



Association of
Independent
Museums

AIM Bulletin

December 2024

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10 years of Elizabeth Gaskell's House

AIM Board is delighted to announce the appointment of Rhiannon Goddard as the new Chair of the Association. Rhiannon takes up the role after an open search.

AIM Board appoints new Chair

Andrew Lovett OBE is due to step down as Chair in the New Year, a role he has held for six years and after three terms as a Trustee.

Rhiannon's 20+ year career started in education at Somerset House Trust and the Gilbert Collection and has included roles in organisations of all scales prior to her taking up her current position as Head of Public Engagement Projects and Business Management at Historic Royal Palaces.

On the appointment Rhiannon says

"I'm delighted to have the opportunity to lead AIM in its mission to support and advocate for independent museums across the UK, and to give back to the sector which has provided me with such a rewarding career.

Independent museums are the lifeblood of the museums sector, and I am continually delighted and inspired by the work they do. I am also looking forward to continuing to work with a

committed and expert Board, a dedicated team and wonderful member museums.

I'd like to say thank you to Andrew Lovett too, for his brilliant leadership and for coaching me through my role as Deputy Chair; I have big shoes to fill but I am looking forward to the challenge!"

Outgoing Chair, Andrew Lovett OBE, added

"I am so pleased that the leadership strengths and quality of Rhiannon shone through to be appointed as the next and first woman to Chair the Association of Independent Museums.

Rhiannon brings bags of experience, empathy with the cause and philosophy of independent museums and personal integrity.

Few understand the challenges and opportunities of independent museums like Rhiannon. It's a fabulous appointment, and I know Rhiannon



will have the full support of the Board and enormous goodwill from our membership."

Lisa Ollerhead, AIM Director

"I am very much looking forward to continuing to work with Rhiannon. The calibre of applicants we received is testament both to the importance of the role to our sector, and recognition of the work Andrew and his predecessors have done as Chair."



Front cover

Last month marked 10 years since Mancunian literary museum Elizabeth Gaskell's House opened to the public. The journey to becoming a visitor attraction and museum took several years of tenacity and some serious fundraising from a dedicated group of volunteers who brought the House back to life, while generous grants and donations also made the milestone possible. Director Sally Jastrzebski-Lloyd explains how this marks one of the most important decades in the building's almost 200-year history on page 19.

AIM as a strategic partner



Isabel Wilson, Senior Manager, Museums and Cultural Property explains how AIM works in strategic partnership with Arts Council England.

Arts Council England is the national development agency for museums. We invest in AIM to support museums and heritage organisations in building for a successful future – with good governance at its heart. But AIM is more than a grant recipient – for us, it’s a strategic partner. We work closely together on support for museums at risk, research and joined-up advocacy.

Looking back, 2024 has been a tough year and these challenges will continue into 2025. Museums continue to make a difference to people’s lives, but it’s the hardest environment that many have experienced in the sector.

Getting the data

AIM is also a valued partner to our Museum Development programme which provides vital business-to-business support, grants and networks to regional museums across the country. The 2024 Annual Museums Survey data report, produced by Museum Development South West on behalf of all the MD partners (see links below) provides valuable insights into how museums are faring. In it you’ll see – and know first-hand, that for many museums expenditure is outstripping income and local authority support is down. Visit numbers overall are still 8% below pre-pandemic levels, but on a brighter note there has been a dramatic recovery in volunteering on which museums depend.

It’s so important we can evidence the difference museums make – not just economically, but also to people’s lives more broadly, whether as a cherished local museum that fosters pride in place, a focus for volunteering, or a family day out. Via our new Culture and Place Explorer (see links below) you can also see what Arts Council investment looks like in your locality.

Advocating for our sector

We’ve spent a lot of time recently case-making for museums with government. Although there wasn’t specific reference to regional museums within the Autumn budget, we are still hopeful that this will come through the business planning process within DCMS. We’ll continue to make the case for our hard-pressed sector for capital and revenue support in the lead-up to the Spring 2025 budget.

Supporting museums

We’ve been doing a lot of work to make the schemes we run for your benefit more user-friendly and up to date.

Accreditation – the UK standard for museums has been the bedrock of museum practice for more than 35 years. We’re publishing refreshed guidance for the 2018 standard to make it more accessible and to help you think holistically about risks and planning. This hasn’t increased the requirements but has updated the context. Across the UK Accreditation Partnership, we are starting to think about the opportunities of a user-focussed redesign to make sure the scheme is meeting users’ needs in these times of cutbacks and difficult choices.

Designation is the quality mark that celebrates and recognises the richness and significance of regional collections has been refreshed. The collections at Bronte Parsonage were awarded Designated status in 2023.

The *Government Indemnity Scheme* offers a free alternative to commercial insurance. Athelstan Museum made good use of GIS to cover valuable loans in for their Athelstan 1100 exhibition.

Acceptance in Lieu and Cultural Gifts can help enrich your collections: A sample of the Winchcombe meteorite which fell overnight in 2021 was donated under the Cultural Gifts Scheme to Wincombe Museum in 2022. Its display has played a major role in boosting visitor number from around 1,200 to 6000 annually.

The *Arts Council/V&A Purchase Fund* has been helping with acquisitions since 1881! It recently supported The Stained Glass Museum in Ely, to acquire the last window designed and cartooned by renowned Irish Arts & Crafts artist Wilhelmina Geddes (1887-1955) in 2022.

National Lottery Project Grants – If you have received a Museum Development small grant, do consider a follow-on application to our National Lottery Project Grants. The British Deaf Society was awarded £31,000 recently to interpret and make accessible Deaf history following a move to a new venue.

The *Digital Culture Network* is a great opportunity for you to get expert advice to help build your business. The Migration Museum has a wonderful online shop which has benefitted from advice from one of our Tech champions.

