

Annual Report

03	President’s introduction
04	Reference and administrative details
05	Report of the board
18	Independent auditors’ report
22	Statement of Financial Activities
24	Balance sheet
26	Notes to the financial statements
38	AMA and FMA awards 2024/25
40	Notice of the AGM
43	Code of Ethics for Museums
51	AGM 2024

President's introduction

My focus as President remains on advocacy for our vitally important museums at a time of challenge and change for the sector; support for members and the wider workforce to ensure that it represents the diversity of the communities we serve; and continuing our important work on environmental sustainability and climate justice. I am pleased to say that over the past year the Museums Association (MA) has continued to support our members and the wider sector to deliver in every one of these areas.

We continue to live in challenging times, where the threat of polarisation and division casts a shadow over our communities. I remain ever optimistic, however, that museums can offer hope and support as a powerful convening force in the world – helping to bring people together to overcome differences and to discover how much we have common, rather than what might set us apart.

It is within the gift of the museums we work for to provide safe, welcoming, civic spaces where people of all ages and from all backgrounds can explore, learn and grow together. Needless to say, in order to provide those vitally important spaces the sector needs adequate funding. One of the key points we have made to politicians and stakeholders when we have met with them is that to realise the ambition of everyone in the UK having a sustainable and good quality museum near to where they live, strategic long-term national and local funding must be in place.

As part of our ongoing advocacy work we have engaged with sector organisations to ensure that we have joined-up messaging about the value of museums and to fully understand what is needed in terms of investment. In the past year we have refreshed Museums Change Lives, our flagship campaign, with case studies from across the UK that demonstrate how museums can increase our sense of wellbeing, help us feel proud of where we have come from, and inspire, challenge and stimulate us. We will continue to promote this positive impact through our advocacy work and support it through the Esmée Fairbairn Communities and Collections Fund and the new Health and Wellbeing in Museums Fund.

Our workforce support and development programmes remain at the heart of what we do as a membership organisation. Over the past year we have supported dozens of members to achieve the Associateship of the Museums Association (AMA) and the Fellowship of the Museums Association (FMA), as well as delivering support through online learning, career

conversations and our Wellbeing Hub. This year we also launched a Freelance Hub on our website.

To support the development of a more inclusive and representative workforce we are continuing our [Anti-racist Museums Programme](#), which takes six museums on a journey to becoming anti-racist organisations, with this year's programme building on the positive evaluation from the first cohort.

I am passionate about environmental sustainability and the MA's work on climate justice continues to support museums to make changes within their own organisation and to work with their communities to effect positive change.

As well as these priorities, we have continued our [review of the Code of Ethics](#) with extensive consultation and engagement with sector bodies. We know this is an important document for members and the wider sector and we hope the new code will support best ethical practice across all areas of museum work.

As a UK-wide organisation we have a responsibility to serve our members in all nations of the UK and to advocate for museums and museum workers in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. In the next year there will be elections in Scotland and Wales, and we are working with stakeholders and sector bodies to produce museum manifestos in those countries so that we can advocate the value of museums to politicians of all parties.

We will also analyse the emerging impacts of devolution and local government reorganisation in England to make sure that the value of museums is fully understood and appreciated.

Undoubtedly the future will continue to hold challenges for us all, as well as many opportunities to work with our communities and our collections to make a positive difference to people's lives. The MA commits to supporting that vital work in all its forms.



