



Association of  
Independent  
Museums

# AIM Bulletin

October 2024

Page 14

Keeping on top of  
your cybersecurity

Page 18

Going Digital with  
Bloomberg Connects

Page 19

Ringling the changes with  
Bellingham Heritage Centre



## Assessing the impact, making the case

**Latest Economic Impact Report released**

# Welcome to AIM Bulletin!

## Celebrate your achievements, share your experiences

AIM Bulletin has long been a place where we seek to bring together the ideas, experiences, and best practices that make our sector so vibrant.

And we want to warmly invite you to contribute. Whether it's a new initiative, a complex project, or an innovative solution to the challenges we face, your experiences can provide invaluable guidance to your colleagues and peers across the sector. Your insights into the processes and strategies that led to good outcomes are invaluable.

So, if you have innovative ideas or perspectives that you believe deserve wider discussion, let us know! Your thoughts can help spark conversations that push the boundaries of our collective thinking and inspire new directions.

You know through hard learned lessons that every project or initiative carries with it valuable insight, sometimes more so when things do not go as planned.

Sharing these experiences – the obstacles faced, the adjustments made, and the outcomes – can be as beneficial as sharing successes. The AIM Bulletin is a safe space to reflect on these moments and offer insights that others might find useful in their own work.

If you have ever thought about contributing to the Bulletin and sharing with the AIM community, we would love to hear from you. Please do drop me a line with a brief proposal outlining your thoughts. Alternatively I would be delighted to speak to you if you would like a chat before putting pen to paper, or fingertips to keyboard!

I look forward to hearing your ideas and continuing to highlight the wonderful work being done across our sector.

**Matt Smith**  
Editor, AIM Bulletin  
[editor@aim-museums.co.uk](mailto:editor@aim-museums.co.uk)

## Front cover

One of the co-authors of AIM's Economic Impact of the Independent Museum Sector Report and Toolkit, Dr Stephen Connolly (Director, DC Research) pictured at AIM Conference 2023.

Alongside co-author Jonathan Durnin (Director, Durnin Research) they highlight some key takeaways from the latest report, the first following several economic shocks, on page 6.



# A packed Autumn of AIM events

## Setting up a new museum

These interactive, online workshops will be led by Emma Chaplin and Heather Lomas, authors of AIM's popular 'Setting up a new museum' success guide. Following museum sector standards and best practice, alongside AIM's Hallmarks of Prospering Museums, participants will be guided through the building blocks that underpin the success of a new museum project.

### What to expect

- Discussion of all aspects of running a museum, from museum management and governance to collections, purpose, visitor focus and leadership to finance.
- How to use best practice standards to plan your new museum.

- An understanding of the world that museums operate in, its lead organisations and sources of support.
- A guide to funding opportunities that are available to new museums
- An opportunity to discuss your own museum projects and get expert feedback
- Learning alongside a peer group with similar ambitions and challenges.

### When

Workshop 1: 5pm – 7pm Wednesday  
9 October

Workshop 2: 5pm – 7pm Wednesday  
16 October

### Where

Interactive online Zoom session

### Cost

Cost: £150 for AIM members for both sessions, £200 for non-members.

### Support available

Thanks to funding from the Welsh Government, we are pleased to offer a limited number of bursary places to trustees of Welsh museums.

To apply email Christine Andrews on [christine.andrews@aim-museums.co.uk](mailto:christine.andrews@aim-museums.co.uk)

AIM members can apply for an AIM training grant to cover the cost of attending this training session.

### Booking

Book your place today at [aim-museums.co.uk/dates-for-your-diary](http://aim-museums.co.uk/dates-for-your-diary)

## Heritage Trustees 101

### What to expect

Join the AIM team and more to better understand the role of the Trustee and the skills and the commitment required for success. The session is ideal for those outside of the sector, looking to understand the key governance issues and realities of Board work in museums.

A successful Trustee in a heritage organisation can come from any background, from any career stage and at any age – so whatever your motivation and wherever you are in your journey to joining a Board, join us to find out more!

### When and where

Tuesday 15 October 4.30 – 7pm (3.30pm – 7pm if wanting to visit the museum as well), Manchester Jewish Museum

Wednesday 23 October 5 – 7pm at The Postal Museum, London

Online: Thursday 7 November, Zoom 4 – 6pm

### Cost

These events are free for AIM members and non-AIM members.

### Booking

Book your place today at [aim-museums.co.uk/dates-for-your-diary](http://aim-museums.co.uk/dates-for-your-diary) →

## Know Your Neighbourhood Connected Communities event

### What to expect

Join us for an inspiring and engaging event hosted by the Know Your Neighbourhood project Strand One partners: Association of Independent Museums, Creative Lives, and Libraries Connected. This free hybrid event is a chance to hear from captivating speakers, network with grantees, and explore the sustainability of their impactful work.

### When

Tuesday 5 November 2024, 10am – 4pm

### Where

Bob Jones Community Hub, Bromley St, Wolverhampton WV2 3AS

### Cost

This event is free.

### Booking

Book your place today at [aim-museums.co.uk/dates-for-your-diary](https://aim-museums.co.uk/dates-for-your-diary)

For any accessibility requirements or questions, please email [events@librariesconnected.org.uk](mailto:events@librariesconnected.org.uk)

## Trustee induction

### What to expect

An essential and practical introduction to museum governance and best practice for new trustees or a refresher for existing trustees. These sessions will be interactive, engaging and provide tools for you and your board to improve your museum's governance. They are also an invaluable opportunity to network with other trustees, exchange ideas and be refreshed in your thinking about trustee induction.

A good induction will enable your new trustees to become active and contribute more quickly and to have a greater effect on your museum. It is

also a requirement of the Museum Accreditation scheme.

The course is delivered by Hilary Barnard and Ruth Lesirge, the authors of AIM's "Successful Governance for Museums" and acknowledged experts in charity governance.

### When

Tuesday 26 November 4pm – 6pm  
Session 1: Introduction to Museums

Tuesday 10 December 4pm – 6pm  
Session 2: Helping the Board and Trustees to work well

### Where

Zoom online forum

### Cost

£150 for AIM members for both sessions, £200 for non-members.