Here’s hoping you have a successful end of the year and whatever your plans for 2025 – wishing you all the best from Arts Council England.

Links:

MDSW report tinyurl.com/bdzawebh

www.artscouncil.org.uk/your-area/culture-and-place-data-explorer

www.artscouncil.org.uk



Image supplied by Judges Lodgings Museum

Additional funding for New Stories New Audiences projects

AIM members receive additional funding to build on successful project outcomes.

Since its launch in 2021, the AIM New Stories New Audiences grant funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund, has supported 43 small museum members to develop new interpretation and work with new partners.

This summer we held a bonus grant round, opening the opportunity for eligible grantees to apply for an enrichment grant to expand on the outcomes of their original project

The eight projects selected to receive further funding were:

Ledbury Places – To create a new panoramic display of Ledbury High Street. **£3,850**

Judges Lodgings Museum – To run a series of creative workshops for schools, families and the local community based around the Afamefuna portrait. **£4,200.**

Hundred Heroines – To support a cohort of young artists

to create a zine focusing on the achievements of early women pioneers in photography. **£4,349.**

Sturminster Newton Heritage Trust – To develop a keepsake exhibition and oral history archive around the theme of migration with supporting training. **£3,000.**

The Mixed Museum – To undertake a full audio recording of SussedBlackWoman for older and visually impaired users of the archive. **£4,800.**

Turner's House – To run Tales and Travel programme for another year. **£4,050.**

Englesea Brook Chapel and Museum of Primitive Methodism – To co-create short films and interpretation boards with a local school and update current exhibits. **£4,450.**

The Finlaggan Trust – To extend digital resources beyond Islay to other parts of the Western Isles, Skye etc., extending representation into the Iron Age. **£5,000.**

The eight new projects and the fifteen funded in round three will all complete before the end of March 2025. Look out for news on the outcomes and further learning next year.

New Stories New Audiences is made possible by National Lottery Heritage Fund. Thanks to National Lottery players.

Looking forward to Conference 2025!

Plans and programming are well underway for AIM's National Conference in June 2025. Hosted by the wonderful Mary Rose Museum in Portsmouth.

The Mary Rose Museum, located in Portsmouth Historic Dockyard, is an award-winning museum dedicated to the preservation and display of the hull of the Mary Rose, King Henry VIII's favourite warship which sank in 1545. It provides an unparalleled glimpse into life 500 years ago through its unique collection of thousands of artefacts recovered from the ship.

At the heart of the museum is the meticulously conserved hull of the Mary Rose, which was raised from the seabed in 1982 after 437 years underwater. It remains the world's largest underwater excavation and recovery ever undertaken and was the first underwater broadcast by the BBC.

Alongside the hull, the museum houses many thousands of the 19,000 artefacts recovered, including weapons, the crew and their personal belongings, and the ship's dog – all offering valuable insights into Tudor life and maritime warfare. The ship and collection are housed in a purpose-built museum that gives visitors the opportunity to breathe the same air as the ship herself and to see the crew brought to life.



Image © Harvey Mills

The Mary Rose Museum is not only a centre of historical preservation but also a hub of educational activity and community engagement. It offers a wide range of interactive exhibits, educational programmes, and research opportunities, making it a vital resource for historians, archaeologists, and enthusiasts alike. As a registered charity, the Mary Rose Museum continues to inspire and educate future generations while honouring the legacy of one of England's most iconic ships.

Tickets for AIM National Conference will be on sale in January 2025.

<https://maryrose.org>



Refreshed AIM website imminent

As you read this the team is putting the final touches to a re-vamped AIM website. bringing this popular resource up-to-date with web development specialists MeThree.

The site seeks to make accessing our advice and guidance easier, with a fresh new look and feel that retains that customary AIM friendliness and approachability.

With thanks and appreciation to all those members who shared their insights and thoughts throughout the testing process.

AIM fees frozen for 2025

We're pleased to confirm that we are freezing AIM's membership fees for 2025 following approval at September's AIM Board Meeting.

Lisa Ollerhead said

"The tough financial environment is impacting many of our members so we hope that freezing our subscription fees whilst introducing some exciting new grant schemes, will offer some cheer in these challenging times."

As ever, if you have any questions relating to your membership, do contact our Membership Officer, Helen on membership@aim-museums.co.uk

News in brief

Major online exhibition of 84/85 Miners' Strike memories launches

A new interactive 3D tour of a major exhibition commemorating the 40th anniversary of the Miners' Strike – 84/85 – *The Longest Year* – has been made available for free online by National Coal Mining Museum for England.

Opening earlier this year at the Wakefield-based Museum, the exhibition focusses on the experiences of miners and their families, giving a voice to three different points of view: striking miners, those that went back early and those that didn't strike at all.

Viewers will uncover the story of the Miners' Strike from those that experienced it with the unique opportunity to listen to interviews, read compelling quotes, absorb powerful photography and see artefacts from 1984/85.

The exhibition features memories received following a public call out in November 2023, where over 100 people across the country came forward with their recollections of the strike. Each of these memories have been added to the Museum's collection and a number

have been included in the exhibition.

www.ncm.org.uk/whats-on/84-85

80s icon Pete Burns comes home to Port Sunlight in new photography exhibition

Nearly five decades after he left the village of Port Sunlight where he grew up, the late 80s pop music icon Pete Burns is featured in a new exhibition of photographs by Francesco Mellina.

Over 40 photographs are on display in the *Total Stranger* exhibition at Bridge Cottage Gallery. The exhibition's title is taken from the Dead or Alive song of the same name.

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, Francesco Mellina took photographs of bands at the famous Eric's Club in Liverpool, recording the various subcultures in clubland during the pivotal post-punk era. Francesco also managed Dead or Alive, guiding them to number one chart success with hits such as *You Spin Me Round (Like a Record)* and *Brand New Lover*.

