

## **York Museums Trust (YMT) Report Against Core Partnership Objectives** **January to June 2019**

### **Creation of museum and gallery provision capable of contributing to positioning York as a world class cultural centre**

1. YMT has a four-year Business Plan for the years 2018-19 to 2021-22 which indicates how the Trust will pursue and achieve the five headlines priorities from its Forward Plan 2016-2021.
  - Deliver the York Castle Museum (YCM) major capital project, including collection and storage rationalisation, and develop the Castle area as a cultural quarter.
  - Excellent, high profile programming, including strategic YMT-led events to attract visitors to York and high quality exhibitions at York Art Gallery (YAG).
  - Expanding Enterprises and fundraising activities, building on success, becoming a more business-like charity and increasing our income streams and resilience.
  - Ensuring a 21<sup>st</sup> century Visitor Experience, pro-actively engaging visitors to sites and online
  - Improving York's and York Museums Trust's profile through local, regional and international leadership, partnership and delivering on all expectations of key stakeholders.
2. The Business Plan specifies aims and measurable targets for the teams within the Trust to realise our ambitions. We have an Operational plan and report to Trustees each quarter on our performance and the operational KPIs.
3. One of the headline priorities is the redevelopment of the Castle Museum and the Castle Gateway. Planning for this initiative continues in close collaboration with CYC and the Castle Gateway Masterplan. We have accelerated the project to meet Castle Gateway Masterplan timeline with help from the Leeds City region pooled rates bid and are building a consensus with our own Castle Museum Advisory Group consisting of our stakeholders and neighbours.
4. We have been briefing individual CYC councillors and are working with officers to ensure the new Executive has also been fully briefed.

5. In the period we have appointed architects and building services and design consultants to develop a scheme to RIBA1 stage and the work to submit a major capital funding bid to National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF). The deliverables from this stage of the project will additionally include a fundraising strategy and a Business Case and a Business Plan.
6. We used the public consultation we undertook last summer to inform the architectural brief, and we are now working with the #My Castle Gateway consultation team on the public consultation this summer.
7. Another of our priorities is to build our financial resilience and operate as a business like charity. We found the 2018/19 financial year very challenging. It is worth restating the context of the 2018/19 financial year in that our annual revenue grant from CYC has been significantly reduced from £600k three years ago to £300k in 18/19. We have found the final year of the £100k per annum reduction difficult to achieve and consequently we returned a deficit position of £90k in the financial year. Despite management actions to save money in year the reasons for the deficit included:
  - i. The Rose Theatre disrupted visitor flows by blocking the YCM from the city and adversely affected visitor numbers in our peak summer trading period at the YCM. We calculated a financial loss of admissions and retail and catering income of £50k.
  - ii. We had assumed that we would be able to achieve Gift Aid conversion rates of 50% on admissions at all sites. In fact our performance was below 40% and we have been struggling to get the message across to visitors that we are a charity as a reason for gift aiding.
  - iii. As we depend more on admissions income, the percentage of irrecoverable VAT on the goods we buy increases which is a cost to the trust. This is a very difficult number to plan for and added £20k more to our VAT bill than we had forecast.
  - iv. In previous years we have taken advantage of the HMRC capital goods scheme to reclaim VAT and reduce the costs of our major capital projects, the most significant of which was the Art Gallery scheme in 2014/15. These schemes operate for 10 years and changes in our VAT recovery rate can increase or decrease the amount we can claim. Unfortunately this is only something we discovered with the help of professional advisors in the current financial year and we have had to make payments to HMRC this

year of £37k effectively paying back some of the VAT we owe them from the capital scheme.

8. We have taken professional advice and reviewed all of our charging resulting in modest price increases from 1 April at all sites whilst simplifying our concessions and extending them to the whole range of claimants under Universal Credit. Whilst our sites will remain free to York's children we are having to introduce child charges in the Autumn to help balance the books.

