

Beaminster Museum Forward Plan for the period Aug 2026 – Jul 2030

APPROVAL OF DOCUMENT	
Changes	Updated and revised version of the previous Forward Plan. All sections have been reviewed and updated as necessary. The Access Plan, first written in May2026, has also been incorporated into this document to ensure that we only have one list of objectives.
Signed	
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Position	Chair of Beaminster Museum Management Committee
Date	23.Sept.2026

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1. INTRODUCTION

Beaminster Museum's Forward Plan is a key management document. The process for the creation and management of the Forward Plan is described in Beaminster Museum's Policy and Governance documents, Section 6.

This document gives the context for the Forward Plan, reviews the current state of the museum, updates on progress on the last plan, and sets new multi-year objectives and actions for the current year. This plan was originally part of the Policy and Governance documents but it was separated from those in 2023 as the review processes for the objectives and for the policies are different. The pattern now followed is for update of the plan each year, with progress reviews at committee meetings in the year.

This document also incorporates the Access Plan, written for the re-accreditation application in May 2026, so that we do not have *two* lists of objectives to refer to. Work for re-accreditation delayed the revision of the Forward Plan but the delay also means that we can incorporate the Arts Council's recommendations from the re-accreditation in this plan.

[Section 8](#) details the achievement in the last year vs the plan; [Section 9](#) gives the new actions for 2026/27, which align with the overall aims of the museum and the multi-year objectives.

2. DESCRIPTION OF THE MUSEUM

Beaminster Museum is a community museum, created and supported by volunteers from the Beaminster area.

It is a local history museum for Beaminster and the surrounding civil parishes of Broadwindsor, Burstock, Chedington, Corscombe, Halstock, Hooke, Mapperton, Mosterton, Netherbury, Seaborough, South Perrott, Stoke Abbott and Thorncombe.

Its collection reflects its rural setting, with many and varied artefacts from a typical small country town and even smaller villages, which remind visitors of the extent to which even the tiniest of communities were far more self-sufficient in earlier times. There is some emphasis on the local sailcloth industry, which died out in the mid-19 century. It is also the closest museum to Horn Park Quarry and has a collection of local fossils.

The collection is housed over two floors of a Grade II Listed former Congregational Chapel to which a two-storey extension was completed in 2022, a short distance from the town centre.

The museum building was acquired in 1990 by the Beaminster Museum Trust, a registered charity formed to set up and maintain a museum for the town of Beaminster and the surrounding rural area.

3. GOVERNANCE, MANAGEMENT AND PERSONNEL

The main business of the museum is overseen by a Management Committee which is formally constituted. Five roles are assigned and described in the Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) and Rules of Governance (ROG): Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer and Curator. In addition, the constitution provides for the appointment of two to five additional members without portfolio but with full voting rights. There is also provision for a representative from Dorset Council (DC), the Chairman of the Trustees, and the Museum Mentor; all ex-officio and non-voting. There is also a power in exceptional circumstances to co-opt new committee members. Management Committee meetings are normally held approximately 6 times each year.

Specific areas of the Museum's business are devolved to sub-teams. The sub-teams include:

- Care and conservation
- Children's activities
- Collections
- Displays
- Events
- Maintenance and Premises
- Marketing and Publicity
- Oral History Project
- Research & Family History
- Shop
- Stewarding
- Fundraising

The sub-teams report back to the Management Committee on significant developments and key decisions. The Research and Family History sub-team is more loosely organised as a collection of individuals with their own expertise that can be called upon to answer specific questions.

Approximately 58 volunteers support the running of the Museum. Volunteer hours are heavily concentrated on maintaining the Museum's opening hours and ensuring that displays never stay the same for long. Volunteers meet weekly on Fridays, but the bulk of their work is actually done at other times, either in the museum or at home.

In 2019 the museum's volunteers were recipients of The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service.

All members of the volunteer team receive appropriate training and have access to a range of free courses provided through the South West Museum Development Programme (eg through informing in weekly newsletter).

4. FINANCE AND ACCOUNTS

Beaminster Museum's Financial Year runs from 5 November to 4 November. The financial situation is discussed at the Annual General Meeting (AGM) and management committee meetings. The Treasurer provides a full income and expenditure summary for each management committee meeting and the finances are reviewed. The accounts are audited annually.

The museum does not receive regular local government revenue support and relies on its own mix of income generation for sustainability. The primary income sources are member subscriptions, and fundraising events/donations. The museum's annual turnover is small – around £11,000 per annum, but is typical of many volunteer-run, community museums in the local area.

The museum has introduced a number of spending guidelines to ensure full probity on financial issues. This includes:

- Limit of Management Committee expenditure of £5000 on any one project or item without Trustee authorisation.
- Limit on any one cheque issue or electronic payment limited to £5000 without Trustee authorisation.
- Travelling expenses to be not greater than HMRC approved rates.
- Funds donated for specific purposes or with conditions must have these restrictions recorded in some readily available form.

The Trustees in 2023 determined that financial reserves of £10,000 minimum at any one time should be held.

5. MISSION STATEMENT - BEAMINSTER MUSEUM TRUST

To encourage research, and to collect, conserve and exhibit objects, images and records associated with the history of Beaminster and the surrounding villages, so adding to the cultural and educational facilities for local adults, children and visitors to the area.

AIMS:

1. To care for the Museum building and maintain the terms of the Museum Covenant.
2. To care for and develop the Permanent Collections, advised by recommended best practice.
3. To present and display materials, particularly to encourage learning.
4. To provide temporary exhibitions and other opportunities for educational and cultural events in the museum.
5. To develop the Reference Section to provide materials for local history studies and family history research.
6. To care for the volunteers who help run the museum by offering opportunities to learn and develop new skills in a happy, friendly and safe working environment.
7. To maintain the effective management of resources, finances and personnel to ensure the delivery of the Museum's aims well into the future.

