

Wessex Museums Trust

Unaudited Annual Report and Financial Statements

For the Year Ended 31 March 2024

Charity Registered in England and Wales Number: 1171104

Wessex Museums Trust
Contents
For the Year Ended 31 March 2024

	<u>Page</u>
Reference and Administrative Details	2
Trustees' Report	3 – 6
Independent Examiners' Report	7
Statement of Financial Activities	8
Balance Sheet	9
Statement of cashflows	10
Notes to the Financial Statements	11 – 20
Appendix A – Impact Report	

Wessex Museums Trust
Reference and Administrative Details
For the Year Ended 31 March 2024

Trustees

D Dawson
C Dixon
E Dunbar
J Dyer
A Green
G Smith
S Wills
F Yeo

Chief Executive Officer

K Broughton

Registered Charity Number

1171104

Registered Office

Albert Goodman LLP
Goodwood House
Blackbrook Park Avenue
Taunton
Somerset
TA1 2PX

Independent Examiner

Michelle Ferris BSc (Hons) FCA DChA
Albert Goodman LLP
Goodwood House
Blackbrook Park Avenue
Taunton
Somerset
TA1 2PX

Bankers

Barclays plc
Leicester
LE87 2BB

The Trustees of the Wessex Museums Trust present their report and the accounts for the period ended 31 March 2024 and confirm they comply with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011, the charity's constitution, and Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (SORP FRS 102).

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

The Wessex Museums Trust is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) registered with the Charity Commission in January 2017 (No. 1171104). The Trust is governed by its constitution last updated in March 2024.

The Wessex Museums Trust Board consists of five nominated and five appointed trustees. The five nominated trustees are nominated, one each, by the five nominated bodies (Poole BCP Council – Poole Museum, Dorset Natural History & Archaeological Society, Salisbury and South Wiltshire Museum Trust, Swindon Borough Council – Swindon Museums, Wiltshire Archaeological & Natural History Society). Nominated trustees are appointed for a three year term. The five appointed trustees are independent and selected on the basis of the skills, knowledge and experience they can bring to the effective administration of the Trust Board. The five appointed by the trustees serve for a term of three years.

Trustees are elected at a meeting of the Trustee Board, usually the AGM.

A charity trustee who has served for three consecutive terms may not be reappointed for a fourth consecutive term but may be reappointed after an interval of at least one year.

The charity trustees are responsible for managing the affairs of the CIO. They also oversee the management and delivery of the Wessex Museums Partnership's National Portfolio Organisation (NPO) programme funded by Arts Council England (ACE). The funding agreement for the NPO is between ACE and, Wessex Museums Trust.

The day-to-day operations of the Trust are managed by the CEO and a team of three (2.2 FTE) further central staff members who work across the consortium: a Fundraising & Development Manager, Marketing & Digital Officer and Finance & Admin Assistant. All three posts are funded by a combination of the consortium's NPO grant and partner museum contributions made to the Trust. All staff are employed by Wessex Museums Trust.

The Wessex Museums Trust Board meets 5 times per year. The Board invites an 'observer trustee' from the meeting host when held on site in a partner museum, to ensure engagement with the partner museums' boards. The minutes of the Wessex Museums Trust Board meetings are also distributed to and form a regular agenda item on the boards of each of the partner museums.

Trustees give their time freely and receive no remuneration or financial benefits.

The Wessex Museums Partnership maintains a risk register in respect of delivery of its NPO programme and the charity's affairs. This includes organisational risks in respect of the Wessex Museums Trust as the governance and management body of the NPO. The risk register is reviewed at every Board meeting.

Trustees

G Coy	(Resigned 23 May 2024)
D Dawson	
C Dixon	(Appointed 21 September 2023)
E Dunbar	(Appointed 21 September 2023)
J Dyer	(Appointed 21 September 2023)
A Green	
E Selby	(Resigned 21 September 2023)
G Smith	
M Spender	(Resigned 23 May 2024)
S Wills	
F Yeo	(Appointed 22 June 2023)

Objectives and activities

The objects of the Wessex Museums Trust are set out in its constitution and are summarised as follows:

- To support for the benefit of the public the building, establishment and maintenance of accredited museums in Dorset and Wiltshire, their artefacts, art, specimens, documents and other associated material, including the collection, storage, research and conservation of all such material; and
- To advance the education of the public (in particular but without limitation to those living in Dorset and Wiltshire and those geographic, ethnic, disabled and other communities who do not traditionally attend museums) in particular (but not limited to) by providing information about the history, heritage and culture of Dorset and Wiltshire and support to the provision and improvement of the facilities, collections, exhibitions, formal and informal learning opportunities, public events and other educational activities, including in digital form, available to the public in museums in Dorset and Wiltshire and within the communities of Dorset and Wiltshire and across the internet.

The Wessex Museums Trust is a thriving partnership of the five leading museums/museums services across the counties of Dorset and Wiltshire: Poole Museum, Dorset Museum & Art Gallery, The Salisbury Museum, Swindon Museums and Wiltshire Museum.

Wessex Museums exists to build the resilience and relevance of the museums in our partnership and others across the region. Our mission is to support museums to connect, inspire and add value to people's lives.

Achievements and performance

The achievement and performance of the Wessex Museums Trust are set out in our Annual Impact Report for 2023/24 (Appendix A).

Financial review

During the year the charity generated income of £546,674 (2023 - £101,203) from a combination of grants, sponsorship and donations. Against this there were costs for the operation of the charity, as well as programme and project delivery costs. The surplus in the year of £161,270 (2023 – deficit £38,375) included a surplus of £130,128 for restricted funding and a surplus of £31,142 for unrestricted funding, leaving closing reserves at the year end of £43,557 unrestricted funds (2023 - £12,415) and £139,805 of restricted funds (2023 - £9,677).

Reserves policy

Wessex Museums Trust are particularly aware of the need to cover contingency liabilities such as gaps in funding streams, cash flow and meeting the cost of redundancy payments to staff in the event that the organisation were forced to close. It achieves this by aiming to hold enough free reserves to cover these contingencies.

The level of free reserves has been set by Trustees taking into account the following:

- The need to secure ongoing core funding from sale of charitable activities and grants. Plus ensuring that if payment is late in arriving, we have funds to cover running costs.
- Project funding is often short term and at risk of changes to funding programmes. Additionally, in-kind support currently received may not be available in the future.
- Sufficient funds should be readily available to provide working capital to enable the organisation to bid for additional funding streams which may be paid in arrears.
- Working capital i.e., project funding to continue short term projects or start new ones, although at that point it could be made a designated fund. (An amount decided each year)
- Funds should be available in order to build capacity and contribute to improved productivity and sustainability of the organisation.
- The smooth running of the charity.
- Funding should also be available to deal with contingencies which might arise in the day to day running of the organisation including: Contingency costs (An amount decided each year), sickness cover, maternity/paternity leave, recruitment costs.

It is anticipated that 3-6 months would be a required level of reserves, which at the current level of expenditure would equate to £96k - £192k. Current reserves are £183,362 and are being accumulated towards the desired level.

Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities

The trustees are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards including Financial Reporting Standard 102: The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

The law applicable to charities in England & Wales requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and of the income and expenditure of the charity for that period. In preparing these financial statements, the trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP;
- make judgments and accounting estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable accounting standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements, and
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in business.

The trustees are responsible for maintaining proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act 2011, the Charity (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 and the provisions of the trust deed/constitution. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Approved by the board on 03/10/2024 and signed on their behalf by:

G Smith
Chair

Wessex Museums Trust

Independent Examiners' Report to the Trustees
For the Year Ended 31 March 2024

Independent examiners report to the Trustees of Wessex Museums Trust

I report to the charity trustees on my examination of the accounts of Wessex Museums Trust ("the charity") for the year ended 31 March 2024.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity trustees of the charity you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ("the 2011 Act").

I report in respect of my examination of the charity's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act.

Independent examiner's statement

Since the charity's gross income exceeded £250,000 your examiner must be a member of a body listed in section 145 of the 2011 Act. I confirm that I am qualified to undertake the examination because I am a member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales, which is one of the listed bodies.

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

1. accounting records were not kept in respect of the charity as required by section 130 of the 2011 Act; or
2. the accounts do not comply with these records; or
3. the accounts do not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of the accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a "true and fair view" which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Michelle Ferris BSc (Hons) FCA DChA

Albert Goodman LLP
Goodwood House
Blackbrook Park Avenue
Taunton
Somerset
TA1 2PX

Date: 16/10/2024

Wessex Museums Trust
Statement of Financial Activities
For the Year Ended 31 March 2024

	Notes	Unrest- ricted Funds £	Restrict- ed Funds £	Total 2024 £	Unrest- ricted Funds £	Restrict- ed Funds £	Total 2023 £
Income from:							
Donations and grants	2	62,170	484,504	546,674	22,739	78,464	101,203
Total income		62,170	484,504	546,674	22,739	78,464	101,203
Expenditure on:							
Charitable expenditure	3	31,028	354,376	385,404	17,122	122,456	139,578
Total expenditure		31,028	354,376	385,404	17,122	122,456	139,578
Net income/(expenditure) before transfers		31,142	130,128	161,270	5,617	(43,992)	(38,375)
Transfer between funds	8	-	-	-	(100)	100	-
Net movement in funds		31,142	130,128	161,270	5,517	(43,892)	(38,375)
Reconciliation of funds							
Fund balances at 01 April 2023		12,415	9,677	22,092	6,898	53,569	60,467
Fund balances at 31 March 2024	8	43,557	139,805	183,362	12,415	9,677	22,092

Wessex Museums Trust
Balance Sheet
As at 31 March 2024

	Notes	2024 £	2023 £
Fixed assets			
Tangible fixed assets	6	2,377	3,790
Current assets			
Cash at bank and in hand		198,643	24,875
		<u>198,643</u>	<u>24,875</u>
Creditors			
Amounts falling due within one year	7	(17,658)	(6,573)
Net current assets		<u>180,985</u>	<u>18,302</u>
Net assets excluding pension liabilities		<u>183,362</u>	<u>22,092</u>
Defined benefit pension scheme asset/(liabilities)	10	-	-
Total net liabilities including pension liabilities		<u>183,362</u>	<u>22,092</u>
Funds			
Unrestricted funds			
General funds	8	30,408	11,664
Designated funds	8	13,149	751
		<u>43,557</u>	<u>12,415</u>
Restricted funds	8	<u>139,805</u>	<u>9,677</u>
Net assets		<u>183,362</u>	<u>22,092</u>

Approved by the Board of Trustees for issue on 03/10/2024 and signed on their behalf by:

G Smith
Chair

Wessex Museums Trust
Statement of cashflows
As at 31 March 2024

		2024 £	2023 £
	Notes		
Cash flows from operating activities			
Net expenditure for the year		161,270	(38,375)
Adjustments to cash flows from non-cash items:			
Depreciation and amortisation	6	1,413	450
		<u>162,683</u>	<u>(37,925)</u>
Working capital adjustments			
Increase / (decrease) in creditors	7	11,085	6,573
		<u>173,768</u>	<u>(31,352)</u>
Cash flows from investing activities			
Purchase of tangible fixed assets		-	(4,240)
		<u>-</u>	<u>(4,240)</u>
Net increase in cash and cash equivalents		<u>173,768</u>	<u>(35,592)</u>
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the reporting period		<u>24,875</u>	<u>60,467</u>
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the reporting period		<u>198,643</u>	<u>24,875</u>
Cash & Cash equivalents reconciliation:			
Cash at bank		<u>198,643</u>	<u>24,875</u>
Total cash & cash equivalents at the end of the reporting period		<u>198,643</u>	<u>24,875</u>

1 Accounting Policies

1.1 General information and basis of accounting

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statements of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS102) (effective 1 January 2019) – Charities SORP (FRS 102), the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102).

The charity meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102. Assets and liabilities are initially recognised at historical cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant accounting policy.

The charity previously prepared the accounts on a receipts and payments basis. For the year ended 31 March 2024 the limit for receipts and payments accounts was breached and therefore these accounts are prepared on the accruals basis. The accounts (including comparatives) have been prepared as if the accruals basis had always been applied.

1.2 Income

All income is included in the Statement of Financial Activities when the charity is entitled to the income and the amount can be quantified with reasonable accuracy. The following specific policies are applied to particular categories of income. The valuation of donated services is not quantified within the Statement of Financial Activities.

Donation income is received by way of general grants, donations and gifts and is included in full in the Statement of Financial Activities when receivable.

Income from charitable activities is recognised when the activity that lead to the income takes place.

Investment income is included when receivable.

1.3 Government grants

Government grants are accounted for when unconditionally due and reasonable assurance can be gained that it will be received. Where funds are received in advance, for a specified period, these funds are deferred and recognised in the period to which they relate. Where funds have not been received in a specified period, these funds will be accrued in debtors and recognised in the period to which they relate. Not all grants received have conditions and performance indicators attached, where this is the case, the income is included within donations. Performance related grants are included within Charitable Activities income.

1.4 Donated services

In accordance with the Charities SORP (FRS 102), unpaid volunteer time is not recognised in the financial statements.

1.5 Expenditure

Expenditure is recognised on an accruals basis as a liability is incurred. All expenditure is gross of VAT which cannot be recovered and is reported as part of the expenditure to which it relates.

Charitable expenditure comprises those costs incurred by the charity in the delivery of its activities and services. Direct costs are allocated to such activities and support costs are apportioned as appropriate to delivering charitable activities.

1.6 Fixed assets

Depreciation is calculated to write off the cost of fixed assets over their estimated useful lives at the following rates:-

Computer equipment	- 33.33% straight line
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Fixed assets are valued at cost less depreciation.

1.7 Debtors

Prepayments are valued at the amount prepaid. Accrued income comprises amounts due from funders and is recognised when the charity is entitled to the grant, receipt is probable and the amount can be measured reliably.