### **Provision that is a source of inspiration and enjoyment for all and a stimulus for learning and skills development**

9. Much of the Trust's public provision is reported in a subsequent section below, including exhibitions and online and learning offerings. However, a few highlights are included in this section.
10. *Yorkshire's Jurassic World* continued to attract significant numbers of visitors meaning that our attendances at the Yorkshire Museum were up 35% in the 2018/19 financial year compared with the previous year.
11. Our learning team continue to deliver work related to delivering Culture and Wellbeing provision as part of our cultural commissioning consortium. This included 'Family Movement Workshops' led by York Dance Space across February half term.
12. New Higher Education partnerships and projects have been developed at the Yorkshire Museum with the University of York Theatre Film and Television and York College fashion students with students producing work that will be shown on gallery.
13. The learning team enabled students from Burton Green primary school to work with the Anthony Shaw collection and Anthony himself, to develop their own works in response as well as to select works from the collection to display in the Anthony Shaw space.

### **The protection and conservation of the collections, gardens and buildings for future generations including improved storage**

14. We have been undertaking preparatory work throughout the period at all of our stores in preparation for our planned stores consolidation project. This is an important enabling project for the Castle Transformation project. We have had additional staff for over twelve months to work on

the audit and documentation of the collections in advance of the stores consolidation.

15. A new Tiered Garden area has been created outside Manor Cottage utilising some of the Abbey stone and a new planting plan has been installed in the Tempest Anderson border.
16. We have completed the rewiring of the Museum garden lights and these are now in use. Whilst fixing the lights we took the opportunity to improve the infrastructure in the garden more generally installing garden flood lighting, which will mean us having less reliance on external contractors in the future to illuminate our buildings with special effects.
17. We have taken two work experience placements to work in the gardens (one from York St Johns and one from Askham Bryan College).
18. We have replaced the second of two boilers at Yorkshire Museum with a Hoval multi gas boiler which is 30% more efficient.

**Promotion of the city's museums and collections through a varied range of activities which could include exhibitions, displays, community projects, volunteering opportunities, formal learning for schools, informal activities for families, and adult learning**

19. Our active, high-quality exhibitions programme includes:

**York Art Gallery**

*The National Gallery Masterpiece Tour* – (July to September 2019)

20. We will be displaying *The triumph of Pan* by Nicholas Poussin one of the most important and influential painters of the 17<sup>th</sup> Century.

*Sounds Like Her* (July to September 2019)

21. This is a touring exhibition produced by New Art Exchange Nottingham. It brings together seven women artists from diverse backgrounds each exploring sound as a medium or subject matter in innovative ways.
22. *Ruskin, Turner and the Storm Cloud: Watercolours and Drawings* opened to the public on 29 March until 23 June 2019. It received plenty of publicity around the opening including in *The Guardian*, the *New York Times*, a double page spread in the *Big Issue*, and specialist art journals

Apollo and Frieze. It was also given a rave review on Radio 4's Saturday Review. It proved to be very popular with visitor numbers more than doubling at the Art Gallery during this period. *Just Looking* in the Project Gallery (29 March-summer 2019) links with the Ruskin show and offers a taster of the permanent collection by allowing visitors to linger and reflect on three paintings. This exhibition is a touring exhibition which after York will be showing in Kendal.

*The BFG in Pictures* (From October 2018 to February 2019)

23. The exhibition, curated by Quentin Blake, contained 40 artworks, including rarely seen unpublished illustrations of *The BFG*. The art gallery learning team created a much-used interactive space alongside the exhibition.
24. *When All is Quiet: Kaiser Chiefs in Conversation with York Art Gallery* (From December 2018 to March 2019)
25. Kaiser Chiefs explored the boundaries between art and music this winter in a unique and experimental exhibition. Using their position as pop musicians as a starting point, Kaiser Chiefs chose to rethink sound as a medium, inviting visitors to join them in exploring the edges between music, art, creation and performance. To do this, they brought together works by internationally regarded sound artists which have resonated with the band while on their travels and inspired them to look at sound in new ways.

