerns. At Hayes Parsons Insurance Brokers we tailor our advice to your situation and would be happy to talk through your options.

To find out more please contact our museum expert, Martin Howard Cert CII on 0117 930 1668/07719 023 194 or [m.howard@hayesparsons.co.uk](mailto:m.howard@hayesparsons.co.uk)

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Make sure you're getting your money's worth from your online booking system with these five tips, say AIM Associate Supplier, **Beyonk**.

# Getting the most from your online booking system

## 1. Set Up

It's one thing having an online booking available on your website, but it needs to be visible. 'Clicks kill' so make sure there are as few as possible between a potential customer landing on your website and being able to book. Having a booking/payment form on your homepage or a large 'book now' button on the header is essential.

## 2. Control and Planning

Online booking systems are a great way to control your customer journey and plan accordingly. Use the following:

- **Pre-Checkout Question:** collect important bits of information as part of the booking process. For example, any dietary requirements, or any details you need for provision of equipment or support.
- **Automated emails:**
  - In the **booking confirmation email**, make sure to include key visit information especially about arrival. Include detail about the location (in case it's hard to find or sat nav is misleading), the best way to travel, where to go on arrival, how early to arrive, what to bring – all things that will help ensure the customer arrives as prepared as possible, making their experience better and your lives easier!
  - These messages can be reinforced in an **automatic reminder email**. Even if you don't have anything specific they need to know before arrival, take this opportunity to send a friendly message welcoming them. It all helps provide a great visitor experience.
- **Ticket types:** can be a great way to collect more information about your guests in order to provide the best service you can. For example, if you offer separate tickets for the over 65s, or for children, analyse the numbers every once in a while and use this information to ensure you're targeting the right markets in your offer and future marketing.
- **Timeslots:** If you're open all day, consider if the ability to book arrival timeslots will help spread out visitors throughout the day, reducing queuing on arrival, at a particular attraction or experience, or in the cafe etc.

## 3. Revenue

With online booking there are some great things you can do to increase revenue, chief amongst these is 'add-ons'.

- **Add-Ons:** At Beyonk we've found approximately 10% of people will buy an add-on to a booking – for example a cream tea with a visit, or a souvenir, or perhaps simply a donation to a related charity – take advantage of this opportunity to upsell and generate additional revenue.

## 4. Marketing

Your booking system should act as a crucial part of your marketing plans, capitalising on the already engaged status of your customers. Make use of:

- **Discount codes:** add discount codes to social media campaigns or newsletters, or with your automated thank-you emails to offer customers a discounted repeat visit.
- **Checkout questions:** make sure to utilise any opportunity to ask your customers questions before checkout – e.g. do they want to go on your newsletter? How did they hear about you?
- **Automated emails:** use automated emails to have one final engagement with your customers, thank them for coming and prompt them to leave a review, visit your social media pages, or book again using the discount voucher, as above.
- **Distribution integrations:** make use of integrations with third party resellers. Beyonk for example partner with a large number of tourist boards such as Go New Forest, rail networks and other organisations. It can really help to get your experiences in front of new audiences.

## 5. Don't forget story-telling.

A compelling narrative as to why people should book with you vs any other experiences. Telling a good story can help forge an emotional connection to a potential customer, making a booking much more likely. Stories can also be tweaked, for example with changing of the seasons, so it's a simple way to help broaden your target market and extend the booking season.

*If you have any questions or would like to discuss using Beyonk for your own system, we'd be delighted to hear from you. Contact [support@beyonk.com](mailto:support@beyonk.com) or 0800 980 4517.*

