

## **Children, Education & Communities Policy and Scrutiny Committee 10 January 2018**

### **YMT Report Against Core Partnership Objectives - July to December 2017**

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

YMT was successful in its application to Arts Council England (ACE) to be granted National Portfolio Organisation status. As such, ACE has committed to contributing £1.2m per year to the Trust for the next four years beginning in fiscal year 2018-19. This recognition of the quality of YMT's programming, service and operations comes as competition for NPO status has increased and with some well-established museum services being denied this status and/or having their funding reduced.

YMT is creating 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. The Business Plan will update the Forward Plan and will specify aims and measurable targets for the teams within the Trust to realise our ambitions. One of the headlines priorities is the redevelopment of the Castle Museum and the Castle area. Planning for this initiative continues in close collaboration with CYC and the Castle Gateway Project. The appointment of an external project manager, a conservation survey and an options appraisal for the site are the next immediate steps to be taken in this process.

The Trust has received a number of awards including the following:

*Visitor Attraction of the Year* -- York Art Gallery (2nd year running), Visit York Tourism Awards

*Gold Award* -- York Museum Gardens, Yorkshire in Bloom

*Excellence in Media Arts* -- Viking exhibition Virtual Reality (YMT and University of York Digital Creativity Labs), York Culture Awards

*Blunt Prize* -- Dr. Andrew Woods, Senior Curator Yorkshire Museum, for significant contributions to the field of numismatics, British Numismatic Society

At the time of writing this report, the YMT has also been shortlisted for the following Little Viking Awards:

*Best Attraction* (York Castle Museum)

*Best Christmas Experience* (York Castle Museum)

*Best Children's Festival* (Eboracum Roman Festival, YMT)

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

Much of the Trust's public provision is reported in a subsequent section below, including exhibitions and online and learning offerings. However, several examples are included in this section.

With HLF funding, YMT has commissioned the author Rebecca Manley's to write a bespoke, site-specific play, entitled 'These Walls,' drawing on the stories of the Debtors' Prison to bring characters to life and challenge audiences to think about issues of justice, human rights, debt and the rights of women. York Theatre Royal Youth Theatre will perform this exciting new work in March 2018.

YMT delivered several events as part of the York Food Festival in September, bringing opportunities for learning and access to YMT collections through this popular annual festival. Especially successful was 'Behind the Scenes at the Chocolate Factory' a talk at the Castle Museum by Mike Grimes, former Terry's employee.

In December YMT delivered a discovery day for secondary school, A level students at York Art Gallery. The day, a partnership with the University of Leeds, introduced young people to research skills and supported them in giving a series of presentations on artworks in the gallery.

In partnership with Reading University, we are developing a workshop for KS 2&3 based on research into the Ivory Bangle Lady, a bronze sculpture on view in the Art Gallery. The workshop will be based on gallery on the theme of diversity and migration in Roman York focusing on Ivory Bangle Lady, Septimius Severus, Lucius Rufinus. The session is likely to be delivered to the public during the Roman Festival in June 2018.

The quality of provision at YMT is reflected, in part, by the continuing increase in visitor numbers at the Trusts' sites, in particular, the significant increase in numbers at the Yorkshire Museum in response to the Viking exhibition. This is supported by the continuing level of four- and five-star reviews on Tripadvisor. More information on visitor numbers and customer service are provided later in this report.

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

Plans to address most of the Trust's remaining collections storage and management issues will be dovetailed with the Castle Museum project. The social history collection alone has c.350,000 objects, and this Designated collection is one of the best social history resources in the UK. The process of properly documenting the collection and making it accessible to staff, volunteers and researchers is ongoing.

An extensive programme of work on the trees in the museum gardens has commenced. This will entail reshaping some trees and clearing branches that are no longer viable. This is as part of a longer term strategy to conserve and maintain the safety of the trees in the Garden and to ensure that other planting is unaffected by excessive growth.

