

Strategic Plan 2019 - 2024

WILTSHIRE MUSEUM

Inspiring people to explore the archaeology, history and environment of Wiltshire

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Developing this Strategic Plan

This initial priorities for this Plan were developed at a workshop attended by staff, trustees and stakeholders. Draft documents have been discussed and commented on by staff, trustees and volunteers and the final document was approved by the Trustees on 19 September 2019 and by the members of the Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Society at their Annual General Meeting on 19 October 2019.

Thanks to all those who have contributed to this document.

September 2019

Contact: hello@wiltshiremuseum.org.uk

Wiltshire Museum, 41 Long Street, Devizes, SN10 1NS

Charity No: 1080096, Company Limited by Guarantee in England and Wales: 3885649

Introduction

The Wiltshire Museum is run by the Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Society, founded in 1853. We are an independent charity and our objects are to “educate the public by promoting, fostering interest in, exploration, research and publication on the archaeology, art, history and natural history of Wiltshire for the public benefit.”


This is crystallised in our Mission Statement:

- inspiring people to explore the archaeology, history and environment of Wiltshire.

This Strategic Plan will maintain our forward momentum over the next few years as we embark upon the development of the Devizes Assize Court as the new home of the Wiltshire Museum. The key focus of this plan is to deepen our engagement with audiences through our high-profile exhibition programme, engaging with a wider community and meeting the needs of under-represented audiences. These areas are important to prepare the Museum for the challenges of a major capital programme and to ensure that our focus remains on our audiences and users.

We remain a small organisation facing substantial financial challenges, with our income already fully committed. We value the partnerships we have developed and generating funding for specific projects has become an essential element of our finances. We need to maintain our partnerships and success in fundraising to enable us to thrive and prosper.

This strategy is embedded in understanding of our audiences, the result of a programme of visitor surveys, member surveys and analysis of our local demographics. We know that there are areas of our community that are under-represented amongst our users and engaging with these groups is a major element of our future work, led by our Community Curator and part of our ACE-supported Wessex Museums Partnership programme. We have been developing a range of detailed plans and strategies to guide our work, and this Strategic Plan brings these together to provide a focus for our work over the next 5 years. It has been informed by the Wessex Museums Business Plan and the business plan prepared for the Assize Court project.

In identifying our actions in the years ahead, this plan indicates where the Wessex Museums Partnership supports our work (^{WM}) and where our work will build momentum towards the Assize Court project (). We face many current uncertainties and therefore this strategy will be adapted and implemented as challenges arise and new opportunities are seized.





Devizes Assize Court: a new home for the Wiltshire Museum

In November 2018, the newly formed Devizes Assize Court Trust announced that it had purchased the former Assize Court building, with the aim of creating a new home for the Wiltshire Museum. This will be a long-term project, with an initial estimate of a 10 year timescale and a cost of £10m.

This will be a transformational project, changing every element of our current activity. It will place us in the heart of the local community, offer us the space and facilities to share Wiltshire's Story with a wider range of people and provide the setting that our nationally important collections deserve.

Before the Museum agreed to work in partnership with the Assize Court Trust, the Trustees reviewed a business plan for the operation of the Museum in the Assize Court building that indicated that the financial position would be improved in the long-term by the move. The Museum would be located in an iconic building close to the Kennet and Avon Canal with the potential for a significantly increased footfall.

During the period of this Strategic Plan, we will be working with the Devizes Assize Court Trust to prepare a vision for the building as our new home and to support the major fundraising campaign that will be required. Timescales are difficult to predict, but it is assumed that significant progress will have been made with fundraising by 2025 and that some elements of the project, such as building repairs, may be underway.

What challenges do we face?

- Maintaining and developing our core activity while planning a major capital programme
- Supporting a major fundraising campaign while we seek to fundraise for our own activities
- Limited staffing and resources
- Maintaining enthusiasm and support over a long period

What we will do?

- Work with different communities to broaden our audiences and build community support for the Assize Court project [WM](#)
- Work closely with the Devizes Assize Court Trust to develop and implement Strategic, Fundraising and Business Plans for the project [WM](#)
- Use our expertise, reputation and partnerships to support the development of the project [WM](#)

Where will we be in 2025?

- Developed exciting plans for the new home for the museum
- Working on capital fundraising
- Building lasting partnerships to support the delivery of the project
- Achieving our ambitions for our audiences and users



What our visitors think of their visit – from over 250 survey responses

24/8/19 Sophie-Jane Freshford, Bath
Blown away by the way
everything is presented - one of the
best museums I have ever been to -
tops the London Museums that's for
sure - great for kids - not bored
once! Thank you + well done on
a truly wonderful museum.

28/8/19. HAZZA H. Lovely. interesting axes.