Steve Miller
President, Museums Association

Reference and administrative details

For the year ended
31 March 2025

Status The organisation is a charitable company limited by guarantee, incorporated on 20 November 1930 and registered as a charity on 7 November 1962.	Company number 252131 Charity number 313024 OSCR number SC041856	Bankers National Westminster Bloomsbury Parr’s Branch 126 High Holborn London WC1V 6QB Solicitors Russell-Cooke, Solicitors 2 Putney Hill London SW15 6AB Stone King, Solicitors 16 St John’s Lane London EC1M 4BS	Auditors Moore Kingston Smith LLP Chartered Accountants Statutory Auditors 9 Appold Street London EC2A 2AP Investment managers Rathbones 8 Finsbury Circus Finsbury London EC2M 7AZ	Beloved Adonai <i>(retired 31/03/2025)</i> Stella Byrne Hasina Dabasia Janet Dugdale Tony Heaton Kinvara Jardine Paterson <i>(appointed 01/02/2025)</i> Sara Kassam <i>(retired 30/09/2024)</i> Kathleen Lawther <i>(retired 31/03/2025)</i> Ross McKirdy <i>(appointed 01/04/2025)</i> Christine McLean Katherine Steiner Mohammed Akhtar Suleman Michael Terwey Georgina Young	Staff Director Sharon Heal Membership, Marketing and Website Deputy Director William Adams Marketing & Membership Manager Zoe Spencer Membership & Marketing Officer Sophie Lawson Membership & Marketing Officer <i>(Maternity Cover)</i> Craig Smith Marketing & Membership Officer Emma Randall Account Manager Abigail Lasisi Digital Communications Officer Francesca Collins	Projects and Programmes Programmes Manager Sally Colvin Policy and Ethics Lead India Divers Policy and Campaigns Officer Joshua Robertson Grants Manager Sarah Briggs Projects Assistant Jacqui Buscher Workforce Development Lead Tamsin Russell	Publications and Events Head of Publications & Events Simon Stephens Deputy Editor Eleanor Mills News Editor & Staff Writer Geraldine Kendall Adams Events Programme & Content Editor Rebecca Atkinson Finance and Resources Head of Finance & Resources Neil Mackay Finance Administrator Jolanta Stevens Executive Assistant & HR Officer Charlie Lindus
Governing document The company was established under a Memorandum of Association, which established the objects and powers of the charitable company and is governed under its Articles of Association.	Registered office and operational address 42 Clerkenwell Close London EC1R 0AZ From 1 September 2025: C/O Stone King LLP Boundary House 91 Charterhouse Street London EC1M 6HR.		Board 2024/25 President: Steve Miller Vice President: Rachael Rogers				

Report of the board

The trustees, who are also directors of the company for the purposes of the Companies Act, submit their annual report and the audited financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2025.

Reference and administrative information set out on page 4 forms part of this report. The financial statements comply with current statutory requirements, the articles of association and the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP), Accounting and Reporting by Charities issued in March 2015.

Objectives and activities for the public benefit

The charitable objectives of the MA are: to advance education in, and to foster and encourage the preservation and better understanding of, the material heritage of mankind and the environment for the public benefit by the promotion and development of museums and galleries and by encouraging the involvement of members of the public in their work, and to establish, uphold and advance the standards of professional education, qualification, training and competence of those employed in museums and galleries.

The board members have referred to the Charity Commission’s general guidance on public benefit in reviewing the aims and objectives of the charity, in planning future activities and how planned activities will contribute to those aims and objectives. The review of activities later in the report demonstrates what the MA has done during the year to achieve its aims and what its plans are for 2025/26.

Organisation and governance

The MA is governed by a board of up to 14 people. Ten members of the board are elected by the members of the MA (one vote per member) and four are appointed by the board. For induction, new trustees meet individually with the director and are given the most recent set of accounts, the constitution documents and a copy of the rules. The MA is run by the board, which agrees strategy and is accountable to members. Operational matters are delegated to the director who reports to the board.

Staffing

The MA’s salary policy is designed to provide a clear and flexible framework to reward employees with a view to attract and retain a competent workforce, which is essential to the ongoing success of the organisation. Pay grades within the policy are set by comparing appropriate market rates. The board carries out a cost of living review annually. The director’s salary is set separately by the board.

Investment policy

By the terms of the Articles of Association of the MA, the board has the power to make any investment it sees fit. An investment strategy was implemented in 2018/19. Surplus cash is held in interest-earning bank accounts with funds of the grant-making trusts being invested in charity equity and fixed interest funds.

Risk management

The MA commenced its five-year strategic framework in April 2020 and continues to have careful financial planning at its core to ensure continued financial stability. The objectives of the plan will continue to be monitored by the board, with a report being presented at each of its meetings.

Reserves policy

The reserves policy aims to maintain a sufficient level of reserves to enable normal operating activities to continue should a shortfall in income occur and to take account of potential risks and contingencies that may arise from time to time. In determining the level of reserves required by the MA, the trustees have considered the risks to the MA in respect of unrestricted income and expenditure and, where appropriate, restricted income. They have also considered any identified potential external major risks to income and expenditure.