8. To work in collaboration with schools, community groups, the Beaminster Festival, Dorset Arts Weeks, regional and local councils and other museums so enhancing the contribution of the Museum to community well-being.
9. To implement a wide marketing policy in order to achieve the aims.

... That by doing the above, the museum will continue to provide a welcoming, interesting and memorable experience for visitors.

6. CURRENT STATE OF MUSEUM

Beaminster Museum's collections, containing over 1000 accessioned objects and over 2000 images, are wide-ranging, and include items relating to the remarkable geology of the local area, social history from medieval to modern times and the particular importance of the flax industry. The permanent displays are ranged across two floors.

The museum also has a substantial support collection which contains a huge volume of information about Beaminster and the surrounding area.

Every year the museum endeavours to mount at least one season-long temporary exhibition focusing on specific community and local history themes.

With the completion of the extension in 2022 the museum has not only increased the area available for displays but also now has a specific area available for research making use of the considerable collection of historical material, as well as providing necessary storage space.

There is a growing use of touch-screens in the museum, presenting digital information to visitors.

Beaminster Museum opens seasonally for visitors, usually from Easter to the end of the autumn half-term. The opening hours are Tuesdays, Thursdays, Saturdays and Bank Holidays: 10.30 am – 4.00 pm and Sundays: 2.00 pm – 4.30 pm. Saturday afternoons appear to be the most difficult stewarding slots to fill.

The Museum is signposted from the town centre and there is an external sign fixed to the main wall. A canvas 'sail' is hoisted when the Museum is open to visitors. The Museum has both a web and a social media presence.

Visitors will always find a volunteer behind the reception desk, to give a welcome, answer questions if needed, facilitate the visit to the museum, and to signpost visitors to other facilities in the town. Whilst no entry fee is charged, on leaving, visitors will find a donation box with £3.00 per person being the suggested amount as a contribution towards the Museum's running expenses but no pressure is placed on visitors to make a donation.

Emphasis is laid on interaction with digital and physical exhibits, with signposted "hands-on" activities. There are many themed activities for children, including a well-stocked dressing-up corner.

Some seating is provided and ramps are provided between downstairs levels. The toilet is disabled-friendly. The Chesterman Room and the upper gallery are accessible by stair-lifts.

Summer season visitor numbers for the last seven years are tabulated below.

Year	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Visitors	861	912	0*	586*	1373	1356	1436	1223

** The Museum was unable to open to visitors in 2020, initially because of the Covid-19 pandemic, then because of building work on the new extension. In 2021, after the lifting of Covid restrictions, the Museum was able to open on 24th July.*

Free entry was introduced in 2022. Visitor numbers were significantly increased in 2022 compared to pre-Covid levels and these increased numbers have been maintained, though 2025 saw a 12% reduction in visitor numbers compared to the average of the previous three years, perhaps due to prolonged good summer weather and the proximity of countryside and beach. The summer season under-18 visitor numbers have varied between 12 and 24% of the total in the past four years, largely depending on how many summer visits by schools were requested.

Summer season visitors do not account for all of the museum's impact and a breakdown of other ways we engage with members of the community is provided in [Appendix 1](#). These numbers better demonstrate our interactions with local schools through visits (including during the winter) and loan boxes, our digital and social media presence, and our work outside the museum itself. The museum volunteers again supported a school visit by the whole of Year 7 at Beaminster School on WW1.

Visitor donations were 22% down in 2025 compared to 2024 (excluding gift aid); shop sales were also down by 20%. The takings from the winter talks were up by over 100% and there were some good fundraising events (eg festival week tea party) which, coupled with somewhat reduced utility costs, means that we were in a much better position at the year-end 2025 than we were in 2024, even after poorer donations. An analysis of ordinary operating income and expenditure (ignoring legacies, grants and grant spending) for the past few years shows that we made a worsening loss 2022-2024 but that we have turned that around in 2025.

Year	operating surplus or deficit
2022	-£279
2023	-£1850
2024	-£4485*
2025	+£968

** The large increase in UK energy prices in 2024, coupled with the expiry of the museum's fixed price energy deal, meant a large increase in costs for 2024.*

One-off large donations have helped us greatly over the past few years but continued focus on fundraising events will be needed to ensure we remain financially healthy.

On buildings maintenance, towards the end of 2024 an issue in the Chesterman Room lead the trustees to find rot in the kitchen floor and a leaking pipe. Repair costs were almost fully covered by an insurance claim in 2025, with only minor costs to the museum for betterment items. The works to the floor were completed during the off-season (winter 2024-2025) and the kitchen was out of bounds while the works were done, so that there was no risk to volunteers or the public. The kitchen floor and units have been replaced and no further work is required.

Further, a report commissioned in 2014 indicated that the 1825 stained-glass windows needed re-leading and this cannot be postponed too much longer. Fund-raising to cover this work started in 2025 and has raised £3150 to end Apr 2026 in local donations and sponsorship, including a large donation from the local WI and several large individual donations. However, we have not yet been successful in obtaining grant money, which will be needed to provide the majority of the funds. While we await repairs, the security of the windows will be evaluated and recorded in the security review and the risk to volunteers and the public arising from the windows will be assessed in the risk assessment. Applications will continue for the re-leading of the windows but we may well need to be more strategic in our applications, eg targeting a wider renovation to the Reception area in addition to repair of the windows to attract funding for a redevelopment of the entrance to the museum rather than just “do a repair”. To create the kind of vision needed for such applications, a design company (Smith and Jones) has been contacted to create a new ground floor plan. We are also aware that for e.g. Lottery Heritage funding, we will need to address all four of their investment principles, so a thoughtful approach will be required.