### Support available

Thanks to funding from the Welsh Government, we are pleased to offer a limited number of bursary places to trustees of Welsh museums. To apply email Christine Andrews on [christine.andrews@aim-museums.co.uk](mailto:christine.andrews@aim-museums.co.uk)

AIM members can apply for an AIM training grant to cover the cost of attending this training session.

### Booking

Book your place today at [aim-museums.co.uk/dates-for-your-diary](https://aim-museums.co.uk/dates-for-your-diary)

## AIM Aspire mentoring programme launched

AIM Aspire is the latest mentoring programme we've made available exclusively for AIM members.

AIM Head of Programmes Margaret Harrsion

"Mentoring has routinely been part of our grant programmes, but we now are offering advice, guidance, and support through mentorship to help you and your museum outside of this work.

AIM Aspire offers up to ten recipients four, free one to one mentoring sessions from our experienced roster of consultants on a range of specific issues, providing a new perspective on your priorities and challenges."

This programme of support and development is open to anyone working in an organisation that is a member of AIM, or individual AIM members.

Keep an eye out for future rounds of AIM Aspire in 2025.

## Latest round of Spark! underway

The latest round of our programme of support and development for independent museum leaders is underway. The Spark! programme enables you to share your challenges and opportunities with a small group of museum directors and senior leaders. It is perfect if you are looking to reignite your creativity, re-energise your teams, and face the future for your organisation with confidence.

The latest edition of the programme runs from October 2024 – January 2025.

Guided by experienced consultants, this targeted programme of support and professional development is designed to enable you to pause, reflect and plan. Participants are expected to continue reflecting on their practice between sessions. It is also designed to be a safe space to raise difficult issues and gain ongoing support from a network of peers – which will be part of the legacy of participating.



# AIM Connected Communities programme boosting volunteering and tackling loneliness

**AIM's Connected Communities programme seeks to improve wellbeing in nine disadvantaged areas in England by offering more people the chance to get involved in their local museum.**

Funded by the Know Your Neighbourhood Fund through Arts Council England (ACE), the scheme has offered grants of £15,000 – £100,000 to museums delivering projects that improve community connections through high-quality volunteering opportunities and/or tackle loneliness and increase social connection.

AIM Director Lisa Ollerhead

“Supporting this incredible project to enhance volunteering at museums is a game-changer. It not only enriches our cultural institutions but also tackles loneliness by bringing people together. Powerful connections make vibrant communities and I’m excited to see the outcomes and impact of this innovative work early next year.”

Each of the successful organisations will have completed delivery by the end of January 2025, with over £250,000 invested in this round.

The successful projects are:

**Ushaw Historic House and Gardens** are aiming to reduce social isolation in the elderly rural population of County Durham through a volunteering programme based around the collection, through volunteer-led exhibitions, developing collection care skills and networks.

**Gawthorpe Textiles Collection** are tackling chronic loneliness and isolation through a project that includes 10 months of engagement with the collections programme, where participants are encouraged to respond creatively, culminating in an exhibition.

**The Museum of Cannock Chase** are working with local colleges to develop and provide high-quality volunteering that teaches young people sector-specific and transferable skills.

**Sunderland Culture** are improving relationships with local partners to deliver a programme of creative activities for young people with autism, co-created with participants, aimed at tackling chronic loneliness.

**Signal Film and Media** are engaging young people and marginalised adults through high quality volunteering opportunities in a project that engages with the Sankey Collection in co-created activities, research, and exhibitions.

Pictured above: Wolverhampton Arts and Culture.



# Assessing the impact, making the case

**As AIM prepares to release the latest Economic Impact of the Independent Museum Sector Report and Toolkit, the first following several economic shocks, authors Dr Stephen Connolly (Director, DC Research) and Jonathan Durnin (Director, Durnin Research) highlight some key takeaways.**

AIM first assessed the Economic Impact of the Independent Museum Sector, and developed the AIM Economic Toolkit, in 2010. The Toolkit was refreshed in 2014, and the work was again updated in 2019. The latest version has been developed in 2024 to enable the sector to assess impacts following several economic shocks that have affected visitor patterns.

The research estimates the economic impact of the independent museum sector on the UK economy, through understanding employment, procurement, volunteering and visitor impacts.

**Independent museums have volunteers, spend money on goods and services, and many employ staff – all generate economic impacts in their localities.**

In terms of direct employment, the independent museum sector accounts for more than 7,200 jobs, which is

equivalent to almost 4,700 full-time equivalent (FTE) jobs. Over two thirds of these jobs are local to the museums, showing the significant local employment impacts of independent museums.

Furthermore, the research estimates that the sector spent a total of £131.4 million on the procurement of goods and services in 2023, which is the equivalent of around 2,900 FE jobs.

## “The overall gross economic impact of the independent museum sector could be around 17,900 jobs, or £838.7 million of expenditure.”

The research also found that there are 38,900 regular volunteers in the independent museum sector, and these volunteers contributed more than half a million (almost 518,000) volunteer days in 2023. This is the equivalent of £41 million of impact.

### Visitors to independent museums generate a range of economic impacts, both on-site and the wider local areas

Independent museums attracted more than 19.5 million visitors in 2023 based on the survey findings, and of these, it is assumed that around 14.6 million are adult visitors. The overall (gross) spend of these visitors is more than £497 million, and much of this expenditure will contribute to the local economies in the places where independent museums are located.

Most of this visitor spending (more than £279 million) takes place off-site – i.e., outside of the museums themselves and in the local economies and communities where the museums are based, and this equates to around 3,800 FTE jobs.

### So what does this all mean?

Adding together the direct employment, direct procurement, and off-site visitor impacts shows that the independent museum sector's overall gross, direct economic contribution is in the region of 11,300 FTE jobs, or £531.8 million of expenditure.

To fully understand the impact of the sector, it is important to factor in indirect and induced effects generated by this expenditure. This suggests that the overall gross economic impact (i.e. direct, indirect and induced impacts) of the independent museum sector could be around 17,900 jobs, or £838.7 million of expenditure.

These findings 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.