### **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**

YMT presented an active, high-quality exhibition programme this year. Highlights include:

#### *York Art Gallery*

##### *Albert Moore: Of Beauty and Aesthetics* (April – October)

The first monographic exhibition of York born artist Albert Joseph Moore since the memorial exhibition in 1894. The exhibition featured an impressive selection of Moore's paintings, watercolours and sketches, highlighting the beautiful and classical women for which the artist is most famous and demonstrated the modernity of his approach.

##### *Foundation Myths* (August 2016 – November 2017)

Foundation Myths was the first installation ever to be commissioned for the Artists Garden site which provides the public with free access to works of art by accomplished artists. The installation was created by Charles Holland of Ordinary Architecture, an art, architecture and design practice with an international profile. The installation, produced especially for the Garden, drew on the rich history of the site and its many uses over the centuries.

##### *Aesthetica Art Prize 2017* (May – September)

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, both established and emerging.

### *Leisure Land Golf* (June – September)

Following a successful crowdfunding campaign, York Art Gallery brought Doug Fishbone's Leisure Land Golf to the Artists Garden.

### *Picasso Ceramics from the Attenborough Collection* (July – September)

York Art Gallery and the Centre of Ceramic Art (CoCA) displayed highlights from the Attenborough Collection of ceramics created by one of the world's most famous artists.

### *Marinella Senatore: York Symphony* (From Sept)

Through a series of workshops and conversations collecting individual stories in York, Italian artist Marinella Senatore has created the York Symphony: an artwork that engages York's communities and culminates in a film on show in the Gallery. This new Evelyn Commission is a contemporary response to the historic Evelyn Award, a scheme which ran from 1950 until 1962 with the aim of bringing York's topographical collection up to date.

### *Paul Nash and the Uncanny Landscape: An Exhibition Curated by John Stezaker* (From October 2017)

Paul Nash's groundbreaking inter-war landscapes which transformed the genre of British landscape painting feature in this exhibition curated by artist John Stezaker at York Art Gallery. The exhibition also includes works by Stezaker including new landscapes created in response to the themes of the uncanny landscape. A private collection of rarely seen Nash drawings, paintings, photographs and ephemera is also on display.

### Yorkshire Museum

#### *Vikings: Rediscover the Legend* (May – November)

This major new partnership exhibition with the British Museum was curated by YMT and brought together objects from the YMT and the British Museum: two of the most significant and internationally recognised collections of Viking Age treasure in Britain. The exhibition is now touring across the UK.

#### *Medieval York: Capital of the North* (From November)

This installation explores how York became England's second city and how its fortunes rose and fell with its ties to the Crown and the Church. Through the finest medieval discoveries ever unearthed, including the Middleham Jewel, the Escrick ring and a Richard III supporter's Boar Badge, the latest metal detected finds and brand new research, this new display tells the only complete Medieval history of York in the city.

### Castle Museum

#### *Chocolate – York's Sweet Past* (From April)

A dispersed exhibition delving into the history of some of the world's most iconic chocolates and sweets. The collections tell the story of York's key confectionary producers, including Rowntrees and Terry's, and explore how the Georgians, Victorians and the Jacobean satisfied their sweet tooth.

### York St. Mary's

#### *The Dark Self – Susan Aldsworth* (May – September)

Susan Aldsworth's exhibition *The Dark Self* was inspired by her research into sleep during her three year residency at the University of York working with neuroscientist Professor Miles Whittington and art historian Professor Michael White.

### Online visitors

Our digital practice plays a significant role in providing access to YMT collections. Presently we have more than 180,000 collections records and 50,000 openly-licensed images – making YMT's collection highly visible to digital audiences. In fiscal year 2017-18 we are on track to have over 700,00 unique visits to our collections pages online. Our partnerships with companies such as Google, Wikimedia UK and Sketchfab –

has resulted in YMT collections being viewed by approximately 24 million views on our collection items via those sites. These initiatives also further our headline priority to improve the Trust's profile through partnerships.

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. YMT's approach has been lauded by the National Museum Directors' Council as the most 'radically open' institution in the UK. We have focused our efforts not only nationally but regionally as well, through the Museum Development Yorkshire network.

