

Association of Independent Museums

AIM E-News – January 2015 – Number 65 – EXTRACTS

AIM 2015 NATIONAL CONFERENCE - *The Hallmarks of Prospering Museums*

18-20 June 2015 at Brunel's ss Great Britain, Bristol

Sponsored by Development Partners

Overcoming issues affecting independent museums today can sometimes feel like a tough challenge! What may seem easy for larger and well-funded museums can feel daunting for smaller and volunteer-supported independents. But many of the characteristics of prospering museums can and do apply to all, whatever their size or level of resource. In 2015 AIM launches its seven 'Hallmarks of a Prospering Museum' to help all independent museums and galleries face the future with confidence through a clear framework for success. The AIM National Conference 2015 promises an informative schedule of talks, surgeries and break-out sessions offering helpful insights, tips on best practice and fresh ideas based around the Hallmarks to boost your income and help your museum, gallery or heritage organisation succeed. This year, the conference will be held at the award-winning Brunel's ss Great Britain in Bristol, complete with an exciting new conference format that highlights three themes: Leadership, Purpose & Governance; Innovation in Visitor Experience and Entrepreneurialism & Income Generation. The event also includes the AIM annual dinner in the ss Great Britain First Class Dining Saloon, as well as a supper evening and treasure trail at Arnos Vale Cemetery and a visits day including the Underfall Boatyard, the Clifton Suspension Bridge and the Royal West of England Academy. The conference will be extremely good value as always, includes a trade exhibition, and offers early bird booking availability to help your budget. AIM Training Grants criteria also apply (http://www.aim-museums.co.uk/content/aim_training_grant/). The programme and booking form will be enclosed with the February AIM Bulletin, and will be on the [AIM website](#). Watch out for regular updates on the website, in the Bulletin and monthly E-News and on Twitter @AIMuseums #2015AIM

NEW - AIM's new Advocacy Toolkit launched

AIM has launched its new [Advocacy Toolkit](#), complementing the successful and much-used AIM Economic Impact Toolkit. It will be available online from this week. AIM commissioned DC Research to expand on the Economic Impact Toolkit to cover social and environmental questions. Supported by Arts Council England (ACE), it takes museums through five steps to demonstrate the impact of your activities on key outcomes across five themes - Health and wellbeing; Society and communities; Education; Economy, and Environment. These themes cover outcomes of increasing interest to local authorities, service commissioners and local and national culture and heritage funders. The toolkit also offers advice on how (and how not) to present evidence, and how to quantify the contribution of volunteers.

NEW – Accountancy helpline for AIM members

AIM's accountants, Mazars of Bristol, have offered to provide a helpline to AIM members on producing charity accounts. To get help call the office on 0117 973 4481, let the receptionist know that you are calling the Association of Independent Museums Helpdesk, and you will be put through to Jon Marchant or one of his assistants. The aim is to give guidance on general accounting, tax or charity matters, and point enquirers to relevant supporting documentation or advice. They will, of course, not be able to give specific advice on tax or VAT matters without being formally engaged.

Charity audit thresholds consultation

A consultation on [charity audit thresholds](#) is underway, following Lord Hodgson's recommendation in his 2012 review of the Charities Act 2006 – closing date is 27 January. He suggested there should be an increase in financial thresholds above which charities must have their accounts audited rather than independently examined. Currently charities must have their accounts audited if they have an annual income of more than £500,000, or assets worth more than £3.26 million and an annual income of more than £250,000. The Government proposal is to increase this to an annual income of more than £1 million or assets worth more than £3.26 million and an annual income of more than £500,000. The consultation also includes increasing the threshold above which charities must prepare group accounts from a total income of £500,000 to £1 million. The proposals would make up to 4,000 charities exempt from the expense of a full audit, but still retain an appropriate degree of scrutiny. The Government is also considering whether to extend the list of professional accountancy membership bodies able to carry out independent examinations for charities with an income of over £250,000.

The Museums Association (MA) has launched an [online consultation into changes to its code of ethics](#). Among issues being considered for change are digital inclusion, sustainable practice, international partnerships, human rights, repatriation, workforce diversity and sponsorship. AIM is talking to MA to ensure that the best interests of independent museums are properly considered in any new draft, particularly in respect of its role in Accreditation. The consultation closes on 13 February.

Support for reintroducing charging at Britain's national museums and large regionals came from Jeremy Paxman, writing in the Waitrose weekly magazine. Since rebuilding the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam a €13 charge has been introduced, he says. "Why on earth don't the museums of Britain do something similar?" One consequence of free admission was that "you can't get anywhere near the exhibits for crowds of bored Italian teenagers playing on their phones." Paxman continues that he doesn't recall overseas taxpayers helping to amass our great collections, as British people have done. The other consequence was that "all our museums are permanently broke". The Rijksmuseum was rebuilt with public money and had no problem charging for access.

Darren Henley is to become the **new chief executive of Arts Council England (ACE)** in succession to Alan Davey, who is to join BBC Radio 3 as controller. Managing director of Classic FM, Darren Henley has led two reviews for the Government on music and cultural education, which resulted in new initiatives including ACE's museums and schools programme

Aycliffe & District Bus Preservation Society in Co Durham is wondering if any museums receive **water rate reductions for environmental charges**, such as surface water disposal and foul water disposal. Northumbria Water plc, the society's water supplier, offer reductions but only to certain societies such as sports clubs, community halls, youth groups and places of worship. The society's Ian Wiggett believes that they should qualify and that the current drafting of the company's criteria does not reflect the intention following privatisation. Anyone with information should contact ianwiggett@uwclub.net

Chris Bryant, the Labour MP for Rhondda, has been appointed as the **new shadow minister for the Arts** in a small Labour party reshuffle. He has moved from the shadow department for works and pensions.