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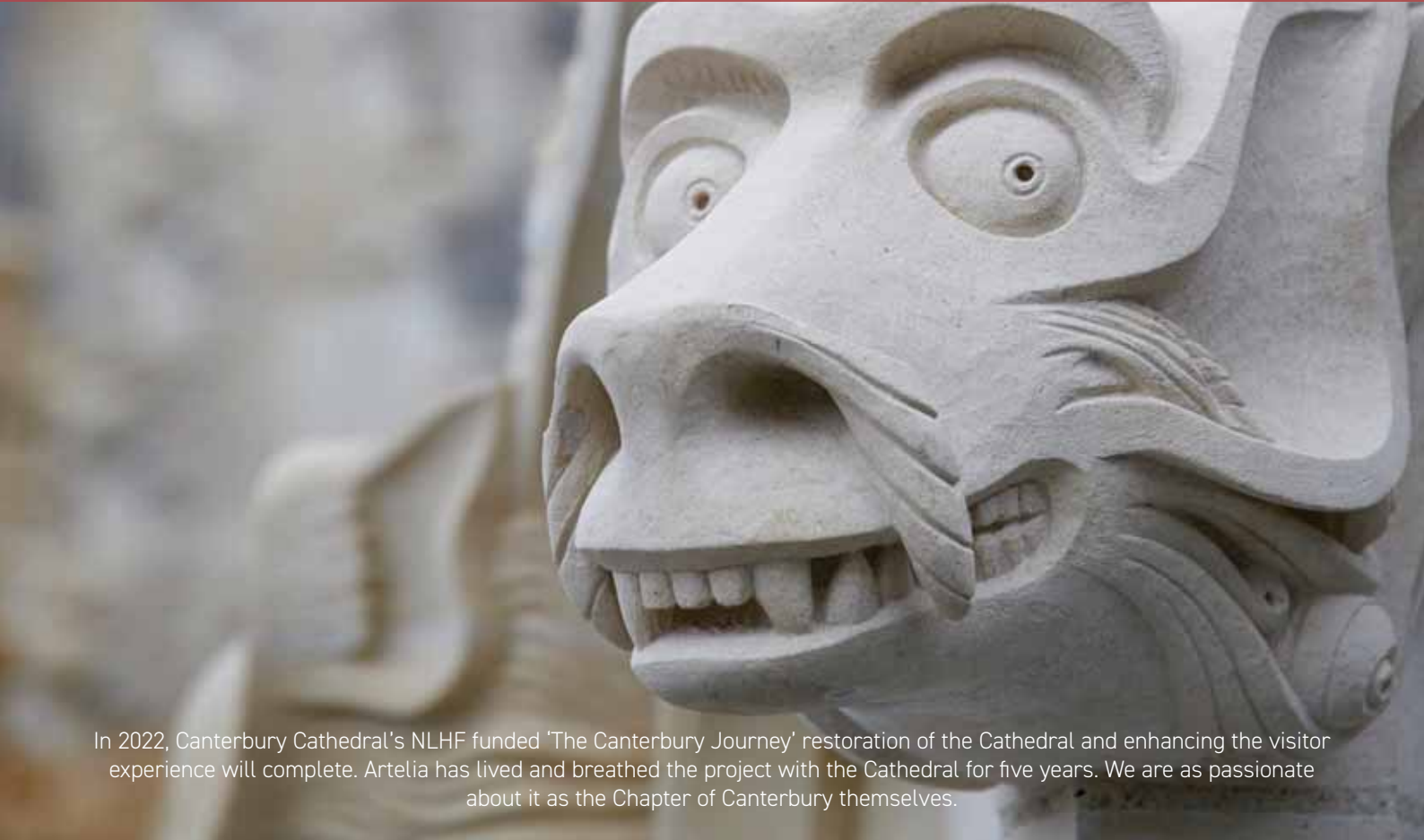
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In 2022, Canterbury Cathedral's NLHF funded 'The Canterbury Journey' restoration of the Cathedral and enhancing the visitor experience will complete. Artelia has lived and breathed the project with the Cathedral for five years. We are as passionate about it as the Chapter of Canterbury themselves.



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**Leicester Transport Heritage Trust** have been driving their audience engagement using digital technology and a willingness to do things differently . . .