I. Engage with our audiences

We engage with a number of distinct audiences, each with different needs and potential for engagement and development. We have surveyed our visitors, using the methodology developed by the Audience Agency, and are able to compare the results with our Wessex Museums Partners. We have also surveyed our members, using an in-house developed survey.

Our main audiences are

- local people – families, those interested in local/family history, newcomers to Wiltshire
- formal learners – particularly school age children, through visits or outreach activities
- tourists
 - we are an ‘intellectual gateway’ to the Stonehenge and Avebury World Heritage Site
 - telling the story of the local area
- specialist – students, academics and researchers
- members – individuals and institutions, in the County, across the country and internationally



Our audiences broadly reflect the diversity of our area, taking into account age, ethnicity and disability. As recent research has shown, an admission charge does not necessarily form a barrier to engagement. More significant is tackling other barriers to engagement and we will continue to run an active outreach programme at local events and to offer at least one free day a year, normally by taking part in Heritage Open Days. Our increased community engagement will support the developing Assize Court project.

Our members are a particularly important audience and are extremely supportive. A member survey in 2019, showed that 69% of our members said that supporting the Museum and Society were very important to them. However, our membership is not representative of our local population, and it will be important to seek to widen our membership as the Assize Court project proceeds.

What challenges do we face?

- Young adults (16-24) are under-represented in our visitor surveys (2% of our visitors, 10% in Wessex)
- Ensuring that our entry charge is not a barrier to community engagement
- Balancing three complementary roles as interpreting the Stonehenge and Avebury World heritage Site, celebrating the wider story of Wiltshire and telling the story of Devizes
- Making membership more appealing to a wider group of people, particularly by attracting more younger members
- Advances in technology and increasing popularity of information being consumed online
- Changing focus of consumers to ‘experiences’

What we will do?

- Continue to review our visitor surveys and implement the lessons learnt ^{WM}
- Maintain high standards in our galleries and public areas
- Work with different communities to broaden our audiences (see section 6) ^{WM} 
- Continue to develop our social media output ^{WM} 

Where will we be in 2025?

- Continue to achieve Visitor Attraction Quality Assurance Scheme (VAQAS) accreditation
- Engaging with new audiences
- Have increased levels of engagement on our social media channels
- Embedded in building the social capital of the local area



Helen Wilcock reviewed Wiltshire Museum — 5.0

30 January 2018 · 🌐

What a wonderful museum! I took my 9 and 11 yr olds to visit primarily to see the prehistory exhibition as this is what we are studying at the moment. This was so informative, well presented, easily accessible to all ages. The regular interactive activities really helped keep the interest going especially the microscope activity. The use of video footage added to the interest too especially as we love Phil Harding!

We thought the quality and quantity of all the other exhibits of different periods were amazing too. The children were captivated by everything, spending a long time in all areas, pointing things out and commenting.

Having spent 2 hours in the museum my 9 yr old said it was the best museum she has ever been to and definitely wants to visit again.

We shall certainly be back once we have studied the next few periods of history!

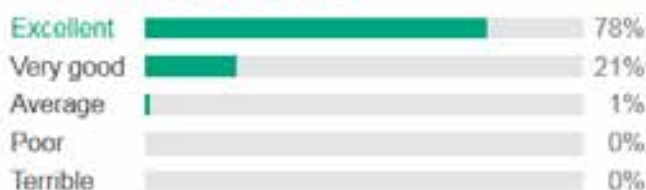
Thank you to the lovely gentleman on the entry desk. He was so kind and interesting to talk to. Thanks also for organising more paper for the brass rubbings and to the lovely lady who brought it to us.



Traveller Overview

4.5

355 reviews



monanza1998
Bournemouth, United Kingdom

👍 10 🍷 2



Reviewed 1 June 2019

What a surprise !

I found the museum by accident as I had a bus day ticket to Salisbury and found that I could travel to Devizes. I had not heard of the museum and just saw the sign. The admission charge was very reasonable (£4.50) concession but I could not believe the quality of the exhibits and displays. The exhibits were displayed really well and there was enough labelling to interest people who did not know the local prehistory without patronising those who did. The long barrow and hut reconstructions were really well done and would appeal to all ages. The volunteers were really pleasant and welcoming, which always helps. Unfortunately I had to catch a bus an hour later so I could not do it justice. I will certainly return soon and recommend it to my friends.

[Show less](#)

Date of experience: June 2019

2. Welcome visitors




Where are we now?