### Learning and Volunteers

YMT's learning, volunteer and Yorkshire Museum curatorial teams took part in September's annual *Yorkshire Fossil Festival* in Scarborough. This high-profile, three-day festival was organised by Scarborough Museums Trust with funding from The Palaeontological Association. Participating institutions included; the Natural History Museum; Oxford University Natural History Museum; Leeds University, Hull University and Leicester University. YMT's activities for schools on Friday 22 September reached 120 children and 16 accompanying adults. The free family festival on the Saturday and Sunday attracted over 5,000 people.

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. For the current fiscal year, we are on pace to serve 4,500 York school children who will participate in our programmes and 170,000 family programme participants. In total, over 100,000 children and young people will visit the museum this fiscal year.

An example of a more intensive, focused programme is the YMT's four-day Teenage Art School presented in July. A deliberately small number of students, eleven in this case, worked with four different artists producing sculpture, ceramics, paintings and collage. The sculptures, inspired by the work of ceramic artist Kate Haywood, are currently on display in the Project Gallery.

YMT works in partnership with other local organisations to develop and strengthen its public programme. Two examples include:

- Ethnic Minority Support Services in Selby and York – Refugee families have contributed stories inspired by buttons which will be included in a storytelling area in next year's CoCA Lucie Rie exhibition.
- YMT worked in partnership with York Theatre Royal, York Explore Libraries, York Minster and York Army Museum to deliver Arts Award Discover to local children through our family arts and craft activities over the summer holidays.

Since 1 July of this year, over 250 volunteers contributed 7,500 hours on 52 different activities throughout the Trust. Core projects such as costumed roles on Kirkgate increased as new volunteer offers came on line, and as a result of this, our volunteer Sewing Bee also expanded to meet the increased demand for authentic replica costume. The Sewing Bee have also supported the Chocolate and Shaping the Body exhibitions, by creating some authentic 'trying on' costumes for visitors, which were as wide ranging as giant Quality Street costumes to a complete Henry VIII outfit.

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

Visitor numbers from 1 July to 18 December 2017 are very positive when compared to the same period in 2016:

	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Last year</u>	<u>% Change</u>
York Castle Museum	140,782	133,996	+5%

Yorkshire Museum	54,711	38,773	+29%	
York St Mary's *	10,442	34,452	-30%	* York St Mary's was open full-time throughout 2016 but just 5 days/week from June-Sept 2017.
York Art Gallery	42,660	38,798	+9%	
<b>Total</b>	<b>248,595</b>	<b>246,019</b>	<b>+1%</b>	

The 'YMT Card' scheme, introduced in summer 2015, remains very popular:

- Over 50,000 'YMT Cards' have been sold to date
- There are currently 24,500 active card holders
- 55% of members are York residents, meaning 14% of adults within the CoYC boundary have purchased a YMT Card

### **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**

The offer to York residents has been improved in partnership with York Explore. York Card holders can still use their cards as evidence of residence to purchase YMT Cards at half price and they are now also entitled to 20% off day tickets. Alternatively, residents without York Cards can use their Council Tax bill as evidence to gain the discount on YMT Cards.

The YMT residents open days proved popular in June 2017, with nearly 3,000 additional visitors across all the sites over the weekend. We look forward to participating in the Residents Festival again in Jan 2018.

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

YMT's public programme of talks, workshops and events for adults continues to include regular sensory tours, particularly suitable to those with a sight impairment, and monthly practical, inclusive Arts for well-being sessions. Dementia, autism and deaf awareness training has been introduced for staff, and 'relaxed openings' have been introduced for people with sensory impairments.

Admission for children is free of charge at all YMT sites. Previously, thanks to a contribution from CYC, residents aged 17-24, those entitled to most forms of income related benefit, carers and community groups in excluded categories could get a YMT Card free of charge. Once this allocation was expended, the YMT decided to continue providing this benefit.