In 2024, the museum was successful in acquiring a Bronze Age gold ribbon, found in the local area. In 2025 the museum was successful in applying for grants to help install a secure, humidity-controlled cabinet for display of this artefact and other metal objects more susceptible to damage through excess humidity. This cabinet is key to borrowing such susceptible artefacts and it is therefore a key achievement for the museum.

Considerable work went into the redesign of the prehistory and geology displays and this was coupled with the work needed for the Fire Flood Frost 2026 exhibition. This stretched our volunteer workforce and we will need to be careful in future not to overextend ourselves when redesigning existing displays. However, we do plan to apply for further grants for new displays so that we can continue to modernise our displays in a targeted fashion.

Re-accreditation was initiated in April 2026 and awarded 18th June 2026, AN1647. There were some recommendations for our next return as follows:

- Forward planning: at next return update on progress with works to repair the kitchen floor, and to re-lead the 1825 stained glass windows.
- Ensure that risk to staff, volunteers, the public and the collections (on display and in storage) is being regularly monitored throughout this period and security is regularly assessed.
- Forward planning: for next return, consider expanding action planning to include financial resourcing, the people responsible for tasks, and the addition of clear deadline dates.

- Access Planning: at next return update on progress to add further practical access information to the museum's website, including the introduction of a virtual tour. Ensure that a broad range of access needs are considered during this process.

These recommendations will be incorporated as appropriate actions in our action list in [Section 9](#).

7. INPUT FROM STAKEHOLDERS

As noted in the introduction, the forward plan is informed in part by input from stakeholders. Input has been gathered as follows:

- Trustees – Views transmitted to the management committee by committee chair and secretary (both of whom are trustees)
- Committee members – through general committee discussions, circulation of the draft forward plan and by creation of a SWOT analysis at the 1st May 2026 committee meeting (see below)
- Members – by discussion at AGM
- Volunteers – by individual discussions and as a result of ideas suggested particularly by the topic teams

Visitor surveys in 2017 through to 2021 did not result in clear direction to the museum about how to improve. In 2022 feedback from visitors was again sought, using a physical voting system. While the numbers returned were small, the feedback indicated that visitors would like to see a focus on the local area and more art and craft on display.

The AGM in January 2026 brought up several pieces of input from attendees:

- Can we apply for a Blue Badge space closer to the building?
- Do we need to improve access for mobility vehicles?
- Can we obtain a brown sign to publicise the museum?
- Can we repair/replace the Co-op board?
- Do we need to look at the days the Museum is open as well as changing the morning session to end at 12:30 noon than 1.15pm?

These items have been considered in the SWOT below and, where solutions are within our control, actions have been suggested in Section 9. Note that opening hours/days are always under review as we consider our stewarding cover but the current preference is that they stay as they are for the present.

7.1. SWOT Analysis

The below analysis was performed at a committee meeting in 1Q2026

Strengths	Weaknesses
Local Free community-based quirky	Located out of town centre – low passing traffic Reliance on donations Operational revenue has not covered expenses in 3 out of past 4 years

Volunteers have expertise (research, IT, technical, fossils, family history, history of Beaminster) Interesting building Diverse collection Family friendly Horn Park Quarry within our catchment	Large capital costs of running own building and lack of annual PPM budget Attracting new volunteers Lack of immediate parking Poor signage from town centre Lack of consistent branding Lower presence in villages Low numbers of volunteers willing to initiate or lead tasks (childrens' activities especially)
Opportunities Town Council link Bournemouth Uni & students Waddon Hill excavation DoE students (other museums use them) History badges in brownies/cubs etc and curriculum in schools Working with Bridport Museum (3D expertise) Country houses in area (Mapperton, Parnham, Forde Abbey, plus others not open to public) Presence at Village Fetes More art/craft-based exhibitions?	Threats Lack of succession for key roles, notably Treasurer and Rota Coordinator Visitor donations continuing to reduce Necessary building maintenance to an old building The cost of renovation of display spaces to more modern standards Recruitment difficulties and the increasing average age of existing volunteers leading to a shrinking volunteer workforce

The themes from the SWOT can be summarised as below.

We need to

- increase our operating revenue to ensure we can meet operating costs
- increase our volunteer base
- use links with villages, Town Council, universities, local museums, local country houses to address some of our weaknesses
- ensure we can replace the key roles where we have upcoming retirements
- continue to apply for grants to address capital costs of running the building and to improve our displays, while retaining the quirky nature of the musuem
- build on our strengths

These themes will not be addressed in one year but the actions that can be undertaken in the next year are recorded in section 9.

8. FORWARD PLAN ITEMS COMPLETED UP TO END JUL 2026

(NB item numbering reflects the numbering of the previous Forward Plan)

Objective	2025 Actions	Status
Aim 1: To care for the Museum and maintain the terms of the covenant. Matthew		
1.1 To conserve the Museum front windows.	Investigate and plan funding for identified solution(s) eg via Heritage fund and an appeal.	- Appeal launched and £3150 raised locally as of end Apr - Grant applications so far unsuccessful
1.2 Update the entrance to the museum to be more welcoming of visitors	Re-think and re-decorate entrance lobby	- Re-decoration of lobby complete - Consultants approached for ideas to improve lobby, reception, ground floor.
1.3 Address the damp evident on the walls of the museum	Watch the kitchen and toilet for evidence of any further damp, following renovations	Currently appears ok
Aim 2: To care for and develop the permanent Collections, advised by recommended best practice. Richard		
2.1 Ensure Modes provides an accurate record of our collection	Implement artefact move system to track changes	In place but needs to be re-inforced
2.4 Investigate photogrammetry as a means of bringing our artefacts to a wider audience	- Ensure progress with the objectives written into the Royal Society grant proposal, including: - Scan at least 40 items in our collection and 5 items in other local museums by end 2025 - Create a section on our public website for scans - Have the scans accessible in-house for visitors to use	33 unique objects scanned in the museum plus 8 from other museums; many items scanned by two techniques - Complete