*Aesthetica Art Prize* 2018 (March – July 2019)

26. A platform for innovation and originality, the Aesthetica Art Prize Exhibition invited audiences to engage with captivating projects from some of today's leading artists from across the world, both established and emerging.

*Lucie Rie: Ceramics and Buttons* (From June 2018)

27. As one of the most respected potters of the 20<sup>th</sup> century Dame Lucie Rie was known for her finely thrown and beautifully decorated functional domestic ceramics. This exhibition also highlights the ceramic buttons she began producing for the fashion industry alongside many examples of domestic wares she was famous for.
28. In the Centre of Ceramic Art (CoCA) the Anthony Shaw Collection has been redisplayed by pupils from Burton Green Primary School. There

was a gleeful afternoon opening showing their work alongside their selected objects from the Shaw collection.

*Michael Lyons: Ancient and Modern*

29. The Artists Garden and the edible garden have been used as a setting for a major exhibition of Yorkshire-based artist Michael Lyons' sculptures. This exhibition runs for a year from May 2019 and is free to the public.

## **Yorkshire Museum**

*Yorkshire's Jurassic World*

30. This permanent and award winning exhibition opened in March 2018 and has proved very popular. It takes the visitor back 150 million years to discover the world of dinosaurs and through the use of our collections and interactive technology brings this experience to life.

## **Castle Museum**

*A Personal Collection of Vivienne Westwood Shoes (July 2018 to June 2019)*

31. This exhibition worked within the existing *Shaping the Body* gallery and includes some of Westwood's most iconic shoes displayed alongside shoes from our own collection dating back to the 18<sup>th</sup> century selected by Westwood and her team.

*Museum of Broken Relationships (March 2019 to March 2020)*

32. Pieces are largely on loan from the *Museum of Broken Relationships* in Zagreb but the exhibition also includes new acquisitions for the Zagreb Museum acquired through open public call by YCM to people in Yorkshire. The digital team have supported a pilot programme of collecting digistories for the exhibition *The Museum of Broken Relationships*.

## Online visitors

33. Our commitment to open licensing, allowing free access to and free re-use of a large proportion of our digital assets, also enhances access to our collections and intellectual property. We have over 25 million searches on our online collections each year. We have focused our

efforts not only nationally but regionally as well, through the Museum Development Yorkshire network.

34. At the end of last year we introduced online ticketing for visitors and this has proved a popular way of gaining access to the attractions and events. We have learned from the soft launch and are in the process of improving our online presence.

### Learning and Volunteers

35. Through its learning offerings, YMT reaches many school children and families both through specific programmes on aspects of the collections and through visits to our various sites. In the first half of the current financial year, we served over 2,700 York school children who participated in our programmes. In total, over 150,000 children and young people have already visited our attractions in the current financial year. However York schools children visits continue to fall despite continued promotion of school activities. We are investigating the root cause of these changes which we believe to be a combination of the gradual impact of a more narrowly focussed curriculum and the cash-strapped position of many schools hindering things like coach travel. We are also going to be adapting our offer at York Castle Museum to make it more appealing and relevant to school teachers.
36. At the Yorkshire Museum the Learning team experimented with running family engagement activities for a longer period of time. This shift, coupled with a focus on the ever-popular dinosaurs theme saw a doubling of visitor figures from the comparative six-week summer holidays in 2017.
37. YMT hosted a *Kids in Museums* training day, providing us with the opportunity to showcase work undertaken at YAG to secure the UK Family Friendly award in 2015.
38. Whilst the number of active volunteers has decreased the number of volunteer hours given has held up. We have over 200 volunteers who contributed over 1,000 hours every month. Attention has been focussed on improving the visitor facing volunteer offer at the Yorkshire Museum to capitalise on the increased visitor numbers for Jurassic. The result has been an increase of more than 50% in volunteer hours at the Yorkshire Museum. Overall, there is a drop across the city in student volunteering

and we are working with the University of York, Jorvik, NRM and York Minster to develop a central pool of student volunteers.

