



Association of
Independent
Museums

AIM Bulletin

June 2024

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Martyn's Law update

A large, circular photograph of a man with a beard and a brown hat, smiling and looking to the right. In the background, a woman in a blue shirt is visible, looking up and gesturing with her hand. The scene appears to be indoors, possibly at a conference or event.

Countdown to Conference!

Welcome to AIM Bulletin!

www.aim-museums.co.uk

Change – a constant potential

It is a key challenge of writing something for print. Between the penning and the printing, all manner of events can take place rendering carefully crafted words old news, yesterday's views.

As ever, the potential for change is in the air and on the horizon. It is hard to escape, no matter how hard one might try, the fact that we are in an election year. Indeed, there is always the possibility that an election campaign could be well underway by the time you read this, or at least be more imminent.

This sense of the constant potential for change is, ironically, a certainty we have learned to live with over the last few years. But how does it impact how we plan? How do we ensure as the sands shift around us that our museums and our work remain valued, in every sense of the word? How do we best remind ourselves, and our communities, how important it is that we are very much of them as well as in them? In essence, how do we offer our communities a sense of certainty in these times?

There has not been a better time for an AIM conference, to take time out, to get together. To listen and think and plan. And I am delighted we are getting together at Black

Country Living Museum. It is particularly apt that the theme of this year's event sees us exploring the place of our organisations at the heart of our communities. Community has been and remains essential to the work of the Black Country Living Museum, as I am sure it is in your own organisation. It is what enables and inspires us as we strive to retain that critical place, in the hearts of our visitors.

If you are coming along, I look forward to hearing the practical and inspiring examples of good work, the challenges and questions, debates and thoughts that we always enjoy at AIM Conference.

And whether I will see you there or not, as ever I ask that, should you have suggestions and ideas that AIM should be considering that you share these with me, the Board or the Team.

I understand that your membership of AIM is an investment. Of your time, money and faith in our organisation and our community. Thank you for that, I hope we can continue to deliver on that investment for you.

Lisa Ollerhead
Director



Front cover

One of The Guardian's must visit venues for 2024, we are delighted to have the support of the Black Country Living Museum for this year's Conference. An award-winning open-air museum, it tells the story of one of the very first industrialised landscapes in Britain. Set across 26 acres, delegates can explore carefully reconstructed shops, houses and industrial areas that represent the Black Country's story and learn how steam power, human ingenuity and an increasingly interconnected world transformed this region into a manufacturing powerhouse.

AIM Director Lisa Ollerhead on developing AIM's Climate Hallmark.

The responsibility to make a difference

At last year's Conference AIM shared a draft of a brand-new Hallmark for Prospering Museums – one for the environment. This, our first new Hallmark since Tackling Inequality was added in 2020, joins the rest of our framework for helping members to understand what it means to be a good independent museum and reflect on where they're doing well and where they could improve.

We included the draft in last year's August issue of the Bulletin so members who weren't in Edinburgh could comment on wording and concepts that would help assess activity on the environment. Several of you got in touch with feedback, which I was grateful to take into consideration in the next draft of the Hallmark.

It's been a while since that conference, so I wanted to update on where this piece of work has got to. It has become a small part of a much bigger piece of work looking at how we work with sector partners to support members with environmental sustainability, AIM's own responsibilities as an organisation, and museums' role in climate action. We are currently lining up these pieces of work and so releasing a new version of the Hallmarks with the addition of one for the environment – or as we are now referring to it, the Climate

Hallmark – has been on pause in the early part of this year.

The main piece of work we have been doing is re-envisioning the guidance we had planned to develop to accompany the new Hallmark. We know how much is out there on environmental issues, from buildings to operations to programming, and how difficult it can be to keep up and understand what's relevant to each organisation. We want to find ways to help members to navigate all that material – and it's turned out this is a shared ambition with other sector organisations, so we are in discussions about helping to create a more ambitious resource that can work across museums and heritage. Our Board member Liz Power has been involved in this exciting piece of work as part of her day job of running Historic Buildings & Places as well as being a carbon literacy trainer.

Alongside this work we are initiating a new research project on how museums work with land: from gardens, to fields, to country estates; as part of their operating models, as well as how they approach it as a part of nature in a context of climate change. More information about this innovative research will be available soon (including, inevitably, a survey which we hope as many organisations as possible will fill in!) We hope the findings of this research will inform

future work around climate and the environment, including helping set the scene for next year's National Conference which will delve into these issues in more detail.

“ We want to find ways to help members to navigate all that material – and it's turned out this is a shared ambition with other sector organisations. ”

We are also continuing to look at AIM's own environmental impact, both under the leadership of our Board and as part of our responsibilities as an Arts Council England Investment Principles Support Organisation. Like many of our members we are a small organisation, and it can be a challenge to see how we can make a difference – but we understand our responsibility to do so, and the impact small steps can have.

There will be more on all of these projects in the coming months, including the next draft of the Climate Hallmark. Please do look out for where members can get involved to make it as supportive and useful as possible.

aim-museums.co.uk/aim-hallmarks

Cornwall Museums Partnership (CMP) recently completed the Arts Council England funded Transition process.

Cornwall Museums Partnership ensures positive legacy

A legacy for CMP's work with museums across Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly has been secured as CEO Tamzyn Smith, in collaboration with CMP's Board, delivered on a number of the objectives set when the decision was made to close. These include the planned 'adoption' of the organisation's live projects, support for the team in securing new roles and, crucially, ongoing support for Cornwall's rural museums and heritage organisations.

Arts Council England Transition funding is granted to previous NPO organisations to "assist them to wind down or move towards a new operating and/or funding model in a managed and orderly manner."

CEO Tamzyn Smith says, "The findings of the independent business and funding review as part of our Transition process was highly unexpected, but once we got over the initial shock, as a team we agreed

that we wanted to embark on this ending and closure in a new way. We committed to making this exit an evolution, and to it being as positive, proactive, and human-centred as it could be. Importantly we set out to provide a positive legacy, and where possible, to find new, fitting, 'adoptive homes' for CMP's invaluable work."

As part of the closure, Safe Access, working in partnership with Queer Kernow, has moved to AIM. This R&D project highlights the risk to wellbeing that increasing access to collections presents, especially for researchers from marginalised backgrounds. This work is funded by NLHF via their Heritage Innovation Fund and supported by the Young Foundation. As part of the positive transition, CMP's Jenna Marrion has moved to AIM to lead the project.