Objective	2025 Actions	Status
	○ Train at least 4 volunteers in the scanning process ○ Share relevant models with our local museum and heritage partners for their use.	• Achieved for summer exhibition 2025; funding obtained to improve in 2026 • 2 volunteers trained so far • Models shared with Bridport, Poole, Ashmolean and DMAG
2.5 Review primary collection currently in storage for artefacts and themes that could be displayed	• Check for items relevant to 2026 exhibition • Support the updates to e.g. the prehistory and geology displays	• Complete • Complete
Aim 3: To present and display materials, particularly to encourage learning. Matthew (as acting curator)		
3.1 Review existing old display cabinets and develop a stepwise plan for improvement / replacement with more modern facilities, using achievable best practice identified in other museums	• Review existing displays vs identified best practices and create a display prioritized development plan	• Ideas being sought from design consultancy for re-staging of our display spaces
3.3 Develop specific plans to update permanent displays	• Update Prehistory display to accommodate gold band acquisition • Update the geology section as needed	• Complete • Complete
3.4 Continue to improve digital exhibitions	• Consider how best to use the digital exhibitions created for the Romans display in 2025	• Royal Society grant obtained to fund new hardware
3.5 Improve family-friendly facilities in museum	• Add activities for children related to the transport and Romans exhibitions • Add children's activities at the museum at Living History Day (eg badge making)	• Complete – mosaics & Roman games • Complete

Objective	2025 Actions	Status
	Incorporate ideas from 'Iggy For All' training to welcome children with Special educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) e.g. welcome basket and information on website	Welcome basket complete; website in progress
3.6 Improve visitor welcome and disability-friendly approach	Welcome basket for SEND to support their visit, e.g. puppets, torches, fiddle toys	Complete (as above)
Aim 4: To provide temporary exhibitions and other opportunities for educational and cultural events in the Museum. Matthew (as acting curator)		
4.1 Create 1 temporary exhibition per year	Create and mount Romans and Travel exhibition	Complete
4.2 Create other one-off events in museum for educational / cultural purposes	- Repeat Living History Day in the summer holidays - Continue to offer tea and cakes after winter talks to add to these events	- Complete for 2025 - Complete for 25/26
Aim 5: To develop the Reference Section to provide materials for local history studies and family history research. Richard		
5.1 Provide access to museum resources in Chesterman room for interested researchers	- Improve use of shelving to reduce clutter - Continue to feed in requests from social media	- Complete - Complete
Aim 6. To care for the volunteers who help run the museum by offering opportunities to learn and develop new skills in a happy, friendly and safe working environment. Janice, Alec, Matthew		
6.1 Encourage new volunteers at the museum and retain existing volunteers	- Continue finding new ways to recruit new volunteers eg Regular social media posts and poster distribution in new venues - Continue to show appreciation for volunteers – eg social event and coffee& cakes for leavers as appropriate	- Continued efforts through year - Complete. Volunteer lunch held in Nov25
6.2 Train existing volunteers	Run pre-season training for stewards as usual	2026 training included museum walk-round

Objective	2025 Actions	Status
6.3 Create a succession plan for all key roles	- Appoint new chair of trustees - Replace curator and, in the interim, ensure curator tasks are adequately covered	- MK appointed - MK appointed
Aim 7: To maintain the effective management of resources, finances and personnel to ensure the delivery of the Museum's aims well into the future. Alec and Matthew		
7.1 To review all policies as required.	Next review due March 2026	Complete
7.3 Fund-raising objectives	- Investigate applicable funding possibilities and apply for grants for eg a secure display cabinet and associated graphics, and re-leading of the stained glass windows - Work with Vicky de Wit to understand whether we qualify for the revenue support offered by Dorset Council - Kick off local fund-raising ideas to support the above	- Display cabinet grants obtained; windows grants not yet successful - Met with Vicky in Sept 25 - Windows fund raising started
Aim 8: To work in collaboration with schools, community groups, the Beaminster Festival, Dorset Arts Weeks, regional and local councils and other museums so enhancing the contribution of the Museum to community well-being. Richard		
8.1 Continue to improve links with local schools	- Increase links with schools to promote use of loan boxes and school visits - Liaise with local schools to link our support to their history curriculum - Develop a Roman School Loan Box following on from the exhibition - Complete training opportunities with EmeraldAnt within 'Iggy For All' project including craft workshop, Dino Day at Mountjoy	- Continued - Have contacted St Mary's Beaminster to who how the museum can contribute to their curriculum - Continued to support Beaminster School with a visit based around WW1 - Complete - Complete. Followed up with Mountjoy School