Visitors will be able to see the exhibition between 21 September until 19 January 2025.

www.portsunlightvillage.com



£1m awarded through Art Fund's Reimagine Grants

Art Fund, the UK's independent charity for art, recently announced a total of £1 million in funding to support local museums and galleries across the country.

Art Fund's Museum Directors Survey 2024 revealed that financial strain on civic museums has worsened following a decade of austerity, the pandemic and the ongoing cost-of-living crisis, with two thirds of museum directors concerned about funding shortfalls, a rise from half in 2022. This round of Reimagine therefore prioritised museums relying on local authority support.

Those awarded funds included AIM members Derby Museums, Birmingham Museums Trust, Bristol Museums, The Museum of Wigan Life, Manchester Art Gallery and The Bowes Museum.

Launched in 2020, the Reimagine programme is designed to inspire creativity and increase stability and resilience in museums, supporting organisations to develop or refresh their work in response to their current situation.

www.artfund.org/professional/news-and-insights/art-fund-reimagine-grants



Image © Ross Williams

Saltaire Collection's Heritage website seeking to break down barriers to access

The Saltaire Collection has recently made several changes to its website to improve accessibility for disabled people, for those who are neurodivergent and for those whose first language is not English, thanks to support from Bradford Council.

The website now features an accessibility widget which, along with other tools, allows users to adjust the font size and contrast to make it easier to read. Other new features include audio stories, many recorded by young actors from



the Bingley Little Theatre, which provide a fascinating introduction to Saltaire's history. Two new video tours

of Saltaire are available with sub-titles and in Urdu and a 'word only' tour for people with visual impairment.

Tackling the climate and nature emergencies

The Welsh Government's declaration of a climate emergency in April 2019 acknowledged the need to urgently address climate change and signalled a direction of travel for Wales.

The culture sector in Wales has emerged as a focal point for engaging the public with the climate and nature crisis, given its potential to inspire, educate and mobilise communities towards environmental stewardship and sustainability.

Museums in Wales have a deep understanding of their responsibility and power to meaningfully engage the wider public on the topic of climate change, recognising their ability to meet communities 'where they are'.

Wales Climate Week (WCW) returned in November, bringing together people from across Wales to share learning, stimulate ideas and encourage discussion on solutions for tackling climate change. It coincided with the United Nations COP29 climate change conference.

The theme '*Adapting to our changing climate*' provided an opportunity for climate decision-makers, stakeholders, community groups and people from across Wales to explore how together we can minimise the risk and prepare for the impacts of climate change, as well as capitalising on the links with climate mitigation, which aims to reduce our carbon and greenhouse gas emissions.

This year's WCW event delivered a 5-day virtual conference, held between 11th-15th November for climate stakeholders with a role in delivering climate adaptation policies, programmes and initiatives.

The Welsh Government also re-opened a Climate Conversations fund. The aim of which is to support organisations with established links to community groups to host local events to encourage people to join in on conversations around how we can adapt to our changing climate.

Further detail on the programme can be found at climateweek.gov.wales

Coinciding with Wales Climate Week, the Museum Sector in Wales sought to explore some of the key issues associated with adaptation to climate change and climate resilience.

The Natural History Museum's **Fixing Our Broken Planet: Community of Practice** supports practitioners to network and share learning around how museums can respond to the climate emergency, with a focus on engaging and empowering young people.

Amgueddfa Cymru hosted a free event, *Resilience in Museums in the Face of a Planetary Emergency* on the 11th and 12th November at St Fagans National Museum of History, Museum Wales, Cardiff and Big Pit National Coal Museum focusing on the theme of resilience.

For more information on the Fixing our Broken Planet session contact Welsh Government on MuseumDevelopment@gov.wales

Head of Programmes, **Margaret Harrison**, introduces AIM's latest grant scheme.



Introducing our new grant programme

AIM Museum Fundamentals

AIM understands that our members need support, advice and funding to help with core museum activities, including caring for collections – the most fundamental part of being a museum. Our members have told us that grant programmes are the most essential service we provide, and in particular have asked us for support on:

- Funding core costs
- Funding for building maintenance
- Funding for back of house projects

AIM has a long-standing partnership with Pilgrim Trust which has supported small museums to care for and conserve their collections for many years. We know that this funding is invaluable to AIM members, but also that more support is needed. In response, we are very pleased that with new support from the Julia Rausing Trust, alongside our existing Pilgrim Trust funding, we are opening a new grant programme – Museum Fundamentals.

Museums use their collections to tell stories and connect with visitors: to discover meaning behind objects and heritage, educate and entertain, inform and inspire.

To do this, they must know what is in their collection and have well-looked-after objects they can research, interpret and display. Museum Fundamentals will support AIM members with these core activities.

The new fund will support AIM's small and medium museums, i.e. museums with under 50,000 visitors per year. It will be open to AIM members that are a UK registered charity and recognised public bodies such as local authority museums.

Through the fund we will continue to support activities that we already fund through our Pilgrim Trust conservation grants – collections care audits and remedial object conservation. But we are very excited that we are now able to fund additional costs to support collections care and new areas of activity. So, in addition to the activities we already support, AIM members will now be able to apply for up to £20,000 for:

- Collections documentation and research
- Collections review

- Development of new exhibitions or other access to collections
- Purchase of equipment and software
- Small scale building work to support collections care
- Improvements to heating, lighting and other building services
- Staff time
- Volunteer recruitment and expenses

The programme will also provide mentoring to grant recipients.

As with all our funding streams, we encourage applicants to talk to AIM staff about their project proposals and to receive feedback on draft submissions. Look out too for online workshops to introduce the new grants – we really want to help you put in as good an application as possible!

AIM Museum Fundamentals opens to applications early 2025. The programme is generously supported by The Pilgrim Trust and The Julia Rausing Trust.