1.8 Cash at bank and in hand

Cash at bank and in hand comprise cash on hand and call deposits, and other short-term highly liquid investments that are readily convertible to a known amount of cash and are subject to an insignificant risk of change in value.

1.9 Creditors

Creditors and provisions are recognised where the charity has a present obligation resulting from a past event that will probably result in the transfer of funds to a third party and the amount due to settle the obligation can be measured or estimated reliably. Creditors and provisions are recognised at their settlement amount.

Deferred income is included when the charity has not met the criteria for recognition of the income.

1.10 Taxation

The company is a registered charity and is therefore not liable to corporation tax to the extent that income and gains are applied to the charitable objectives of the charity.

1.11 Pension contributions

The charity operates a defined contribution pension scheme. The scheme and its assets are held by independent managers. Contributions are recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities in the period in which they become payable in accordance with the rules of the scheme.

In addition, the company holds a Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) managed by Dorset County Council, which is closed to new entrants.

This is a funded defined benefit schemes where the assets are held separately from those of the charity in separate Trustee administered funds. Typically defined benefit plans define an amount of pension benefit that an employee will receive on retirement, usually dependent on one of more factors such as age, years of service and compensation.

The liability recognised in the Balance Sheet in respect of defined benefit pension plan is the present value of the defined benefit obligation at the reporting date minus the fair value of the plan assets. The defined benefit obligation is measured using the projected unit credit method. The present value of the defined benefit obligation is determined by discounting the estimated future payments by reference to market yields at the reporting date on high-quality corporate bonds that are denominated in the currency in which the benefits will be paid, and that have terms to maturity approximating to the terms of the related pension liability.

Actuarial gains and losses are recognised immediately in other gains and losses.

The net liability in the scheme at the date of the transfer of the employees from the council is shown as a separate item in the Statement of Financial Activities.

1.12 Fund accounting

General funds are unrestricted funds receivable or generated for the objects of the charity without further specified purpose and are available as general funds.

Designated funds are unrestricted funds earmarked by the Trustees for particular purposes.

Restricted funds are amounts that have been received with a restriction applied on their use by the donor.

1.13 VAT

The charity is not VAT registered and therefore all costs are inclusive of VAT.

1.14 Financial instruments

The charity only holds basic financial instruments as defined in FRS 102. The financial assets and liabilities of the charity and their measurements are as follows:

Financial assets – trade and other debtors are basic financial instruments and are debt instruments measured at amortised cost. Prepayments are not financial instruments.

Cash at bank – is classified as a basic financial instrument and is measured at face value.

Financial liabilities – trade creditors, accruals and other creditors are financial instruments, and are measured at amortised cost. Taxation and social security are not included in the financial instruments disclosure definition. Deferred income is not deemed to be a financial liability, as the cash settlement has already taken place and there is an obligation to deliver services rather than cash or another financial instrument

1.16 Critical accounting estimates and areas of judgement

Estimates and judgements are continually evaluated and are based on historical experience and other factors, including expectations of future events that are believed to be reasonable under the circumstances.

The Trust makes estimates and assumptions concerning the future. The resulting accounting estimates and assumptions will, by definition, seldom equal the related actual results. The estimates and assumptions that have a significant risk of causing a material adjustment to the carrying amounts of assets and liabilities within the next financial year are discussed below.

The present value of the Local Government Pension Scheme defined benefit liability depends on a number of factors that are determined on an actuarial basis using a variety of assumptions. The assumptions used in determining the net cost (income) for pensions include discount rate. Any changes in these assumptions, which are disclosed in note 10, will impact the carrying amount of the pension liability.

2 Donations and general grants

	Unre- stricted funds £	Restrict- ed funds £	Total 2024 £	Unre- stricted funds £	Restrict- ed funds £	Total 2023 £
Donations	-	10,000	10,000	7,739	1,273	9,012
Partner Museum contributions	15,000	-	15,000	15,000	-	15,000
NLHF Grant	-	39,125	39,125	-	33,240	33,240
Art Fund	-	-	-	-	2,495	2,495
NPO Grant*	-	435,379	435,379	-	41,456	41,456
BCP Council funding*	44,358	-	44,358	-	-	-
AUB - project underspend	2,812	-	2,812	-	-	-
	62,170	484,504	546,674	22,739	78,464	101,203

*Denotes government grants

Income from government grants comprises grants made by local authorities or other government bodies to fund the principal activities and objectives of the charity via core funding and funding for specific projects. See above for more information, including the amount and source of these grants. There are no unfulfilled conditions or other contingencies attached to these amounts.

Wessex Museums Trust
Notes to the Financial Statements
For the Year Ended 31 March 2024

3 Charitable expenditure

	Unre- stricted funds £	Restrict- ed funds £	Total 2024 £	Unre- stricted funds £	Restrict- ed funds £	Total 2023 £
Salary and contractor costs	18,421	286,236	304,657	-	48,463	48,463
NPO Fundraising maternity cover	-	-	-	-	1,556	1,556
NPO Conference	-	-	-	-	1,215	1,215
NPO Partnership Exhibition						
Development	-	-	-	-	4,559	4,559
Fundraising regulator	-	-	-	-	50	50
Training	-	5,005	5,005	-	1,505	1,505
Workplacements	-	-	-	-	759	759
Evaluation	-	2,500	2,500	-	6,531	6,531
Legal support	3,526	-	3,526	6,469	-	6,469
Insurance	805	-	805	723	-	723
HR fees	-	-	-	1,722	-	1,722
IT setup and annual support costs	2,310	648	2,958	2,487	891	3,378
Subscription	-	470	470	666	-	666
Stripe refunds	-	-	-	216	-	216
Xero fees	-	-	-	39	-	39
Operational costs	20	2,907	2,927	45	-	45
Depreciation	1,413	-	1,413	450	-	450
Advertising	-	3,523	3,523	-	-	-
Travel and subsistence	-	4,658	4,658	-	-	-
Consulting	-	8,605	8,605	-	-	-
Entertainment - business	274	-	274	-	-	-
Project costs:						
Hardy exhibition	-	-	-	-	56,528	56,528
Learning showcase	-	-	-	-	399	399
Bridging the gap	-	304	304	-	-	-
Lost and Found	-	16,736	16,736	-	-	-
Artistic and cultural spend	-	8,677	8,677	-	-	-
Virtual collections	-	3,900	3,900	-	-	-
Connecting with communities	-	10,012	10,012	-	-	-
Museum opportunities stipend	-	85	85	-	-	-
Environmental responsibility	-	110	110	-	-	-
Governance costs:						
Accountancy fees	3,539	-	3,539	3,621	-	3,621
Independent examiner fees	720	-	720	684	-	684
	<u>31,028</u>	<u>354,376</u>	<u>385,404</u>	<u>17,122</u>	<u>122,456</u>	<u>139,578</u>

4 Net incoming resources before transfers

This is stated after charging:

	2024	2023
	£	£
Depreciation	1,413	450
Independent examiners remuneration - accountancy fees	3,539	3,621
Independent examiners remuneration - examination fees	720	684
	<u> </u>	<u> </u>

5 Employees and employment costs

	2024	2023
	£	£
Wages and salaries	294,475	47,939
Pension contributions	10,182	524
	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
	<u>304,657</u>	<u>48,463</u>

No individual employee was paid over £60,000 (2023: none).

