



Association of Independent Museums

The National Body Connecting, Supporting and Representing Independent Museums

Association of Independent Museums AIM E-News – February 2014 – Number 54 - **EXTRACTS**

AIM sets up new blog - <http://aimuseums.wordpress.com>

AIM has set up a new blog intended to get information to members on an even more regular basis than before. Members already have access to the printed bi-monthly AIM Bulletin, the monthly E-News, the website, and Twitter posts. The blog will be contributed by AIM's executive director, Tamalie Newbery, and can be found at <http://aimuseums.wordpress.com>. Subjects so far have included: running membership schemes; local enterprise partnerships; fundraising articles; internships and traineeships offered; webinars on collections management, and the 'social entrepreneurship revolution'.

New AIM Success Guide launched on Business Rates

Successfully Negotiating Business Rates has been written by Colin Hunter of Storey Edward Symons, a specialist in advice on all aspects of property and business assets. Colin has written several articles for AIM Bulletin on business rates over a number of years, and represented a number of independent museums at appeals. Business rates are "surrounded by myths and legends", he says but in essence it is simply a property tax. Business rates are a significant cost to businesses, and are expected to be an increasingly notable cost to museums over the next few years. The guide begins by explaining the basics of valuations and reliefs, before moving on to how museums in particular are valued for rating and rights of appeal. Three case studies report how some museums have been successful in challenging their valuations. The political background to the current situation, notably the Localism Act 2011, is covered, followed by a section on empty properties, and with the majority of the guide written with England in mind, a comparison with the situation in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. AIM's new Success Guides replace the Focus Papers, they are free and you can download them as pdfs from AIM's website at http://www.aim-museums.co.uk/content/success_guides/. All freshly written or updated, most have been funded by ACE (Arts Council England) through AIM's Resilience programme.

MUSEUMS + HERITAGE SHOW – Show partners with AIM to bring retail and trading focus

The Museums + Heritage Show - the UK's biggest event for the cultural sector - takes place on 14/15 May at Olympia, London and brings together all the latest technologies, services and thinking for anyone working in museums, galleries, heritage and cultural visitor attractions. It's the only sector event which offers an entirely free-to-attend programme of inspirational talks on hot button topics, 150+ suppliers of innovative and cost-saving products and services, and showcases the very latest in new technologies, innovations and market insight. Working with high-profile sector organisations the show's highlights will include - **Learning** in partnership with Culture24; **Visitor Marketing** in partnership with The Audience Agency; Understanding **your Visitors** in partnership with Visitor Studies Group; Collections in partnership with Paul Fraser-Webb, cultural consultant and Clare Valentine, head of life sciences collections, Natural History Museum; **Retail + Trading** in partnership with AIM; **Learn from the Best** in partnership with Visit England, and **Exhibition Design and Interpretation** in association with some of the UK's leading designers. This, together with live discussions, special features and new product launches, makes the Museums + Heritage Show a 'must do' for anyone looking to stay one step ahead, say the organisers. Register for your free pass today at www.museumsandheritage.com/register.

Changes to charities' annual returns

The Winter issue of the Charity Commission's online newsletter for trustees includes information about forthcoming changes to the annual returns for 2014. Following a consultation last year some new questions have been introduced aimed to make charities more accountable to the public. These require information about whether charities raise funds from the public, have a trading subsidiary, pay trustees, have certain policies in place, are regulated or registered with a registrar other than the commission, and whether they carry out their charitable purposes predominantly through grant-making. The new changes also include removing the requirement for charities with an income over £1 million to complete the Summary Information Return (SIR). Detailed guidance will be available shortly on <http://www.charitycommission.gov.uk/>

Just Giving, the e-commerce company, says more than 100,000 charitable donations totalling over £2.5 million were made to it through Twitter last year. Product manager Jonathan Waddington says the data shows the way givers connect with causes they care about continues to evolve. <http://tinyurl.com/pe4aj6u>

English Tourism Week is on 29 March-6 April, a chance to showcase your museum. Go to www.englishtourismweek.co.uk which provides you with all the tools you need to get involved.

Country Land & Business Association has published guidance on how to pay less VAT on building work wholly legitimately, at www.cla.org.uk/buildingVAT, and an accompanying handbook, Saving VAT on work to heritage and other existing buildings. Meanwhile the campaign against the reversal of the zero rate on alterations to listed buildings goes on.