Lisa Ollerhead, AIM Director said "We are delighted to support to the

ongoing Safe Access project with Queer Kernow. Innovation thrives on breaking barriers and fostering inclusivity, and Safe Access exemplifies these principles. Thanks to the support of NLHF we are glad to give this project a home and continue CMP's important work. Welcoming Jenna to the AIM team to drive this project forward is a great opportunity, and we look forward to sharing the outcomes of this innovative work in due course."

An Arts Council England spokesperson said: "Over the past 10 years, Cornwall Museum Partnership has laid firm groundwork for the local sector. We are pleased to have supported a thoughtful closure programme through Transition Funding and will continue to support museums in Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly for the long-term benefit of residents and visitors to the Southwest."

Lost Museums: Can you help?

Do you know what happened to the Vinas Dolls Gallery in Newark, which closed in 2015, or where the collection of the Norfolk Museum of Straw Works ended up after its founder Ella Carstairs died in 2017?

The Mapping Museums Lab at Birkbeck and King's College London are researching museum closures in the UK from 2000 to 2025, and trying to find out what happens to collections when museums close. Do they go to other museums, or into storage, or are they sold? How much remains in the public domain and on display, and how much is dispersed elsewhere? The team are also interested in what happens to the buildings that these museums once occupied. What purposes are they then put to, or do they remain empty and unused?

The project began in October with a list of over 480 museums recorded as closed since 2000. The Mapping Museum's team has succeeded in gathering information for almost 400, but the rest

of the list have proved difficult to find out much about despite numerous enquiries.

And this is where AIM members come in. We know that the museum community has acquired a wealth of information over many years, and it's possible that you may know what happened in some of the cases where our enquiries have stalled.

You may know something about the Mechanical Memories Museum in Brighton, which apparently closed in 2020 or 2021, the Abergynolwyn Village Museum in Wales, closed c. 2007, or the Museum of Cipher Equipment in Cupar, Scotland, which may have closed at any time between 2004 and 2017.

You can see the full list of closures at mapping-museums.bbk.ac.uk/closed-museums-missing-data-independents-by-region.

If you have any information about what happened to the collections or buildings for any of these museums, do get in touch, it would be very much appreciated.

m.liebenrood@bbk.ac.uk

Mark Liebenrood, Mapping Museums Lab



Fostering positive wellbeing for diverse heritage freelancers

The second phase of the Heritage Innovation Funded action research Safe Access Project is currently underway, led by Nicki Foley and Sophie Meyer at Queer Kernow CIC and AIM Freelance Project Manager, Jenna Marrion.

The principle aim of the project is to ensure that heritage organisations create safe and healthy cultures for their workers, freelancers and consultants, especially those from marginalised backgrounds. To garner a more robust understanding of the potential representation burden that marginalised people face when working with museums and heritage settings, the Test Phase of Safe Access will enable the team to expand on their work so far by researching the experiences of diverse freelancers and consultants in rural regions across the UK.

During June, July and September, the project team will be conducting interviews in different locations across the UK and are currently inviting heritage freelancers and consultants from marginalised communities to submit an Expression of Interest to participate. Interview participants will be reimbursed for their time with an honorarium of £150 as well as travel expenses.

If your museum or heritage organisation has delivered innovative projects in collaboration with diverse freelancers and consultants, the Safe Access team would really appreciate your support in sharing this opportunity for your contacts to be involved in the project.

The experiences and perspectives collected will be used to inform the production of tools to support heritage organisations in creating inclusive workplaces and better protect colleagues in the future.

If you are a marginalised person who has worked with a GLAM organisation and would like to share your experiences in an interview, please do submit your Expression of Interest, using this link: <https://forms.office.com/e/tASWBpHmEU>

Should the project team be successful in securing funding from Phase 3 of the Heritage Innovation Fund, they will be looking to work with museums and heritage organisations to test and embed the tools created. If you would like to register your interest or discuss the potential opportunity for your organisation to be involved in please email Jenna at jenna.marrion@aim-museums.co.uk

www.cornwallmuseumpartnership.org.uk/safe-access-promoting-wellbeing-for-diverse-researchers/

Pictured: Sophie Meyer, Director of Queer Kernow CIC, leading a group of young queer people around the strong rooms of Kresen Kernow to examine LGBTQ+ archive material.

News in brief

Art Fund Museum of the Year 2024 finalists announced

Five museums have been shortlisted for Art Fund Museum of the Year 2024, the biggest museum prize in the world with the winner receiving £120,000, and the four finalists £15,000 each.

The award champions brilliant museums and galleries across the UK. From a reimagined museum created with children and young people to one of Scotland's leading contemporary arts organisations, each shortlisted museum has centred community in its programming to make a lasting impact on both a local and national scale.

- Craven Museum in Skipton, North Yorkshire
- Dundee Contemporary Arts in Dundee
- Manchester Museum
- The National Portrait Gallery in London
- Young V&A

www.artfund.org/museum-of-the-year

Chatham Historic Dockyard Trust celebrates 40 years

AIM member Chatham Historic Dockyard Trust recently marked the 40th anniversary of the closure of Chatham Dockyard and the creation of Chatham Historic Dockyard Trust.

On 30 March 1984 Chatham Dockyard's gates closed, ending 400 years of the Royal Navy's presence in Chatham and the surrounding area. The very same day, Chatham Historic Dockyard Trust was formed to save 80 acres of this uniquely historic site and provide a beacon of hope for the community.

At its height during the Second World War, the Dockyard employed more than 17,000 workers from more than 26 different trades. Just prior to the announcement of its closure, the Dockyard employed 6,500 civilians. Forty years on and the Trust, who

began the work of preserving, conserving, and finding a use for the historic site in 1984, is simultaneously remembering the closure and what it meant to Chatham, while also celebrating the achievements of the last four decades. Those achievements include saving 47 Scheduled Ancient Monument buildings, 180 businesses welcomed on to the site, the saving of the oldest Ropery in Europe, keeping the 400-year-old skills alive in practice, and a permanent home for the HM Submarine Ocelot, HMS Cavalier and HMS Gannet, and much more.