Report reveals Scottish museums and galleries' financial fragility

Jason Rose, Senior Advocacy and Public Affairs Manager, Museums Galleries Scotland, explains the implications of its latest sector survey.

The full results of MGS's recently published survey reveal that while visitor numbers for some are up, finances are more fragile than ever.

The report is based on 114 organisational submissions from across the sector, from national and civic museums to independents, and it shows how they are faring compared to a similar survey carried out in 2022.

The initial findings released in September showed that 11% of respondents felt their organisation was at risk of closure in the next 12 months. In 2022 it was 10%.

Now that we are able to dive into the full report, we see most organisations report no change to their income. However, due to recent high inflation, it is likely that most have faced a real terms decrease. Almost two-thirds of respondents report that they have seen an increase in expenditure.

The fragility of the sector's finances is made clear by the shift in the reserves museums have access to, with a drop in those reporting more than 12 months of reserves and a rise in those reporting less than 4 months' worth.

The shift in roles within the sector is concerning. The proportion of front-of-house roles continues to increase while curatorial roles continue to fall, and the kind of roles that deliver vital audience engagement such as education and participation are down to just 4% of the museum workforce. This means we are losing the ability to care for and share the stories of the collections we hold for the people of Scotland.

The silver lining to this cloud is visitor numbers – now at 15.4 million overall. This is higher than the 5.2 million reported in 2021-22 and higher than the 12.8 million reported in the pre-Covid period of 2019-20. However, we are aware through conversations with sector colleagues that, although visits might be up for some, this is not the case for others.

Museums Galleries Scotland CEO Lucy Casot said:

“This report shows the state of Scotland's museums and galleries, underlining their importance to our economy, our health and wellbeing, and our education. Despite the increase in visitor numbers for some, we still have an extremely vulnerable sector.

“Cost pressures and funding cuts mean our museums and galleries are looking less financially resilient, with a number at risk of closure.

“Museums and galleries are continuing to deliver the very best for local communities but without investment, these positive impacts cannot be sustained. Most are at a disadvantage as they can't access capital funding and are limited in access to grant funding. Strategic public funding at local and national levels is urgently required to help the sector transform and ensure culture and heritage are accessible for everyone.”

From an advocacy point of view, Scotland's museums have great stories to tell, thanks to their impacts on everything from educational attainment and public wellbeing to the visitor economy and climate change. Building greater awareness and understanding among decision-makers will continue to be a priority for MGS in the months ahead as we help the sector through these uncertain times.

Download the report at
www.museumsgalleryscotland.org.uk/research/2024-survey-of-scotlands-museums-and-galleries



AIM Director Lisa Ollerhead explains possible approaches to advocacy using AIM's latest economic impact toolkit.

Seizing the opportunity

Advocacy and AIM's Economic Impact Report

As I write, the Autumn Budget – the first ‘fiscal event’ – from the new Labour Government is coming tomorrow. Trailed by weeks of rumours narrowing down more recently to days of real announcements, by the time you read this piece you will know what was in the Budget and will have started to grapple with what it means for your organisation.

It seems certain that there will be a rise in employer National Insurance, which will affect all of you with paid staff, and there may be museums, heritage, or culture measures as well that will affect our sector more specifically.

AIM's role at these times is to do our best to convey to policymakers (Government ministers and departmental officials) what our members and the independent sector need and, crucially, provide strong evidence that the problems are real and at the scale we say they are at, and that our proposals will solve them.

Before joining AIM as Director, I was Head of Museums Policy at the Department of Culture, Media and Sport, so I understand this relationship from both sides, and how to work constructively with decisionmakers to become a trusted source of ideas and evidence, and a potential partner on getting things done.

I also know how important it is for the sector to speak with one voice.

As advocates we work closely with other support organisations including

the Museums Association, the National Museum Directors' Council, the Heritage Alliance, the English Civic Museums Network, and more. You may have seen our reports during the Budget process of what we were collectively seeking, and, by now, our joint response to what was – and wasn't – included.

This partnership between sector bodies and DCMS is important because the final ‘boss’ of fiscal events (which in England currently tend to come twice a year) is HM Treasury. The reality of the process is that museums' spending proposals are in competition with spending proposals from the whole of culture, which are in competition with spending proposals from the whole of DCMS, which are in competition with spending proposals from the whole Government.

I understand the argument that in a rich country there should be enough to fund museums and heritage as well as health, education, and other social goods. But that isn't the system that is currently in place. (With occasional interesting exceptions – see me at an AIM Conference with a glass of wine in hand for further details.) HM Treasury and the Chancellor of the Exchequer make decisions on how to prioritise a finite envelope of funding and it's crucial that DCMS can make a robust case for why spending on museums is more important than spending on other things.

That robust case brings me to our latest iteration of the AIM economic impact analysis and toolkit. This piece

of work was first completed in 2010 and has become a mainstay of AIM's resources. For the latest version, once again carried out by Jon Durnin and Stephen Connolly we, once again, ensured the economics are of Treasury evidential standard ('Green Book') so we can be confident, and the Government can be confident, that when we say independent museums contribute over £800m of expenditure to the economy every year from 19 million visitors, it's true – and good context for the relatively constrained financial asks we make on behalf of our entrepreneurially-minded part of the sector.

We hope you use the toolkit, this year with a new and user-friendly spreadsheet version, to work out your own impact and make similar cases locally, to argue for investment or to show how important you are to your places economically as well as historically and socially.

The next fiscal event we expect is spring's Comprehensive Spending Review, an infrequent event which sets departmental spending for several years. This covers the national museums and Arts Council England – so it will be another crucial opportunity to make our case to ‘fund the fundamentals’ and protect the ability of thousands of museums to keep caring for collections and serving communities.