The board agreed that, in line with Charity Commission guidelines, the MA will at least hold free reserves equivalent to three months, turnover. In 2024/25 this equated to £440,000. Unrestricted reserves at the year-end were £1.17m including designated funds of £600,000 for pension and £14,000 for membership support. This gave an unrestricted reserves figure of £499,000 and a free reserves figure of £416,000 at the year end (excluding assets held).

A reduction in unrestricted income is a medium risk to the MA mainly due to the financial restraints within the sector potentially affecting the amounts free to spend on MA membership and activities over the coming year, with expenditure and restricted income considered a low risk. The major external potential risks identified are the economic environment, rising cost of living and cuts within the sector.

The overall reserves policy of the MA includes all reserves and therefore covers the Trust and Endowment funds managed by the MA, but the focus of the policy is on the free reserves of the organisation.

In 2024/25

Membership continued to rise steadily since the large drop off during the pandemic in 2020/21. This is the highest level of membership since then. Overall membership increased by five per cent – with individual membership being the key driver of this growth. Institutional membership remains higher than pre-pandemic levels.

Individual membership

Year-on-year individual membership increased by five per cent (2024/25: 11,411; 2023/24: 10,913;). The majority of this growth was in the volunteer, full, and essential member categories. Membership in the devolved nations of the UK remains high.

Institutional membership

Year on year institutional membership dropped by three per cent (2024/25: 635; 2023/24: 652). This was almost entirely due to drops in the band of institutional membership for the smallest museums. Overall institutional membership remains significantly higher than pre-pandemic levels and we continue to represent over 1,600 museums through our institutional members.

Commercial and Freelance & Consultant membership

Year on year membership grew by 24 per cent (2024/25: 310; 2023/24: 251). This growth was due to the successful introduction of a new package of benefits for freelancers and consultants. It is a reflection of strong engagement with our members despite the impacts of the pandemic, inflation, and spending cuts to their work.

In 2025/26

We expect members to be impacted by the longer term effects of the squeeze on public and personal finances. We aim to retain our organisational members and steadily grow individual membership, through the advice, support and advocacy we undertake.

Total end of year membership

MAR 15	7,740	
MAR 16	8,354	
MAR 17	8,364	
MAR 18	8,979	
MAR 19	10,651	
MAR 20	14,691	
MAR 21	10,138	
MAR 22	10,557	
MAR 23	11,165	
MAR 24	11,816	
MAR 25	12,356	

Total membership 2024/25 →

12,356

Membership

We grew in numbers and maximised engagement across our digital channels in 2024/25, enjoying another year of consolidated strong performance through our website, social media platforms and newsletters. We reached thousands more users on almost every platform, speaking to the continued relevance of our content and the success and responsiveness of our digital strategy.

Website and digital

In 2024/25:

- We received 2,825,518 website page views from 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025, up from 2,524,227 views in the previous period (an increase of 12%), with the number of users rising from 656,208 to 771,476 (an increase of 18%) in the same period.
- As well as updating our existing website content, we launched new content across all our areas of work, including campaigns, events, funding, and programmes.
- We continued to work with our web development partner to introduce new and improved functionality and design across the website, including the section for our annual conference. We also worked collaboratively to review our website’s visual identity and brand ahead of updates in 2025/26.
- We enjoyed high growth on our social media platforms, using them daily to communicate activity across the breadth of the MA’s work.
- From April 2024 to March 2025, we grew from 78,032 to 95,375 followers on LinkedIn, an increase of 22%.
- We leveraged the changing social media landscape to launch the regular use of our Bluesky account, growing our account from 400 to over 13,000 followers in just four months.
- We gained over 3,000 new followers on Instagram (9,716 up to 12,776) in response to our updated video and graphic social media outputs, an increase of 31%.
- We delivered MA Conference 2024 as a hybrid event in Leeds and online, providing a rich, interactive digital experience for both in-person and online delegates through our website, purpose-built conference app and social media channels.
- From April 2024 to March 2025, our newsletter subscription list has increased from 50,000 members to 54,000 members. We delivered two newsletters per week to keep our subscribers up to date with the latest sector news, MA news and content from Museums Journal. Our open and click-through rates benchmarked well against industry standards.