Don't miss Lynette Crisp, Director of Public Engagement at Chatham Historic Dockyard Trust, speaking at AIM Conference 2024.

thedockyard.co.uk

Brunel's SS Great Britain launches 'Plants Crossing Continents'

New exhibits revealing the Australian roots of the English Garden

The ship's weather deck now displays three reconstructed Wardian cases for visitors to explore with three more to be added in July. Wardian cases were mini glass houses which, in 1833, were adapted to transport living plants on the decks of ships across the oceans. The modern-day cases are replicas of the last surviving ship-board example designs, which are kept in the Kew Gardens archive. The cases will



Wardian cases aboard SS Great Britain w Jane Porter and Lou (Redcatch).

celebrate the inbound and outbound plant species that the ship transported across the world between 1859 and 1875.

Thanks to new research from the Brunel Institute, which studied the ship's cargo manifests, each case will be planted with a true-to-life 'order' to make the global crossing. The innovation of the Wardian case revolutionised long-distance plant transport. Each sealed case created its own microclimate, allowing the plants to survive despite only being watered once during a two-month crossing.

By enabling the global migration of plants, the *SS Great Britain* connected key botanists, entrepreneurs and 'plant hunters' from across the world. The plants that the *SS Great Britain* transported inspired some of our most famous thinkers. It's thought that the Australian orchids, which supported Darwin's theory of evolution, were sent to his home in Kent via the *SS Great Britain*.

AIM members collaborate on new exhibition

The Kent Archaeological Society (KAS), in collaboration with the Faversham Fleur De Lis Museum and the Lees Court Estate, has launched a new archaeological exhibition called "Lees Court Estate: Story of a Prehistoric Landscape." The exhibition tells the story of one of the UK's most extensive long-term community excavation projects.

The Lees Court Estate, located near Faversham, has been a site of archaeological investigation since 2017. Over the past seven years, the KAS has discovered evidence of a previously unknown prehistoric landscape situated around a valley between Badlesmere, Shottenden, and Sheldwich.

Among the discoveries are four Bronze Age hoards, a late Bronze Age/early Iron Age settlement, and two possible Neolithic monuments. The Fleur De Lis Museum team has partnered with

KAS to choose objects from various excavations that help tell the story of this mysterious landscape.

Andy Ward, KAS Curator, said: “Many of the objects on show have been excavated by volunteers who have given up their time to investigate this fascinating and previously unknown prehistoric landscape. This is part of a wider community archaeology project that is only beginning to explain the complexities of life dating back as far as 150,000 years ago.”

www.kentarchaeology.org.uk
favershamsociety.org

Peggy Guggenheim: Petersfield to Palazzo

The Guggenheim name is synonymous with the great cities of New York, Bilbao and Venice, but less so with an historic market town in Hampshire. However, an exhibition opening in the summer of 2024 is aiming to change that.

Before buying the Palazzo Venier dei Leoni and the garden behind it in Venice in 1949, for five years (between 1934 and 1939), world-famous 20th-century patron and collector of modern art Peggy Guggenheim (1898-1979) lived at Yew Tree Cottage near Petersfield.

Featuring a focused selection of artworks once owned by the self-described ‘art addict’, Peggy Guggenheim: Petersfield to Palazzo will show paintings and sculptures by leading British and European modern artists including Henry Moore (1898-1986), Yves Tanguy (1900-1955), Max Ernst (1891-1976), Jean Arp (1886-1966) and John Tunnard (1900-1971) amongst others.

A variety of photographs, contemporary fashion items and literature provide further context to the fascinating life and times of Peggy Guggenheim. The exhibition includes loans from the Peggy Guggenheim Collection, Venice – whose Director, Karole P. B. Vail, is Peggy Guggenheim’s elder granddaughter.

Karole P. B. Vail says, “It will be wonderful to have an exhibition exploring an unexpected and wonderful little-known chapter in Peggy Guggenheim’s eventful life before she began her life as a committed patron of the arts.”

Peggy Guggenheim: Petersfield to Palazzo
15 June – 5 October 2024



Peggy Guggenheim on the roof terrace of Palazzo Venier dei Leoni, Venice, early 1950s Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation, Venice, Photo Archivio Cameraphoto Epoche, Gift, Cassa di Risparmio di Venezia, 2005.

Opportunity for emerging curators

Together with Frieze and the National Gallery Subject Specialist Network (SSN): European Paintings pre-1900, Art Fund is offering ten fully funded places for UK regional curators to attend a two-day programme.

Working in partnership with the SSN for European Paintings pre-1900 and The National Gallery, through the Frieze Masters programme, the event takes place at Regents Park, London, on Thursday 10 and Friday 11 October.

It seeks to bring together a cohort of emerging career curators from diverse and underrepresented backgrounds to explore the subject of transhistorical exhibition making (across historical time periods, both historic and contemporary).

Led by Dr Jennifer Sliwka, Keeper of Western Art at the Ashmolean Museum and Professorial Fellow of Balliol College, University of Oxford, the programme covers:

- Pre-programme online seminar and introduction to the Art market session introduction and access to The Credit Suisse Exhibition Van Gogh exhibition (The National Gallery)
- In-conversation with Emerson Bowyer, Searle Curator Painting

and Sculpture of Europe, The Art Institute of Chicago

- Curators’ workshop
- Tours of Frieze Masters
- Unexpected View at The National Gallery (conversations between curators and cultural practitioners, focused on selected works from the National Gallery Collection, exploring its relevance to the artist’s work, or more broadly to current social and cultural issues)
- Feedback meeting with the curators
- Access to Frieze London and Frieze Masters

Find out more at

www.artfund.org/professional/get-funding/programmes/art-fund-curators-programme-at-frieze-masters

Deadline Wednesday 26 June, 5pm.



Frieze Art Fair Frieze Masters, Regent’s Park, London, 2016 © Vincent Chapters 2016.

Gillian Simison, Head of Museum Development, Museums Galleries Scotland (MGS), explains recent developments in repatriation, restitution, and the involvement of Scotland's museums.

Repatriation and restitution in Scottish museums

Earlier this year the Scottish Government accepted the six recommendations from the Empire, Slavery & Scotland's Museums Steering Group. Recommendation six states that the Scottish Government should demonstrate their support for restitution and repatriation of looted or unethically acquired items in Scottish collections. This recommendation recognises that restitution and repatriation of unethically acquired museum collections is an essential step

in addressing the legacies of empire, colonialism and historic slavery. The acceptance of this recommendation by the Scottish Government is a significant step in supporting museums to work with source communities to repatriate looted or unethically acquired items in Scottish collections.