One Trustee was reimbursed for general expenses during the year of £184 (2023: none).

The key management personnel of the charity is considered to be the Chief Executive Officer. The total costs to the charity of employee benefits (includes gross pay, employer national insurance and employer pension) for the key management personnel was £57,600 (2023: nil).

The average monthly head count was 5 (2023: 2).

The charity operates both defined benefit and defined contribution pension schemes. The charge to the Statement of Financial Activities for the year is shown above.

Contributions totalling £2,214 (2023: £175) were payable to the schemes at the end of the year and are included in creditors. Further details of the defined benefit pension scheme are given in note 10.

6 Tangible fixed assets

	Computer Equipment £	Total £
Cost		
As at 01 April 2023	4,240	4,240
As at 31 March 2024	4,240	4,240
Depreciation		
As at 01 April 2023	450	450
Charge for year	1,413	1,413
As at 31 March 2024	1,863	1,863
Net book value		
As at 31 March 2024	2,377	2,377
As at 31 March 2023	3,790	3,790

7 Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year

	2024 £	2023 £
Trade creditors	8,924	4,733
Accruals	3,480	1,665
Tax and social security	2,059	-
Pension creditor	2,214	175
Other creditors	981	-
	17,658	6,573

8 Statement of funds

	Balance 01.04.23 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfers £	Balance 31.03.24 £
Restricted funds					
ACE NPO	8,221	435,379	(336,229)	-	107,371
National Lottery Heritage Fund	1,456	39,125	(18,147)	-	22,434
Trusts & Foundations - Swire	-	10,000	-	-	10,000
Total restricted funds	9,677	484,504	(354,376)	-	139,805
Unrestricted funds					
General	11,664	47,170	(28,426)	-	30,408
Designated funds					
Partner Museum Contributions	751	15,000	(2,602)	-	13,149
Total unrestricted funds	12,415	62,170	(31,028)	-	43,557
Total funds	22,092	546,674	(385,404)	-	183,362

8 Statement of funds- prior year

	Balance 01.04.2022 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfers £	Balance 31.03.2023 £
Restricted funds					
Art Fund/Weston Loans	22,269	2,495	(24,864)	100	-
ACE NPO	31,300	41,456	(64,535)	-	8,221
National Lottery Heritage Fund	-	33,240	(31,784)	-	1,456
Thomas Hardy Society	-	1,273	(1,273)	-	-
Total restricted funds	53,569	78,464	(122,456)	100	9,677
Unrestricted funds					
General	6,898	7,739	(2,873)	(100)	11,664
Designated funds					
Partner Museum Contributions	-	15,000	(14,249)	-	751
Total unrestricted funds	6,898	22,739	(17,122)	(100)	12,415
Total funds	60,467	101,203	(139,578)	-	22,092

8 Statement of funds

Purpose of material funds:

- Designated funds – contributions from partner museums to support agreed programmes.
- NPO – Arts Council England grant funding to support agreed partnership programme, including staff costs, operational costs, exhibitions, training & development, etc.
- Art Fund/Weston Loans – grant funding to support external loans of works of art and associated costs to conserve, frame and mount the work for inclusion in the Hardy's Wessex exhibition.
- NLHF – grant funding for the Bridging the Gap programme to support inclusive engagement practice across the partnership. Includes staff costs, training & development, public programming and evaluation.
- Thomas Hardy Society – grant for programme of talks linked to the Hardy's Wessex exhibition.

9 Analysis of net assets between funds

	Unre- stricted funds £	Restrict- ed funds £	Total 2024 £	Unre- stricted funds £	Restrict- ed funds £	Total 2023 £
Tangible assets	2,377	-	2,377	3,790	-	3,790
Current assets	58,838	139,805	198,643	15,198	9,677	24,875
Current liabilities	(17,658)	-	(17,658)	(6,573)	-	(6,573)
	<u>43,557</u>	<u>139,805</u>	<u>183,362</u>	<u>12,415</u>	<u>9,677</u>	<u>22,092</u>

10 Defined benefit pension scheme

On the 1 April 2023 two employees transferred to the charity from Bournemouth Christchurch and Poole Council, under TUPE rules.

They are therefore part of a closed defined benefit pension scheme. The scheme is fully funded at a rate of 19.4%.

The value of assets and liabilities at the year end are as follows:

	2024	2023
	£'000	£'000
Ongoing fund position		
Assets	225	-
Liabilities	(225)	-
Total		

The assumptions adopted in calculating the liability are as follows:

	2024	2023
	% p.a.	% p.a.
Calculation assumptions		
Discount rate	5.0	-
Rate of pay increases	3.6	-
Rate of pension increased (CPI)	2.6	-

**Wessex
Museums**

Impact Report

2023-24

Introduction to Wessex Museums

Wessex Museums is a thriving partnership of museums across Dorset and Wiltshire – Dorset Museum, Lydiard House Museum, STEAM – Museum of the Great Western Railway, Poole Museum, The Salisbury Museum, Swindon Museum and Art Gallery, and Wiltshire Museum.

We believe that by working together we can...

- Strengthen the cultural offer of our museums and our region.
- Push out of our comfort zones to do things in new ways.
- Share important stories from across our region from a range of perspectives.
- Share and learn from successes and mistakes, build relationships, and enhance our reputation with partners and stakeholders.
- Increase our organisational resilience.

Our charity, the Wessex Museums Trust (WMT), exists to build the resilience and relevance of the museums in our partnership and across the region.

Our mission is...

To support museums to connect, inspire and add value
to people's lives.

Our vision is...

Museums thriving through collaboration.

A Message from our Chair, Gill Donnell

It is a real privilege to be the Chair of this partnership and as such, I continue to be hugely proud of the achievements of our staff within the partnership, as well as the many volunteers working in the partner museums and for the Trust.

Significantly, this year, we have achieved our very, long-term aim of becoming a fully independent charity, which together with continued funding from the Arts Council, creates great opportunities to build on the success of previous years. Nevertheless, there have been significant complications in achieving the ambitious aims we set out, not least due to partner museums' closures, albeit for exciting redevelopment projects.

I continue to believe, however, that our strength is in this partnership and **together** we can plot a course through these challenges, continuing to deliver our vision for the people of Wessex.



Reflections from our CEO, Kristina Broughton

2023/24 marked the first year of Wessex Museums Trust (WMT) operating as a fully-fledged organisation after achieving our long-term ambition to externalise from BCP Council. This coincided with the start of our new National Portfolio Organisation (NPO) programme, helping to stabilise the charity during a period of continued financial uncertainty and change for both our partners and the sector as a whole.

With three of our partner museums closed, or partially closed during the year for capital redevelopments, it has been a challenge to hold space for the work of the partnership. However, despite the challenges around resource capacity, recruitment and museum closures, Wessex Museums continued to deliver its mission to *support museums to connect, inspire and add value to peoples' lives*.