- We have been awarded Visitor Quality Award (VAQAS) by VisitEngland with a score of 77%
- Our audience surveys show that amongst our Wessex Museums partners, we have the highest scores for the overall quality of experience and value for money
- Currently 6th top-rated visitor attraction in Wiltshire on TripAdvisor
- 65% percentage of our visitors are over the age of 65
- We have a growing social media following – we engage with an audience of 6,500 on Twitter, 3,000 on Facebook and 1,300 on Instagram
- Our online audience is more reflective of our local demographic in comparison to real-world visitors. (35% of our Instagram audience are under 35, 19% of our Facebook audience are under 35, while 54% are under 45)

What challenges do we face?

- No planned new major permanent exhibition developments – danger of stagnation
- Turning our online audiences into real-world visitors
- Small marketing budget and limited staff resources
- Changing nature of social media platforms
- Location away from town centre and very limited ability to improve external signage

What we will do?

- Strive to increase our VAQAS score at each assessment
- Use our exhibitions programme as a focus for marketing the Museum, including marketing costs in budget and grant proposals ^{WM} 
- Continue to encourage English Heritage to market the Stonehenge Museums Partnership
- Develop a social media strategy to ensure that at least 75% of members of staff promote their work through social media to raise awareness of the work of the Museum – including collections, retail and education as well as the traditional marketing function ^{WM} 
- Train staff and volunteers as ‘welcome hosts’ and effective contributors on social media ^{WM}
- Implement new till and stock management system
- Continue to keep the Museum open 7 days a week for most of the year
- Review and improve the accessibility of videos in our galleries
- Work with audiences to reduce barriers to accessing the Museum ^{WM} 

Where will we be in 2025?

- Increased our VAQAS score by 5%
- Continue to achieve high scores on TAA and over 75% 5* ratings on Tripadvisor
- Our exhibitions programme is a major factor in decision-making by 25% of our visitors or has increased visitor numbers by 25%
- 10% of our visitors are encouraged to visit the Museum through marketing by our partners (Stonehenge and Wessex Museums)
- Have a monthly autism friendly hour at the Museum
- Maintain a comprehensive access statement to ensure that we can offer a warm welcome to every visitor



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3. Boost tourism and the local economy







Where are we now?

- 60% of our visitors are visiting the Museum for the first time (compared with 55% for our Wessex Museums Partners)
- 52% of our visitors have come to Devizes specifically to visit the Museum (compared with 38% of our Wessex Museums Partners and their respective areas)
- 13% of our visitors are from outside the UK (compared with 10% for our Wessex Museums Partners)
- English Heritage is working on delivering against the Stonehenge Museums Partnership strategic action plan – including joint ticketing
- The Museum is worth £750,000 to the local economy (using AIM methodology, 2018-2019 figures)

What challenges do we face?

- VisitWiltshire have established that there is a significant lack of visitor accommodation in Devizes and the immediate area, leading to low number of tourists in town
- Devizes remains difficult to access using public transport – especially by rail
- The current Museum building is in a residential location – making it difficult to generate footfall and to link with other attractions in the town for coach groups
- Lack of a joint ticketing initiative for Stonehenge and Salisbury Museum

What we will do?

- Continue to work with VisitWiltshire and the Great West Way to promote the Museum – with a focus on independent travellers and specialist groups 
- Continue to develop a high-profile special exhibition programme to reach new audiences. In the next two years, our plans include:
 - 2020 – Japan and Ravilious, 2021 – Hardy's Wessex 
- Continue to punch above our weight in the use of social media 
- Develop high quality online resources to promote events, exhibitions and our core offers
 - 2019 – media training, Wessex Museums branding and website 
- Review brand positioning – relative merits of focus on 'gold from the time of Stonehenge' and 'telling Wiltshire's story' 
- Continue to work with Wiltshire Council on the Wharf Development Strategy, plans for Devizes Parkway railway station and improved links with Stonehenge and Avebury 
- Continue to work with English Heritage to develop and market a joint offer – subject to satisfactory progress
- Work with Devizes Town Council on plans for the Market Place and promoting the town

Where will we be in 2025?

- We will be worth £1m to the local economy
- Our exhibition programme has delivered new audiences
- Wessex Museums Partnership has encouraged more sharing of audiences
- Have further developed our partnership working with Devizes Town Council, VisitWiltshire, Wiltshire Council, English Heritage and the British Museum



4. Promote membership and volunteering

Where are we now?

- 120 volunteers contributing 7,800 hours a year to the organisation – over many different roles
- 1,000 members – keeping membership steady during a challenging period
- Comprehensive member offer – newsletter, annual journal, admission offer to Stonehenge and partner museums
- Have designated volunteer coordinator and multiple staff act as volunteer supervisors
- We offer health and safety and role-specific training to volunteers upon joining
- We host quarterly coffee mornings/briefings and biannual celebration events for our volunteer team
- We host work experience placements throughout the academic year and summer placements during the school holidays
- We run a Duke of Edinburgh programme for school students
- Support interns and young professionals to help them develop careers in the sector

What challenges do we face?