# From collections to characters

## Leicester Transport Heritage Trust Personas Project

The Trust have been working with AIM member Documentary Media Centre to develop a new project with the support of a young volunteer, Emily Whitlam, the project's 'Digital Curator.' Emily joined Leicester Transport Heritage Trust after becoming passionate about her school buses and is delighted to be using her drawing skills and the knowledge she has gained during her time as a bus enthusiast to promote the Trust's message.

Taking one of the Trust's best loved vehicles, a 1977 *Dennis Dominator*, Emily uses digital platforms to share Dennis' adventures, introduce his friends, and promote the work of the Trust. A new Instagram channel @Dennis.n.friends is managed by Emily, who designed the illustrations of Dennis and his friends – Olivia, Ruby and the 'Krazy & Wild' Kirby and West milk float, Speedy.

Her interest in 233 or 'Dennis' the *Dominator*, was sparked during the time she spent creating an official video that promoted Dennis' return to the road after restoration. The bus is the first production model of its kind – so Dennis holds a historical significance, too

Emily is excited about the project's potential to engage new audiences and young people in the work of the Trust. There's already interest in merchandise, children's books, and other fundraising ideas, as she explains

### MEET DENNIS

Dennis is a 1977 Dennis Dominator with East Lancs bodywork. He was the first production model of his type and therefore Dennis feels very smug about being the oldest survivor! However, he often runs into trouble as he's so old in bus years (132 to be exact) that they don't make parts for him any more. Luckily, Dennis is so special that making new, customised parts for him is worth the money, and this makes his friends a little bit jealous. But don't worry! All of the LTHT buses are loved equally and the drivers don't have favourites. Much.

**DENNIS**



"It's great to be able to give Dennis and his friends their own 'busonalties' and bring them to life in a fun and engaging way. I am using my media skills to gain valuable experience whilst at the same time enhancing the way people interact and engage with the work of the LTHT."

Tina Barton, Documentation Media Centre added

"We have worked with several museum and heritage locations with young people like Emily and it demonstrates the untapped value of engaging with young volunteers.

Providing them with support to use their existing skills and experiences to help enhance audience engagement and

transform the way museum and heritage locations use social media platforms."

Follow Dennis and his friends on Instagram and keep up to date with all his adventures @Dennis.n.friends

If you would like to find out more about the project contact: Tina Barton [docmediacentre@gmail.com](mailto:docmediacentre@gmail.com)





# Seven Stories

## The National Centre for Children's Books

**Seven Stories, the National Centre for Children's Books, is a registered charity and accredited museum in Newcastle Upon Tyne dedicated to celebrating and protecting Britain's literary heritage. It shares how children and young people's books have developed over time and highlights their impact on readers and communities.**

The Seven Stories Collection includes work from some of the best-selling and influential authors and illustrators of the last 100 years including Enid Blyton, Elizabeth Beresford, Dianne Wynne Jones, Philip Pullman, Nick Sharratt, Kaye Webb, and Judith Kerr.

Seven Stories is also an Arts Council National Portfolio Organisation. The Collection and Archive is housed at City Library in Newcastle and can be visited by appointment.

Collection highlights include books from Kaye Webb's working library, as well as a large quantity of letters and other papers which document Kaye's career; original handwritten drafts of some of Morpurgo's best loved books; draft material for fourteen of Phillip Pullman's published books, including manuscripts for his highly-acclaimed Sally Lockhart quartet; 70 years of Judith Kerr's work including childhood paintings, drawings from her student days, and finished artwork for most of her published books, including *The Tiger Who Came to Tea*; and Enid Blyton's typewriter on which she wrote over 400 books!

The Visitor Centre is open six days a week in term time, and seven days a week in school holidays (10am – 5pm). Paid-for events and workshops run throughout the week for all ages, including 'Bookworm Babies,' which introduces a love of reading at an early age; interactive performances from the Story Catcher team for ages 0-12; book themed breakfasts and tea parties, and guest author and illustrator workshops for all ages.

A specialist children's bookshop is at the heart of the museum, which also houses a coffee shop and the Riverside Café on level 2, which features relaxing views of Ouseburn canal.