To take this recommendation forward the Scottish Government have asked MGS to coordinate the development of guidance on repatriation and

restitution for Scottish museums, galleries and heritage organisations. MGS is working with colleagues from Scotland and beyond who have experience in returning collections, to scope out what advice and support is needed to enable more museums to engage in this vital work. An important objective is to create clearer pathways for those seeking the return of unethically acquired items – to locate them, and to engage with Scottish museums.

Wellbeing and Museums in Wales

Research in Wales underscores the important role museums play in the wellbeing of their communities.

Welsh museums run a wide range of wellbeing activities which include volunteer programmes, work with refugees, and supporting people living with dementia.

In January 2024, independent consultant Lynn Podmore was appointed by the Welsh Government's Culture Division to

conduct research into the impact Welsh museums have on visitor wellbeing. The aim of this project was to create a case study publication of wellbeing projects and to collect quantitative data on visitor wellbeing using the UCL Museum Wellbeing Measures Toolkit.

The data was collected from general visitors to museums using the Positive Wellbeing Umbrella (which can be found on page 15 of the Toolkit).

After a public callout on Jiscmail, seven museums volunteered to be part of the study.

A recent example of repatriation in action took place at National Museums Scotland. This was a result of discussion and close collaboration between the Nisga'a Nation and the museum. The term repatriation, rather than repatriation, is used here to ground the process of recovering belongings in Indigenous law and it is in alignment with Nisga'a matrilineal society. In September 2023 the House of Ni'isjoohl memorial pole was repatriated from National Museums Scotland to its home in Nass Valley.

In April 2024, the first natural history specimen repatriation in the Caribbean took place. The repatriation of a Jamaican Giant Galliwasp specimen from The Hunterian collection at the University of Glasgow is part of the 2019 Memorandum of Understanding between The University of the West Indies and the University of Glasgow.

It supports collaboration in research and education and addressing the historical legacies of colonialism. Found only in Jamaica, the Giant Galliwasp became extinct due to the disruption of their natural habitat brought about by sugar plantations. Specimens exist in collections in Europe and the USA but until the return from the Hunterian collection, none have been held in Jamaica since the early 20th century.



The Hunterian, University of Glasgow.

The return of unethically acquired items is a long overdue step towards reparative work in itself, and should be explored for that reason alone. However, the relationship that can develop between source communities and museums through the process of a return often creates opportunity for a deepening of understanding and for the voices of the source community to be heard within the museum. In some cases, it leads to enriching, ongoing relationships,

although that should never exist as an obligation on the source community.

MGS is interested in hearing from museums and individuals (particularly those with limited/no experience with repatriation and restitution) regarding what support and guidance would help them to engage in this important area of work.

Contact Gillian at inform@museums.galleriesscotland.org.uk

- Llandudno Museum and Gallery
- Tredegar House
- The Egypt Centre
- Museum of Cardiff
- Nantgarw China Works Museum
- Carmarthenshire County Museum
- Oriol Môn

The participating museums represent a diverse geographical spread and different collection and governance types. Using the Wellbeing Umbrellas, these museums collected the raw data from general visitors during the period 7th February and 19th March 2024 and then sent it to Lynn for analysis.

The participating museums collected a total of 379 responses between them. The analysis showed that visitors had an

increase of feelings of wellbeing on average of 28%.

Additionally, ten case studies of wellbeing projects from Welsh museums have been collected for publication. The aim is to share best practice from the Welsh museums sector and encourage more museums to engage in wellbeing work.

Using the Wellbeing Measures Toolkit is an easy way of gathering data to promote the positive impact that Welsh museums have on visitor wellbeing and provide evidence for the brilliant work our sector is already doing. We are keen that museums use the Toolkit and will be including questions around it in future Museum Spotlight Surveys.

We would like to thank Lynn Podmore for conducting this research and the museums who participated in the study and provided case studies for their contributions.

Join our Jiscmail list www.gov.wales/news-museums

Consultant and AIM Associate Supplier Colin Mulberg highlights the importance of solid groundwork to project delivery.

Strong foundations for successful projects

In the early stages of a significant project, it is tempting to push hard towards getting things moving. However, it pays to spend a little more time at the start, considering realistic aspirations, who will benefit and what will deliver most value for money. To prepare the groundwork, it is worthwhile examining the project from internal and external perspectives.

Organisational benefit and alignment

An important first step often overlooked is to have an honest examination of how well the project

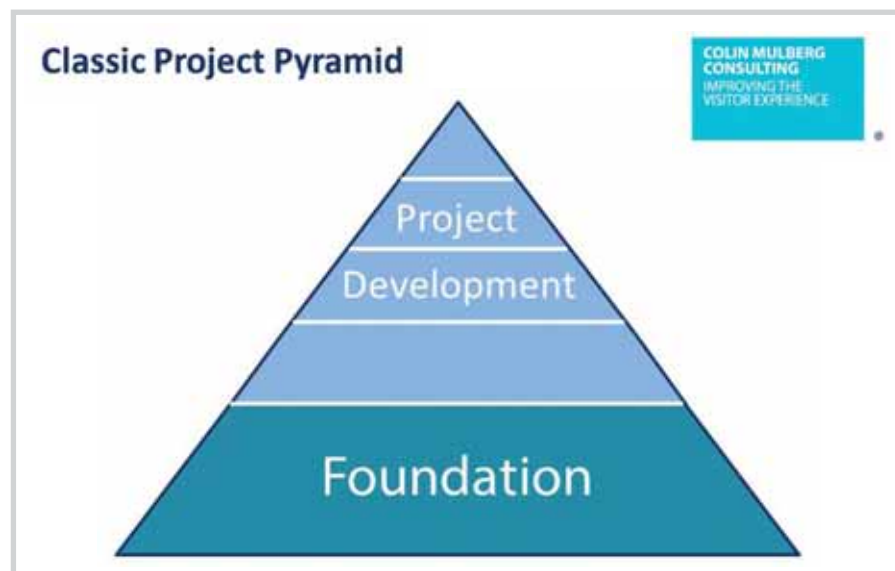
sits within your organisation. Spend time defining exactly how the organisation will benefit and what you want out of the project – ‘what’s in it for you?’ Check how well the project aligns with and furthers your mission, aims, and values, including its long-term legacy.

It could be that there are particular problems that you want the project to fix or specific outcomes that match established organisational need. These benefits should then be the main driver of the project.

Consider how much the project departs from what you’ve done

before and the overall amount of change. Spending considerable time, effort and resources on a project is a great opportunity to do things differently and instigate a programme of change as an organisational benefit. Encouraging change can also nurture the excitement and passion that lifts a project.