- Increasing external demands on volunteer time
- Increasing competition for volunteers
- The impact of changes to retirement age on volunteering
- Limited staff time and budget to develop volunteer programme
- Identifying suitable roles for younger volunteers and difficulty in retention
- Limited space and capacity to host and support additional volunteers and interns

What we will do?

- Review our membership offer in light of the 2019 membership survey, digital publication of our Journal and the Assize Court project 
- Continue offering tours and events specifically for our members
- Continue to offer a wide-ranging events programme for specialist and general audiences
- Formalise, develop and market our student volunteering programme
- Develop a programme of volunteer events and networking opportunities with other organisations  
- Introduce a 'welcome induction' for all volunteers, covering basic training in invisible disability awareness and safeguarding with refresher sessions for existing volunteers
- Support volunteers in developing new skills and roles – including learning and community engagement  

Where will we be in 2025?

- Implemented the recommendations and met the targets set in a membership review
- Have an active student volunteering programme that focuses on work skills development
- Offering training sessions throughout the year for volunteers
- Have a varied events and networking programme for volunteers
- Be nominated for the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service



5. Inspire learning











Where are we now?

- Around 2000 children and young people school visits each year with 66 facilitated sessions
- Around 500 children take part in informal learning activities each year
- There is a dedicated Learning Officer who works part time (3 days per week) with a very small team of volunteers who mainly help with the holiday activities
- We have developed a Strategic Action Learning Plan for 2019-2022 with an external consultant
- Work with over 10 University groups each year, including running teaching sessions

What challenges do we face?

- At key times of the year, we do not have the capacity to take more school bookings due to limited staff time and the lecture hall being in high demand for a number of different activities
- Schools have had budget cuts and conversations with some local schools suggest this may result in fewer visits being made in the coming years
- Being located in a small town means that there are not many schools within easy travelling distance and many of these are small rural schools. As a result, most need to pay for a coach to get here, and with coach costs being so high, this limits the number of visits they can make
- We are competing with organisations that do not need to charge for the activities they offer
- Secondary schools have limited space in the curriculum for extension activities
- Working with universities is often dependent upon the enthusiasm of individual members of staff at the university

What we will do?

- Develop volunteer learning team to help deliver an enhanced learning programme  
- Develop self-led offers to schools to help increase capacity by using times when learning officer / space are not available
- Write a learning policy to underpin the approach to learning.
- Identify new workshop programmes to increase our appeal (natural history, art based, tourism).
- Develop partnerships to deliver programmes such as Arts Award.  
- Develop learning activities linked to support our exhibition programme  
- Develop ways of evaluating learning, both formal and informal to ensure we are going in the right direction.  
- Involve young people in consultation for future projects to give them a sense of belonging to the Museum.  

Where will we be in 2025?

- A team of at least 10 regular volunteers helping deliver the learning programme and supporting self-led visits by schools
- Engaging with 2 groups of secondary school students each year
- The perception of our offer has been changed by putting 3 new workshops in place
- We are demonstrating our impact by measuring using ACE Quality Principles
- Leading 3 university teaching sessions each year



6. Engage our community: health and well-being







Where are we now?

- Partner in the county-wide Arts Council funded project 'Celebrating Age Wiltshire', engaging older people living in 6 of the 16 community areas in the County
- Our Wiltshire Community Curator has recently been appointed with Arts Council funding to support community engagement working with us and Salisbury Museum. In May 2019, the Board agreed an Action Plan focussing on -
 - Invisible disability
 - Disadvantaged young people (13-25)
 - Under 5's
 - Mental health
 - Community volunteering
- Support a range of initiatives including family learning week
- Welcome visits from and give talks to a wide range of community groups
- Our volunteers are given training opportunities and a chance to engage in social events throughout the year

What challenges do we face?

- Tackling perceptions and barriers to participation
- Developing a sustainable financial model for community engagement activity beyond the current periods of ACE funding
- Increased competition for grant funding for community work due to reduced commissioning budgets at local authority level
- Time and capacity to build and maintain partnerships with a wide range of stakeholders
- Space and learning resources already stretched by competing demands
- Delivering work to all our targeted groups in a sustainable way to avoid pockets of impact

What we will do?

- Establish a consultation programme to tackle barriers to participation with target groups
- Improve the visitor welcome for those with a visible or invisible disability – eg running dementia friends sessions and offering special relaxed sessions for visits 
- Develop a targeted referral project for young people in partnership with the Youth Offending Team 
- Develop an Under 5's 'Curious Kids' offer 
- Develop a mental health offer working in partnership with the Richmond Fellowship 
- Develop a programme for older people in community settings and care homes 
- Train, support and develop volunteers to support the community engagement programme 

Where will we be in 2025?