Objective	2025 Actions	Status
	School and developing our welcome of SEND and other groups of the community with specific needs and disabilities	
8.2 Continue to work with other local voluntary organisations	• Work with Bridport Museum, The Ashmolean, Poole Museum, and DMAG on Waddon Hill finds • Support Beaminster Festival by staging a continuous photo show of shops in the square through time	• Complete • Complete
Aim 9: To implement a wide marketing policy in order to achieve the aims. Karen		
9.1 Renew efforts to increase marketing and analysis of visitor numbers	• Strengthen relationships with local press to increase coverage of museum activities [Karen] • Explore free and paid-for listings/advertorial opportunities on local websites/print media such as Dorset Living and Resort Magazine (2026 issue) [Karen] • Review visitor feedback at end of season committee meeting, and use stewarding, visitor numbers, and recruitment data to consider/confirm opening hours 3/4Q24	• Two Bridport News and 1 West Dorset Magazine article published Apr25 • Opening hours remain the same for 26
9.2 Continue to improve use of social media	• Use consistently over the season to promote family-friendly aspects of museum	• Continued work on this with multiple family-oriented posts in 2025

In addition, in May 2026 a new Access Plan was written as part of our re-accreditation process as a standalone document. For the future, this Access Plan will be incorporated into the Forward Plan to reduce the number of documents and reduce duplication of objectives. To facilitate this, the achievements noted in the standalone Access Plan of May 2026 are repeated here. There is some overlap with the achievements noted above but these overlaps have been highlighted by use of italics in the table below.

Objective from Access Plan	Achievements 2024-25
Improve physical access to museum	• Performed an Access Review with a wheelchair user • Special parking arrangements for blue badge holders by prior arrangement
Improve access to displays	• Then-and-now photos of Beaminster moved to bigger screen to improve viewability • Created child-friendly fossils digital content • <i>Planned and executed new display for new acquisitions and hidden gems and placed at entrance to Chesterman room</i> • <i>Planned and executed new prehistory display to accommodate an important new local artefact</i> • Started to create displays at different heights for different needs • Started use of BCE and CE rather than BC, AD in our new displays • Implemented larger font files for exhibition displays with chairs to be able to sit and read
Improve access to museum resources	• Outside researchers have used the digital and physical reference resources in the Chesterman room • <i>Worked with Bridport Museum, The Ashmolean, Poole Museum, Stoke Abbott Parish Hall, and DMAG on 3D modelling and loan-in of Waddon Hill finds</i> • <i>Developed a School Loan Box on Romans</i> • Held training on family history research
Grow diverse on-site, off-site and on-line audiences	• Family-friendly area introduced in Rose Gallery • Family craft afternoons held during 2025 season • Updated children's activity sheets (e.g. photo trail and location of bees) and increased number of hands-on activities • <i>Introduced welcome basket for SEND to support their visit, e.g. puppets, torches, fiddle toys</i> • <i>Continued to use social media, now with video content to promote museum artefacts and family-friendly events</i> • <i>Schools links continued and built on via loan boxes and visits (eg Year 7 visits in November which have happened now for 3 years running, on WW1)</i> • Continued to work with Town Council and other local organisations on participation in local events • Distributed posters and flyers in tourist information points, cafes, shops and community venues within the museum's catchment area

Objective from Access Plan	Achievements 2024-25
	• Continued to circulate press releases and build relationship with local print and broadcast media, eg West Dorset Magazine and Bridport News and through national heritage publications, eg Current Archaeology • Partnered with other heritage organisations, eg Beaminster Festival, Heritage Open Days to build awareness of the museum

9. FORWARD PLAN AUG 2026 TO JUL 2030

Incomplete items from the previous Forward Plan are included below but may have been renumbered to correspond to the correct aim. Each Aim has the name of the committee member responsible for ensuring that the actions/tasks covered by that Aim are set, reviewed and reported on. New columns for target dates and the estimated cost have been added; note that even where an estimated cost of £0 is provided, this activity is still dependent on sufficient volunteer time being available. As noted in [section 6](#), we need to be careful not to over-stretch our volunteer workforce.

Objective	2026/7 Actions	Target Date	Status	Estimated Cost* / £
Aim 1: To care for the Museum and maintain the terms of the covenant. Matthew				
1.1 To conserve the museum front windows.	Investigate and plan funding for identified solution(s) eg via Lottery Heritage fund and an appeal.	4Q26	In progress	0
	- Investigate removal / replacement of secondary glazing - Ensure security review assesses security of stained glass windows and that the risk assessment includes the risk to volunteers and public of the windows in their current state	4Q26		0
1.2 Update the entrance to the museum to be more welcoming of visitors, improve physical access and disability-friendly approach	Consider how entrance & reception area could be altered to create easier access and a better flow around the ground floor	4Q26	In progress (will be longer term objective)	£4,800 for consultant input and plans
	Develop Accessibility Plan information on the website to include practical information re facilities and access and a video tour for orientation purposes. A broad range of access needs will be considered in this process	1Q27	Add information to the website when additional support by Toilet and Wheelchair ramp are in place.	0
	Implement additional assistance handle in toilet	4Q26		100
	Install bolt on door to kitchen/toilet area to extend area for privacy for facilities	3Q26	Done. Bolt already on inside latch.	5
		4Q26		

Objective	2026/7 Actions	Target Date	Status	Estimated Cost* / £
	- Purchase threshold ramp for wheelchairs to navigate over door jamb more easily - Investigate blue badge parking nearby	4Q26	- Under construction. Can sit inside door and be dropped in place either side of threshold. - Not started yet, but at present only dedicated spaces agreed outside square.	100 0
1.3 Address the damp evident on the walls of the museum	Consider best approach to damp evident in Chesterman room	1Q27	Plan to clean out lower part of store in the winter and add DampStop membrane, and repaint.	100
1.4 Reduce heat/UV through windows in Rose gallery	Complete installation of protective film on Rose Gallery skylights	3Q26	In progress. Only one skylight remaining to be completed.	0
Aim 2: To care for and develop the permanent Collections, advised by recommended best practice. Matthew				
2.1 Ensure Modes provides an accurate record of our collection	- Continue to check and update the box contents in the stores - Reinforce artefact move system to track changes in object location	Ongoing		0 0
2.2 Update our CD and DVD collections by putting them onto digital storage.	- Decide whether to digitize remaining CDs and DVDs and check indexing of those already digitised - Decide whether to digitise any remaining VHS and audio material (eg donated materials and oral histories)		Not started	0 0
2.3 Aim to make photographs of key parts	Agree extent of online catalogue and create work plan	4Q26	Reviewing options such as Open Source Digital	0