### Making the case

The 2024 AIM Economic Impact Toolkit can be used by museums to estimate their economic contribution and impact for the purposes of advocacy (their *overall, or gross, economic impact*) and to make a case to economic and tourism stakeholders (about their *net additional economic impact*). It includes up-to-date spend metrics by locality, where possible.

Since 2010, the Toolkit has been well used by many museums and adapted by sector developers and advocates. There are many examples where the AIM Toolkit has helped organisations make their case in a range of different scenarios, including good examples of success in terms of influence and securing funding, and celebrating success and advocacy by highlighting economic benefits to a range of audiences.

The 2024 research captured some of these examples from independent museums themselves:

*“It is a very important piece of evidence”.*

*“During my career I have consistently used the tool to evidence the economic impact of many cultural/historic sites. I shared this information with Trustees/AIM/ACE/NLHF and especially when local/regional government did not understand the positive impact of heritage and culture to the local economy”.*

*“Invaluable in advocacy at a political level and showing the importance and impact of the museum”.*

*“Hoorah!!! Love that it's out there again. Given Birmingham (and elsewhere) threat to arts and heritage this will really help people make the case”.*



To download the latest Report and Toolkit visit [aim-museums.co.uk/resources](https://aim-museums.co.uk/resources)  
To sign up for related online events visit [aim-museums.co.uk/dates-for-your-diary](https://aim-museums.co.uk/dates-for-your-diary)

**Culture Secretary declares culture, media and sport sectors crucial to national growth mission, in first major speech in Manchester**

# Culture crucial to new Government's growth mission

The Culture Secretary Lisa Nandy brought together leaders representing more than 150 strategically important organisations to a summit in Manchester recently to invite them to work with DCMS in delivering the Government's national mission of economic growth over the next five years.

The event was the first in a series that DCMS Ministers will carry out around the country to engage DCMS sectors, which are worth more than £170 billion and support more than four million jobs. The UK creative industries alone are worth £125 billion – more to the economy than life sciences, automotive manufacturing, aerospace and the oil and gas sectors combined.

On writing communities back into a new national story, and enhancing these sectors as vehicles for economic growth in all parts of the UK, the Culture Secretary said:

“It is our ambition that we will face a self-confident country, at ease with itself, where all our people see themselves in the story we tell ourselves about ourselves as a nation – and our contribution is seen and valued.

“And my message to each and every one of you is that if you share that

belief in our country. If you have that zest. If you want to challenge us and are willing to be challenged in turn.

“Then I promise you. That we will walk alongside you. We will have your back. And we will give voice to the country many of us have believed in all our lifetime but never quite yet seen.”

Organisations with representatives at the summit included: Arts Council England, Society of London Theatres, HarperNorth, Writers' Guild Of Great Britain, Royal Opera House, Royal Shakespeare Company, Southbank Centre, Association of British Orchestras, Creative Industries Council, Musicians' Union, Creative UK, UK Music, National Gallery, Association of Independent Museums, Science Museum, National Portrait Gallery, Tate, British Library, Royal College of Music, London Philharmonic Orchestra, Birmingham Royal Ballet, English National Opera, Merlin Entertainments, UK Hospitality, Visit Britain, O2 Arena, Prince's Trust, Duke of Edinburgh Award, and the British Council. Also in attendance were regional museums such as

Birmingham, Derby, Sheffield, and Manchester.

The Culture Secretary also met young people representing Girlguiding and the National Citizen Service, as well as local Manchester youth group HideOut Youth Zone, who are currently working with the Science Museum on an exhibition.

Andrew Lovett OBE, Chair of AIM, said:

“Independent museums welcome nearly 20 million visitors annually to the bustling city centres and beautiful rural settings they are found in across the UK.

Powered by thousands of passionate staff and volunteers, they sit proud at the heart of the places and the communities they serve. The stories they tell not only represent and engage us but help make sense of the world and our place in it. At the Association of Independent Museums, we are excited to get to work with DCMS on unlocking the power of museums and heritage to stimulate economic growth and ensuring that everyone can benefit from our rich history and promising future.”





# The impact of the climate crisis on Scottish museums

**Lucy Neville, Climate Officer, Museums Galleries Scotland (MGS) highlights the impact of the climate crisis on Scottish museums and how they are taking action.**

Scotland has 452 museums and galleries, many based in rural and coastal locations. These areas, and the communities living within them, are particularly vulnerable to the effects of the climate crisis but museums right across the country are experiencing different impacts. Over the last five years storm damage, landslides caused by heavy rainfall, rivers flooding and concerns related to rising sea levels have effected museums across the country. Museums and galleries are also increasingly used as safe warm and cool spaces as the seasons become more extreme.

Immediate impacts include the need for building repairs and rising insurance costs, but questions are also being raised over how museums can best support their communities, influence individual and systematic behaviour change, and take climate action. I have highlighted a few of the different ways museums in Scotland are responding to the climate crisis and the support they are creating for their communities.

At museums and heritage organisations across the islands there is great work engaging the community. From events for those living with dementia around connecting with

nature, to youth exchanges tackling eco-anxiety and action around sea level rise.

Industrial museums are using their collections and stories to look at unjust energy transitions from the past and how we can learn from them to ensure a just transition in the future. Glenfinnan Station Museum are engaging with climate action through creating a permanent open-air exhibition space to explain snow clearance methods of the past, whilst highlighting it in the context of Scotland's current and future climate change.

Aberdeen City Archives, Galleries and Museums have created a wildflower meadow. An accompanying interpretation explains its benefits, process, and increases in recorded biodiversity to the public.

Both Glencoe Folk Museum and the Scottish Crannog Centre have undertaken capital build projects centered on creating a sustainable site.

As the national development body, it is vital that MGS supports museums in the role they play in tackling the ecological crisis. Climate sits as a core area of work in the Resilience strand of Scotland's Museums and Galleries Strategy and in 2023 the post of full-time permanent Climate Officer was created to ensure our work in this area continues to develop. Support for the sector to address the climate crisis is provided in the form of training, advice, strategic investment and networks.