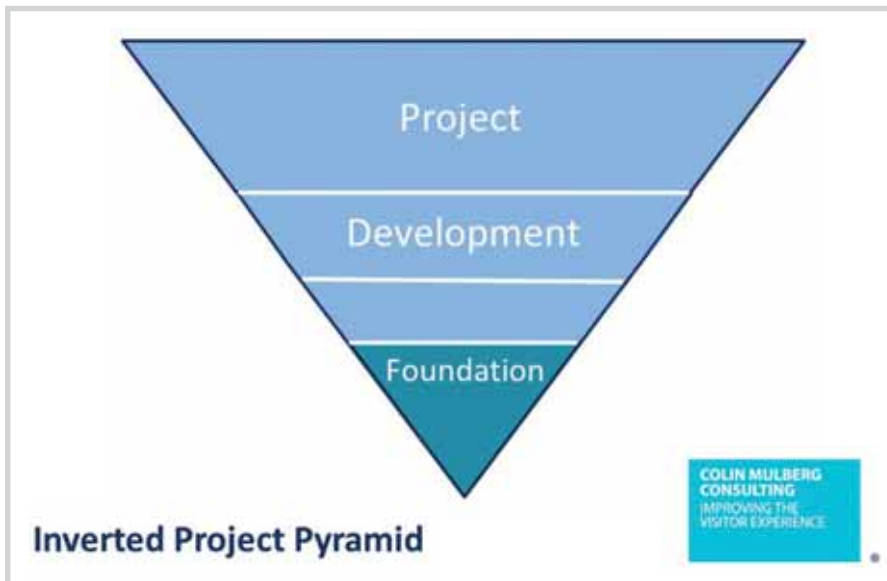
“Creating a strong evidence base reduces project risk and increases the chance of success.”



In a classic project pyramid, decisions decrease after the foundation is built. © Colin Mulberg

However, the project could also have implications for other work and priorities and well as staff capability and capacity levels. Projects also have a wider ‘opportunity cost’ as pursuing this project may mean not focussing on other opportunities that arise.

Looking at your situation as a whole will reveal if the project is the best way of delivering your organisation’s priorities. For example, many projects start off by seeking to increase visitor numbers or increase visits by specific audiences when



With inverted project pyramids, the shallow foundation means many decisions are left until later and actually increase during the project. © Colin Mulberg

increasing earned income is the most pressing need and other ways of doing this have not been explored fully.

Projects can be considered a mixed investment of resources, time, energy, emotion, and money. The project will be stronger if it is clear early on what you will get back, the benefits of the project over other courses of action and the project's success criteria. Good projects closely match organisational need and are in line with what you need to do anyway. This means that work on the project will benefit the organisation, even if the project fails to secure funding and stalls at a later stage.

Evidence base

Really clear benefits from the project should be supported by evidence of need and that the project is the best solution. It pays to be specific about who the project is for and how you know that they will want the outcomes. This is especially important for projects that face outwards, to visitors and external stakeholders. An early

focus on key audiences will help determine what is already known about them and any current evidence that they will be attracted to the project.

Identifying a range of indicators will show the degree of audience interest and engagement. Any evidence gaps can be plugged by further visitor research, including trialling project approaches to see how well they work and consulting with specific audiences. Research can cover a range of in-house activity (e.g. events that indicate audience interest) as well as established standard visitor questionnaires.

Creating a strong evidence base reduces project risk and increases the chance of success.

Solid project foundation

Determining the benefits of the project, target beneficiaries/audiences and evidence that the project is needed and will be successful are the platform on which good projects are built. This can be developed into a strong project rationale with a compelling story

that is easy to communicate to others – stakeholders, governing board, staff, volunteers, visitors, etc. A clear rationale also improves the quality of funding bids.

Signing-off the rationale gives a firm basis to the project and builds a solid project foundation. The rationale guides further stages of development and helps when engaging designers, architects, specialists, and consultants as the project vision is clear and agreed. The rationale can also be used to audit the project through each development stage.

Building a solid project foundation gives a base on which to sit later decisions as the project progresses. In a classic project pyramid model, much of the hard work is done building the project foundation and decisions decrease in volume and importance as the project progresses.

“ Building a solid project foundation gives a base on which to sit later decisions as the project progresses. ”

In contrast, difficult projects often end up being an inverted project pyramid, where the project foundation is poorly defined and shallow. This means that key issues and decisions are left until later in the project, often causing disagreements, stress, rushed decision-making and increased costs.

So, making the effort to work through the elements of the foundation and rationale starts your project on a sound footing, saves time and budget in later stages and gives the best chance of using your resources to make the project a success.



Image by Peter Föllner-Letzel on Unsplash

Spooktacular!

Innovative tours opening the door to new audiences

We spoke to Ella Price and Natalie Moor at Maidstone Museums and Emma Boast at Ramsgate Tunnels to see how they've used unusual tours to bring in new visitors.

Ghost tours are popular. They appeal to our fascination with the unknown, the mysterious and eerie. Guides weave tales of paranormal encounters and historical events offering a unique and entertaining journey into the realm of the unexplained. Many museums and historic houses have such tours on their roster of events, but what does it involve? And how do

you get started? We spoke to two AIM member organisations, Maidstone Museum and Ramsgate Tunnels to find out more.

Maidstone Museum is owned and run by Maidstone Borough Council and is home to a vast collection of Fine Art, Natural History, and Human History collections with historical artefacts of international importance. Based in Chillington Manor it opened on January 20, 1858, as the Charles Museum, making its current incarnation as Maidstone Museum one of the first local authority run museums in the UK. Natalie Moor, who recently took over the role of Museum Manager saw the potential for drawing in new audiences by doing something different.

“We were regularly asked whether we did ghost tours, and a guy who has quite a following in our area contacted

us looking for a new space to do his paranormal investigations. So, we saw an opportunity.

From our point of view it means more footfall, something different for people to come and do; it's a great use of the space and we make a bit of money on it. Diversification and reaching new audiences is important to us. We know experiences like Escape Rooms are popular, people want to do something different. That's why we do it.”

Marketing and ticketing are covered by the third-party company whose staff run the tour, and the museum gets a flat fee. This keeps things simple. The resourcing from the museum is light too. Visitor Experience Officer, Ella Price explains.

“We open late, tours finish about 11.30pm, so it's a few hours of ghost hunting and half an hour to tidy up.