**Increased access to the city’s collections, gardens and buildings and increasing visitor numbers, especially young people**

39. Visitor numbers from 1 January to 30 June 2019 are down by 4% when compared to the same period in 2018. The Jurassic exhibition has continued to be popular at the Yorkshire Museum but we are comparing this period with the opening period in 2018 when we had a huge interest. The visitor numbers at the Castle Museum continue to be a cause for concern as well as a reminder of the need to invest in the Museum. The Art Gallery numbers have exceeded our expectations as a result of the popular *Ruskin Turner* exhibition. The visitor numbers for the period are set out in the table below:

	<b>Actual</b>	<b>Last year</b>	<b>% Change</b>
York Castle Museum	118,312	126,531	-6%
Yorkshire Museum	62,528	85,861	-27%
York Art Gallery	57,375	36,501	+57%
Total	238,215	248,893	-4%

40. In the last financial year we welcomed over 100,000 free children’s visits to our three sites.

**Recognition of the special significance of the museums and gallery for York residents through the maintenance of pricing incentives for York residents and opportunities for free access**

41. Residents of York can use their Council Tax bill as evidence to gain the discounts available on admissions and the YMT half price Card.

42. YMT participated in the annual York Residents Festival with 3,692 York resident adults and 1,063 York resident children visiting the attractions over the weekend of the 26<sup>th</sup> & 27<sup>th</sup> January.

43. We also run our own York Museums Trust’s Residents Weekend from June 29-30. We had 2,133 visitors over that weekend.



## **The facilitation of outreach activities and pricing mechanisms designed to encourage visits by those who do not traditionally use the museums or gallery**

44. Admission for children is free of charge at all YMT sites currently and will remain free to York children when child charging is introduced in September. YMT continue to provide residents aged 17-24, those entitled to most forms of income related benefit, and carers and community groups in excluded categories, with a YMT Card free of charge. Over 4,500 residents have taken this up.
45. YMT integrate diversity into the cultural programme: *The Sea is the Limit* focused on refugee experience and welcomed several refugee families and groups to it. *Strata...* had as its centrepiece the UK premiere of *Stones Against Diamonds* by BAME LGBT artist Isaac Julien. *Viking: rediscover the legend* on tour to Southport and Norwich, addresses issues of settling and integration. YAG showcased creative output by participants in York's Cultural Consortium for Wellbeing.
46. We address barriers to involvement through our collections and committed staff: We marked the anniversary of women's suffrage with displays and events at YCM. We created a Community Researcher post to empower communities and work with them on our collections. A cross-cutting YMT inclusion group including the Visitor Experience team drives activities e.g. low sensory experience times. Following decolonisation discussions we have altered some YCM displays to improve context or remove historically inaccurate misrepresentations.
47. YMT led York's Cultural Consortium for Wellbeing which co-ordinates cultural prescription to activities led by organisations across York for people who suffer from loneliness and mental health issues. This pilot project funded by CYC completed in June and has effectively demonstrated the impact of cultural activities for wellbeing.

## **Excellent customer service and visitor experience**

48. All sites were mystery shopped during 2018 as part of the annual visit England, Visitor Attraction Quality Assurance Scheme. All sites scored over 79% (York Castle Museum). YCM dropped 1% to 79%. The Art Gallery scored 90% up 1% and received particular praise from the assessor. The Yorkshire Museum at 84% was down 2%, with praise for Jurassic, but the overall 'tired' state of the building décor was

commented on as a negative factor. The 2019 results are yet to be completed.