In 2025/26:

- We will continue to release new website content according to our work and priorities, as well as updating and optimising existing content as needed.
- We will make further improvements to the website’s design and development, including an anticipated update to the site’s visual identity.
- We will continue to grow our social media followings and engagement on LinkedIn, Instagram and Bluesky, expanding our offering of video, graphic and interactive content in line with the fast-moving social media landscape.
- We will execute the digital delivery of our 2025 conference in Cardiff, providing the user app for delegates, delivering an engaging digital experience and disseminating marketing and communications content.
- We will further increase the size of our newsletter reach, aiming to deliver the sector’s go-to subscription for news, events and professional development.
- We will continue to analyse our performance across our website, social media and newsletters, undertaking relevant training to improve capabilities in this area and updating our digital strategy responsively.
- We will further explore the challenges and opportunities presented by AI and how it might impact our digital strategy moving forward.



95,375 LinkedIn followers in 2025

Museums Journal continues to offer comprehensive news, comment, reviews, features, best practice and information to the sector online and in print.

In 2024/25

- We continued as a bi-monthly printed magazine with coverage of key sector issues, developments and trends across England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales, as well as internationally.
- We refreshed some of the content of the printed magazine from the January/February 2025 issue, adding extra analysis, comment and features, while migrating some existing content such as The List online.
- We published a themed issue on “the joy of museums” which was linked to the theme of our annual conference in Leeds.
- We published our annual Careers Guide, which offers advice and support to those looking to enter the museum and gallery sector.
- We continued to offer a comprehensive online editorial offer on our website, and increased our output of news, comment, reviews and features.
- Our monthly email newsletter continues to promote members-only Museums Journal content.

In 2025/26

- We will produce our third podcast series under the Radical Museums theme, which features interviews with sector figures working across the four nations of the UK who discussed decolonisation, wellbeing, anti-racism, climate crisis and lots more.
- We will continue to review our editorial digital output and look to make additions to our offer where appropriate.
- We will continue to publish a bi-monthly printed magazine.
- We will continue to cover key developments in museums across England, Northern Ireland, Scotland, Wales and internationally.
- We will continue to reflect key campaigns on decolonisation, wellbeing, anti-racism, ethics, anti-ableism and the climate crisis.
- We will publish a special guest-edited November/December 2025 issue of Museums Journal.
- We will develop a plan to digitise the Museums Journal archive, which dates back to 1901.
- We will continue to give members a voice in our editorial content online and in print.
- We will continue to publish campaigning and investigative content.
- We will prepare to celebrate the 125th anniversary of Museums Journal in 2026.

→ We will continue to review our editorial digital output and look to make additions to our offer where appropriate.

Museums Journal

Our annual conference, which was held in Leeds and online in November 2024, has continued to evolve. Our hybrid approach is extremely popular, with high levels of engagement from museum people across the four nations of the UK and overseas in person and online. We will further develop our conference offer to meet the needs of the sector across the UK and internationally.

Our programme of one-day conferences performed strongly during the year, with our wide range of events attracting lots of in-person and online-only delegates. Yet again, the programme exceeded its revenue targets. We also held four Members Together events for members in England, Northern Ireland, and Scotland as well as a programme of online meetings for all members.

Conference and events

In 2024/25

- Our annual conference was held in Leeds and online, with the main event taking place at the Royal Armouries, Leeds. It attracted 1,000 in-person delegates and 1,200 online attendees.
- We held two in-person one-day conferences: Museum Tech 2024: A Digital Festival for Museums, which was at the Museum of London; and Show Time: Designing Great Exhibitions, which was at the Barbican Centre, London. Both were well attended.
- Our most popular in-person one-day conference was Show Time: Designing Great Exhibitions, which attracted 190 delegates.
- Our other eight one-day conferences were online and covered career development; disposal; accessibility; income generation; marketing and PR; collections development and climate change; and working with schools.
- Our most popular online one-day conference was Money Talks: Income Generation, which attracted 196 delegates, narrowly beating our Disposal Bootcamp, which attracted 189 delegates.
- We ran three in-person Members Together events, in England (Norwich Castle Museum), Northern Ireland (Ulster Museum), Scotland (Perth Museum). Our in-person Members Together for Wales was postponed because of a clash with another event.
- We ran four free online Members Together events for members across the UK and internationally, covering advocacy, climate justice, wellbeing and ethics.

