



Newsletter

January 2021

Registered charity 1171756

A new era of investment for Herefordshire Museum service

We are delighted to report that the first practical step towards substantial investment in an expanded Museum and Art Gallery to house the county collections has been taken. The Cabinet meeting of Herefordshire Council, held on 21 January 2021, endorsed the draft Town Investment Plan (TIP) for Hereford City. The final (TIP) will be submitted to central government by the end of the month and you can find full details on <https://strongerhereford.co.uk/>. This programme includes reference to plans to develop the whole of the current museum, art gallery and library building in Broad Street as a county museum and art gallery. The city library will move to a new learning centre to be developed in Maylord Shopping centre.

The museum project will maintain the Victorian façade, the Woolhope Room and other notable features, while transforming internal and external spaces. All areas will be fully accessible. Both the museum and library developments will be led by Herefordshire Council and together signal a very positive new future for the county's cultural services sector.

Aside from the development of these new physical spaces, some of the other projects in the TIP will offer significant opportunities to improve delivery of services and stimulate new strategic directions. These include projects to develop digital skills and cultural programming. An outline of all projects are available in the TIP.

This remarkable change in policy deserves support from everyone who has backed the long-running campaign calling for investment in Herefordshire museum service. These proposals offer the potential to greatly improve access to the county collections as well as encouraging the development of new ways for our varied communities to be able to engage with and explore them. Our thanks go to Councillor Gemma Davies and her colleagues in Cabinet for recognising the potential contribution that the museum and art gallery collections can make to the cultural and economic life of Hereford city and, indeed, the wider county.

It is important to recognise that the submission of the Hereford TIP to access funds for these projects is only the first stage. Much remains to be done to secure additional funding and work up the detail of the ambitious museum and art gallery project. A very preliminary timetable indicates completion of project development and business case phases by May 2022 with a speculative date for reopening in spring 2024.

What you can do

One way you can show your support for these projects now is by writing to your local county or city councillor and/or to the *Hereford Times* and other local media. Register for updates on

<https://herefordshiremuseumsupport.org.uk/>

the <https://strongerhereford.co.uk/> website and aim to take part in opportunities for stakeholder and public engagement as these arise.

Herefordshire's Viking Age Hoard

Herefordshire Council is still awaiting notification of the official valuation and process for acquisition of the Herefordshire Hoard. Once this happens the proposal to acquire the Hoard for the county will go through the council's governance and decision making process. If the scheme for acquisition is approved then fundraising can begin along with plans for its public display.

The story of the HOARD has continued to attract national and international interest. You may be interested in reading an article published in the *New Yorker* in November 2020 entitled 'The curse of the Buried Treasure'.

<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2020/11/16/the-curse-of-the-buried-treasure>

The hoard has recently been nominated by *Current Archaeology* for their annual public vote for 'Rescue Project of the year'. Their website includes a link to the fascinating article 'The Herefordshire Hoard: unpicking the story of a hidden treasure ' by Tim Hoverd, Peter Reavill, Judy Stevenson, and Gareth Williams which was published last year.

Full details of all the nominated projects and the crucial vote can be found on their website. **The closing date is 8 February 2021.**

<https://www.archaeology.co.uk/awards/rescue-project-of-the-year-2021.htm>

Broad Street Gallery Exhibition schedule 2021

Continuing restrictions due to the pandemic have disrupted the full exhibition programme planned for 2021. At present the gallery remains closed with no indication when it may be able to reopen. Highlights from the full programme include the work of Lady Mary Rennell, who lived at the Rodd, Presteigne and an exhibition of Grayson Perry tapestries. We will keep you posted as exhibition plans can be firmed up.

May Fair 900

2021 marks the 900th anniversary of the Hereford May Fair. A series of celebration events are planned including an exhibition at Hereford Museum and Art Gallery. Planned to run from 1st April to 12th June, this will tell the story of the May Fair from its founding in 1121 to the present. Images, documents, objects from the collections and fairground memorabilia will feature. A funding application has been submitted for a multi-media exhibition created by Catcher Media to take the celebrations out into High Town and ensure there is some public access to the exhibit even if restrictions on indoor galleries continue.

Black & White House 400th anniversary

A number of events and activities are being planned to celebrate the 400th anniversary of the Black and White House. Students from Hereford College of Art will create an external installation exploring how the house has featured in May Fair iconography over the years.

<https://herefordshiremuseumsupport.org.uk/>

Inside Out

During the last few months, two of the art works have been completed with the third due early this year. The photographs below show two of the artists with their installations.

Nuala Hussey's artwork, based on the museum's hop stilt, has been on display at Blue Diamond Garden Centre on Kings Acre Road. Do have a look, when you can, and please contribute your thoughts about the artwork and the project via the feedback cards located with the projection. Afternoons are a good time to go, especially when the light starts to fade as the projected images become even more rich and vibrant.

Andy Round's interactive piece based on the museum's Noah's Ark is awaiting installation at Hampton Dene surgery. Constructed to resemble an arcade game, it covers many subjects from climate change to the history of the ark, using sound, images, film and computer simulation. It's a fascinating piece of work that appeals to all ages; all achieved by pressing a series of buttons. The Noah's Ark was chosen by the public in an on line vote earlier this year when the first lockdown started.



Who we are

HMSSG is a registered charity which works to promote the development of Herefordshire Museum Service. Our priorities are to:

- Encourage Herefordshire Council to invest in enhanced galleries and staff.
- Develop our membership to enable active support for the museum service.
- Raise funds to support the services and promote public enjoyment of the county collections.

If you have some time to spare and support our aims then please email us on herefordmuseumgroup@gmail.com or join as a member –see website below.

<https://herefordshiremuseumsupport.org.uk/>