- Deliver an active and sustainable community programme, supported by a team of volunteers. This will engage under-represented groups, including older people, young people at risk of offending and those with mental health issues
- Welcome a wider range of people to the museum, supporting them to make their visit engaging and worthwhile
- Be a caring organisation that continuously consults to ask the questions – who are you, what are your needs and what can we do together?

Many of the meetings were held in the local district hall, but an early one was held in the home of a local woman, Mrs. J. J. Smith. During the winter and the spring months, the meetings were held in the local hall, and during the summer months, they were held in the local hall.



7. Maximize our research impact



Where are we now?

- Almost all collections are catalogued on the Museum's Collections Management database (MODES). These records are online, with the most important items photographed
- Active programme of post-graduate research visits, with 148 PhD candidates including the collections in their projects over the last 10 years
- Our archive and library sees a significant amount of research use, mainly by community and family history researchers
- The Research Charter published on our website is being followed as a model of good practice by our Wessex Museums partners
- The Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Magazine is one of the most respected County Journals, publishing a wide range of archaeological and historical research

What challenges do we face?

- Welcoming and supporting post-graduate researchers requires significant staff resources
- Facilities for researchers are poor – space is shared with staff and volunteers. This is particularly significant when sensitive organic samples are being taken
- Keeping our collections management database and displays up-to-date with the latest research carried out on the collections
- Locating all the theses and publications that result from research using our collections
- Finding a sustainable business model for our Journal – balancing income generation with wide access to the results of the latest research

What we will do?

- Update our collections management database with the research carried out on the archaeology collection over the past ten years and implement FAIR principles for open data
- Enhance the web version of the database to display enhanced records that tell the object stories resulting from research ^{WM} 
- Trial online publication of our Journal
- Revise our Research Charter to promote our archive and library collections and encourage researchers to engage with our audiences
- Demonstrate the research impact of the Museum to Higher Education Institutions, with the aim of becoming a partner in the SW Doctoral Training Partnership
- Build increased awareness of our archive and library collections amongst students and academic researchers using social media ^{WM}
- Share the exciting results of the research on our collections through our lecture and conference programmes, exhibitions and multimedia on social media ^{WM} 

Where will we be in 2025?

- Develop an online research portal
 - collections database with enhanced records contributing to a virtual Wessex Museum collection developed with our partners
 - research agenda to promote under-researched areas of the collections as potential projects for early career researchers
- Enhance our reputation as a museum that encourages and supports research
- Publish our Journal on-line as well as in print

In the last 5 years, we have loaned objects to exhibitions in Wiltshire, across the UK and internationally. We are supporting a 8 venue tour of a Stonehenge exhibition managed by MuseumsPartner and are discussing future loans with Nagaoka Museum in Japan, Halle Museum in Germany and the British Museum.

Aldbourn Heritage Centre; Athelstan Museum, Malmesbury; Brading Roman Villa, Isle of Wight; Buxton Museum; Wiltshire Council, County Hall, Trowbridge; Chippenham Museum; Corinium Museum, Cirencester; Dorset County Museum; Gallo-Romeins Museum, Tongeren, Belgium; Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Cambridge; Pewsey Heritage Centre; Poole Museum; Salisbury Museum; Stonehenge Visitor Centre; Tate Britain, London; Ulster Museum, Belfast; Union City Museum, Kansas, USA; Young Gallery, Salisbury

8. Care for our nationally important collections





Where are we now?

- Actively manage and care for our nationally important Designated collections to the best of our ability, including monitoring our collections to identify conservation priorities
- We have been working to solve the crisis in the storage of archaeological archives by leading the 'Seeing the Light of Day' project which is having a national impact. We have been unable to accept archaeological archives since 2013 as we have no storage space
- The partnership between our Finds Liaison Officer and detectorists has resulted in the donation or loan of significant finds and the purchase of important Treasure finds
- Selectively acquire objects that tell the Story of Wiltshire – including art, social history, books, photographs and archives – that fall within our Collection Development Policy
- Actively involved in a number of high-profile national and international exhibitions, lending objects found within the Stonehenge and Avebury WHS.

What challenges do we face?

- Acquiring and commissioning a new off-site store, primarily for archaeology archives, with limited staff and financial resources
- Accessioning into the collections a six-year backlog of archaeology archives currently held by archaeology contractors working in our collecting area
- Collections stored in the attics and cellars, where there is low security, or it is difficult to control environmental conditions.
- Limited staffing resources – the equivalent of one full-time member of staff caring for our Museum, Archive & Library collections
- Limited access to conservation expertise and a limited conservation budget
- 30% of our displays are presented using out-dated display cases with low security and no environmental control for fragile items

What we will do?