In 2025/26

- Our annual conference will be held at Sain Ffagan Amgueddfa Werin Cymru (St Fagans National History Museum) in Cardiff in October 2025.
- We will run ten one-day conferences, covering exhibition design; tech; accessibility; fundraising; collections management; volunteers; copyright; curatorial practice; facilities management; and career development.
- We will run four free in-person Members Together events in England (Science Museum, London), Northern Ireland (Tower Museum, Derry-Londonderry), Scotland (National Museum of Scotland, Edinburgh) and Wales (Glynn Vivian Gallery, Swansea).
- We will run four free online Members Together events for members across the UK and internationally.
- We will begin exploring the benefits of offering a series of training events for our members.

The MA’s vision for the sector across the UK is for inclusive, participatory and sustainable museums at the heart of their communities, and our mission is inspiring museums to change lives. Over the past year we have worked to support our members and the sector and to deliver this vision and mission.

In 2024/25

Advocacy

- We worked with other sector bodies to advocate for museums throughout the UK.
- We met with ministers and government officials in all four nations of the UK to make the case for the value of museums and for additional funding for the sector.
- We responded to government consultations on a variety of issues in all four nations.
- We met with politicians and responded to consultations when local museums faced the threat of cuts and closures.

Museums Change Lives

- We consulted members to refresh our Museums Change Lives campaign, ran the 2024 Museums Change Lives Awards at our annual conference and added new best practice case studies to our website.

Decolonisation

- We convened our Anti-racism and Decolonisation steering group to help guide our work, funded work that tackles decolonisation via the Esmée Fairbairn Communities and Collections Fund, and updated case studies.

Climate justice

- We worked with our Climate Justice steering group to refresh the campaign and funded projects that tackle climate justice via the Esmée Fairbairn Communities and Collections Fund, and updated case studies on our website.

Learning and engagement

- We updated case studies and further disseminated our Learning and Engagement Manifesto.

Wellbeing

- We updated our salary recommendations, developed our Wellbeing Hub with new resources, and produce focused research and recommendations on wellbeing and diversity.

Ethics

- We further consulted with members and key stakeholders on the Code of Ethics and answered ethical queries from across the UK.

Anti-racism

- We delivered our Anti-racist Museums Programme and used external evaluation to further shape the programme for 2025/26.

Campaigns and advocacy



We further consulted with members and key stakeholders on the Code of Ethics and answered ethical queries from across the UK.

In 2025/26

Advocacy

- We will continue to work with other sector bodies to advocate for museums throughout the UK.
- We will work with members and stakeholders in Wales and Scotland to produce museum manifestos in the run up to elections in 2026.
- We will meet with ministers and government officials in all four nations of the UK to make the case for the value of museums and for additional funding for the sector.
- We will respond to key government consultations to ensure the case for museums is recognised.
- We will meet with politicians and respond to consultations when local museums face the threat of cuts and closures.

Collections

- We will begin the process of revisiting our Collections 2030 research and the recommendations in our Empowering Collections report.

Museums Change Lives

- We will publish our refreshed Museums Change Lives campaign and run the 2025 Museums Change Lives Awards at our annual conference.

Decolonisation

- We will continue to fund work that tackles decolonisation via the Esmée Fairbairn Communities and Collections Fund and will support the work of the Anti-Racism and Decolonisation steering group.

Climate Justice

- We will work with our Climate Justice steering group and continue to fund projects that tackle climate justice via the Esmée Fairbairn Communities and Collections Fund.

Wellbeing

- We will deliver our Health and Wellbeing in Museums Fund to support museums in delivering health and wellbeing programmes, and disseminate learning.

Ethics

- We will develop new case studies and further guidance to support the implementation and dissemination of the Code of Ethics and advocate for museums to undertake strategic disposal programmes as part of their wider collections management approaches.

Anti-racism

- We will deliver the second iteration of our Anti-racist Museums Programme.



We will deliver our Health and Wellbeing in Museums Fund to support museums in delivering health and wellbeing programmes and disseminate learning.