*To join the Scottish Museums Climate Network or find out more please get in touch: [Climate@MuseumsGalleriesScotland.org.uk](mailto:Climate@MuseumsGalleriesScotland.org.uk)*

**Pictured above: National Mining Museum Scotland.**

# News in brief

## We're improving AIM's website

We are currently undertaking a comprehensive redesign of the AIM website to make it more accessible, user-friendly, and responsive to the evolving needs of our membership. As technology and user expectations have evolved, so have your needs. Working on the redesign will give us the opportunity to further streamline the site's structure, simplify the navigation, and hopefully improve your overall user experience.

The new layout will ensure that resources, case studies, and essential updates are easily accessible, saving your time and enhancing the value of your membership. With user testing scheduled for early November and a site launch by the end of 2024, we look forward to updating this key part of our support for our members!

## Temple Newsam to host first Public Houses conference in Leeds

On 9 and 10 October Temple Newsam House will host the first Public Houses

conference in Leeds, bringing together experts from across the UK to address key issues facing local authority historic house museums. The conference will welcome scholars, practitioners, funders, and policy makers to explore what it means to be a publicly owned and managed historic house museum in the 21st century, and what the future might hold for these unique sites. The conference venue of Temple Newsam House is a local authority run museum, part of the Leeds Museums & Galleries portfolio.

Dr David Hopes, Head of Service for Leeds Museums and Galleries says, 'At a time when civic museums are under huge pressure financially, this conference will give us an opportunity to celebrate the uniqueness of civic custodianship of historic houses, and to chart a course forward together with informed optimism.'

Speakers include Dr Simon Thurley CBE (Chair of The National Lottery Heritage Fund), Ben Cowell OBE (Historic Houses), Tarnya Cooper (National Trust), Dr Oliver Cox

(V&A), Sarah McLeod (Wentworth Woodhouse), Dr Christopher Ridgway (Castle Howard), Helen Featherstone (Director of England – North, Heritage Fund).

**'Public Houses: What makes civic custodianship of historic house museums in Britain different and where next?' 9 & 10 October 2024.**

[museumsandgalleries.leeds.gov.uk/temple-newsam/public-houses-conference-2024](https://museumsandgalleries.leeds.gov.uk/temple-newsam/public-houses-conference-2024)

## HVG Volunteer Leader of the Year Award

The Heritage Volunteering Group exists to enable the sector to realise the potential of volunteering to transform organisations, lives, and communities. Its Volunteer Leader of the Year Award celebrates the achievements of those who have made a difference and recognises innovative and outstanding examples of volunteering leadership and management.

Last year's winner, Sam Clift, said on receiving the award:

"It's been fantastic to have the recognition for the achievements made in volunteering at London Transport Museum. We've been working hard to add more meaning and value to the volunteer experience and create new pathways to volunteering for disabled people, so it's wonderful to have this acknowledged by Heritage Volunteering Group. I feel proud and humbled to have received this appreciation and its exactly the reason awards like this should exist".

Nominations are open now and this year's winner will be announced at the annual conference, Heritage Volunteering 2024, taking place online on 26-27 November.

[Heritagevolunteeringgroup.org.uk](https://Heritagevolunteeringgroup.org.uk)



Temple Newsam.

### Re Rewind! Links for Croydon article

For those interested in last edition's Bulletin article (*Sounds great! AIM Bulletin August 2024*) on the Museum of Croydon's exhibition Rewind: This is Croydon's Music check out further detail on the development of the project and the app in this case study: [situate.io/aim-croydon](https://situate.io/aim-croydon) and the exhibition info at [museumofcroydon.com/rewind](https://museumofcroydon.com/rewind)

### Iconic willow sculpture at Anne Hathaway's Cottage undergoes conservation

As part of the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust's ongoing conservation programme, the iconic thatched Moon Seat at Anne Hathaway's Cottage in Warwickshire has undergone conservation to preserve the much-loved willow sculpture. Earlier this summer, award-winning willow and living sculpture artist Tom Hare returned to the family




home of Anne Hathaway, William Shakespeare's wife, to rethatch the popular sculpture. It has become a focal point for visitors to sit and capture beautiful photographs with since it was first created in 2013.

Tom drew inspiration from the famous line, 'How sweet the moonlight sleeps upon this bank!' from *The Merchant of Venice*.

[www.shakespeare.org.uk/visit/anne-hathaways-cottage](https://www.shakespeare.org.uk/visit/anne-hathaways-cottage)



2023 Volunteer Leader of the Year Award recipient Sam Clift, London Transport Museum.



A platform for creating visitor guide apps

Situate is an affordable, easy-to-use, platform for creating and managing location-aware apps.

Supports Bluetooth Beacons, GPS and NFC.



Allows you to target specific audiences e.g. supporting language and accessibility needs.

Fully customisable and scalable.

[situate.io/aim](https://situate.io/aim)

Perfect for:

- Museum Guides
- Audio Tours
- Walking Trails
- Visitor Guides
- Event Guides

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 Arts Scholars Brighter Day Grant

### Dulwich Picture Gallery *Emergency Planning* £4,090

Dulwich Picture Gallery is very appreciative of the assistance from AIM Arts Scholars Brighter Day Grant Scheme. The need to protect our historic collection during accidents and emergencies has always been of vital importance. However, in recent years we have witnessed a rise in the range and quantity of emergency events affecting our sector. Incidents can be both natural and man-made. These include wildly fluctuating weather conditions – extreme heat, cold and flooding. Attacks on master-artworks with various substances by individuals are another shared concern.

The grant has supported the safety of our collection enabling us to purchase new emergency salvage equipment, undertake a professional review process to update our emergency planning and deliver staff training.

The training was led by Claire Fry, who is deeply knowledgeable about disaster

preparedness and was able to offer practical advice based on real-world experience. She provoked thought and discussion, and we have already taken additional steps to improve our salvage response based on her insights.

We were especially grateful to be able to roll the training out widely across the Gallery, with colleagues coming together from all teams, from curatorial, operations and visitor experience to learn best practice for a variety of challenging scenarios. One of the outcomes of the pandemic has been the rise in more flexible working and because of this we need to be

mindful to provide wider training to staff so that we have trained cover on any particular day in the event of a serious incident.