[Download the Economic Impact Report and Toolkit and spreadsheet at aim-museums.co.uk/2024-economic](https://www.aim-museums.co.uk/2024-economic)



Association of
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Economic Impact of the Independent Museum Sector 2024

The results included here estimate the overall (gross) economic contribution of independent museums to the (local) economies in which they are located. The extent to which such economic contributions are net additional is best considered at the local level using the 2024 AIM Economic Impact Toolkit.

Supporting Local Jobs



**UK Wide
more than
7,200 jobs
(4700 FTE)**

70% in the local area

The Value of Volunteers

**38,900 regular
volunteers
Almost 518,000
volunteer days**

**valued at
over £41 million**

Attracting visits

**more than
19.5 million
visitors**



Visitor spending



**over £279
million spent
off-site**



**estimated
total spend
£497 million**

**equates to around
3,800 FTE jobs**

Sector spend

**Independent
museum sector
spent £131.4
million on
goods and
services, which
equates to
2,900 FTE jobs**



**49.5%
spent in the
local area**

Significant economic contribution

**Gross direct
economic contribution**

**11,300 FTE jobs
£531.8 million
of expenditure**

**Overall gross direct,
indirect, and induced
economic contribution**

**17,900 jobs
£838.7 million
of expenditure**

AIM administers grants including AIM Arts Scholars Brighter Day Grant funded by the Worshipful Company of Arts Scholars Charitable Trust and AIM's Conservation and Collections Care and Collection Audit Schemes, funded by the Pilgrim Trust.

AIM grants case studies

AIM Pilgrim Trust Collections Care Audit

78 Derngate

Making the Most of Mackintosh

78 Derngate Northampton is the only house in England designed by the internationally important modernist architect Charles Rennie Mackintosh. Dating from 1917, the building was restored to its original condition and reopened in 2003, together with a collection of Mackintosh features, objects, and furniture.

Since our centenary in 2017 and a significant extension of our exhibition spaces in 2023, we have been planning for a major audit of our collection, both to address issues of care and storage, and to manage our archive of historic items and materials.

With the help of an AIM Pilgrim Trust grant, in July 2024 we were able to welcome the expert conservator Caroline Oliver to help us work towards these goals. Caroline led an inspirational and informative workshop for key staff, covering all areas of conservation techniques and priorities, from light and humidity to security and pest control. She was then able to undertake a thorough audit of our existing displays, archives, and storage, identifying priorities for future improvement and advising on areas of focus and urgency.

Caroline's substantial report is proving invaluable for us as we plan towards applying for crucial funding to restructure our archives and to improve the care and conservation of our historic building and collection.

Liz Jansson
House Manager



78 Derngate hall lounge.

AIM Pilgrim Trust Collections Care Grant

Stromness Museum £7,831

The AIM grant paid for materials to mount and store fragile seaweed specimens, cleaning materials for ongoing collections care and a conservator's time to undertake training and treatment. The museum is run by a small team who recognise the potential of natural history specimens and have built up a programme around them.

Additional funding was sourced to pay for an outreach officer to undertake shoreline safaris, so they could compare the seaweed found today with historical specimens, and get people interested in science and climate change. There will be a follow up exhibition this winter that incorporates the conserved specimens.

Feedback from the museum stated



Conservator Hana Bristow working on seaweed specimen at Stromness Museum.

“We have found the process of watching our fragile pressed seaweed collections being transformed through conservation to a more robust state very rewarding. They are now conserved and rehoused to ensure

their longevity and improve future access for researchers, outreach activities, and digitisation work.

Having a locally based conservator (Hana Bristow) with whom we were in regular contact was very beneficial as we felt part of the process. Discussions on handwritten notes, labelling and the reorganisation of the storage, on-site training with our own collection was equally useful.

The legacy for the museum is far reaching and we have achieved all we set out to do with most of the collection: the conservation and future preservation of our seaweed collections; collections that are now more accessible to researchers and visitors; that are ready for digitisation; and staff have been upskilled in collections care. The winter 2024 exhibition will showcase the importance of these collections and highlight why we need to look after them.”

Stop Press! Andrew Lovett OBE appointed to Arts Council England's National Council

As the Bulletin was going to press DCMS announced that outgoing AIM Chair Andrew Lovett will join Arts Council England's National Council.

Made up of 15 members who are also charitable trustees, ACE National Council includes its National Chair, Sir Nicholas Serota and the five chairs of its area councils.

It is responsible for ensuring the achievement of ACE objectives, to develop and improve the knowledge, understanding and practice of the arts, and to increase the accessibility of the arts to the public. The council decide on policy and priorities and invest money in artists and art organisations directly and through the area councils.

Members are appointed by the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, usually for four years.

On the appointment AIM Director Lisa Ollerhead said

“This is a great appointment. Andrew's wealth of experience and expert advocacy has been invaluable to AIM during his tenure as both a trustee and Chair. As he steps down from AIM Board, I am delighted that Arts Council England and organisations large and small will continue to benefit from Andrew's support through this important new role.”



Sarah Furness, employment law specialist at AIM Associate Supplier Hay & Kilner highlights the latest on Employment Rights.

The Employment Rights Bill: what's changing?

The Employment Rights Bill has now passed its second reading in the House of Commons; so, what can employers expect if the bill comes into force? Sarah Furness, employment law specialist at Hay & Kilner explains.

Unfair dismissal: Arguably the biggest change, the Bill plans to make protection from unfair dismissal a day-one right, subject to a statutory probationary period, meaning that employees with less than two years' service will be entitled to bring an unfair dismissal claim in some circumstances.

Although the details are still unclear, employers will potentially be permitted to dismiss employees within a statutory probationary period without giving rise to an unfair dismissal claim although some formal process is likely to be required. However, employees will potentially still be entitled to bring an unfair dismissal claim in their probationary period if the reason for dismissal is redundancy. The length of the statutory probationary period is likely to be up to nine months, however this is subject to further government consultation. Although a substantial change to the law on unfair dismissal, this is not expected to come into force until October 2026.

