

STROUD DISTRICT (COWLE) MUSEUM SERVICE Access Policy

Museum: The Museum in the Park

Name of governing body: The Stroud District (Cowle) Museum Trust (owner of the collections) in partnership with Stroud District Council (collection manager & museum service provider).

Date on which this policy was approved by the Governing Body: 7th November 2022

Review schedule: biennial

1. Introduction

The Museum in the Park has collections that are recognised as being of regional and national significance, with regional, national and international users and visitors. Its core purpose is to safeguard the collections, to make them widely accessible for study and enjoyment and to preserve them for future generations. Mindful of the constraints of the Grade 2 listing of the Mansion House, the Museum is committed to complying with legislation concerning physical and intellectual access and strives to surpass the basic requirements of such legislation at all times.

It is our policy to facilitate access to the Museum and collections for all our visitors, and to take into account their physical, intellectual and sensory requirements.

The Museum continually reviews its Access Statement using a template provided by Visit England. The Statement is available on the Museum's website.

2. Scope

This policy covers provision at the Museum in the Park, through our website and other online activities, and at other venues where we deliver outreach (i.e. activity not run at the Museum). This policy relates to access by our users and does not cover access in relation to staff, volunteers, freelancers or contractors.

3. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to set out the museum's commitment to maximising access and to identify the ways in which we achieve this across the organisation.

4. Building and Services

- Entrances, public areas, facilities and circulation routes are designed to be as accessible as possible.
- Signage and orientation are provided for the benefit of all (including some Braille).
- The Museum is committed to an ongoing process of consultation and evaluation in relation to the services it provides.
- Access to the collections must be balanced against the care and management of the collections and resource available. Refer to Care & Conservation Policy.

5. Staff and training

- As part of a staff induction process, new staff receive disability awareness training including addressing the needs of visitors with specific requirements,

appropriate use of language and assisting those with disabilities, and the protected characteristics. This policy is shared during induction.

- All staff including volunteers will receive on-going training in areas of equality, diversity and inclusion awareness and legislation appropriate to their roles and needs.
- The Council has obligations under the Public Sector Equality Duty and Equality Act 2010.

6. Social (Cultural) and Financial

- The Museum in the Park is committed to free admission for all its visitors.
- Where possible, special exhibitions will not incur charges.
- There may be a charge for some educational activities to help cover staff and material costs. These will be kept to a minimum.
- All visitors receive a warm and friendly greeting from staff.
- The comfort and ease of visitors will be addressed, including providing, where possible, appropriate toilets, seating in galleries and an on-site wheelchair.
- The Museum will programme events and activities which aim to attract new audiences or those not pre-disposed to visiting a museum whilst recognising that audiences have a variety of needs.

7. Intellectual

- The needs of visitors are considered in the preparation of publicity material and information for visitors.
- The needs of visitors are considered when preparing and presenting collections information and interpretation in the galleries and online.
- Information about facilities and services is available in a variety of formats at the reception desks and can be requested in advance of a visit.
- Our educational programmes are tailored for specific groups and their requirements.
- Education materials will be made available for different audiences and abilities, as required and as resources allow.
- Events and activities are programmed throughout the year for people with a wide range of abilities.

8. Sensory

- It is the principal duty of all staff to safeguard the collections, to make them accessible for study and enjoyment and to preserve them for future generations.
- The Museum utilises different senses in its displays, including auditory (sounds and narration), olfactory (smells e.g. walled garden), visual (labels, objects and information sheets, video and slides) and touch (for some objects and handling items).
- We aim to fulfil all reasonable requests for tours and handling sessions in liaison with the relevant staff.
- An induction loop is used for talks in Gallery 2 and Gallery 1 and can be made available on request. An induction loop is permanently available at the reception desk and Pavilion with appropriate signage.

9. Site Safety

- To facilitate access the museum premises is maintained through planned and responsive maintenance schedules. In addition, there are tools such as CCTV and alarms.
- Staff are trained to ensure safe evacuation of all visitors in the event of an emergency or dealing with an incident.

10. Outreach

- The museum provides a Remote Learning Programme, mainly to primary schools, but also occasionally to community groups.
- Talks and handling sessions are occasionally provided for community groups.

11. Digital

- Digital access via the Museum's website and social media and through resources offered within the galleries is regularly revised and updated in accordance with current best practice and available resources. The museum maintains an awareness that not all visitors have access to digital devices.

12. Policy Review

- This policy will be reviewed by the Learning & Access Officer in consultation with the Museum Development Manager and any recommended changes presented to the Governing Body for approval.

© **Stroud District (Cowle) Museum Service**

Version 1.4

Filing: PDF and to website.