Helen Hillyard, Curator

“The trainer helped us to consider many different types of emergency and a plan. I am much better equipped now to deal with a range of challenging situations.” Simon Bray, Head of Site

“It was superb! So professionally run, I learnt a lot and felt very supported by the facilitator – she responded to our specific needs and was open and thorough.” Jennifer Scott, Director



Team at Dulwich Picture Gallery undertaking salvage training.

## AIM Higher governance support programme

### Listen to our latest podcast *Governance with Royal Irish Benevolent Fund*

Dr Laura Patrick, Regimental Heritage Officer/Director Virtual Military Gallery, Royal Irish Benevolent Fund, applied to AIM Higher for governance training following a rationalisation of the military museums in Northern Ireland. Three regimental museums with six collections and five Boards have been brought together as one museum across

two sites with two new Boards; a Collections Board responsible for all the collections and an Operations Board to manage the business side of the museum.

Consultant Hilary Barnard supported a review of the governance documents and delivered training with the two newly formed Boards responsible for Virtual Military Gallery. We chatted to Laura about her role in the formation of these two Boards.

[Listen to the podcast online: soundcloud.com/aim-435579158](https://soundcloud.com/aim-435579158)

# Looking after collections in Wales

In 2023-24, Welsh Government commissioned Headland Design Associates to review collections management in Wales ('the Review'), taking account of local authority and independent museums and Wales' national sponsored cultural organisations.

The Review's scope included storage, collections care, digital preservation and decarbonisation of collections more broadly across the local and national sectors. It identified several challenges museums face which are having a negative impact on their ability to provide appropriate storage conditions for their collections principally:

**Buildings** – many local and independent museums are situated in historic buildings which are not fit for purpose. The nature of the buildings makes it extremely difficult and often costly to maintain the necessary environmental standards required to care for collections and in some cases actively risk damage to collections through water ingress.

**Capacity** – the Museum Spotlight Survey 2022 reported 88% of the museums that responded had stores that are already overcrowded, or will be, in less than five years. These findings are upheld within the Review. Overcrowding in storage can be detrimental to the care of existing collections and hinder collections development. This impacts both contemporary collecting and diversifying collections to address legacy issues concerning Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities, women, persons living with disabilities and LGBTQ+ communities.

In direct response to the Review's recommendations (unpublished), we have developed two key strands of work that will be delivered within the year:

#### **Collections Management Capital Improvements Grant Programme**

We have developed a new grant programme for local and independent museums (who are Accredited or Working Towards Accreditation)

and archive services (who are Accredited or committed to becoming Accredited) to make small-scale capital improvements to improve conditions in existing collection stores and/or to refit spaces to create new collection stores. This funding will support the improvement of collections storage and support organisations to meet recognised standards for collections care.

#### **Doing things Differently: Archaeology Collections**

Archaeology collections often require specialist storage that can be difficult and costly to achieve. We are currently looking to commission a team of specialists to undertake consultation and scoping around options for shared storage for archaeology collections (whether this be multiple regional stores or one single 'national' store).

*For more information on these work strands, please contact Sara Maggs [museumdevelopment@gov.wales](mailto:museumdevelopment@gov.wales)*



Image by Fabian Serra on Unsplash

# Cybersecurity: protecting your organisation without breaking the bank

**Data loss impacts an organisation's time, money, reputation, and legal compliance, explains Andrea Taylor-Jones of Associate Supplier Rod Barlow Consulting.**

The British Library suffered a Cyber-attack in October 2023 which had an extensive impact. While library premises remained open, services were severely restricted for quite some time and a full recovery could take even longer.

## Cyber-attacks on the British Library

**Elena Carofyllakis, Business Development Manager at Hallett Independent Art & Heritage Insurance on how you can guard against cyber-attack.**

Do recent cyber-attacks on the British Library and other cultural institutions (The Met Opera, Toronto Public Library, Museum für Naturkunde Berlin) highlight a worrying trend? Or are they just some of a huge number of 'marks' which landed for cyber criminals?

The explanation by UK journalist Rupert Goodwin that the British Library attack was 'largely symbolic' because 'as one of the world's largest lending libraries, with 170 million items, the library is "emblematic" of public knowledge', may be comforting for smaller institutions, but attacks are on the increase.

To defend against unseen threats, we must demystify terms like “cybersecurity” and “the cloud.” Data resides on physical devices—under desks, in pockets, or within data centres. Thinking about data storage in these terms helps us plan effectively.

### Are you at risk?

Smaller organisations often underestimate their vulnerability. Cybercriminals are indiscriminate, exploiting low-value information. Attackers prioritise targets based on perceived significance, regardless of ransom payment resources.

Here are cost-effective recommendations to minimise risks:

#### Train and empower employees:

- Educate staff on phishing emails, social engineering, and malware.
- Regular security awareness training enhances vigilance.
- Gamified modules boost engagement and knowledge retention.

#### Enforce strong password policies:

- Require complex passwords (length, variation).
- Explore and implement multi-factor authentication (MFA) for added security where it is supported by your systems.

#### Avoid password reuse:

- Discourage using the same passwords across services.
- Breached data from one site can compromise others.

#### Beware of social engineering:

- Social engineering exploits human vulnerabilities.
- Educate employees to recognise and resist manipulation.

## “Continuous vigilance is essential for effective cybersecurity.”

#### Prioritise software updates:

- Regularly apply updates and patches for operating systems, applications, and firmware.
- Schedule automated updates to minimise risk exposure.
- Address unsupported or end-of-life applications promptly.

#### Secure sensitive information:

- Encrypt data at multiple levels, especially sensitive databases (e.g., customer info, financial records).
- Enable disk encryption on all devices (desktops, laptops, mobile) at no cost.

#### Prepare for data loss with backups:

- Follow the 3-2-1 rule: Three copies of data, two different methods, one copy offsite.

- Regularly assess backup security and successful restoration capabilities.

#### Control access:

- Limit user access to essential functions based on their roles.
- Remove unnecessary administrator permissions to prevent unauthorised software installations.