Campaigns and advocacy

We administer two trusts established to assist museums and their staff in specific areas of collections development and care.

Beecroft Bequest

The Beecroft Bequest awards grants of up to £20,000 for the purchase of pictures and works of art (furniture or textiles can be considered) not later than the 18th century in date.

Grants awarded 2024/25

Aberdeenshire Museum	£ 5,650
Quaker Museum	£ 6,000
Beaminster Museum	£ 580
Orkney Museum	£ 9,500

Members Support Fund

Established as the Museums Association Benevolent Fund, and now renamed as the Members Support Fund, the fund’s purpose is to alleviate financial distress suffered by members of the MA and to support the education and training of museums and galleries personnel.

In 2025/26

The fund will continue to allocate funds towards members suffering financial distress, and provide inclusive memberships and events places, and support for CPD fees and activity.

In 2024/25

The fund supported members across a wide range of areas.

Grants awarded 2024/25

CPD awards and fees	£10,000
Hardship awards	£2,000
Inclusive memberships and events	£26,000

Trusts and funds



£59,730

worth of grants awarded in 2024/25 from trusts administered by the MA

We work with partners and funders to develop programmes that help museums and those who work with them to become more inclusive and sustainable.

In 2024/25

- We reviewed and relaunched the Esmée Fairbairn Communities and Collections Fund to, for the first time, welcome partnership grant applications between museums and community organisations.
- We concluded the Mindsets + Missions for Museums and Science Centres of the Future programme, funded by UK Research and Innovation and Arts and Humanities Research Council.
- We created the Health and Wellbeing in Museums Fund, with funding from the Julia Rausing Trust.
- We ran the first ever Anti-racist Museums Programme with six participating museums and partners Talk Listen Create.
- We awarded over £1.3m in grant funding to museums.

In 2025/26

- We will award over £1m in Esmée Fairbairn Communities and Collections Fund grants to museums and their community partners for inclusive collections work.
- We will award £600k in Health and Wellbeing in Museums Fund grants to museums to extend and embed their excellent health and wellbeing programmes.
- We will run the Anti-racist Museums Programme for a 2025 cohort of six museums, with Talk Listen Create.
- We will continue our research and fundraising to support key aims to increase and normalise museum disposals to support sustainable collections; and work as part of a coalition to champion decolonisation.

£1.3m+ awarded in grant funding to museums

Our workforce development includes campaigns, such as those on pay and wellbeing, as well as running professional development programmes. Our competency framework underpins this work, which includes the Associateship of the Museums Association (AMA), a self-led CPD (Continuing Professional Development) programme with mentoring and support groups; the Fellowship of the Museums Association (FMA),

developing and recognising significant commitment to and impact on the sector; Mentoring for All, creating time-limited mentoring relationships to progress an individual’s development; online learning, a collection of courses introducing key elements of working in the museum sector; and our Career Conversations programme, for those wishing to access 1:1 support with their career.

In 2024/25

- We launched our Inclusive FMA programme to broaden representative participation for underrepresented groups.
- We piloted a one-year fast track AMA, for people who already sit comfortably at MA level two competencies.
- We enhanced our Wellbeing campaign through exploration of wellbeing with different groups, we published a report to highlighting the impacts on wellbeing for those from the global majority.
- We reviewed and published updated pay research, to provide current pay expectations, in line with inflation.
- We created our Freelancer Hub, a space for freelancers and consultants to engage with and have access to dedicated resources associated with successful freelancing.
- We undertook a review of our online learning programme, and have begun to integrate changes for our courses. This will continue in 2025/26.

In 2025/26

- We will begin consultation for the new Workforce Strategy 2026-2030, to ensure that our offer is relevant and responsive to our member and sector needs.
- We will continue our commitment to wellbeing in year three of our campaign, including a new online learning course for managers and research with other key groups.
- We will review our workforce offer to support engagement, using our competency framework and experience with mentoring.
- We will update our online learning courses starting with the topics of anti-racism and collections.
- We will review and update our work relating to inclusive practice, including our inclusive recruitment guidance, a second cohort for both inclusive AMA and inclusive FMA, as well as broader support and content.
- We will work with institutional members to campaign for the Real Living Wage for all museum staff.