Zero-hour contracts: To prevent "exploitative" zero-hour contracts, the Bill introduces a right for zero-hour or "low-hour" contract workers to be offered guaranteed hours based on an average amount of hours that they

have worked over a certain reference period. In an acknowledgement that many workers enjoy the flexibility of zero-hour contracts, the worker is not obligated to accept these guaranteed hours.

The Bill also introduces an entitlement for workers to reasonable notice of a cancellation of or change to a shift, and importantly, a right to payment if a shift is cancelled, moved or curtailed at short notice.

Fire and re-hire: The Bill makes it automatically unfair to dismiss an employee for refusing to agree to a change in their contract of employment, with a very limited exception if the employer can show evidence of severe financial difficulties (likely to be near-collapse) and demonstrate that there was no reasonable way to avoid making this change.

Flexible working: The Bill provides that flexible working will be the default "unless the employer can prove it is unreasonable". This heavily caveated right only really requires the employer to state why the request is unreasonable, meaning that, in practice, there is no significant change in this area.

New day-one rights: Alongside protection from unfair dismissal, employees will gain the right to parental leave (unpaid), paternity leave, bereavement leave and statutory sick pay from day one of their employment.

Statutory sick pay: employees will be entitled to statutory sick pay from the first day of their sick leave, instead of the third day, and the lower earnings limit to qualify will be removed.

Collective redundancies: Currently, employers only have an obligation to collectively consult their staff if they are proposing to make 20 or more employees in one establishment redundant; the Bill will abolish the requirement for all employees to be at one establishment, meaning that employers proposing to make 20 or more employees redundant across all establishments will be required to collectively consult.

Sexual harassment: The new, active duty on employers to take reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment in the workplace, (which came into force on 26 October 2024), will be amended by the Bill to require employers to take all reasonable steps and to extend the duty so that it applies in respect of third-party harassment. Regulations may be put in place to specify these reasonable steps.

Summary

While these are all certainly changes employers need to be aware of, the most impactful are likely be the changes to the law on unfair dismissal and the reinforced protections for zero/low-hour workers. The Bill may still be subject to change as it goes through the consultation process, and further detail is still required to give a comprehensive overview of its impact.

The employment law team at Hay & Kilner are on hand to provide support to AIM members by offering a free 30-minute consultation. Find out more aim-museums.co.uk

The importance of heritage protection

Heritage sites and museums are repositories of our collective memory, but their preservation is under constant threat. Lisa O'Flynn from new Associate Supplier Abloy outlines strategies to mitigate the risk.

Common threats

1. **Environmental Risks:** Climate change poses significant risks, with rising sea levels, extreme weather, and natural disasters endangering physical structures and collections. Heritage sites often lack the infrastructure to withstand these changes, making it important to assess vulnerabilities and implement adaptive measures.
2. **Theft and Vandalism:** Art theft is a multi-billion-pound industry, with museums and galleries frequently targeted due to the high value of their collections. Vandalism, whether motivated by political statements or personal grievances, further exacerbates the risk. There is also the insider theft risk and knowing who, where and when a gallery or store has been accessed is key and investigation time can be greatly reduced with digital systems.
3. **Technological Vulnerabilities:** As museums increasingly adopt digital technologies – such as electronic online databases, online ticketing and physical security systems, they can also become susceptible to cyber-attacks. Protecting sensitive information and ensuring the integrity of digital collections is paramount. Any digital security systems introduced also need to ensure they comply with current legislation and compliance.

Effective Security Strategies

To combat threats, heritage institutions should adopt a holistic approach to security:

1. **Risk Assessment and Management:** Conducting a thorough risk assessment is the first step. This includes identifying potential threats, evaluating current security measures, and establishing protocols to mitigate risks. Regular updates to the assessment are crucial as new threats emerge.
2. **Physical Security Measures:** Installing surveillance cameras, motion detectors, and alarm systems is essential. Employing trained security personnel who understand the unique needs of heritage properties can help deter criminal activity. Additionally,

employing access control measures can prevent unauthorised entry. The availability of digital key systems allows us to know who, where and when a lock was accessed and are now crucial in today's world. With the introduction of 3D printing, mechanical keys are now susceptible to copying and cannot be deleted like their digital counterparts if lost or stolen.

We must also not negate the physical security of installed products, which happens with many feature driven digital systems. NPSA certified products will ensure they are physically secure and fully compliant. These digital systems must also compliment the aesthetics of a Heritage Listed building and preserve its authenticity and discreetly control access whilst adhering to Escape Door standards such as BS EN 1125 and 179.

3. **Environmental Controls:** Implementing climate control systems is vital for preserving sensitive artifacts. Regular monitoring of temperature and humidity levels helps protect collections from deterioration. Flood barriers and disaster preparedness plans are also crucial for safeguarding physical structures.
4. **Digital Security Protocols:** Museums must protect their digital assets with strong cybersecurity measures. This includes using encryption, regular software updates, and employee training on best practices for data security. By using AES256 encryption for example you ensure transmitted data is secure during the transfer process.
5. **Community Engagement and Education:** Engaging the community in the preservation of local heritage can enhance security. Educating the public about the value of cultural assets fosters a sense of stewardship.
6. **Collaborations and Partnerships:** Museums can benefit from forming partnerships with local law enforcement, heritage organisations, and cybersecurity firms. These collaborations can provide resources, expertise, and additional security measures tailored to specific needs.

As stewards of cultural heritage, museums and heritage sites bear a significant responsibility. Securing these properties and their assets requires a multifaceted approach that integrates technology, community involvement, and proactive management. By addressing vulnerabilities head-on, these institutions can continue to protect and celebrate our shared history for generations to come.