**Active international partnerships to enhance public programmes, to increase YMT's and the city's reputation, and to raise funds**

49. *Viking: Rediscover the Legend* was installed at its final touring venue Norwich Castle Museum. During the install the Yorkshire Museum team were shadowed by staff from The Auckland Project. Members of the Yorkshire Museum team attended the British Museum's National Programmes celebration event, at which Hartwig Fischer, Director of the British Museum, highlighted YMT's work with the their National Partnerships programme.
50. The Yorkshire Museum was shortlisted for Visitor Attraction of the Year and Yorkshire's Jurassic World was shortlisted for Innovation in Tourism in this year's Visit York Tourism Awards.
51. Yorkshire Museum team gave tours to 40 international delegates from the Destination Viking Association.
52. Our leadership in digital is increasingly recognised. In January Theodore Wilkins, IT and Digital Engagement Manager, was invited to speak at the National Trust's regional digital leads forum and Museum Development Yorkshire's South Yorkshire Museums Forum where he shared our digital approach and gave examples of how we harness digital tools and techniques.
53. Staff from Colchester and Ipswich Museums met with members of the Yorkshire Museum for advice regarding the Collections' Designation process. A team from Tyne and Wear Arts and Museums visited York Castle Museum to find out more about our Castle Museum capital project and compare notes about governance and enterprises. The Women Leaders in Museums Network visited *When All is Quiet: Kaiser Chiefs in Conversation with York Art Gallery* for a guided tour by Beatrice Bertram and *Yorkshire's Jurassic World* at the Yorkshire Museum with Sarah King.
54. Beatrice Bertram was one of the judges on the panel for the *Aesthetica Art Prize 2019*. Suzanne Fagence Cooper represented York Art Gallery & Abbot Hall at 'Ruskin Today' network meeting and delivered three talks linked to the *Ruskin, Turner & the Storm Cloud* exhibition. Lucy Creighton filmed a segment on the Star Carr pendant for *Mystic Britain* -

a new Smithsonian Channel series presented by Clive Anderson and Mary Ann Ochota. Sara Wajid held an 'in conversation' with Reyahn King for the York Heritage Research Seminar of the University of York's archaeology department which was watched by over 200 people on live stream as well as those in the seminar.

55. Reyahn King has been chairing the York Cultural Leaders Group and the steering group developing York's Cultural Strategy which was endorsed by the City of York Council.

**Retention of registered museum status and development of the designated collections to ensure maximum public benefit Continues.**

56. YMT continues to provide expert support and advice to other museums in the region which are seeking to renew or gain accredited museum status through consultancy in its Museums Development team funded by the Arts Council for England. The team provided support to 92% of the eligible museums in the region in 2018/19.
57. It has been a good period for research: a popular publication was launched to accompany the *Ruskin, Turner & the Storm Cloud* exhibition, co-edited by Suzanne Fagence Cooper and Richard Johns, with contributions by Emma Stibbon RA, Timothy Spall and Steven Wildman, supported by a Paul Mellon Centre grant and Paul Holberton. Beatrice
58. Bertram delivered a research seminar at the University of York on "A Monster of Beautiful Loathsomeness": William Etty's *Sirens and Ulysses*. Adam Parker and Emily Tilley have had an article published in FORUM: The Journal of Council for British Archaeology Yorkshire - *Reveal Your Secrets: research and identification of a 'mystery' Roman object in the Yorkshire Museum*. Andrew Woods participated in the British Museum's Tetrarchic hoards workshop, presenting the latest interpretation of the Wold Newton hoard.
59. Over 150 toys and games have been catalogued by a student on placement from York University's Institute for Public Understanding of the Past. Another student from the University of York biology department undertook a 3 month, full time placement, as part of the White Rose partnership, working on a handling box for *Yorkshire's Jurassic World*. Around 8,000 specimen at the Yorkshire Museum have been moved to enable boiler replacement works.