The company (who do the tours) bring in their own staff and split the audience into groups, and they move around different rooms at different times, two of us from the museum go along with the tour – it’s nice for visitors, they can ask us questions about the museum, people are really interested.”

Natalie adds “He (the tour operator) has a core audience. As soon as we started marketing it, it sold out. He was professional and great to work with. We’re already thinking about next steps ‘Can we badge this up as a museum late?’ ‘Can we bring in a local person to talk about ghosts in the area?’ We’ve a local theatre company we’re working with who want to do something around Shakespeare and ghosts or Shakespeare and paganism.

Like every museum we want to balance commercial, community and academic objectives – this is about accessibility, access to a beautiful building – this kind of work opens the door for us to a different audience who haven’t come before. I think it’s

easy for us to be over-protective, but unless people use us, we won’t be here anymore – we want people to come in.”

Ramsgate Tunnels are a volunteer led heritage attraction that opened to the public in June 2014 after being closed for more than 50 years.

The tunnel network includes Britain’s largest purpose built Second World War Deep Tunnel Shelter, and a former mainline Victorian Railway Tunnel, designated a site of historical engineering of national significance.

Emma Boast, Tunnels Manager, explains how, even without a connection to a ghostly back-story, the Tunnels can be eerie.

“They’re extensive, dark and cold! There’s no supernatural back story per se, miles of tunnels . . . when you’re on your own, you don’t need it!

We were originally approached by local ghost hunters who wanted to come on site overnight, but we didn’t see them as quite the right ‘fit’.

A different third-party organisation got in touch about putting on a ghost tour. We had a deeper discussion, got to know them, and gained a sense of their respectful approach. The arms-length approach works for us and helps us route any related enquiries.”

The views of staff and volunteers were also an important part of the decision to stage the tour, as Emma explains.

“We canvassed the opinions of our volunteers, and some attended the trial tour, with mostly positive feedback. The fee received from the tour operator is based on how many book on.”

One of the volunteers acts as dedicated support too, so, as with Maidstone, resource implications are manageable.

“Whilst it’s not a major income stream from a financial perspective, it’s nice to have the extra income coming in, and as we don’t have to put in many resources. It is low cost.”

www.ramsgatetunnels.org
museum.maidstone.gov.uk

Summer 2024 Update from the AIM Energy Action Group

David Cooksey shares the latest on energy markets and museums.

At present we’re seeing welcome market reductions in energy prices after the wild rollercoaster of 2022 and 2023. The benefits can take time to reach everyone because of the duration of current fixed term contracts that may have been signed during the peak rates of the Energy Crisis.

For those with supply contracts coming up for renewal in 2024 now is a good time to research the market for rates. Alternatively, get in touch with

Emma and team at the AIM Energy Action Group (EAG) and we’ll be happy to send out competitive tenders on your behalf.

The EAG has been helping AIM members for many years to secure competitive energy supply prices on supply contracts. Currently, we work with over 70 AIM Museums, nationwide, to secure competitive tariffs and achieve the lowest energy costs.

Our 2024 Energy Buying Basket is currently in full swing, tendering and pricing contracts for renewal in Spring, Summer, and Autumn. Our group tendering encourages suppliers to price competitively, by leveraging

the collective gas and electricity consumption of AIM members.

Alongside supply contract renewals we also advise on reduced VAT rates, billing problems, changes of tenancy, new gas and electric connections, export metering and the selling of renewable surplus back to the grid as well as energy efficiency, reporting and targeting and bill validation.

If you want to discuss any of the above or any other utility related headaches we’d be delighted to hear from you.

hello@eaguk.org

01256 976 775

<https://eaguk.org/>

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 Grant

The Peace Museum

£4,240

The AIM Pilgrim Grant process was a simple process from start to finish. Guidance was clear and helpful, and any questions were answered quickly. The grant we received funded essential conservation equipment and helped us equip our new collection stores. We were able to replace old wooden plan chests with new metal museum grade racking and rehome archival material in acid-free boxes. This work improved overall care and has contributed to the longevity of the collection. It also helped to improve the accessibility of the collection as in the new stores it is now better organised and much more obtainable. It is indispensable funding for collections care within the sector especially for small independent museums like The Peace Museum.

Charlotte Houlahan (Hall), Curator



Storing items at The Peace Museum.



Applying UV film at Malton Museum.

Malton Museum

Overall, the process was quite straightforward; in part this was because the museum had the benefit of previous experience from applying for the Collections Care Audit grant, and in part because Fiona Woolley provided very helpful answers to questions that arose during the process.

The equipment purchased through the grant has enabled the museum to address the recommendations of the Collections Care Audit, with consequent long-term benefits to the monitoring and control of conditions in the museum.

The ability to continuously monitor the environment within the display cases has already produced additional benefits. Firstly, it has enabled the museum to arrange the loan of an Iron Age sword from another institution. Secondly, the greater accuracy of the monitors compared to their cheap, non-logging predecessors has allowed the museum to identify an issue with some of the display cases that had not previously been discernible.

David Snowden, Volunteer Collections Manager

AIM Pilgrim Trust Collections Care Audit

Send & Ripley History Society

Send & Ripley History Society is an active local history group with a micro museum of 22 square metres. We hold a collection of about 1000 artefacts and 600 photographs related to the local area.

Collection storage and condition has become an issue following three moves in four years, as donated storage space became unavailable. AIM provided a brief collection care audit which was well suited to our small facilities. It enabled a review of current collection conditions and care procedures by a knowledgeable conservator. The application process was very clear, forms were easily available online, and encouraging AIM support available by email and telephone.

Major benefits from the audit were:

- The onsite review of our facilities, with much valuable knowledge transfer from the conservator.
- Use of a standardised checklist to aid the conservator's analysis and enable comparison with other collections.
- Highlighting areas of concern previously unidentified by the Society.



Send & Ripley History Society.

- An audit report which listed ten areas of concern and provided advice on their solution.

The Society now has better data about where to concentrate future care efforts. We also have guidance on the collection care facilities needed within a future museum renovation, intended for 2025.

Phil Davie, Archivist

AIM Training Grant

Brunel Museum

Part of the Brunel Museum's forward plan is to *'better facilitate training for our almost entirely part-time workforce bearing in mind their capacity to take part'*.

Organising essential training for our small team of staff, who work disparate shift patterns, is often challenging. However, the financial support from the AIM Training Grant Award has allowed us to facilitate two online training courses that provide greater flexibility and work around the team's

individual availability, for which we are incredibly grateful.

