



# STROUD DISTRICT COUNCIL

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## COMMUNITY SERVICES AND LICENSING COMMITTEE

### MEMBER REPORT

NAME OF ORGANISATION/BODY	Museum in the Park (Cowle Trust)
DATE OF LAST MEETING ATTENDED	25 <sup>th</sup> July 2022 & 7 <sup>th</sup> November 2022 (apologies sent, report based on reports/minutes)

#### BRIEF REPORT

Please see the [museum's annual report for 21-22](#) which was approved at the July meeting.

The museum has welcomed over 31,000 visitors during April-October and 60,000 engagements (visits, enquiries, outreach, website visits but excluding social media), visits are down by about a third compared with pre-Covid-19. This appears to be what other museums are experiencing. Gross income is however comparable with pre-Covid 19 figures. The signs of recovery remain.

Despite providing a scaled down programme visitor feedback in regards to exhibitions and events continues to be positive. The 'quality over quantity' approach taken by the museum team to ensure flexibility and resilience is important to manage their limited resources effectively and that a quality visitor experience can be maintained.

**Top three risks** to museum operations include:

- Staffing (vacancies and availability) – affecting staff well-being and workloads for all
- Volunteer recruitment and engagement (pending staffing being resolved)
- Distributed collection stores and care of collections (environmental controls – see below).

The **Community Case** continues the theme of missing histories and to celebrate 50 years of Pride in the UK, Stroud District Council's LGBTQIA+ group - known as Stride - put on a display of personal objects and photographs alongside their reflections on finding and celebrating their identities and accomplishments. If you belong to a community group or know of anyone who may be interested in staging a display in the Space do get in touch with the museum [here](#).

Following a **missing histories** display on women's health, 19 women came to the museum to share their stories of motherhood and menopause, and to create a piece of bunting to represent their story. These artworks are now on display and their stories available to read.

**Programme:** The summer exhibition was by a local wildlife artist and founder of Stroud Nature Festival, Steve Roberts. *Handstitched Stories* (from 19<sup>th</sup> November) - Sabine Kaner's work generates conversations on identity, mental health, memory and personal experiences, using colours, symbols and semi-abstract compositions to create visual narratives and metaphors. Wednesday Winter Warmers: Local History slideshows with refreshments running until 14<sup>th</sup> December. Harmony Singing for wellbeing (6 week course) running November-December.

#### Treasure Finds

There have been a number of declared Treasure Finds due to national backlogs caused by Covid-19. Fundraising is currently underway for two items:

- William Webb mourning ring found at Painswick. You can read more about the ring here: <https://finds.org.uk/database/artefacts/record/id/1037014>. Fundraising for this object is via public donations online and at the museum as it has been able to borrow the object.
- Hoard of 61 Charles II & William III coins found at Alkington. You can read more about the coins here: <https://finds.org.uk/database/artefacts/record/id/1038864>. The museum has secured a grant from the V&A Purchase Fund and The Headley Trust supported by match funding from the Cowle Trust.

### Collections Care

The museum is continuing to undertake actions to manage a mould outbreak in two rooms at the School of Science and Art and are implementing recommendations from external conservators. Once stabilisation of the environment is confirmed, the conservators will be contracted to clean the worst mould from the objects and brief some of the museum team on cleaning others.

The annual location audit was completed and 99.995% of objects sampled were correct.

### Fossil Fishing at the Farm

You may have seen the jaw-dropping photos of the hundreds of fossils found in Kings Stanley on the news and social media. They include 3D fish, fish with soft parts (including eyeballs!), ichthyosaur bones, rare insects and more. What you may not know is that the museum's Collections Officer, Alexia Clark, played a pivotal part in the operation. The museum also successfully applied for an Arts Council grant to run a family event and evening talk at the start of the October half-term, over 800 people attended the day. In the museum's September Member Mailing there was an exclusive early access to Alexia's excavation diary.

### Museum Membership

People are continuing to sign-up to the free-to-join membership to get news and insights, anyone can join at:

[www.museuminthepark.org.uk/membership](http://www.museuminthepark.org.uk/membership)

The museum team are continuing to work with the supplier on user functionality and customisation requirements relating to the new electronic point of sale (EPOS).



**Cowle Trust** Chair is stepping down. There is one other vacancy which is advertised. Camilla Hale (nominative trustee) was re-nominated for a further term at the end of April 2022. The Trust are now in a position to gift aid donations.

The last day the museum is open in 2022 is Sunday 18th December, then closed for deep cleaning and maintenance, re-opening on Tuesday 24th January 2023.

<b>REPORT SUBMITTED BY</b>	Cllr Nigel Prenter
<b>DATE</b>	13 <sup>th</sup> November 2022