- Maintain our standards of collections care
- Develop a collections care plan to improve standards for priority collections
- Complete the commissioning of a new off-site store
- Update our Collections Development Policy by including a strategic approach to Contemporary Collecting developed with our Wessex Museums partners ^{WM} 
- Seek grants and donations to support conservation and to purchase GIS standard display cases to highlight our archive and library collections
- Successfully maintain our status as an Accredited Museum with our application in 2020 ^{WM} 
- Issue new Guidelines for the Deposition of Archaeology Archives, implementing the outcomes of the Seeing the Light of Day Project ^{WM} 
- Continue an active loans programme ^{WM} 

Where will we be in 2025?

- Implementing a sustainable model for the storage of archaeology collections, enabling us to continue to collect new archives for the next 20 years
- Actively undertaking Contemporary Collecting projects with our Community Curators
- Improved collections care and increased access for at least 2 areas of our collection



9. Develop our role in Place-making








Where are we now?

- Open free for Heritage Open Days
- Work with local organisations to support tourism development
- Work with Wiltshire Council and the Devizes Assize Court Trust on regeneration plans for the Wharf area of Devizes
- Work with partners to support 'sense of place' initiatives – including Wessex Museums, North Wessex Downs AONB, Stonehenge and Avebury WHS, Cranborne Chase AONB
- Celebrate the story of Wiltshire and Devizes through our programmes of events, activities, publications, exhibitions and displays
- Our Archaeology Field Group undertakes a range of community archaeology projects

What challenges do we face?

- Missed opportunities during archaeological fieldwork by contractors to engage the local community and those moving into their new homes
- Resourcing a contribution to wider sense of place initiatives
- Working with the Army Rebasing project to support the building of new communities
- Inadequate display space to tell the story of the area local to these new communities
- Reflecting today's Wiltshire through contemporary collections

What we will do?

- Work with Wiltshire Council Archaeology Service to identify suitable archaeological fieldwork projects to deliver community engagement, funded by developers
- Promote the role of the Museum to developers as helping to create new communities
- Continue to support the development of the Wharf Development Plan 
- Work with wider sense of place initiatives to support our mission and to enhance our profile  
- Develop a contemporary collection policy in collaboration with our Wessex Museums partners  
- Develop exhibitions and digital resources with, by and for local community groups  
- Use exemplar projects to further develop the skills of AFG members
- Promote Archaeology Field Group projects actively engaging with the local communities where they take place

Where will we be in 2025?

- Delivering a range of 'sense of place' and community archaeology and engagement projects
- Recognised as a respected partner in tourism and regeneration projects
- Our contemporary collecting and community exhibition programme will represent and celebrate Wiltshire



10. Increase our resilience




Where are we now?

- Our current revenue grant funding is £12,800 from Wiltshire Council, £4,000 from Devizes Town Council. Over the last 10 years we have seen the impact of a large pension fund deficit, cuts to conservation support, cuts in our revenue grant and a new charge for business rates. Together, these changes have had a negative impact of £65,000 a year.
- Wiltshire Council have provided significant support for the purchase of a new store. This support recognises the impact of property development on the museum
- We continue to generate a significant proportion of our income from admissions, retail, events, subscriptions and donations
- The Wessex Museums Partnership is receiving significant funding support from the Arts Council
- In 2018-2019 our operating deficit was £60,000
- As a result of the increase in value of investments and the generosity of past members through legacies, our reserves have increased in the last 3 years by over £500,000 to £1.3m
- The Board agreed a fundraising strategy, led by our Development Officer, in March 2019

What challenges do we face?

- Local authority funding continues to face major challenges, we must plan for no grant support from Wiltshire Council
- There are major uncertainties in the current economic and political climate that could have a significant impact on income
- Political uncertainty is likely to have a significant impact on overseas visitors and our ability to develop and sustain wider partnerships
- Increasing legal and financial complexity
- Reducing our impact on climate change
- Highly dependent upon specialist skills of a small team of staff

What we will do?

- Ensure that we balance income generation with delivering our core mission 
- Maintain a close watch on our finances – maximising income and managing expenditure
- Ensure a prudent investment policy to secure a reliable income from our investment
- Continue to implement our fundraising strategy – actions on encouraging legacies, promoting membership, involving local businesses, seeking support from Trusts and Foundations 
- Develop a special exhibition programme that attracts new audiences and generates additional revenue 

Where will we be in 2025?

- Our reserves will have increased by an average of 2.5% each year
- Generate additional income streams to support our community engagement work
- Our operating deficit will have increased by less than the rate of inflation (excluding grants)



11. Become an inclusive and diverse organisation



Where are we now?