Particular highlights of 2023/24 were three temporary exhibitions and their associated programming with underserved audiences – *Lest We Forget* at Wiltshire Museum, *Fashioning our World* at The Salisbury Museum, and *Elisabeth Frink: A View from Within* at Dorset Museum & Art Gallery – all supported by WMT. All three exhibitions were successful for their respective museums for different reasons, whether to engage new, more diverse audiences, co-curate with communities, or create home grown blockbusters and grow visitor numbers – they demonstrate the breadth and depth of the partner museums' offer, which WMT aims to enhance through the additional support and economies of scale we can provide by working in partnership.

The economic, physical and political disruptions experienced across the partnership have necessitated flexibility in terms of what exactly the support provided by WMT to our partner museums looked like this year. This 'flex' has also allowed the partnership to recheck progress and reset ambitions in important areas of our work together such as equity, diversity and inclusion, and environmental sustainability.

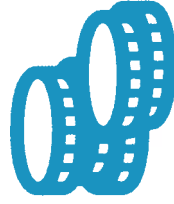
I am proud of the way the partners have come together to navigate through adversity and in the process find compromise and new solutions – not to mention keeping the show on the road during major redevelopments! This, coupled with the unwavering support from Arts Council England for our NPO programme, and other funders who continue to see the value in our work as a partnership, has underlined the value of the Wessex Museums partnership in the most challenging of times.



2023/24 Key Achievements



Carbon Literacy Training
delivered to the first partnership cohort. All participants achieved certification.



Wessex Museums Trust secures more than £70k for the Folk exhibition through fundraising.



Wessex Museums supports 3x exhibitions and associated community programmes across the partnership – *Elizabeth Frink: A View from Within, Lest We Forget and Fashioning our World.*



57 new objects from the partner museums' collections selected by staff, volunteers and local communities as part of *Wessex in 100*



Two new trustees from under-represented groups joined the WMT Board.



Wessex Virtual Collection launched on the Wessex Museums website.

Our Funding & Income

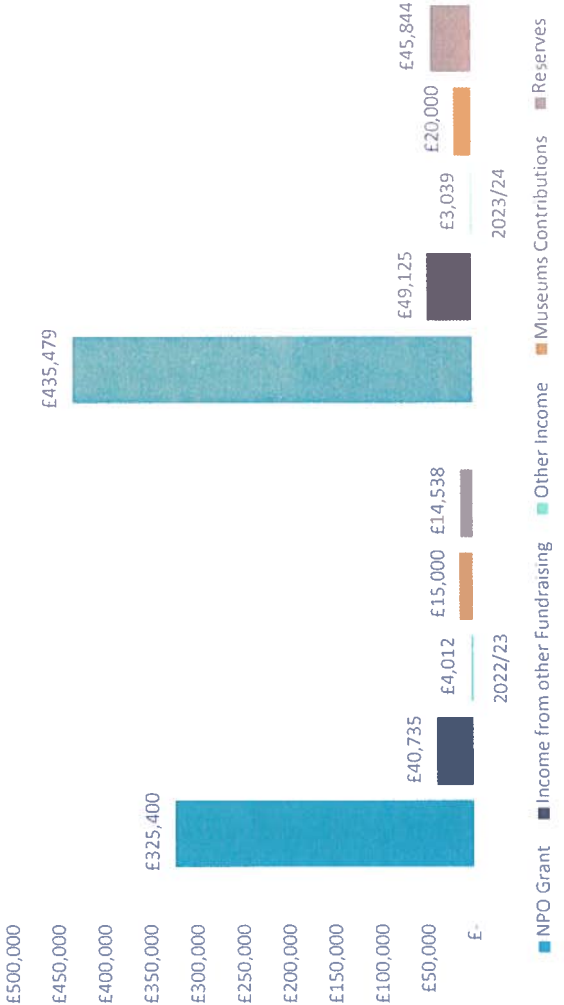
2023/24 marked the first year of Wessex Museums Trust managing all the partnership’s funding, including the funding agreement with Arts Council England (ACE) for the National Portfolio Organisation (NPO) grant for 2023-26.

In 2023/24, Wessex Museums Trust’s **turnover** (excluding match funding and in-kind support) was:

£553,487

This represents a **28% increase from the previous financial year**, mainly due to the funding uplift secured for the new NPO period, successful fundraising related to the planned folk exhibition, and the transfer of residual partnership funding from BCP Council which has resulted in WMT’s reserves more than trebling from the previous year.

Wessex Museums Trust Funding Profile



Summary of Fundraising & Income Generation for the Year

During 2023/24, Wessex Museums achieved more than **£49k in fundraising**, in addition to the NPO, including a grant from the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF).

NPO funding continues to be the partnership's main source of funding and accounted for 90% of our total funding profile in 2023/24 and represents critical core funding for Wessex Museums Trust to continue to operate effectively as an independent charity.

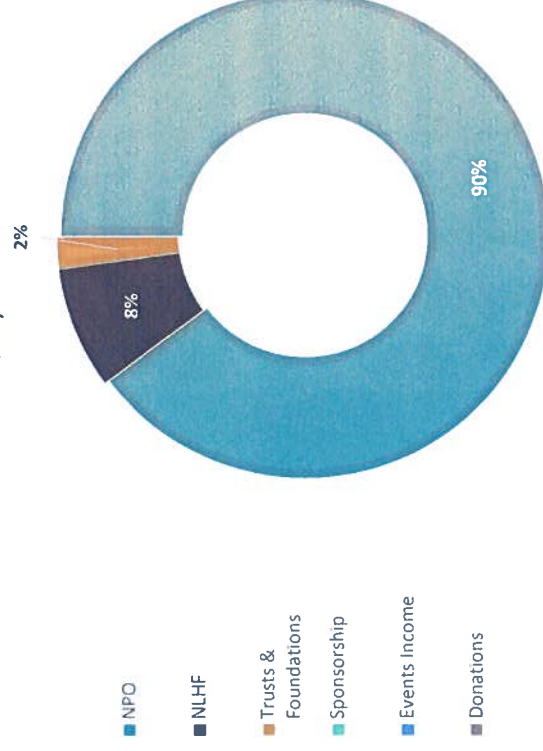
Sponsorship, events income and donations were all down on the previous year, as WMT were not directly delivering programmes in 2023/24.

Diversifying the charity's income is an on-going priority.

Sources of income in 2023/24 have included:

- **£39k from NLHF** (total grant award £62k) for the Folk exhibition
- **£10k from trusts and foundations** for the Folk exhibition.