Objective	2026/7 Actions	Target Date	Status	Estimated Cost* / £
of the primary collection available to see online by end 2027			Asset Management (DAM) Software: ResourceSpace	
2.4 Investigate photogrammetry as a means of bringing our artefacts to a wider audience	- Continue to exploit expertise in 3D digital modelling in our own collection and with other local museums. - Report to Royal Society on scanner grant achievements	Ongoing Oct26	- In progress - In progress	0 0
2.5 Review primary collection currently in storage for artefacts and themes that could be displayed	Check for items relevant to 2027 exhibition	3Q26	In progress	0
Aim 3: To present and display materials, particularly to encourage learning. Matthew				
3.1 Review existing old display cabinets and develop a stepwise plan for improvement / replacement with more modern facilities, using achievable best practice identified in other museums	- Consider quick win of improved 12V LED lighting in existing cabinets - Develop list of desirable and achievable best display practices - Continue to seek to update display cabinetry through surplus from other Museums.	3Q26 4Q26 Ongoing	- In progress. Materials on site - Existing guidelines to be updated, while preserving volunteer lead curation.	20 0 0 0
3.2 Consider new displays	Review whether we could use wall space in the museum for a display of more local photographs from our collection	4Q26	Evaluate ResourceSpace (Open Source Digital Asset Management (DAM) Software: ResourceSpace) to	0

Objective	2026/7 Actions	Target Date	Status	Estimated Cost* / £
			expose the photo collection to a broader audience.	
3.3 Develop specific plans to update permanent displays	- Create multi-year plan to update/augment/replace the content of the existing displays. - In particular, create a plan for the updating of the agriculture display	4Q26 4Q27	Agriculture will be revamped in the winter of 2027/28	0 100
3.4 Continue to improve digital exhibitions	- Augment kiosk tithe map data with Beaminster shops then-and-now information - Consider how best to use the digital exhibitions created for the Romans display in 2025	2Q27 4Q26	- In progress. Complete before 2027 re-opening - Initial display complete 2Q26. Will update as we implement the 3D kiosk	0 0
3.5 Improve family-friendly facilities in museum	Add activities for children related to the Fire Flood Frost exhibition	1Q26	Complete Mar26	0
3.6 Improve access to museum resources	- New digital content kiosk to be created with adjustable height viewing for children / wheelchair users (Royal Society grant) - Display height considered where cabinets allow	2Q27 Ongoing	In progress. Hardware complete. Finalising page templates.	1737 (grant obtained) 0
Aim 4: To provide temporary exhibitions and other opportunities for educational and cultural events in the Museum. Matthew				
4.1 Create 1 temporary exhibition per year	- Create and mount Fire Flood Frost exhibition - Consider theme for 2027 exhibition	1Q26 2Q26	- Complete Mar26 - Entertainment and Leisure theme agreed (title tba) May26	100 0

Objective	2026/7 Actions	Target Date	Status	Estimated Cost* / £
4.2 Create other one-off events in museum for educational / cultural purposes	- Continue to offer tea and cakes after winter talks to add to these events and increase overall takings - Consider further possible events	3Q26 Ongoing	Not started	0 0
Aim 5: To develop the Reference Section to provide materials for local history studies and family history research. Amanda				
5.1 Provide access to museum resources in Chesterman room for interested researchers	- Continue to facilitate public access on request - Clear Chesterman Room of unnecessary items - Improve use of shelving to reduce clutter - Train Collections team in use of reference catalogue - Readvertise use of the museum's reference collection - Consider whether we can centralise our office space more to provide more exhibition space	Ongoing 4Q26 1Q27 4Q26 1Q27 2Q27	3 requests to date in 2026	0 0 0 0 0
5.2 Improve access to museum resources	Provide IT training and support for volunteers	Ongoing		0
Aim 6. To care for the volunteers who help run the museum by offering opportunities to learn and develop new skills in a happy, friendly and safe working environment. Janice				
6.1 Increase our volunteer base	- Continue finding new ways to recruit new volunteers - Update recruitment posters for social media and distribution (liaise with Karen); for inclusion in estate agent packs and village notice boards - Continue to promote museum at events such as Talent in the Town - Meet and greet new volunteers and encourage to attend Friday coffee mornings	Ongoing 3Q26 2Q26 ongoing	- Complete	0 40 0 0

Objective	2026/7 Actions	Target Date	Status	Estimated Cost* / £
6.2 Train existing volunteers, Encourage new volunteers at the museum and retain existing volunteers	- Continue to run training sessions for stewards pre season - Continue to show appreciation for volunteers (social events, coffee and cake for leavers) (liaise with Sarah) - Make best use of volunteers' skills and knowledge to maximise value to museum - Provide opportunities for volunteers to be involved in other areas (e.g. annual exhibition, villages project)	1Q26 4Q26 Ongoing Ongoing	2026 training complete	0 0 0 0
6.3 Ensure we have a succession plan for all key roles	- Appoint new treasurer - Appoint new rota coordinator - Appoint events coordinator (or someone to help Sarah) for eg winter talks, summer walks, film nights, ghost walks	4Q26 4Q26 4Q26	- Treasurer identified 3Q26 for next AGM - Not yet appointed - Not yet appointed	0 0 0
Aim 7: To maintain the effective management of resources, finances and personnel to ensure the delivery of the Museum's aims well into the future. Richard				
7.1 To review all policies as required.	- Next review due March 2026 - Review re-accreditation needs and submit appropriate documentation to Arts Council to meet their timeline for re-accreditation in 2026 - Review Security Policy and ensure it meets guidance - Complete the Business Risk Assessment	1Q26 2Q26 4Q26 4Q26	- Complete. Security policy to be reviewed further - Complete. Arts Council recommendations for next return received	0 0 0 0
7.2 Increase our operating revenue to ensure we can meet operating costs	- Continue to develop shop, donations, and other revenue-raising activities - Consider how to extract more value from the in-house publications; investigate publication costs and ways to finance	2Q27 2Q27	In progress	0 0