60. New acquisitions include:

- Fine art: *Rivaulx Abbey, North Yorkshire* (1842), a watercolour by Anthony Vandyke Copley Fielding (1787-1855).
- York Art Gallery have acquired (by gift) several pieces for the ceramics collection including seven pieces by Emmanuel Cooper and *Drunken Fish* by Pamela Mei Yee Leung
- Social history: Wooden scale model of the G.W. Harding shop front at 26-27 High Ousegate, c.1910; two First World War recruitment posters by Captain Harry Lawrence Oakley; and a 1988 Sony 'Handycam'.
- Archaeology: Fulford Ring - a unique and nationally significant 15th century gold, ruby and emerald double-bezelled finger ring. The ring was purchased through a successful fundraising campaign with 50% from the Headley Trust, 30% from the V&A Purchase Grant Fund, and 20% in donations from YMT supporters. In addition we acquired an ingot from Cundall with Leckby, hacksilver, and a gold ring from Wighill, as well as a significant archive of Roman objects from the fort at Bainbridge. The archaeology team have been trialling new methods for collecting, pro-actively approaching metal detectorists regarding the possible donation of finds. This has resulted in two acquisitions during this period: a Roman dress fitting from Oswaldkirk and a pilgrim badge from Cawood. A revised policy for the deposit of archaeological archives has also been drafted by the Curator of Archaeology; this is currently out for consultation with key partners.

61. The last few months have been a particularly strong period for the development of the Costume and Textiles collection, including the acquisition of:

- Costume worn by Berwick Kaler as York Theatre Royal's dame in *The Grand Old Dame of York*, 2018-19
- Outfit by Vivienne Westwood Gold Label from the collection *Tied to the Mast*, 1998, donated by Vivienne Westwood Ltd via Murray Blewett after his work with us on the curation of the *A Personal Collection of Vivienne Westwood Shoes* exhibition
- Collection of men's clothing relating to the Baines family of Bell Hall, Naburn (York), c.1775-1880, purchased with support from the V&A Purchase Grant Fund

62. The team also worked with a dealer to put us in a position to acquire a 13th century Limoges enamel Corpus Christi figurine, found on the site of St Mary's Abbey but being sold at auction (from a private collection) in Germany. Funds have been raised towards the purchase, with a further grant bid now submitted.

**The maintenance of the Museum Gardens on the Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest maintained and the register of botanical gardens**

63. The border in front of the Tempest Anderson Hall has been cleared and replanted and is filling out. The new border by Manor Cottage is beginning to flourish and is now being extended. The rockery between the St Marys ruins, St Marys Lodge and the Hospitium is being thinned and where necessary additional suitable planting is being installed. The work on the rockery is mostly being carried out by a volunteer with alpine plant knowledge.

**Public access to the Museum Gardens daily (except relevant Christmas / New Year holidays) unless closure is necessary for reasons of public safety**

64. Free access to all is being maintained and over 1.7million visits are made to the gardens each year.
65. We have been advised occasionally by police to close slightly early - or to close entrances by the river. This is to enable better management of the risks of drug dealing in the Gardens.

**Effective, open and transparent governance including effective access and equalities policies covering trustees and staff recruitment practices**

66. Our recruitment practices have delivered 7.6% of our staff from backgrounds of non-white British which is above York averages. This increases at a management team level to 11.4%. Our workforce is 70% female to 30% male and our management team is 60% female. We have engaged a digital trainee from a low socio-economic background as part of a national scheme to widen access to museum careers. As part of the board recruitment the gender ratio is now 42% female and 17% of Trustees have a background of non-white British.

67. We run fair and transparent selection processes for both Trustees and staff. Trustee vacancies are advertised and board diversity is an important consideration in recruitment. For staff posts, HR representatives are present on each interview panel, questions are submitted to HR in advance and all candidates receive the same information and are asked the same questions. Our system of Personal Development Reviews means that routes to training are also open and fair.

Author

Rehyann King, Chief Executive

Paul Lambert, Head of Strategy, Finance and Corporate Services

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### **Abbreviations**

CoCA - Centre of Ceramic Art

CYC – City of York Council

HMRC - HM Revenue and Customs

NLHF - National Lottery Heritage Fund

NRM – National Railway Museum

YAG - York Art Gallery

YCM - York Castle Museum

YMT – York Museums Trust