



# STROUD DISTRICT COUNCIL

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## COMMUNITY SERVICES AND LICENSING COMMITTEE MEMBER REPORT

<b>NAME OF ORGANISATION/BODY</b>	Museum in the Park (Cowle Trust)
<b>DATE OF LAST MEETING ATTENDED</b>	5 <sup>th</sup> February 2024

### BRIEF REPORT

This report covers the period October-December 2023 as presented at the February meeting.

To the end of December, the museum welcomed nearly 38,000 visitors (up 9% on the year before) and had just under 69,000 user engagements (this includes enquiries, outreach, website visits but excludes social media). The museum closed earlier than normal in December and opened later in January to accommodate works for the Salix funded decarbonisation project. The museum's own deep clean has worked around these as best they could. The museum re-open with a special snowdrop weekend on Saturday 27th January 2024.

**Collections Management System Replacement Project:** Initial meeting with preferred supplier. Whilst contract being prepared and finalised there will be a concurrent process of supplying data for review as this will inform the software and services part of the contract. A review of the museum's data analysis and mapping to be held in January.  
*The effective management of the collections held in perpetuity for the community relies on an important tool – a collections management system. The current Access Database was developed in the early 1990s and is not fit for purpose – particularly in the sharing of collections information. The project is funded thanks to a generous private bequest to the Cowle Trust. This is the next step in the museum's development, following the successful museum's free-to-join membership.*

**Acquisitions:** During the period the museum has received 20 offers of objects or groups of objects. The museum has accepted 11 of these. Items include a 1980s McLaren stroller; a collection of bearings and associated documents from the Hoffmann's factory, Stonehouse; a model of the living quarters of Painswick Post Office, which connects to the Post Office model in our existing collections. Contents of the latter to be displayed until end of March.

**Mould:** Conservators have collected for treatment the previously reported objects affected by mould at one of the stores. Further mould affected objects were found at a second collections store during the deep clean. Staff will be analysing environmental data and cleaning what they can safely and seeking expert input.

**Security Assessment:** The museum received an Arts Council England Security Assessment. The report concluded that the museum has good physical, technical and procedural controls. The museum is due to submit a State of the Environment report by the end of January.

### **Public Programme**

Exhibition highlights have included: Woodcarvings by Natasha Houseago (8 October – 5 November) - a varied collection of carvings included sculptures made from fallen or felled trees from the surrounding park grounds, connecting the indoor gallery with the outdoor park setting. 'The Activist Alphabet' by Christine Felce (11 November - 3 December) - a series of 26 print-based works and poems by local artist Christine Felce. The project started during the 2020 Lockdown and arose out of her concern about the impact of climate change and social injustice.

The museum has continued to offer a mix of high quality, welcoming and enjoyable activities and events for different audiences and age groups. A highlight has to be the chocolate impact testing event held during the October half term.

**Learning – Work Experience:** Having reviewed the previous work experience offer, the museum has relaunched their Work Experience Opportunities during December and have advertised opportunities for Year 10 students during two separate weeks during summer 2024.

**Evaluation:** An informative presentation was given by the museum's learning officer of the results from the museum's 'motivation' short survey. The analysis will help to inform the Museum's Forward Plan (2024-2029) development.

### **Volunteering**

To date, this financial year volunteer hours are 2,756 (just under 2FTE), the vast majority in the walled garden. This is valuable contribution, and which is being successfully developed by the museum's volunteer co-ordinator, though this is a temporary post. Thanks to this post the museum has managed to review and relaunch the volunteer programme and has begun to take on new volunteers.

### **De-carbonisation**

All the radiators throughout the museum have been replaced along with plant in the basement. Due to the hard work in preparing for this no collections were put at risk. It was not possible to complete works in the modern extension and these are being re-designed and planned accordingly.

### **Courtyard Furniture**

To help support the museum's income generation and visitor offer the Cowle Trust generously agreed to pay for new outdoor courtyard furniture. The existing furniture, which needs replacement, was previously funded by the Friends of the Museum in 2009.

Visit [www.museuminthepark.org.uk/membership](http://www.museuminthepark.org.uk/membership) to sign-up to the free-to-join membership to get museum insights and news.

Next meeting 29<sup>th</sup> April 2024.

<b>REPORT SUBMITTED BY</b>	Cllr Nick Hurst
<b>DATE</b>	20 <sup>th</sup> February 2024