There are currently three floors of free-entry galleries:

- **Where Stories Comes From.** A permanent exhibition exploring the theory that all stories fit into seven basic plot themes. This gallery includes manuscripts and artwork from Tony Ross, Julia Donaldson, Judith Kerr, and Enid Blyton.
- **Wildwoods Gallery.** An exciting gallery exploring some of the world's most famous fictional magical worlds including Narnia, Harry Potter and DiscWorld, through original artwork, manuscripts, and other glimpses into the making of the stories.
- **Shifter of Shapes: Celebrating Nature.** Celebrating nature writing and artwork from acclaimed book *The Lost Spells* by Robert MacFarlane and Jackie Morris, with new artwork additions from North East artist and writer Abbey Scott, inspired by the woods of Northumberland.

The museum sees over 100,000 visitors per year and hundreds of pupils on school visits facilitated by the Collections and Story Catcher teams. Schools are also engaged through a book subscription scheme, *Hooks into Books*, which refreshes the classroom or library book collection each term, and through free online events with authors and illustrators. This year they have already hosted sessions with Axel Scheffler, Michael Morpurgo and Michael Rosen.

[www.sevenstories.org.uk](http://www.sevenstories.org.uk)

# Levelling Up: how far can it go?

**What do the Government's recent policy announcements mean for heritage, culture, and the wider charity sectors asks Richard Sagar, Head of Policy at Charity Finance Group.**

There was a flurry of announcements of direct relevance to the charity sector in early February. The Government offered its response to the Kruger Report on civil society, and the UK Shared Prosperity Fund: pre-launch guidance also appeared. But perhaps of greatest importance was the launch of the much-anticipated (and much-delayed) Levelling Up white paper.

The Levelling Up white paper laid a welcome emphasis on increasing wellbeing across the UK focusing on social capital alongside economic capital.

However, there was little in the way of funding commitments or concrete policies to match the ambitions which the paper lays out, and a lack of clarity on how far civil society organisations will be able to shape future policies.

It is therefore difficult to determine at this stage how the plans will affect the finances of charities and other non-profit entities.

## Culture and heritage

One area which may be of interest to the Museum sector is the mission to bring about pride in place by 2030. This includes satisfaction with their town centre and engagement in local culture and community, with it rising in every area of the UK, with the gap between top performing and other areas closing.

There is an accompanying policy programme on culture and heritage with a specific funding commitment in the spring of £40m in England as part of the Cultural Investment Fund. The majority of this is to be spent outside of London on more than 50 projects involving cultural assets, libraries, museums, and creative industries.

There are also reminders of the cultural funding previously announced at the Spending Review last year with 100% of the Arts Council England funding uplift being directed outside London. This is to support theatre, museums and galleries, libraries and dance in towns which have been deprived of investment in the past.

This is alongside the £850m investment announced at the Spending Review to support cultural and heritage buildings including museums, to help boost participation, engagement, and employment in local communities and in turn, support the visitor economy in these places.

It is fair to say that in the very short-term it is unlikely to make much difference for most charities, despite several initial funding commitments. These include small pots of money from dormant assets such as £44m to the Youth Futures Foundation, £20m to Access (the Foundation for Social Investment) and £4m for Fair4all Finance.

However, they will not benefit the vast majority.

## High ambitions

There is much to commend in the Government taking a new approach to building social capital and prioritising wellbeing within the economy, but it is too soon to tell how much impact that this will have on overall government policy.

As Pro Bono Economics have pointed out, much of the success of this programme of work will depend on how much buy-in occurs outside DCMS and DLUHC, particularly if there is buy-in within the Treasury. If additional money is not made available, then the ambitious 12 missions to level up the UK will not be delivered.

Aside from the scepticism and concerns about some of the specific policy announcements, there is much to embrace for civil society here. It is up to us to try to work with the Government, to push them further and ensure delivery of the funding which will make the levelling up ambition a reality.

[www.cfg.org.uk](http://www.cfg.org.uk)



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