#### Physical security of hardware:

- Secure physical access to servers, computers, and IT equipment.
- Properly dispose of outdated hardware to prevent unauthorised data access.

#### Third-party risk management:

- Evaluate vendors’ cybersecurity approach before signing contracts.
- Implement data loss prevention (DLP) solutions for secure data movement.

Continuous vigilance is essential for effective cybersecurity. Make sure you consider free resources like the National Cybersecurity Initiative (Cyber Essentials). Small security improvements can significantly deter cyber-attacks and protect valuable data assets.

Also look at significantly discounted security protection software offered through organisations like Charity Digital. Please feel free to contact us if you need help or advice on cybersecurity or any aspect of technology for cultural and heritage venues: [andrea@rodbarlow.com](mailto:andrea@rodbarlow.com) or [www.rodbarlow.com](http://www.rodbarlow.com)

So, what can institutions do to guard against attacks? Especially when already resource challenged?

Firstly, your insurance broker should be talking to you about cyber risks and the options available to you. Informed brokers should be a conduit of knowledge about what the main risks are, what you can do about them and if you want to pass these risks onto an insurer or not. Some top tips include:

- Speak to us or your insurance broker about cyber insurance as these policies will give you a wraparound 24/7/365 response to any incident. It will provide access to IT forensics to get systems back online plus lawyers and PR experts to help with the fall out and advise you.
- Staff training and procedures. Human error still accounts

for the vast majority of incidents. Ensure your staff are properly trained. Also, companies should have strict rules around who can move money and change bank account details. A huge red flag is bank details changing mid deal/transaction.

- Passwords. Use 3 random words which are much harder to guess and different ones for all different systems.
- Back up your data and update your devices.
- Multi Factor authentication. Use it on everything!
- Look at the National Cyber Security website [www.ncsc.gov](http://www.ncsc.gov) for extensive advice on cyber risks and protection.

[www.hallettindependent.com](http://www.hallettindependent.com)

## Consultancy

### Is your Board truly effective?

Do your Trustees share clarity of purpose and direction, and know how you're going to get there?

**Talk to me. With over 35 years practical experience, I've helped over 200 museums and can help you too.**

**co-author of the definitive book:**  
**"Managing Change in Museums - a practical guide"**

*"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



The UK's Governance specialist  
**HILARY MCGOWAN**

**Tel: 01934 811955**  
 e: [hilary.a.mcgowan@gmail.com](mailto:hilary.a.mcgowan@gmail.com)  
[www.hilarymcgowan.co.uk](http://www.hilarymcgowan.co.uk)



**COLIN MULBERG CONSULTING**  
 IMPROVING THE VISITOR EXPERIENCE

Whether you're a small museum, regional heritage site or international arts venue, we can help put visitors at the heart of what you do.

- Developing visitor insight
- Creating strong visitor offers
- Improving the visitor experience
- Increasing earned income
- Supporting funding bids
- Building resilience

**Colin Mulberg Consulting**  
 London, UK  
 +44 (0)7757 800 943  
[colin@colinmulberg.com](mailto:colin@colinmulberg.com)  
[www.colinmulberg.com](http://www.colinmulberg.com)

**J | H | A**

**JULIA HOLBERRY ASSOCIATES**

We specialise in supporting your National Lottery Heritage Fund bid.

We develop and write:

- Activity plans
- Volunteering plans
- Training plans
- Governance reviews
- Options appraisals and feasibility studies

**T 01865 860955**

**E [julia@juliaholberry.co.uk](mailto:julia@juliaholberry.co.uk)**

**[WWW.JULIAHOLBERRY.CO.UK](http://WWW.JULIAHOLBERRY.CO.UK)**

## Design



**Museum redevelopment  
 Heritage interpretation  
 Exhibitions and displays**

**Creating engaging experiences throughout the UK**

**0117 325 1515**  
[www.smithandjones.co.uk](http://www.smithandjones.co.uk)

## Guide Development

**((situate))**

Situate is an affordable, easy-to-use, platform for creating and managing location-aware apps.

Supports Bluetooth Beacons, GPS and NFC.

Fully customisable and scalable.

[situate.io/aim](http://situate.io/aim)

Perfect for:

Museum Guides  
 Audio Tours  
 Walking Trails  
 Visitor Guides  
 Event Guides



## Publishing

**guidebook**

*noun*

book that gives visitors information, designed to enhance their visit

for the guidebook specialist

[www.jigsaw-publishing.co.uk](http://www.jigsaw-publishing.co.uk)

**JIGSAW**  
 DESIGN & PUBLISHING

## AIM Resources

**Don't miss out!  
 Book your upcoming AIM events at**

[aim-museums.co.uk/dates-for-your-diary](http://aim-museums.co.uk/dates-for-your-diary)



**For the latest advice and insights sign up to AIM's eNews today!**

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



# UK Museum COP Report

## NMDC recently published a report on the UK Museum COP event held at Tate Modern in October 2023.

The aim of the event was to secure consensus across museums on urgent action to decarbonise the sector and mitigate the impacts of the climate and biodiversity crises. Following the event UK museum leaders issued their first ever joint commitment to collective action.

NMDC's new Climate Lead Maggie Appleton, CEO of the RAF Museum, said:

'The UK Museum COP event was a real breakthrough in collective commitment to urgent action across the museum sector. With warm thanks to Nick Merriman for his brilliant leadership, and for chairing the COP event, I am delighted to take the reins and drive NMDC's work on this vital issue.

We will continue working hard to deliver the commitments and proposals made at COP, as well as advocating to government and funders on how they can best support the museum sector in achieving its incredible potential to make a major contribution to national ambitions around the climate and biodiversity crises.'

### Museum decarbonisation case studies

To support the objectives of UK Museum COP, NMDC worked with Buro Happold and Flint + Partners on a study of potential improvements to the energy performance of six different museum sites across the country, identifying where changes could be made to make buildings more efficient and reduce carbon emissions. Each case study considers three categories: quick wins, maintenance, and capital projects, and within these demonstrates a range of measures for potential carbon savings.

The case studies demonstrate that while there are huge opportunities for museums to decarbonise and many low-cost ways to make improvements, there are also considerable cost implications for the sector. NMDC will use the case studies to continue to advocate for investment to support museums in decarbonising their estates and operations.