- 50% of our trustees are under 60, (14% under 50), the ratios between female and male is 3 : 11
- 15% of our volunteers are under 50
- We have a Board level Diversity Champion appointed
- Equality, diversity and inclusion awareness training is offered for staff and trustees

What challenges do we face?

- Accessibility issues within the building
- Lack of staff training budget
- Younger people have less time to volunteer due to schooling/working demands
- Building an inclusive programme of activities

What we will do?

- Continue programme of MA Student Observers attending and contributing to Board meetings
- Encourage a greater awareness of the role of Trustees by publishing summaries of Board meetings
- Consult on an equality, diversity and inclusion policy and action plan **WM**
- Develop a person specification for trustee recruitment that includes priorities to ensure diversity – eg seeking to recruit a trustee who can represent a community group
- Work to embed and integrate equality and diversity at every level of our organisation through regular reviews and planning **WM**
- Ensure all levels of staff and volunteers are included in strategic and action planning
- Provide equality of opportunity through the recruitment practice of our workforce
- Introduce a disability champion volunteer
- Ensure that diversity and access are at the heart of planning the Assize Court project 
- Actively review opportunities to improve physical and intellectual access to the Museum and our collections **WM** 

Where will we be in 2025?

- Our trustees, volunteers and membership are more representative of the demographics of our area
- We will have a varied and enriching volunteering programme that supports individuals and has opportunities for skills and personal development
- Diversity will be embedded in everything we do
- With our Wessex Museums Partners, we will have achieved a 'strong' rating from the Arts Council for our work on diversity
- We will have an active community presence and voice within the Museum



Meaco 20L Low Energy Dehumidifier



12. Tackle climate change



Where are we now?

- We have replaced the majority of our lights with LED bulbs, saving 1.5kw in electricity each hour that we are open
- We have replaced our inefficient main gas boiler with a system that is over 95% efficient
- We have implemented a range of minor measures to reduce our use of fossil fuels – such as purchasing energy efficient dehumidifiers
- We commissioned a review of our energy efficiency and are implementing the remaining recommendations
- We are using management software to monitor our energy use
- We are maximizing our recycling and re-use of materials
- The travel section on our website encourages sustainable transport – with information about buses, cycling and electric car charging points
- Our permanent displays highlight the impact of climate change over geological time and human history

What challenges do we face?

- The Museum is located in a historic, energy inefficient building
- Capital cost of replacing remaining older less energy efficient equipment – eg replacing our remaining old inefficient gas boiler
- Limited scope to add further insulation to the building
- Devizes remains difficult to access using public transport – especially by rail
- Limited scope for using public transport to attend meetings to reduce our carbon footprint

What we will do?

- Review the potential for reducing carbon emissions at our new store
- Monitor and reduce our energy consumption and carbon emissions and maximise recycling 
- Replace our remaining inefficient gas boiler
- Work with the Devizes Assize Court Trust to ensure that the new building is designed to minimise carbon emissions 

Where will we be in 2025?

- We will have reduced our carbon emissions by 10%

13. Develop as an organisation

Managing Risk

As a small organisation, we face a number of significant risks. We maintain a risk register that is regularly updated and reported to the Board on a quarterly basis. For each risk there is an assessment of probability and impact, together with a response strategy and contingency plan. The current risks include:-

- Inadequate staffing – including impact of workloads and ability to deliver against planned objectives
- Long-term staff / trustee absence – any long-term absence has a significant impact on the organisation, particularly where the role is specialist
- Stock market / investment income – stock market volatility is a significant financial risk
- Physical risks to collections - fire, flood, theft – managed through our Emergency Plan
- Building maintenance and repairs
- Replacement / obsolescence of capital equipment – phone system, digital printer, IT equipment, alarm systems
- Trustee succession – maintaining a balance of experience, skills and fresh approaches
- Current location – limited parking, lack of event space, not close to busy part of town, planning issues
- Assize Court – maintaining momentum whilst developing a major capital project

Governance

We are an independent charity and a company limited by guarantee, which means that we report to both the Charities Commission and to Companies House. While this provides framework for accountability, this also contributes towards the complexity of running the organisation. New Trustees are given a comprehensive induction to ensure that they are briefed on the structure of the organisations, its challenges and priorities.

We are also facing increasing complexity in the way in which we are required to manage the organisation, having in recent years implemented changes such as GDPR, Making Tax Digital (VAT) and auto-enrolment pensions. We have also moved a number of processes from manual systems to digital – while this is more efficient, there is also a significant overhead in selecting and implementing new systems, while maintaining existing practice. This pace of change is likely to continue over the period of this plan, while staffing resources remain stretched.