Objective	2026/7 Actions	Target Date	Status	Estimated Cost* / £
7.3 Fund-raising objectives	- continue to apply for grants to address capital costs of running building - Continue to investigate applicable funding possibilities and apply for grants - Apply for the revenue support grant offered by Dorset Council - Kick off local fund-raising ideas to support the above	Ongoing	MEND6 application unsuccessful	0
		Ongoing		0
		3Oct26		0
		Ongoing		0
Aim 8: To work in collaboration with schools, community groups, the Beaminster Festival, Dorset Arts Weeks, regional and local councils and other museums so enhancing the contribution of the Museum to community well-being. Richard				
8.1 Continue to improve links with local schools	- Visit as many local schools as possible during September (but focusing on those within Beaminster) to explain what we can offer as their local museum (e.g. Loan boxes, supported visits to the museum tailored to their curriculum needs, oral histories) - Consider development of further loan boxes based on schools’ feedback. - Develop museum outreach activities eg. workshops, artefact handling sessions, visits to local sites, staff meetings for teacher training purposes as appropriate to school’s feedback - Develop “indoor archaeological dig” in support of the Festival of Archaeology 2027	3Q26		0
		1Q27		20
		1Q27		0
		2Q27		100
8.2 Continue to work with other local voluntary organisations	- Advertise the museum offer to youth groups (eg ‘Local History Badge in a Day’; other visits or workshop sessions) and run sessions as appropriate - Work with Bridport Museum and other local museums as opportunities present.	2Q27		50
		Ongoing		0
		3Q26		0

Objective	2026/7 Actions	Target Date	Status	Estimated Cost* / £
	- In particular, make use of the skills we have developed in 3D scanning and digital model display to provide training for Bridport Museum and provide 3D scans of their artefacts - Support Beaminster Festival and other local groups	2Q27		0
8.3 Use links with villages, Town Council, universities, local museums, local country houses to address some of our weaknesses	- Develop contacts in villages to help advertise the museum and its events and to provide a link into village history - Develop links with Town Council to help promote the museum - Use university contacts to develop the Festival of Archaeology 2027 offer by the museum - Maintain and develop contact with Mapperton; develop contacts with other houses in our catchment area operated as tourist attractions	4Q26	•	0
		2Q27		0
		2Q27		0
		2Q27		0
Aim 9: To implement a wide marketing policy in order to achieve the aims. Karen				
9.1 Grow diverse on-site, off-site and on-line audiences	- Investigate brown tourist signage for the museum and better signage from the town centre; repair/replace Coop noticeboard (Matthew) - Simplify the content categories/navigation of the website - Investigate refreshing the overall website design within the existing WordPress Museo Lite theme/consider upgrading to MuseoPro [Matthew] - Refresh the learning/families/research content on the website with input from CAG [Karen] - Strengthen relationships with local press to increase coverage of museum activities [Karen]	1Q27	- In progress - Not started	0
		4Q26 1Q27		0 60
		1Q27	In progress – content received from CAG	0
		Ongoing	6 Bridport News articles, 4 WDM features published April 2025-August 2026	0
				0

Objective	2026/7 Actions	Target Date	Status	Estimated Cost* / £
	Explore free and paid-for listings/advertorial opportunities on local websites/print media such as Dorset Living and Resort Magazine (2027 issue) [Karen]	2Q26	Complete. £300-895 p.a.print / £10 monthly online	0
	Review visitor feedback at end of season committee meeting, and use stewarding, visitor numbers, and recruitment data to consider/confirm opening hours 3/4Q24	4Q26	Not started	0
	Continue to collect home location information on visitors	Ongoing		0
	Develop an audience development plan	4Q26	Not started	0
	Continue to use social media actively	Ongoing		0
	Develop a seasonal marketing plan	4Q26	Complete	0
	Distribute posters and flyers in tourist information points, cafes, shops and community venues	3Q26	In progress, Summer 26 phase complete	30
	Strengthen links with villages in the museum's catchment area	1Q27	In progress	0
	Work with local tourism partners to include the museum in wider visitor promotion initiatives	Ongoing		0
	Explore opportunities to promote the museum through organisations including Prout Bridge Project and local dementia-friendly and family support networks to widen participation amongst young people, SEND families, isolated rural residents and older audiences.	2Q27	Not started	0
	Explore opportunities to repurpose existing publications, starting with Inns and Pubs guide	4Q26	In progress c.£300-£450 for 50 copies, print only	0
	Include more photographs of families, young people and community participation on the website, on social media and in marketing materials to reflect a welcoming and inclusive environment	Ongoing		0
	Planning to arrange 2027 Festival of Archaeology Open day at Waddon Hill	1Q27	Agreement in place with Landowner. Bridport Museum and Dorset Diggers agree to	Should generate revenue but

Objective	2026/7 Actions	Target Date	Status	Estimated Cost* / £
			support event with Volunteers. Bournemouth University potential support if it does not clash with their student training school dig.	need to agree how it is split

*Where an estimated cost of £0 is provided, this activity is still dependent on sufficient volunteer time being available

10. Budget Forecast

With the exception of the payment to Smith & Jones for design work (estimated £4,800) and the grant received for the new digital kiosk (£1737) and corresponding expenditure, the action items in Section 9 cost around £100 or less and are typical of the spend made in recent years on similar items. Using the 2026 estimates as the basis, the budget can be projected forward to 2030, applying an inflation rate of 2.5% (see table below).