WESSEX MUSEUMS FUNDRAISING & INCOME GENERATION
2023/24

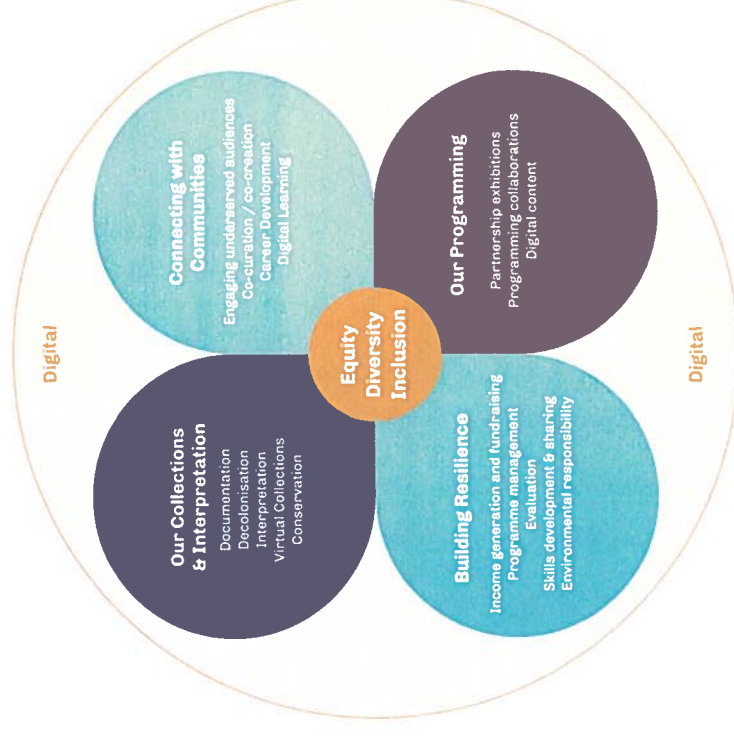


Delivering our Strategic Plan

Wessex Museums started the year with a new three-year strategic plan and NPO grant funded programme. The four strategic aims for the work we do together through the partnership remain unchanged and continue to form the basis for our collaborative programme.

Our focus was on:

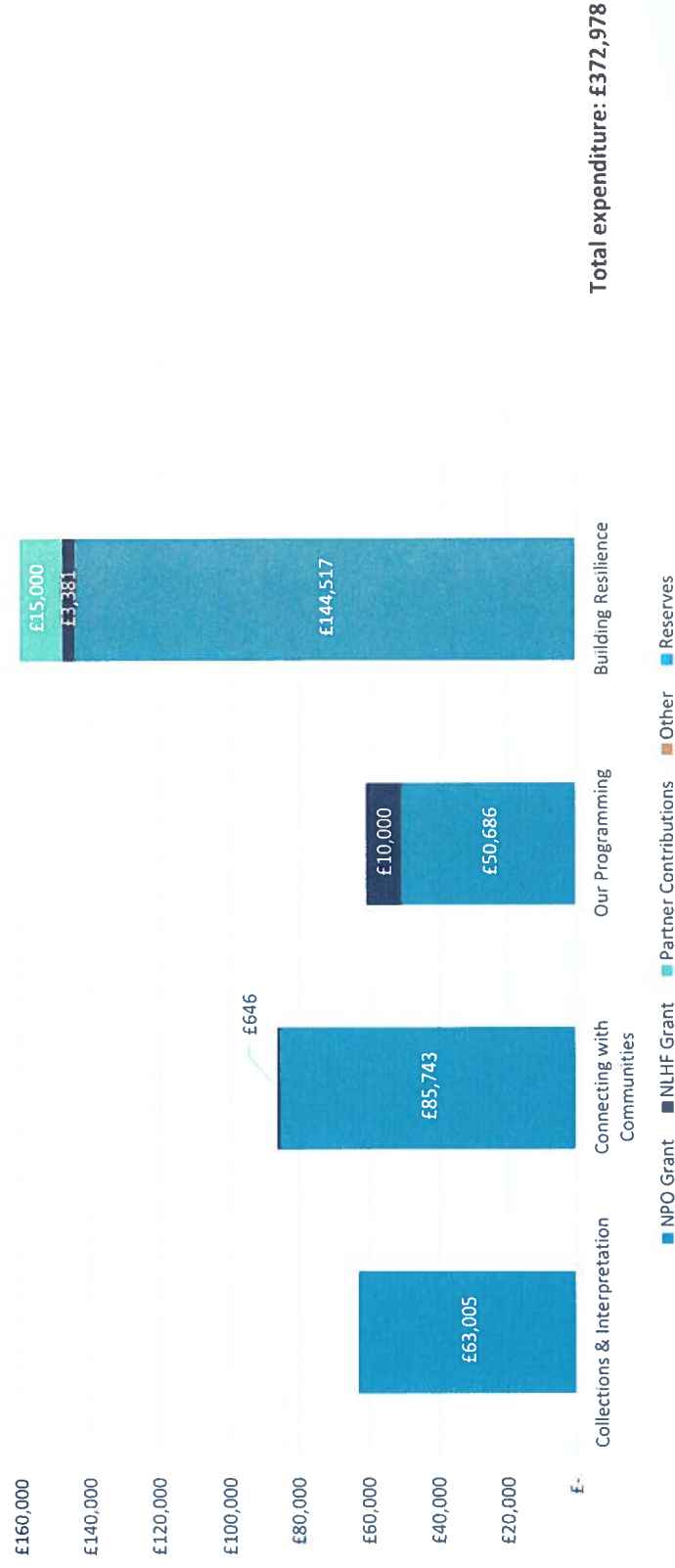
- **Engaging underserved audiences** in our local areas.
- **Improving access** to our world-class collections, including **digital**.
- Delivering excellence through our **partnership programming**.
- **Fundraising** to support our partnership ambitions.
- Continuing to embed **equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI)** in our organisations.
- Taking meaningful action on **environmental sustainability**.
- **Developing the workforce** and **skill sharing** across our partnership.
- Developing an **evidence base** for the impact of our work through informed **evaluation**.



Investment Against our Strategic Priorities

Wessex Museums Trust invests the funding we receive against the four priorities in our strategic plan. The graph below illustrates expenditure against each of the priorities during 2023/24.

Wessex Museums Trust NPO Expenditure Profile



Equity, Diversity & Inclusion

Wessex Museums' EDI framework guides the practical actions we are taking to dismantle prejudice and discrimination in our organisations.

Key achievements against our Wessex Museums EDI action plan for the year:

- **Diversity Data** compiled for trustees, staff and volunteers across the partnership.
- **2x new Trustees** under the age of 35 appointed to the WMT Board.
- **Guidance** for hosting **work placements for underserved audiences** created.
- Partnership formed with Multaka Oxford to **support inclusive engagement practice** with underserved audiences.
- 60 objects selected for Wessex in 100 through **co-curation with underserved audiences**.
- **Decolonisation of collections action plans** in place in each partner museum.
- **Menopause policy framework** adopted by the partnership.



Connecting with Communities

Wessex Museums continues to prioritise the investment in inclusive engagement practice with underserved audiences, through the partner museums. Despite challenges with vacancies in the LEX Co-ordinator and Community Curator roles during 2023/24, the partnership continued to engage new and more diverse audiences through a range of projects and programmes. We also formed a new partnership with Multaka Oxford to continue to provide strategic mentoring for inclusive engagement following the agreed departure of our Wessex Engagement Lead.



Our partner museums engaged and collaborated with more than **4500** people from our underserved communities.



Wessex Museums invested **£86,389** in our Connecting with Communities workstream.