Partnership Development

Working with Partners is an essential part of our work. Whether national organisation or local community group, it is by working with others that we reach new audiences, inspire more people and secure our future.

Below are some of the key organisational partnerships that we will be continuing to develop.

British Museum

The Museum is developing a major exhibition about European Prehistory, featuring Stonehenge. We will be asked to loan significant items from our collections that will be a major feature. We will be able to bring some important objects to our museum, including items from Wiltshire but also others that highlight international connections.

Nagaoka Museum, Japan

We are planning a major exhibition to coincide with the 2020 Tokyo Olympics. We will be asked to loan items to Japan and in return will be able to celebrate contemporary Japanese art and culture, inspired by its archaeology. Our museums both feature objects from sites of international importance and a longer-term relationship, developed with the help of the Sainsbury Institute, will help support a bid for World Heritage Site status for the Jomon sites in Japan.

Stonehenge Museums Partnership

We will continue to work with English Heritage to encourage visitors to gain a fuller understanding of the Stonehenge part of the World Heritage Site by visiting both the Wiltshire Museum and the Salisbury Museum. A new strategy was developed in May 2019 and we wish to see good progress being made. In return, we will consider extending our loan of objects for display at the Stonehenge Visitor Centre and supporting their temporary exhibition programme.

Wessex Museums

Wessex Museums is a partnership transforming the Wiltshire Museum. Built over a number of years, the partnership brings together the skills and expertise of Poole Museum, Salisbury Museum and Dorset Museum. Wessex Museums is an Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation, helping to deliver great art and culture for everyone

Wessex Museums has a 4 year Business Plan, supported by £1.2m of funding. For the Wiltshire Museum, the partnership is providing support for our Exhibitions Officer and Community Curator. In addition, Wessex Museums supports a wide range of joint activity, such as work on online collections, shared exhibitions and understanding our audiences. It is also helping us become a stronger organisation, bringing a focus on evaluation, our impact on climate change and building a creative case for diversity.

In 2021, Wessex Museums will be identifying priorities for the next round of National Portfolio funding and we will be looking at ways of extending our partnership to work with other museums in the region. If we are successful, then it is anticipated that funding would be available from 2022 to 2026.

Devizes Assize Court Trust

The Trust purchased the Assize Court building in 2018 with the support of the Wiltshire Historic Buildings Trust and a private benefactor. We will be working closely with the Trust and with partners such as Wiltshire Council and Historic England to secure the future of the building as the new home for the Wiltshire Museum.

Making it happen

This document provides a strategic framework for the next five years and an outline roadmap of priority actions, success measures has been developed. This will change and adapt as new priorities, challenges and opportunities emerge. The Plan will be implemented by identifying annual priorities, detailed plans and budgets for approval by the Board, kept under review during the year. Progress will, in many areas, be dependent upon our success in fundraising and grant applications. We are grateful to our funders, volunteers, supporters and members, past and present, who enable us to continue inspiring people to explore the archaeology, history and environment of Wiltshire.

Priority actions and success measures

	2019 - 2020	2020 - 2021	2021 - 2022	2022 - 2023	2023 - 2024
Devizes Assize Court	Appoint architects	Outline planning permission	Major fundraising under way		
1. Engage with our audiences		VAQAS accreditation	Five-year review of Audience survey results	VAQAS accreditation	
2. Welcome visitors		Review exhibition impact on visitor numbers		Review VAQAS score	75% 5* ratings on Tripadvisor
3. Boost tourism and the local economy	Review brand position; review Stonehenge link	Japan and Ravilious exhibitions	Thomas Hardy exhibition		Worth £1m to the local economy
4. Promote membership and volunteering		Membership review		Queen's Award for volunteering nomination	Membership targets review
5. Inspire learning		1 secondary school group per annum	3 new programmes in place	10 regular volunteers supporting delivery	2 secondary school groups per annum
6. Engage our community	Delivering against NPO targets	Secured funding for on-going activity			
7. Maximize our research impact		Online research portal	SW Doctoral Training Partner		Review research impact
8. Care for our collections	Commission new Archaeology store	Contemporary collecting projects	Improved collections care project 1		Improved collections care project 2
9. Develop our role in Place-making	First funded project		Community exhibitions		
10. Increase our resilience		Secured funding for community engagement			Reserves increased by 2.5% per annum
11. Become an inclusive and diverse organisation	Rated 'strong' by ACE		Rated 'strong' by ACE		
12. Tackle climate change		Boiler replaced			Carbon emissions reduced by 10%

13. Develop as an organisation	Identify our priorities for NPO application	Delivering against ALL NPO targets; NPO application & result		NPO funding begins	Review this Strategic Plan and develop future priorities
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