Please feel free to contact me if you would like any information on compliant and secure security systems for your premises on Lisa.oflynn@abloy.co.uk

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Martyn's Law:

New Anti-Terrorism legislation progresses in Parliament

The UK Government is making significant strides in enhancing public safety with the introduction of Martyn's Law to Parliament, says Associate Supplier United Outcomes.

This legislation, named in memory of Martyn Hett, who tragically lost his life in the 2017 Manchester Arena attack, aims to protect the public from terrorism by imposing stricter security requirements on venues and public spaces across the UK.

What is Martyn's Law?

Martyn's Law, formally known as the Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Bill, will introduce legal obligations for certain venues to improve their preparedness for potential terrorist attacks. The law applies to venues, events, and public spaces where a large number of people gather, recognising the critical need to safeguard these high-risk areas.

The key principles of Martyn's Law are as follows:

1. Risk Assessments and Action Plans: Under the legislation, venues will be required to conduct regular assessments of the potential risks posed by terrorism and develop action plans to address these risks. This includes implementing appropriate

security measures and staff training to ensure that everyone is prepared for an emergency.

2. Proportional Approach: Martyn's Law introduces a two-tiered system. Smaller venues with a capacity of over 200 will need to undertake basic security measures, while larger venues, with a capacity of over 800, will be subject to more stringent requirements. This tiered approach ensures that businesses are not overwhelmed, while still maintaining robust standards of public protection.

3. Enhanced Collaboration: The legislation encourages greater collaboration between venue operators, local authorities, and counter-terrorism police. This aims to create a coordinated response to potential threats, ensuring that expertise and intelligence are shared more effectively.

4. Public Awareness: Venues will also be expected to raise public awareness of the risks posed by terrorism and how individuals can act to protect themselves in the event of an attack. This could include public safety announcements and visible security measures that reassure visitors while promoting vigilance.

Why Is Martyn's Law Important?

Martyn's Law has been developed in response to the tragic events of the Manchester Arena bombing and the tireless campaigning of Martyn Hett's mother, Figen Murray. Since the attack, she has advocated for stronger

protections and better preparedness across the UK's public spaces. The Government recognises that terrorists often target crowded areas where they can cause the most harm. Martyn's Law seeks to address this by ensuring that operators of public spaces are aware of potential risks and take the necessary precautions to mitigate them.

What's Next for Martyn's Law?

Martyn's Law is currently making its way through Parliament and, if passed, will have a far-reaching impact on the way public safety is managed. The Government has committed to providing clear guidance and support to businesses and local authorities to help them meet the new requirements. There are also plans to provide financial assistance to smaller venues that may struggle to implement the necessary measures.

The introduction of this law represents a pivotal moment in the UK's fight against terrorism. It reinforces the notion that public safety is a shared responsibility, requiring both the vigilance of the public and proactive measures from those responsible for public spaces.

While the exact timeline for Martyn's Law to come into effect is yet to be finalised, the progress of the Bill through Parliament is a clear sign of the Government's commitment to improving security across the country.

www.gov.uk/government/news/martyns-law-introduced-to-parliament-to-better-protect-the-public-from-terrorism

Hayes Parsons Insurance Brokers share essential tips on how to protect your property during winter closures while highlighting the importance of understanding your insurance policy.

Winter is coming

Essential tips for museums preparing for winter closures

Understanding potential risks

Common problems that can arise during closures include:

1. Temperature and humidity fluctuations – Sudden changes in temperature can affect delicate artworks and artefacts. High humidity can promote mould growth, which can severely damage items.
2. Water damage – Cold weather can result in frozen pipes. If they burst, they can cause significant water damage, ruining exhibits and infrastructure.
3. Security vulnerabilities – With the museum unoccupied, it may be more susceptible to theft, vandalism, natural intrusions like wildlife or even as we have seen, urban explorers.
4. Maintenance issues like roof leaks, pest, or electrical problems can escalate without regular monitoring.

Proactive steps to protect your museum and collection

1. Review your insurance policy for winter closure coverage. Start by reviewing your insurance policy. Pay particular attention to the unoccupancy terms. Many insurers have specific requirements for vacant properties and different stages at which a property is considered unoccupied. Speak with your insurance broker to clarify these terms and ensure you can meet them. Failing to meet the conditions can result in limited cover or even claims being denied when issues arise.

2. Control environmental conditions to preserve collections. Where possible, ensure heating, ventilation and air conditioning systems are working and set to optimal conditions. Consider using temperature and humidity trackers that will alert you if conditions fluctuate outside of safe ranges

3. Prevent water damage. Water damage is one of the most common threats during winter, the best solution is to prevent risks before they happen:

- a. Prepare the plumbing. Insulate pipes in unheated areas. Leave heating on low to prevent freezing
- b. Inspect the roof and gutters. Clear any debris and rubbish to prevent water accumulating and causing blockages. Check any flat roof is not pooling water and that any covering is still watertight

4. Enhance security measures during winter closures. With museums empty, security is paramount:

- a. Check security systems. Are alarms and cameras in working order? Would any walkways or corridors benefit from additional lighting?
- b. Schedule regular visits. Arrange for staff or volunteers to check premises periodically. Will anyone be performing admin work from the museum during its winter closure?

5. Conduct regular maintenance. Before closing, carry out a thorough inspection:

- a. Address any issues. Fix any leaks, electrical issues, broken windows
- b. Seal entry points. Inspect windows and doors for weaknesses, seal any gaps to deter pests and intruders

6. Document your inventory/Update asset register. Having a detailed inventory is essential for managing risk:

- a. Update records. Ensure the list is up to date and accurate, including condition of items
- b. Take photos. Document items to assist in any potential insurance claims or police reports should damage or a break-in occur
- c. If renovations are the reason for your closure, ensure all items are stored securing and safely in an area away from works or in a separate building. If storage is off site – update your insurer to have this change noted.