Connecting with Communities Highlights from 2023/24

Multaka Oxford

During the development of our NPO programme for 2023-26, Wessex Museums formed a new partnership with Oxford University Museums who were interested in extending their work into the northern parts of the Wessex region. Multaka Oxford is based at the Pitt Rivers Museum and the History of Science Museum, part of Oxford University Museums. Multaka Oxford's key aim is to bring people and communities together, to strengthen understanding through inter-cultural dialogue through the mutual sharing of art, stories, culture and science in the museums. To date, through our partnership with Multaka Oxford, Wessex Museums has benefited from training, action learning and mentoring support specifically related to inclusive engagement practice and decolonisation. Colleagues from Multaka Oxford began providing 1-to-1 mentoring for the new Community Curator in Swindon in January 2024 and this relationship will continue through the life of the NPO funding period.

Lest We Forget

Lest We Forget was a project led by Wiltshire Museum to tell the story of the Black contribution to the World Wars in Wiltshire culminating in a co-produced exhibition that will tour to two more of the partner museums. The project supported Wessex Museums' Connecting with Communities theme – *Hidden Voices* – and aimed to work collaboratively with new, underserved, local communities to give them agency over how their stories are told by the museums. The Wessex Museums' funded Community Curator at Wiltshire Museum was the project lead and working closely with Wiltshire Race Equality Council, they were able to build relationships with Black and military communities who were new to the museum, to co-produce the exhibition at Wiltshire Museum between November 2023 and March 2024. The exhibition moved onto Lydiard House Museum in Swindon in April 2024.

Fashioning Our World

A project led by The Salisbury Museum, *Fashioning Our World*, showed young people how sustainable fashion choices can be inspiring and addressed Wessex Museums' strategic aims to use our collections to better tell the stories of the Wessex region, and to engage underserved audiences through relevant and co-curated events and activities. Support from Wessex Museums was specifically focused on extending the model of best practice for engaging young people in co-production using fashion collections developed by The Salisbury Museum, to Dorset Museum & Art Gallery, who hosted a vibrant programme of workshops and after-school clubs for young people to learn about traditional methods of repairing, reusing, and redesigning clothing, rather than discarding it, thus promoting a resourceful approach to creating sustainable fashion for the future. The work by the young people culminated in a temporary exhibition at The Salisbury Museum and a small co-produced display at Dorset Museum & Art Gallery.

Exploring Engineering at STEAM

Wessex Museums supported a project at STEAM that aimed to inspire more girls to understand the value of engineering and to welcome new, more diverse audiences to the Museum. STEAM worked with Girlguiding Southwest England (GGSWE) to develop the project over 8 months focused on engaging girls, from areas of Swindon that experienced multiple indices of deprivation, in a day of exciting engineering-based activities at the museum. The girls gained a specially designed STEAM badge for participating in the event. The event was popular with 82 girls attending and resulted in requests from other Girlguiding units wishing to attend a similar day. As a result, STEAM is running further events this year on Saturday 16th March 2024 and Saturday 7th September 2024. The model of working developed through the project and in partnership with GGSWE is also being explored by the other partner museums as an opportunity to offer similar events in their venues.

Work Placements for Young People from Underserved Groups

In the period of our current strategic plan 2023-26, Wessex Museums has committed to creating work placement opportunities for young people from underserved groups, to be available every year in each of our museums. Three placements were hosted by partner museums and WMT during 2023/24, involving young people who identified as disabled, neurodiverse and LGBTQI+. Each

placement has been shaped with the young person working within each organisation, to ensure mutually beneficial outcomes. Work undertaken by the young people included game design, 3D modelling, social media campaigns and object photography.

Digital Learning Platform

Building on the review of the learning offer across the partnership last year, Wessex Museums embarked on building a centralised online platform for digital learning resources. The digital learning platform will provide teachers with a searchable database of learning resources across a range of subjects and Key Stages provided by our partner museums. 2023/24 has been a year of research and development for the digital learning platform. Wessex Museums' Marketing & Digital Lead has been researching similar platforms and working with learning colleagues in the museums and our web developers to develop the platform and map resources. A staging site was created, and resources will be added to the platform next year before testing it with teachers.

Building Resilience

Diversifying our Board of Trustees

Under our new governance arrangements, Wessex Museums Trust (WMT) was able to appoint two new independent trustees to the Board. With an eye on diversifying our board, we aimed to recruit trustees from groups underrepresented on the Board, specifically people,

- between the ages of 18-35 years old
- from low-income backgrounds
- from ethnic minority groups
- who are LGBTQI+

Following a targeted and successful campaign, we appointed two new independent trustees, representative of one or more of these groups, to the Board in September 2023.

Skills Sharing & Training

Wessex Museums continues to support professional development for the workforce in our partner museums. During 2023/24 we funded access to training and development opportunities in areas such as community engagement, evaluation, co-production, digital skills and carbon literacy.

We also started work to develop a streamlined and flexible evaluation framework for partnership exhibitions. The new framework will help the partnership to evaluate our exhibitions for impact across several areas, to help inform our future programming and ensure that partnership exhibitions continue to add value to the partner museums. The framework can also be used flexibly by the partner museums to evaluate their own exhibitions.

Digital

Wessex Museums continued to deliver our digital strategy, which in 2023/24 was primarily focused on reframing our online interfaces and content to our target audiences.

Building on the 2022 website review, Wessex Museums continued to develop and improve the website's navigation and new areas that are more relevant to the target audiences, with a sector focus. The website now hosts project pages showcasing partnership projects, and improved content on our 'About Us' and 'Our Work' sections. During 2023/24, a focused social media strategy was developed primarily using LinkedIn to connect with our sector audience. This approach has resulted in increased followers from 135 to 626.

Wessex Museums hosted a university placement student to explore the possibilities for expanding our digital content creation. The student's work included developing content relating to the collections and filming new content with Dorset Museum & Art Gallery. This project served as a proof of concept, demonstrating the potential for further development of digital content-based projects in the future.

Environmental Responsibility

During 2023/24, Wessex Museum refocused on the aim of our partnership Environmental Responsibility Framework to respond to the climate emergency by reducing our environmental impact. Priorities this year have been to support better understanding of carbon emissions and help partner organisations to reduce their carbon emissions through practical action.

WMT agreed a new Environmental Responsibility (ER) action plan in January 2024 and has two trustees participating in Julie's Bicycle Board Environmental Champions programme. New members of the Wessex Museums team achieved carbon literacy certification. The Environmental Responsibility Working Group was restarted after a period of hiatus and all the partner museums began meaningful work with their teams to develop ER action plans for their organisations.

Wessex Museums began the roll out of Carbon Literacy for Museums training and trained 12 members of staff and trustees across the partnership, all of whom achieved their certification through the Carbon Literacy Project. The training will support all levels of the museums' workforce to take practical action to reduce carbon emissions in their organisations.

Our Programming

Wessex Museums supports a range of delivery models for partnership exhibitions. In 2023/24, the partnership supported individual partners to develop exhibitions that will later tour to other partner museum venues. Wessex Museums provides important match funding for the partner museums to build the significant funding profile necessary to make these exhibitions happen.