With staff members often working solo and outside of regular hours, especially our operations and events coordinators, Lone Worker Safety training has been key to reviewing the museum's safety measures and providing reassurance for our team.

From the resources provided by IHASCO, such as a lone worker safety checklist, we are also writing new policies to better support our volunteers when delivering outreach talks alone at other venues.

Given that the day to day running of the museum is also very hands-on, the Manual Handling course has also been critical to ensure that our staff are prepared for the more physically demanding aspects of their work.

Whether installing new displays, setting up for venue hires or undertaking basic maintenance checks onsite, the team feel better informed about how to carry activities out more safely and efficiently.

Robert Kierle
Collections Access Coordinator

AIM Arts Scholars Brighter Day Grant



Pleats example from a student working with Blandford Fashion Museum.

Blandford Fashion Museum £1,200

The Brighter Day grant gave the Fashion Museum an opportunity to support a key audience identified in their Five-Year strategy in a creative and inspiring way.

The resulting outcomes have been greater than anticipated. The target audience, A-Level students, were engaged and appreciative of the learning opportunities given to them; their work has been productive and their resulting portfolios more than met the brief as a future tool for careers and further education opportunities. The success of the Portfolio Preparation Workshops has led to future workshops being created in the schools themselves as part of their curriculum, and also generated new interest from other educational establishments and students.

Kathryn Reed, Fundraiser

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"The work we did with Hilary has genuinely been the foundation of everything we've done since; when things got really tough, the values we wrote and the Plan that came out of it, that's what we return to!"

Liz Power, then Director Water & Steam Museum
 now Director Historic Buildings & Places



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Update on Martyn's Law

Image by Clem Onigfjoro on Unsplash

The very latest on 'Martyn's Law' from Alan Baldwin, CEO of United Outcomes, and Mark Payne, former West Midlands Counter-Terrorism commander, and United Outcomes Counter Terrorism Lead

Following the terrorist bombing at Manchester Arena in 2017, an inquiry by Sir John Saunders was undertaken to identify learning and reduce the risk of future attacks. Many of the recommendations from the subsequent report focused on the security and preparedness of venues. The legislation that implements these recommendations, **Terrorism (Protection of Premises) bill** also known as Martyn's Law is expected to be passed into statute in 2024, having been included in the King's speech.

The purpose of the legislation is to reduce the risk of terrorist attacks by requiring venue owners and event organisers to consider the risks of terrorism and how they can be reduced and mitigated. Once implemented across the UK the desired effect will be to make venues more difficult targets and raise the awareness of terrorism amongst staff and the general public. Requirements vary depending on the size of the venue or event.

The standard tier will apply to all venues with a capacity of 100-799, whilst the enhanced tier applies to larger events and premises in excess of 800 people.

The requirements are similar in nature to other legal measures designed to improve public safety. They will feel consistent with existing plans to reduce risk around fire or health and safety and should be 'reasonably practicable', including an

emergency plan at the standard tier and risk assessments, security planning and staff training at the enhanced tier.

Compliance with these requirements will be overseen by a regulator, and, in the event of a terrorist incident, the plans and assessments will be subject to significant scrutiny. There are sanctions included in the bill for non-compliance which include fines and possible custodial sentences, as well as the reputational risks for venues and events that do not comply.

Following feedback, there have been some changes proposed to initial requirements, which in turn have been subject to a further consultation process. The Government however remain committed to introducing the amended bill as soon as parliamentary time allows.

What can you do, now, to prepare for Martyn's Law?

As a very recent policing commander of counter terrorism, I can confirm that the terrorist threat to the UK remains very real and we should be doing everything we can to reduce the risk. If you have responsibility for a venue, there is a lot of guidance available at [Protect.uk](https://www.protect.gov.uk) to help you with the basics. Most of it is common sense and should feel similar to other risks that you are managing.

Start with the following questions;

- Have your staff completed the ACT e-learning package?
- Have you completed a vulnerability risk assessment for your venue or event?
- Have you got a contingency plan for a terrorist attack based on any vulnerabilities you have identified?

The *Guide*, *Shelter*, *Communicate* principles proposed in Martyn's law are sensible and should be easily understood by your staff.

- **Guide** – Direct people towards the most appropriate location
- **Shelter** – Understand how your venue might be able to lock-down and shelter people within it for several hours

- **Communicate** – Develop a means of communicating effectively and promptly with users of your venue and ensure staff give clear instructions. Think about how you might integrate with any response or rescue operation by being able to provide things like building plans.

Have you ever exercised a terrorist attack with your staff?

Would staff know what the basic expectations of them are, in the event of an attack?

Are your existing security measures working and up to date?

Do you have a scheduled place in your calendar to consider and update your counter terrorism plans, in the same way that you might have a regular health and safety meeting?

It is important to take time to consider up to date advice on changing terrorist tactics and reflect on any changes to your plans that might be necessary.

Do you know who is responsible for what in the event of planning, risk mitigation and incident response? Are those people aware of their responsibilities and are they confident in delivering them?

If you are already thinking about the risks of terrorism and have started to put plans in place, then achieving compliance will be a much smoother process when Martyn's Law is finalised.

More broadly, it is my experience that although these events are very rare, they are also absolutely devastating. By ensuring your organisations have these skills, systems, and plans and regularly test them, it further protects you against other more common, major and serious incidents should they happen, which is much more likely. *United Outcomes work with you to protect your organisation, workforce, customers, and the public. We look forward to meeting you at AIM Conference!*

www.united-outcomes.com

Replacing technology can be daunting. How do you begin to define what your museum needs asks Associate Supplier, Rod Barlow.

Effectively reviewing and replacing your tech

With technology changing so rapidly, it essential that organisations regularly review their technology choices to ensure they remain relevant. Funding is limited, so a solid business case for any change is vital.

Project Outcomes

Project outcomes are the changes that occur following the implementation of a new technology. They must be well thought through, evidence based, data driven and measurable during and at the end of the project. Adopting a *what, why, how* format will clearly set out what is defined as the outcome for the immediate and long-term success of any technology project.

User Stories

Writing user stories are a useful tool to review your current processes and explore opportunities for improvement. These should be outcome focused and describe key business processes that the organisation needs to undertake and operational challenges that need to be resolved. These user stories will demonstrate what is.