### UK Museum COP actions and recommendations

NMDC continues to work on delivery of actions from the day, and the COP subgroups on Heritage buildings, Scope 3 challenges, Funding, Workforce and skills and Collections are continuing to meet to discuss taking forward their recommendations. Actions already complete or underway include:

#### UK Museum COP commitments

- The Ethics statement from museum leaders, presented by COP Chair Nick Merriman and agreed on the day, has been widely shared and there has been interest from international museum bodies about the COP event and shared statement.
- The Refreshed Bizot Green Protocol endorsed at COP and by NMDC commits to environmental sustainability across all areas of museum activity and the adoption of a 'greener practice first mindset'. NMDC will continue to promote the Bizot Principles and encourages all museums to commit to following them.
- The 'Global Call to Action' aiming to put cultural heritage, arts, and creative industries at the heart of UN climate action was signed on behalf of NMDC. The campaign, coordinated in the UK by Julie's Bicycle, is gaining traction. More information is available at [www.climateheritage.org/jwd](http://www.climateheritage.org/jwd)

### New online resource for museums and heritage

The Scope 3 Challenges COP subgroup recommended that NMDC 'should work with other sector bodies to develop signposting to existing resources for museums, including clear guidance on the most relevant resources for different types of organisations.'

In response, an online 'Museums and Heritage Climate Hub' is in the planning stage, aiming to address current challenges in finding and navigating the right resources by providing a 'one-stop shop' linking to toolkits, case studies and guidance for museums and heritage organisations.

The project is being taken forward by NMDC in partnership with Arts Council England, AIM, Historic Buildings and Places, Historic England, Museum Development North, and Welsh Government.

[www.nationalmuseums.org.uk/what-we-do/climate-crisis](http://www.nationalmuseums.org.uk/what-we-do/climate-crisis)

# Enhancing the visitor experience with Bloomberg Connects

**We spoke to The Royal Signals Museum and Dulwich Picture Gallery, two of many AIM member organisations using the Bloomberg Connects app to reach out to new audiences.**

The Royal Signals Museum in Dorset was set up to preserve and promote the story of the Royal Corps of Signals and is one of almost 140 regimental museums in the UK. During the pandemic the museum looked at its strategy and decided to put capturing the Corps' story as it occurs at the heart of its operational objectives, explains Ryan Ellis, Head of Storytelling.

"As we're situated 'behind the wire' on an active army barracks accessibility was one of the reasons we reached out to Bloomberg Connects. We saw the app's potential to expand the reach of our object collection and our oral history collection, something that we've been building since 2022. Under our new storytelling strategy, as soon as a deployment ends, I'm in a room with those who have deployed capturing their story. Whilst we cannot make some of that immediately public, at least we have captured it, which ensures our ongoing relevance to those currently serving. For the thousands of members of the Corps based in the UK and around the world, the app gives them access to their collection, to their story. It also offers us a straightforward way to share extracts in audio and video form to a global audience in an accessible way."

Other elements of the app's functionality helping the museum team drive engagement include the availability of transcripts and multiple languages.

"Transcripts really open up who can engage with this sound library that we're building. For a museum like ours with a small team and budget this was a

straightforward way to improve access and to gain a global audience.

We recently had visitors from France, possibly in relation to the recent D-Day commemorations, but as a museum based in rural Dorset our display boards are in English. However Bloomberg Connects with its translation function opens a whole new world possibility for our international visitors. We're launching a digital collection on the app as part of the Queen's Gurkha Signals anniversary this year and are hoping that additional languages will be added so the Gurkha community can really engage."

The app has useful reporting that enables organisations to review a range of key data and interactions such as what content is popular, explains Ryan.

"We review what is working and what isn't – last year, one of our most popular items was a long-term volunteer talking about his time operating alone at the start of the Brunei revolt. To be able to tell him that he has been 'number one' on the app for six months is a real boost of confidence for our volunteer base."



*The app helps serving and retired soldiers across the world explore The Royal Signals Museum's collection.*

So, if an AIM member is considering the app, what advice would Ryan give them?

"Jump straight in – the team at Bloomberg Connects are fantastic. There's training on how to best word the individual pieces that you are going to put up, the sort of photographs that work best – there's advice on how best to market the app, both within the space and externally as well – a whole marketing team that will work with you. So, whilst it may seem

like a daunting task, the support network is extraordinary. It has been incredibly beneficial for us to have joined."

For Tom Short, Marketing Officer at London's Dulwich Picture Gallery, a review of the digital visitor experience during the pandemic was the key starting point.

"We were thinking 'what's the world of visiting going to look like when we reopen?' It was an opportunity to look at how we presented the visitor experience digitally and think about how we might enhance our exhibitions. A great thing about the app is there's so much content that you can enjoy outside of the museum experience, you can take it home and learn more, enjoy more and see more."

Working with the app has coincided latterly with a major infrastructure project, explains Tom.

"We're transforming the grounds, bringing sculptures into our gardens. The latest version of the Gallery's map on the app includes points where you can discover more about the sculptures – it's nice to be able to give people pointers on that, visibility which is impossible on other platforms, really, apart from your website.

"You can test things out and it's really accessible for someone who isn't super-hot on using design apps. Usage statistics vary based on the exhibition: demographically some people are going to be more interested in the app and some are more like 'I just want to go into a museum.' The auto translate function is also interesting as visitors can view content in their own language, it helps us build up a picture of what nationalities are visiting and what they want to see from us."

Tom recommends those considering the app to use the platform to its strengths and to think about the user journey.

"There is no need to put every video you have ever made on there, or every interesting image. But, equally, it's great to have some additional bits of content that some will enjoy after the exhibition. It helps to keep them in your ecosystem and encourages them to come back."