Elizabeth Frink: A View from Within

Led by Dorset Museum & Art Gallery, *Elizabeth Frink: A View from Within* is the first exhibition to focus on the significant body of work produced from Elizabeth Frink's Woolland studio in Dorset between 1976 and her death in 1993. The exhibition aimed to increase knowledge of the outstanding collection held by Dorset Museum & Art Gallery and to strengthen lending and knowledge exchange relationships with other organisations and partners. The exhibition opened at Dorset Museum & Art Gallery in November 2023 and received more than 15k visitors during its run.

Total WMT Investment: £28,769

Wessex Museums funding was used to support curatorial development, exhibition design, marketing and costs associated with touring the show to Museum & Art Swindon.

Lost & Found: Rediscovering Folk Art & Traditions of Dorset & Wiltshire

This year, Wessex Museums launched its ambitious project *Lost & Found*, which will culminate in a temporary touring exhibition at four of our partner museums between November 2024 and April 2026.

The project received important support from the National Lottery Heritage Fund and the Adrian Swire Foundation, which, along with the NPO grant, will see the project delivered in line with our ambitions, which include:

- New research and conservation on the museums' folk collections
- Contemporary collecting
- Film and photography commission to capture the seasonal folk traditions of the region
- Community co-production with non-traditional audiences to create 'new folk art' which can be collected by the museums
- Reinterpretation of regional folk songs to be presented as a folk song map
- A temporary touring exhibition and associated events programme
- A digital exhibition

The project, led by Wessex Museums, will be delivered over the next two and a half years.

Total WMT Investment: £148,606

Our Collections & Interpretation

Virtual Collections

The Wessex Virtual Collections database was launched in November 2023 with more than 250k collections records, with more than 28k images, from the partner museums. This launch marked the end of a 3-year project to build the infrastructure and provide an accessible, searchable database of our partner museums' collections. But it is only the beginning, as the database will continue to grow as more records are added by our museums all the time.

The Virtual Collection web page is one of the most visited pages on the Wessex Museums website. It has received more than 2500 views since launch (7 Nov 2023) with visitors spending an average of 2 minutes 2 seconds on the page. The page has been accessed from 39 different countries. The age demographic of users is younger than that of the general website, with the most popular user age range of 25-34, followed by 18-24. As such the Wessex Virtual Collections have been successful in extending our museums' reach with digital audiences.

Wessex in 100

Wessex in 100 is a project that aims to engage audiences with our museums' collections through a co-curated approach and to deepen knowledge and understanding of the heritage of the region. The project brings together objects selected by communities to tell the story of Wessex through new digital content that will extend our reach, diversify our audiences and encourage museum visits.

Throughout the year, the partner museums have been working with volunteers and a range of diverse community groups to engage with and select objects that they feel represent Wessex. To date, 57 objects have been selected and the collection continues to build. The *Wessex in 100* objects have been represented through new digital content in the Collections Showcase on the Wessex Museums website. The project will continue throughout the period of Wessex Museums' current strategic plan, culminating in new digital content and in-gallery displays.

Decolonisation

In 2023, the partners agreed a Decolonising Collections Framework to guide the museums' on-going work to decolonise their collections. This aims to acknowledge and respond to the crucial role that British colonialism played in the creation and development of our museums, and to reassess whether the stories told using our collections recognises this history. Wessex Museums also recognises the importance of returning objects that have been illegitimately or illegally taken from their country of origin.

The goal of the framework is to embed decolonisation in all aspects of collections work to meet our aims:

- **Better understand our collections** and how they are connected to colonial history.
- **Deconstruct our museums' own history** to promote fairness and understanding.
- **To ensure that diverse and hidden voices and histories are fairly represented** within the museums, and that all communities and cultures are made to feel welcome and valued in our museum spaces as a result.
- **Continually improve our decolonisation practice** by keeping up-to-date and sharing best practice, then applying the learning to the work in our museums.

Decolonisation Pilot Projects

The decolonisation pilot projects started in 2022 and reached fruition in 2023/24, using research-based approaches exploring decolonial themes, the provenance of collections, museum legacies and working alongside underserved communities to undertake contemporary research. As a result, the projects have produced new research, established new connections with museums around the world and engaged new and more diverse communities in reinterpretation and redisplay in our partner museums and online.

Dorset Museum: A project highlighting key people that have been underrepresented in Dorset's history, starting with a local man, John Brown who escaped slavery and ended up in Dorchester as a practicing herbalist. The project produced new research, interpretation and a display in the museum.

Poole Museum: Improvements were made to collections documentation as part of a broader multi-faceted approach to decolonisation of the World Cultures collection, to increase transparency, encourage debate and gain a better understanding of the museum's origins.

Salisbury Museum: Linked to the museum's major redevelopment, a Black History Interpretation Group worked with the museum to explore and interpret stories, shaping the narrative of Black history and slavery in the new Salisbury Gallery.

Wiltshire Museum: A project to retell the story of the Britton 'Celtic' Cabinet, which was commissioned by an extremely wealthy Jamaican sugar plantation owner, owning 2-3,000 slaves, and was part of Wiltshire Museum's founding collection. Conservation, new research and interpretation led to a redisplay of the cabinet in the Story of Devizes gallery.

Case studies from each of the pilot projects will be published on the Wessex Museums website in 2024.

Looking Ahead

Wessex Museums is looking forward to continuing delivery of our NPO programme over the next couple of years. In 2024/25 we are particularly excited for the re-openings of two of our partner museums – The Salisbury Museum and Museum & Art Swindon, which will provide more opportunities for the work of the partnership to connect, inspire and add value to peoples' lives.

Our plans for 2024/25 include...

- **Elisabeth Frink: a View from Within** - Home grown, touring exhibition on the life and work of the Dorset based artist Elisabeth Frink, led by Dorset Museum & Art Gallery, will go on tour to Museum & Art Swindon as their opening show in their new venue.
- **The return of Hardy's Wessex** – Our partnership exhibition on the life and work of Thomas Hardy will open at Museum & Art Swindon in August 2024, bringing together all 4 of the original exhibitions into a single touring show.
- **Lost & Found Community Co-production** – Our museums will be working collaboratively with underserved audiences and artists to create 'new folk' art, as part of our Lost & Found project, starting in Swindon in summer 2024.
- **Un/Common People: Folk Art & Traditions of Wessex** – Touring exhibition set to premier at Museum & Art Swindon in November 2024 to March 2025.
- **Work placements for underserved communities** - extending the programme delivered through our successful *Bridging the Gap* project with placement opportunities in each of our partner museums.
- **Wessex in 100** – We hope to reach 100 objects in this community co-curated digital collection representing the Wessex region.
- **Digital Learning Platform** – A searchable database of digital learning resources from our partner museums aimed at teachers, will launch early in 2025.
- **Additional Carbon Literacy Training** - Three more cohorts planned for 2024/25, along with a digital bite-size version of the training aimed at volunteers.



Sharing • Collaborating • Enhancing



wessexmuseums.org.uk

