

# Local museums receive £4 million to improve accessibility to arts and culture

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## £4 million of public funding and private philanthropy to improve access to museums and galleries across the country

- Investment to support local people by improving displays, enhancing collection care and making exhibitions more accessible to visitors
- Partnership between the DCMS and the Wolfson Foundation has funded more than 440 projects over the last 24 years, to help more people engage with arts and culture

24 local museums have received a share of £4 million through the DCMS/Wolfson Museums and Galleries Improvement Fund.

The Fund brings together £2 million in match funding from the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) and independent, grant making charity, the Wolfson Foundation. It supports local museums by improving displays, enhancing collection care and making exhibitions more accessible to visitors.

Over the past 24 years, the fund has awarded over £50 million, which has supported more than 440 projects across the country. It supports the Government's ongoing commitment to ensure everyone, everywhere has access to arts and culture in the place they call home.

Yesterday (Thursday 9 April), the Museums Minister Baroness Twycross and Paul Ramsbottom, Chief Executive of the Wolfson Foundation, visited Norwich Castle which has been awarded £228,900 in this latest round. They met with local representatives to discuss how the investment will enable Norwich Castle to upgrade the gallery infrastructure, remodel and update display cases and reinterpret collections, improving the visitor experience.

### **Museums Minister, Baroness Twycross said:**

We want to ensure that everyone, everywhere can experience arts and culture in the area they call home and this fund plays a key role in making that possible.

The DCMS/Wolfson Museums and Galleries Improvement Fund demonstrates how public funding and private philanthropy can work together to open up access to museums and galleries for those who might otherwise face barriers, and help more people enjoy the UK's world-class collections.

### **Paul Ramsbottom, Chief Executive of the Wolfson Foundation, said:**

Museums are among the great treasures of British cultural life. They preserve the collections and stories that speak of our shared creativity and community heritage. This latest round of funding from the long-standing DCMS/Wolfson partnership allows museums - and particularly regional museums - to upgrade their facilities and improve access to their collections, so more of us can enjoy the fascinating wonders on our

doorstep.

## **Other examples of funded projects include:**

- The Black Country Living Museum will receive £272,000 for a project which will revive the Museum's historic but currently inactive electric trolleybuses and extend the route into the local 1940s-60s High Street. This project will restore the use of the electric transport, protect the area's nationally significant collection and transform access and deliver a truly unique immersive experience for visitors.
- Museum of Hartlepool has been awarded £218,400 for the creation of a Temporary Exhibitions Gallery and Collections Care Facility. The investment will support essential upgrades to the Museum's Exhibition and Collections infrastructure by installing new display cases, lighting, flooring, and environmental controls meeting national security and conservation standards. This will improve collections facilities to provide secure, climate-controlled conditions for artefacts in storage, ensuring that treasures can continue to inspire and educate visitors for generations.
- Kirkleatham Museum will receive £272,000 which will help to reimagine Kirkleatham Museum's permanent galleries around three themes - People and Place, Industry and Innovation, and Heritage and Discovery. The project will support the redevelopment of the Museum's core gallery spaces, creating modern, accessible and inspiring displays that better reflect the stories, people and heritage of Redcar and Cleveland.

The successful museums and galleries are part of the 15th round of funding from the DCMS/Wolfson Museums and Galleries Improvement Fund.

## **Notes to editors**

### **Full list of recipients:**

#### **North West**

- Platt Hall (Manchester City Galleries) - £38,700
- Manchester Museum - £200,000

#### **North East**

- Segedunum Roman Fort - £213,100
- Seven Stories, National Centre for Children's Books - £316,200
- Museum of Hartlepool - £218,400
- Kirkleatham Museum - £272,000

#### **South East**

- Reading Museum - £80,000
- Weald and Downland Living Museum - £227,000
- Booth Museum of Natural History - £139,900
- Pitt Rivers Museum - £55,000

## **South West**

- SS Great Britain - £46,300
- Museum of Barnstaple and North Devon - £103,000
- Bristol Museum and Art Gallery - £317,100
- The Burton at Bideford - £86,500

## **West Midlands**

- Barber Institute of Fine Arts - £150,000
- British Motor Museum - £147,700
- Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery - £183,100
- Black Country Living Museum - £272,000

## **East Midlands**

- National Tramway Museum - £210,600

## **East of England**

- Food Museum - £357,600
- Norwich Castle - £228,900

## **London**

- Garden Museum - £75,000

## **Yorkshire and the Humber**

- Thackray Museum of Medicine - £39,900
- Hepworth Wakefield - £22,000

# **About DCMS/Wolfson Museums and Galleries Improvement Fund**

The DCMS/Wolfson Museums and Galleries Improvement Fund provides capital funding for museums and galleries across England to improve displays, protect collections and make exhibitions more accessible to visitors. For 2025-27, DCMS and the Wolfson Foundation have each contributed £2 million to the Fund, which has benefitted more than 440 projects in its more than 24-year history.

## **About the Wolfson Foundation**

The Wolfson Foundation is an independent grant-making charity with a focus on research and education. Its aim is to contribute to civil society by supporting high-quality projects in science, health, heritage, humanities and the arts.

Since it was established in 1955, the Wolfson Foundation has awarded some £1 billion (£2 billion in real terms) to more than 14,000 projects throughout the UK, all on the basis of expert review.

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