[www.bloombergconnects.org](http://www.bloombergconnects.org)



**The Heritage Centre Bellingham proudly celebrates its 30th anniversary this year, marking three decades of preserving and showcasing the rich history of Bellingham and its surrounding areas.**

# Heritage Centre Bellingham

Since its humble beginnings in 1994, when a small box of postcards was first exhibited at the Town Hall, the Heritage Centre has evolved significantly. It now occupies the former council depot's garage at Station Yard which was transformed into a museum with the help of a grant. Visitors can explore exhibits and displays on the region's railway, coal mining and iron industries, the Border Reivers, and a replica of Walter P. Collier's Edwardian photography shop.

Additionally, there is a Victorian school room exhibit, extensive information on the former Brown Rigg county boarding school and detailed displays about both World Wars. The centre also features a mural depicting 105 themes related to the kingdom of Northumbria, exhibits on Kielder Forest, Kielder reservoir, wind farms, and a comparison between coal and renewable energy sources.

A faithfully reconstructed local smithy provides a glimpse into the area's industrial past. This year's special seasonal exhibition is dedicated to Valdemars Blankenburgs, a Latvian refugee who fled the Nazis and later the

Russians during World War II, and who documented the development of Kielder Forest through his photography. On the station platform, the former Parcel Shed has been converted into an additional exhibition space.

The centre's growing Wikipedia page<sup>[1]</sup> enables locals and those from further afield to share their stories of life in Bellingham and offers access to personal histories closely tied to the collections. This digital collection is especially valuable for our work with local schools, as it aligns with the growing educational emphasis on learning about local history and the community.

This year has been particularly successful with a 57% increase in visitor numbers. The removal of admission fees, allowing visitors to donate voluntarily if they wish, launched as a trial in June 2022 and has proven highly effective. While some visitors choose not to donate, many speak highly of the exhibitions and return with family members, while those who do donate often contribute double the amount of the former admission fee.



A Mark 3 former HST 125 first-class railway carriage was transformed into the revamped "Tea on the Train" café and opened in September 2023. This unique café experience beautifully complements the Heritage Centre's location at Station Yard, offering visitors a stylish and comfortable place to enjoy lunch.

Like many organisations, we are feeling the pressure of sustaining our volunteer base – our seven-day opening schedule requires 28 of our 35 volunteers. To help, we offer volunteer discounts in our shop and café, as well as gift vouchers for those who successfully recruit new colleagues. This incentive program has brought in five new volunteers this year. We are also collaborating with other groups to attract more people to help our efforts. As we celebrate our 30th anniversary, we are deeply grateful for the dedication of our trustees and volunteers, without whom this milestone would not have been possible. Despite the challenges, we continue to grow and evolve, and we look forward to welcoming you to The Heritage Centre soon.

**Clare Craig**  
Volunteer and Shop Manager

<sup>[1]</sup> <https://wiki.bellingham-heritage.org.uk>





## Clare Mills, Deputy CEO, Charity Finance Group on how financially confident organisations are more effective at driving social change.

Museums fascinate me. I don't think I have ever been to a boring one. I love the light that museums shine on our history, geography, politics, society, culture, language, faiths, traditions – the list is endless. By showing, explaining, and putting things into context, our knowledge and understanding grows. And if there is one thing that we need in response to the racist and Islamophobic riots of the summer just past, it is some light to drive away the darkness.

What's this got to do with charity finance, you might be asking? Well, museums and CFG (Charity Finance Group) are part of our country's civil society. And civil society exists to make the world a better place – championing the voices of those who experience disadvantage and exclusion, providing lifeline services, and working to achieve social justice and cohesion. Whether we are telling the story of our community or helping those storytellers to do the most they can with the resources available to them, we are working together to change the world, for the better.

So how can we, the finance people, support you, the story tellers, and bringers of light? At CFG, we believe that financially confident organisations are more effective at driving social change. When finance is at the heart of decision making, and managed well, it has the power to transform organisations and amplify their impact. We offer tools, learning and expertise to improve your financial management, governance, and leadership, helping you deliver your charitable objectives from all the resources you have available.

Through our partnership, any AIM member can also join CFG free of charge and enjoy a range of benefits including training and events tailored for museums and cultural organisations, support and learning from peers across our

vibrant community, and access to free expert advice through our specialist helplines.

What's more, CFG brings together insight from across civil society to influence policymakers and decision-takers. At the time of writing, we are working on our submission to the UK government ahead of the Budget, which is due on 30 October. We will be including representation on tax simplification for registered charities. It is likely we will call for increases to several charity tax reliefs in line with inflation, around the Gift Aid Small Donation Scheme (GASDS) and donor benefits for Gift Aid and extending charitable rate relief to wholly owned charity trading subsidiaries.

We have also been liaising with HM Treasury and HMRC on the implementation plans for the Digital Markets, Consumers and Competition Act. Our work has centred on protecting the Gift Aid element of annual subscriptions to charities, but we have also been looking at the increased rights consumers have to cancel subscriptions which have been purchased digitally. If your organisation offers a subscription model, perhaps through an annual membership scheme, then this may be relevant to you.

We have also been gearing up our support plans, as the new SORP (Statement of Recommended Practice) is expected to apply to accounts from spring 2025. Any charity with annual income of £250,000 or more will need to follow the SORP requirements – and charities with a lower level of income can choose to do so. At the time of writing, the exact dates for the final steps are unclear but we are planning to run consultation events before the final version is confirmed, and a full programme of training as soon as the SORP is finalised.

We will continue to provide technical expertise on all things charity finance. Alongside that, we will continue to use our voice for equity, diversity and inclusion, and to amplify those voices that are less heard, from across the charity sector. Wherever and however, you are bringing light and telling stories, we are here to support you.

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

### AIM Bulletin

Editor MATT SMITH

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

### Contact AIM

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

By phone: 0333 305 8060

By post: AIM Postal, PO Box 181, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 9DR



Supported using public funding by  
**ARTS COUNCIL  
ENGLAND**

Registered in England No. 1350939

Charity No: 1082215

VAT Registration No: 355372196

© No material may be reproduced without the permission of the Editor.

Page layout by Dorchester Typesetting

Group Ltd, Dorchester, Dorset

Printed by Lavenham Press

AIM Bulletin is printed on Edixion offset, uncoated paper with ISO 14001 environmental certification and covered by the European EMAS standard. This product is made of material from well-managed, FSC®-certified forests and other controlled sources.