As part of the Culture & Wellbeing York project funded by City of York Council, YMT has been commissioned to support the work of the cultural sector and improve health and wellbeing outcomes in York by offering opportunities to engage in activities normally out of reach. During the period addressed in this report, the following actions have been taken:

- Creation of a 'Cultural Menu' comprising a broad range of cultural opportunities designed to improve health and wellbeing under development
- Supported the delivery of 'Cuppa and a Chorus' by the National Centre for Early Music. This programme helps reduce isolation and hopes to improve both lung and mental health
- Continued to build a referral network using the Social Prescription Service (Priority Group GP practices) and Local Area Teams
- Submitted a full application to Arts Council England's Celebrating Age programme. If successful, this would secure additional funding to support the engagement of cultural organisations with older people in the city

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

The Trust has again taken part in the Visit England Visitor Attraction Quality Assurance Scheme. Results from the mystery visits undertaken in Summer 2017 show an improvement at all sites, with all site's scores now being over 80%--the Art Gallery being the best performing with an overall score of 89%. The three sites maintain their positions in the York Tripadvisor ratings, being ranked 2<sup>nd</sup> (Castle Museum); 8<sup>th</sup> (Yorkshire Museum) and 11<sup>th</sup> (York Art Gallery) at present.

In order to accommodate visitors with access issues, the Trust has sent Front of House staff on training for working with such visitors, and we have produced information packs on how these visitors can make the most of their visit to our sites. In order to evaluate our progress in making all the sites more accessible, the Trust engaged a mystery visitor who is a wheelchair user and access consultant. Following his visits, the mystery visitor produced a report which highlighted the friendly and confident manner in which the staff engaged with him and his party. He also commended the information provided to enable a wheelchair user to best take advantage of the Trusts' offerings.

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

One of the Trust's aims is to share our collections and expertise with regional, national and international audiences. One example of an initiative in the last six months which has furthered this objective is the Trust's partnership with the British Museum, referenced above. The exhibition, *Vikings: Rediscover the Legend* presented star objects from the British Museum featured alongside the Yorkshire Museum's world class collections, with new interpretations to give a fresh perspective on how the Vikings shaped every aspect of life in Britain. The exhibition debuted at the Yorkshire Museum, is now showing in Nottingham and will travel to Southport. The exhibition also allowed the Trust to showcase its Digital Narratives for Archaeology Research (DiNAR) Project, a joint research project led by the Centre for Digital Heritage, Digital Creativity Labs and York Museums Trust. The exhibition was the first major output of the project comprising of a cinematic VR experience showing immersive vignettes of what life in the camp of the Viking Great Army at Torksey in Lincolnshire could have looked like.

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

Continues. YMT now formally provides expert support and advice to other museums in the region which are seeking to renew or gain accredited museum status.

YMT has received a grant of over £71,000 from the ACE 'Designation Development Fund' to support research into the Roman collections managed by the Trust. As a result of this investment, we have been able to enrich object information with some of the latest research into York during the Roman period. During summer 2017 we ran a conference bringing together leading academics and museum curators to explore and identify opportunities for current and future research. This will help inform the redisplay of Roman collections at the Yorkshire Museum over the next couple of years. The investment will also have a more immediate public benefit by increasing the number and quality of records available online.

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

As referenced in the first section above, York Museum Gardens won another Yorkshire In Bloom Gold Award in 2017. York Museum Gardens will be an active member in the forthcoming 2018 Bloom! Festival.

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

This continues; additionally, the Gardens are open in the evening for the Christmas at York Museum Gardens event which is running for six weeks from mid Nov 2017.

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

As part of its new Business Plan, the Trust is updating its Equality Action Plan (EAP) for the years 2018-19 to 2021-22. Through the EAP, YMT aims to champion diversity throughout the Trust, with a focus on improving representation and inclusion within our audiences, communications, programme and workforce.

The YMT's Equality Action Plan will be monitored by the Trust's Senior Management Team (SMT). The SMT reviews progress against plans each quarter and ensures that the organisation is on track to achieve its objectives. The YMT Board also monitors progress against plans and policies at their regular board meetings, held six times per year. The Success Indicators in this plan will be incorporated into the organisation's KPI report which is monitored by the board on a quarterly basis.

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. The system of Personal Development Reviews means that routes to training are also open and fair.