Grants for display materials have been included at the rate of one per year under “Fundraising – grants” at an approximate value of £2000, with the associated spend captured as “Funded exhibition costs”. This includes the new digital kiosk grant in 2026. This rate reflects our expected application rate for future display grant applications. Note that if no grant is achieved in any year, the associated funded spend would also be zero.

The Smith & Jones work will be paid for from a legacy, with the remainder coming from reserves. This one-off cost has not been captured in the income and expenditure accounts for 2026 or 2027 but will be reflected in the balance sheet.

Any grant achieved for refurbishment of the windows and Reception area has also not been shown in the income and expenditure accounts as the amount is not known and nor is the date of successful application for such a grant. This would make its inclusion speculative at this stage. Further, we are expecting that in the year we are successful with such a grant application, we would make a concerted fundraising effort to enable some % of match-funding by the museum. Again this speculative amount has not been included in the budget. We will review our budgets and include appropriate line items when we have estimates of costs and timings.

Income and Expenditure Budget for the years to 4th

Beaminster Museum Trust

November

	To 4Nov2026	To 4Nov2027	To 4Nov2028	To 4Nov2029	To 4Nov 2030
Income					
Legacies and Donations inc gift aid	£1,100	£1,128	£1,156	£1,185	£1,214
Subscriptions inc gift aid	£1,280	£1,312	£1,345	£1,378	£1,413
Visitor donations inc gift aid	£2,691	£2,758	£2,827	£2,898	£2,970
Fundraising - Grants	£1,974	£2,023	£2,074	£2,126	£2,179
Fundraising other inc gift aid	£4,350	£2,089	£2,141	£2,195	£2,250
Shop sales	£1,500	£1,538	£1,576	£1,615	£1,656
Winter talks, room hire, education, misc income	£2,890	£2,962	£3,036	£3,112	£3,190
Bank Interest	£800	£820	£841	£862	£883
Income totals	£16,585	£14,630	£14,996	£15,371	£15,755
Expenditure					
Friends' expenditure	£160	£164	£168	£172	£177
Funded exhibition costs	£2,412	£2,023	£2,074	£2,125	£2,179
Display, collection, IT costs	£618	£633	£649	£666	£682
SumUp card fees	£120	£123	£126	£129	£132

Marketing costs	£200	£205	£210	£215	£221
Shop purchases	£260	£267	£273	£280	£287
Misc and children's activity costs	£602	£617	£632	£648	£664
Utilities	£4,000	£4,100	£4,203	£4,308	£4,415
Insurance	£2,362	£2,421	£2,482	£2,544	£2,607
Repairs & renewals	£600	£615	£630	£646	£662
Cleaning	£1,500	£1,538	£1,576	£1,615	£1,656
Telephone & broadband	£580	£595	£609	£625	£640
Printing, postage & stationery	£360	£369	£378	£388	£397
Expenditure totals	£13,774	£13,669	£14,011	£14,361	£14,720
Budget Surplus/ Deficit to date*	£2,811	£961	£985	£1,009	£1,035

*Note that some of this budget surplus reflects donations predicated for the window refurbishment and it will sit on our balance sheet until spent on the refurbishment of the windows. Donations for windows in 2026 have been £2800 and an estimate of £500 has been used for 2027, with inflation applied for subsequent years.

Appendix 1. More detailed numbers on community engagement

Visitor numbers 01Apr 2025 to 31Mar 2026 compared with 01Apr24 to 31Mar25

Category	2024-5 Number	2025-6 Number	Average Number	Notes to latest year data (2025-6)
Volunteers	33	28	30.5	56 total volunteers, approx half are also Friends
Friends	187	179	183	data as of March 2026
Physical visitors in summer season	1436	1223	1329.5	down 15% on 2024 perhaps because of the prolonged good weather
Physical visitors in winter season (winter talks only)	413	297	355	197 came to 6 winter talks (1 cancelled); plus 100 people at winter talk in church
School visits (to museum or school)	274	135	204.5	125 Nov yr7s plus 10 staff
Horn Park Quarry visits	94	83	88.5	51 plus 4U-I8s for ramblers; 28 Callywith college; other figures included in weekly totals
June & January finds days	18	22	20	11 per time
Events (coffee mornings, book sales, Christmas)	200	316	258	includes 170 at book sale, 36 at coffee morning, 50 at Christmas and 60 guests on open evening
External events (D-day, talk to WI)	200	140	170	2 talks to WIs, 80 +20 = 100; 40 for the volunteering event in Jan
Loan boxes to schools	600	300	450	5 boxes; 60 students per box on average as some boxes used by whole school
Family history & social media enquiries	50	50	50	FB messaging plus on-site enquiries re family history
Social media followers	880	995	1088*	*Actual number as of 7Sep2026 ; 737 FB + 351 Insta
Website metrics	1573	1522	1547.5	Metric = Number of visits to the "visit us" page
Total	5958	5290	5624	
Virtual visitors shown in blue	2503	2567	2636	NB Home page hits totalled 23.6K in 2025
Physical Visitors 1Apr to 31Mar	3455	2723	3089	