- Important to us.
- Important to our future.
- Unique to our organisation.
- Complicated for us/a current challenge that needs solving.
- Focus on both the your staff/organisational user and your customer's needs.

Business requirements

Turning these stories into a list of business requirements ensures that all the needs are documented, and forms an essential part of any tender documentation, and should be scored in priority order. This set of requirements can also

be used as a matrix to score the fit of any solution you are looking at.

Selection Metrics

There are usually many technology solutions available in the market for a particular set of business requirements. To select the best solution for your museum, you must compare these solutions on a variety of metrics, some of which are defined below:

- **Cost:** licensing fees, support costs, cost of implementation.
- **Features:** Functionality offered by the technology solution which addresses the business needs.
- **Support:** Support available before, during, and after implementation.
- **Return on investment (ROI):** This is a particularly important metric for technology solutions that automates or improves a business process.
- **Total cost of ownership (TCO):** This includes all the direct and indirect costs, including onboarding costs, maintenance, and support costs, training costs, etc.

Summary

When choosing new technology, the intention is to attract a group of 'A' list suppliers whose solutions will fit your requirement. There is a real skill in producing tender documentation that describes not only the nuances of your organisation but clearly defines your business needs, so that you and any potential technology provider can quickly evaluate whether their solution will meet your functionality needs, and is within your budget.

www.rodbarlow.com



The Imagination Museum

A national network for dance and heritage professionals

Bringing dance and heritage professionals together, The Imagination Museum is back following a pilot in 2019.

The network offers the chance to imagine new ways to collaborate and help enliven heritage sites through memorable dance activity. The initial pilot in 2019 brought together 150 well-established dance artists and heritage sites, gathering more than 50 case studies, including from AboutTime Dance Company, Lea Anderson, Theo Clinkard and Leah Marojević, Light, Ladd & Emberton and Jeanefer Jean-Charles, amongst many others.

Networking events

Through a series of networking and practical advocacy events held in Suffolk, Cornwall, Blackpool, and London, The Imagination Museum aims to share its extensive knowledge and experiences of working in the

heritage sector to help build connections across the country. The sessions introduce attendees to previous dance/heritage projects in each area, share The Imagination Museum's future plans, and provide a space to meet local partners and artists.

The events are open to anyone from dance, arts, heritage, community contexts with an interest in collaboration and finding creative ways of interpreting local sites, collections, and stories, especially through dance and movement. A range of £5 bursary places are available to all of its upcoming events, reserved for freelancers and those working for smaller and volunteer museums.

What's coming up?

The Imagination Museum will head to Blackpool's brand-new Showtown Museum on Thursday 20th June. Their Blackpool event Keep Dancing looks at ways to sustain and celebrate the city's historical connection to social dancing, as a starting point for thinking more broadly about how we 'collect' dances and other kinds of intangible heritage.

The event will offer a chance to hear from Showtown, House of Wingz and LeftCoast about how they developed links with local communities through the Get Dancing project, a short curator tour and time to explore the new museum.

Focusing on the legacy of dance and heritage partnerships over time, The Imagination Museum's final in-person advocacy event, Moving into the Future will take place at Trinity Laban in London on Wednesday 4th September. Reflecting on 10 years since Trinity Laban and the Horniman Museum and Gardens' formative 'Dance and museums symposium', this event will uncover the benefits of partnerships between the dance and heritage sectors.

Following these events, The Imagination Museum will work towards a series of co-commissioned works by dance artists, to be presented at the four partner sites next year (subject to funding).

[Imaginationmuseum.co.uk](https://www.imaginationmuseum.co.uk)

manager@imaginationmuseum.co.uk

New laws affecting subscriptions are coming into force. Dr Clare Mills takes a look at the DMCC Bill and explains what CFG is doing to protect charitable organisations from the unintended consequences of the legislation.

What does the *Digital Markets, Competition and Consumers Bill* (DMCC) Bill mean for your organisation?

The Digital Markets, Competition and Consumers Bill (DMCC) has been working its way through Parliament this spring and may have become an Act by the time you read this, with implementation expected from spring 2025.

The Bill introduces welcome measures to ensure that auto-renewal subscriptions are fair and subject to stronger protections for consumers, including cancellation rights. I'm sure many readers share my experience of signing up for a news service or subscription online and forgetting to cancel, or even finding it really difficult to work out how to cancel!

So how does this affect charities, including museums and galleries? Many of you may offer an annual membership which includes unlimited visits to your museum or gallery. This legislation will apply when that membership is purchased online, rather than in person – even if the purchaser is standing in your building signing up from their phone.

HMRC's rules currently allow for Gift Aid to be claimed on memberships where subscriptions pay for membership only (with a small number of exemptions). The Gift Aid regime does not permit Gift Aid to be claimed where there is a condition of repayment, so the cancellation rights provided in the Bill for memberships would contradict these rules. This problem was an unintended consequence of the Bill, and one that we immediately knew needed to be challenged with the government and HMRC.

What are we doing about it?

CFG has worked with sector partners and several charities which would be adversely affected by the changes. We've lobbied officials in the relevant departments including DCMS, DBT and HMRC, and tried to bring about amendments to the Bill in the Lords which would have given an exemption to charities.

While we didn't succeed in bringing in the amendment, we're pleased the government has committed to amending existing

Gift Aid legislation by Statutory Instrument. This means that charities can continue to claim Gift Aid while complying with the new protections for consumers and will be ready for when the Bill comes into force in spring 2026.

One additional factor affects cancellations within the cooling off period. We've heard from charities of a small number of people joining online from the car park, visiting the charity – whether that's a garden, a stately home, a museum and so on – then cancelling the membership. In that instance you are entitled to deduct the entrance fee that would have been payable from the amount refunded. This should be clearly stated in your terms and conditions of membership.

Some organisations simply give a full refund for the whole membership. This may be the right approach. Individual organisations will need to look at:

- the accessibility of their data,
- the effort involved in calculating any deductions, and
- the additional admin load weighing up the financial and resource costs of different courses of action.

Looking ahead

Back to the Bill and the coming months. We have had further commitments that the charitable sector will be consulted on the changes to the Gift Aid regime to ensure that they meet the requirements of charities. There will also be a further consultation on the 'cooling off period'. CFG and our sector partners will respond to both consultations, and we'll be asking for your feedback, if this affects your organisation, once we have further details.

If you have any questions or are concerned about any other policy-related issues affecting your organisation, please get in touch with CFG's Policy Team: policy@cfg.org.uk

AIM Bulletin

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