

Museum Plan 2017-20

Introduction

Over 180,000 historic objects are in the care of the museum service of Herefordshire Council. These collections give an insight into the history, identity and uniqueness of the county. As well as caring and preserving those collections for future generations the museum service also ensures access to an array of artefacts through events, the operation of sites and on-line.

This document outlines Herefordshire Council's plans for the museum service during the next few years highlighting it's role going forward and linking to the wider objectives of the council.



Beetles from the entomological collections

Outline of the service

The origins of the geological and botanical collections can be traced back to the Herefordshire Literary and Philosophical Society, founded in 1836 and the Woolhope Club founded in 1851, both several years before the opening of the County Museum in 1874.

The collection is predominately owned by Herefordshire Council with a small number of items on loan. The collections comprise of a wide variety of subjects covering archaeology, social history, costume and textiles, fine art, decorative art and furniture, documents, photographs, numismatics, arms and armour, ethnography, natural sciences including geology. The costume and textile collection itself is of national significance with items from the 17th century to the present.

The focus of the collection is based on understanding Herefordshire's social and natural history. Experiencing the collection is important with the key displays at Hereford Museum and Art Gallery, and the Black and White House Museum. As well as displays, experience to the collections is also through educational activity, special events and campaigns, and digital access. The collections themselves are housed in one of the finest dedicated museum stores in the country, which was established in 2008 supported by major investment by Herefordshire Council and the Heritage Lottery Fund.

Documentation is an important element of the museum service in recording the vast collection to be accessed digitally and creating a comprehensive record.

In April 2017 entrance fees were introduced for the Black and White House to support the sustainability of the service and enable the care of the collections. There is also recognition that how people access heritage is changing and competing with other forms of leisure, in an existing environment of reduced funding.

Purpose and Vision

The museum service's purpose is to connect people with Herefordshire's past by creating opportunities for direct engagement with museum objects for exploration, enjoyment, curiosity and wonder. The museum sites also have a role to play in generating tourism and pride of place for local people along with other museums and heritage attractions operating in the county independently of the council.

Herefordshire Museum Service Access Policy 2016-19 outlines a vision that "Herefordshire museum service aims to develop and deliver museum services that allow people the freedom to explore, enjoy and participate in their heritage in a way that respects and attempts to fulfil their particular needs and desires. Herefordshire Museum Service aims to create equality of access for everybody by minimising or eliminating barriers to access."

There are three key elements to deliver this vision:

- Collecting and caring for objects and their stories reflecting Herefordshire life: past, present and into the future
- Enabling lifelong use, learning and enjoyment of the museum collections through interpreting and sharing our expertise and knowledge
- Fostering a sense of place and community and promoting well-being.

Objectives

1. **Care and access:** provide access to collections as widely as possible, whilst ensuring the best standards and practice in collections care as possible
2. **Sustainability:** transform the museum service delivery model to enable continued provision of a sustainable and vibrant museum service for the county of Herefordshire, with an appropriately skilled workforce and supported by partner organisations
3. **Income:** develop income generation systems that create a resilient financial base to support the museum service and its activities
4. **Engagement:** deliver engaging experiences, displays and activities with high levels of customer care
5. **Collections:** ensure the collections are relevant to Herefordshire and include a programme of digital documentation.

Links to the Council Priorities

This section looks at how the services deliver on Herefordshire Council corporate priorities.

Enable residents to live safe, healthy and independent lives

- Volunteering opportunities for new skills, social engagement and self purpose
- Courses and classes to enliven minds and facilitate interaction
- Reminiscence work stimulating mental capacity for the elderly
- Community engagement to broaden experience and strengthen sense of place.



Keep children and young people safe and give them a great start in life

- Run a variety of activities for children at the different sites
- Schools education sessions available at the Black and White House and Museum Resource and Learning Centre
- Access to resources for college students and educators
- Involvement in campaigns and partnership initiatives.

Support the growth of our economy

- Museums as key attractions for tourists giving a reason to visit, stay longer and spend more (70% of visitors to Black and White House are out of county)
- Support the regeneration, identity and vibrancy of Hereford specifically the Black and White House used as an icon of Hereford
- Museums as part of the cultural heritage and leisure of the area, supporting reasons for inward investment for relocating companies
- Support the development of the new university adding value to the university offer.

Secure better services, quality of life and value for money

- Charge for visits to the Black and White House for further sustainability of the museum service
- External funding to review the future model of the museum service
- Make best use of people's interest in being volunteers for the museum service
- Extend cross service partnership working.

Major programmes

To support a comprehensive volunteer workforce to assist in the care of the collections and the operation of the sites to aid customer experience.

Reform the schools offer centred on the Black and White House and collections at the Museum Resource and Learning Centre.

Review the model of operating the museum service linked to libraries and archives including working with partner organisations on its long term sustainability.

Deliver a programme of collection care including assessment and rationalisation of social history, and improved storage for natural science, archaeological, costume and furniture collections.

Significant promotion of the Black and White house as income generation.

Run programme of activities to support interpretation of the collections and the wider heritage of Hereford and Herefordshire.

Continue with documentation and digitisation of the collection for increased access to objects on-line.

Explore funding opportunities for the Museum Resource and Learning Centre linking to improved visitor experience and access to the stored collections.



Victorian Children's Shoes
(Hereford Museum & Art Gallery 2977, 7453, 6338, 1459, 4205 and 7980)

Reference to further information:

- Collections Development Policy 2016-19
- Archaeological Deposition Policy 2016-19
- Humans Remains Policy 2016-19
- Care and Conservation Policy 2016-19
- Care and Conservation Plan 2016-19
- Documentation Policy 2016-19
- Documentation Manual 2016-19
- Documentation Plan 2016-19
- Access Policy 2016-19
- Access Plan 2016-19