A wise approach to risk

By being active in your implementation of these strategies, you can significantly reduce the chance of damage or loss during winter closures. Not only will this protect valuable collections, but it can also lead to substantial cost savings by preventing the need for repairs and helps ensure you are compliant with your insurance policy terms. Remember insurance is the last but vital stage of protection, properly preparing can not only keep your running costs down but also your insurance costs too.

If you need any advice or would like to review your insurance policy, Hayes Parsons are here to help.

L.Penny@hayesparsons.co.uk www.HayesParsons.co.uk

Last month marked 10-years since Mancunian literary museum Elizabeth Gaskell's House opened to the public. Director Sally Jastrzebski-Lloyd explains how this marks one of the most important decades in the building's almost 200-year history.

Celebrating the 10-year anniversary of Elizabeth Gaskell's House

The journey to becoming a visitor attraction and museum took several years of tenacity and some serious fundraising from a dedicated group of volunteers who brought the House back to life, while generous grants and donations also made the milestone possible.

The venue has been a member of AIM since 2017, when I took on the Director role. We have benefited hugely from our AIM membership and the support of AIM has been instrumental in our success and survival.

Funding from the AIM Biffa Award as part of the Landfill Communities Fund created a new permanent exhibition space in the Brontë Room. Opened in 2022 it has been a key asset to the museum ever since.

Other AIM funding has enabled us to professionally repair books in our collection, create a much-needed collection store in our attic space and provide a variety of training and CPD opportunities.

Additional achievements over the past 10 years include the restoration of Elizabeth's bedroom, the creation of new permanent and temporary exhibition spaces and the development of a rich and varied online events programme that allows thousands of fans all over the world to participate in the conversation around the seminal author and her writing. This includes partnership events with other AIM members, including Chawton House, Brontë Parsonage and Jane Austen's House.

I also work with more local members such as Salford Working Class Movement Library (WCML) and the Pankhurst Centre on joint marketing initiatives, loans and volunteer development projects.

In 2019, the volunteer team received the Queen's Award for voluntary service, the garden has won several Britain in Bloom accolades, and in August 2024, the House was awarded official accredited museum status.

The House will be holding several in-person and online events to mark the 10-year milestone over the next year, including a brand-new exhibition 'The story of Elizabeth Gaskell's House from dereliction to delight' which will explore the building's restoration and launch as a cultural attraction. It delves into the personal stories and memories of the passionate volunteers who came together to fight, against the odds, for the House's survival, taking visitors on a journey from the building's close brush with dereliction to its rebirth as a visitor attraction and museum.

The House is also set to launch its inaugural residency for North West-based young writers later this year and will work with Manchester Metropolitan University on a student filmmaking project.

For those further afield, a season of online events themed around house and home will enable the museum's online audience of more than 3,000 people to join in the celebrations.

<https://elizabethgaskellhouse.co.uk>



Images of exterior before and after.

CFG's Gift Aid Officer, Dionne Sturdy-Clow, explores some of the results of CFG's recent Gift Aid Survey and shares some top tips for maximising this vital tax relief.

Are you making the most of Gift Aid?

What does gift aid and the Gift Aid Small Donations Scheme (GASDS) mean to your museum? Is it a vital tax relief you can't afford to operate without? Or is it something you'll 'get around to registering for one day'?

Are you making the most out of gift aid and the Gift Aid Small Donations Scheme (GASDS)? Whilst many museums can't afford to operate without the schemes, others may not be maximising the full potential of this tax relief.

Earlier in the summer, CFG ran a gift aid survey to ask charity leaders these questions and more. Thank you if you responded! What came through loud and clear was that many charities, including independent museums, really value gift aid and GASDS.

We also uncovered that for many charities, particularly smaller ones, the claims process and the rules around gift aid and GASDS can present quite a few challenges. And this means that some charities could be missing out on vital income.

In fact, although gift aid contributes £1.6 billion annually to charitable causes, a massive £560m goes unclaimed every year! Some of the problems we identified included:

- a general lack of understanding and awareness among the public about gift aid and how it works;
- a lack of training and information for charity staff and trustees on some of the more technical aspects of claiming;
- operational and technological challenges, such as staff and volunteer turnover, documentation and record keeping.

On Gift Aid Awareness Day on 3 October, CFG held a free webinar for charity staff and trustees. It was a lively event attended by more than 130 people and no question was too basic or too complex for our experts from HMRC and

Buzzacott. After looking back at those questions and our survey results, we've created six top tips for making the most of gift aid and GASDS:

1. Register! It sounds obvious but if you're entitled to claim, do so. It's worth taking the time to sign up. To smooth the process, watch our Gift Aid 101 with charity consultant Rachel Cooper: bit.ly/GAreg101.

2. Get organised. Even if you're using a third party to manage and process gift aid, you'll still need to keep accurate and up-to-date records. You don't need fancy systems and software, but you do need a secure place and robust processes for storing and managing the data.

3. Know the rules. Find out what you can claim on and look at HMRC's guidance notes. If our webinar and survey results showed anything, it's that the rules can be complicated and there's no such thing as a silly question.

4. Access resources. There are many free resources available on the gov.uk website and many of CFG's partners provide great articles too. We recently developed a Gift Aid resource hub on our website. Here, you'll find useful resources and information, all in one place.

5. Phone a friend. There's nothing like fast and friendly advice when you need it. CFG provides a dedicated and free Accounting and Tax helpline, generously supported by Crowe UK. Or get in touch with HMRC via the Charity Helpline: 0300 123 1073.

6. Talk to others! Connect with other AIM members to share advice and approaches. Systems can be different, but there's a lot you'll have in common too.

If you have any questions or would like to share your favourite gift aid resources, email me at: dionne.sturdy-clow@cfg.org.uk

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