Workforce development

Review of financial activities

The results for the year 2024/25 show a negative movement in funds of £279k before actuarial gains/losses on pension scheme assets.

Overall, unrestricted income of £1,925k was 7% lower than last year (2024: £2,067k). Our key areas of unrestricted income are: membership £1,016k (2024: £959k), publications £159k (2024: £194k) and events £390k (2024: £343k).

Unrestricted (including designated) expenditure was 3% higher at £1,939k (2024: £1,876k).

With a drop in the financial markets in March, MA investments showed an unrealised loss of £134k to the year end.

The balance of restricted funds decreased by £133k largely due to the distribution of grant funds for the UKRI Mindset + Missions programme, the balance of these funds being received in the prior year. The balance of endowment funds remains similar.

The MA has a lease on a property in Clerkenwell Close, London that runs to September 2031.

Statement of the board’s responsibilities

The board members (who are also directors of the MA for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the Report of the Board and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

Company law requires the board members to prepare financial statements for each financial year that give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charitable company for that period.

In preparing these financial statements, the board members are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable UK Accounting Standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements; and
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charitable company will continue in operation.

The board members are responsible for keeping proper accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charitable company and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006, the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 and the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006 (as amended). They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charitable company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

In so far as the board members are aware:

- there is no relevant audit information of which the charitable company’s auditors are unaware; and
- the board members have taken all steps that they ought to have taken to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the auditors are aware of that information.

The board members are responsible for the maintenance and integrity of the corporate and financial information included on the charitable company’s website. Legislation in the UK governing the preparation and dissemination of financial statements may differ from legislation in other jurisdictions.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the provisions of Part 15 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies.

Members of the board, who are also trustees under charity law, who served during the year and up to the date of this report are as detailed on page four.

Members of the charitable company guarantee to contribute an amount not exceeding £1 to the assets of the charitable company in the event of winding up. The total number of such guarantees at 31 March 2025 was 12,356 (31 March 2024: 11,816).

Members of the board have no beneficial interest in the charitable company.

Auditors

Moore Kingston Smith were re-appointed as the charitable company’s auditors during the year and have expressed their willingness to continue in that capacity.

Approved by the board on and signed on its behalf by,



Steve Miller
President

Independent auditor's report

To the members of the
Museums Association

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of Museums Association for the year ended 31 March 2025 which comprise the Statement of Financial Activities, the Balance Sheet, the Statement of Cash Flows and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including FRS 102 ‘The Financial Reporting Standard Applicable in the UK and Ireland’ (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

In our opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the charitable company’s affairs as at 31 March 2025 and of its incoming resources and application of resources, including its income and expenditure, for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006, the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 (as amended) and regulation 8 of the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006 (as amended) and the Charities Act 2011.

Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs(UK)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor’s Responsibilities for the audit of financial statements section of our report. We are independent of the charitable company in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the UK, including the FRC’s Ethical Standard, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Conclusions relating to going concern

In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the trustees’ use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the charitable company’s ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least 12 months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the trustees with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

Other information

The other information comprises the information included in the annual report, other than the financial statements and our auditor’s report thereon. The trustees are responsible for the other information. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

In connection with our audit of the financial statements, our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether there is a material misstatement in the financial statements or a material misstatement of the other information. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact.

We have nothing to report in this regard.

Opinions on other matters prescribed by the Companies Act 2006

In our opinion, based on the work undertaken in the course of our audit:

- the information given in the trustees’ annual report for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements; and
- the trustees’ annual report have been prepared in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

In the light of the knowledge and understanding of the charitable company and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified material misstatements in the trustees’ annual report.

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters where the Companies Act 2006 requires us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- adequate accounting records have not been kept, or returns adequate for our audit have not been received from branches not visited by us; or
- the financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or certain disclosures of trustees’ remuneration specified by law are not made; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit; or
- the trustees were not entitled to prepare the financial statements in accordance with the small companies regime and take advantage of the small companies exemption in preparing the Strategic Report.

Responsibilities of trustees

As explained more fully in the trustees’ responsibilities statement set out on page 20, the trustees (who are also the directors of the charitable company for the purposes of company law) are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the trustees determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the trustees are responsible for assessing the charitable company’s ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the trustees either intend to liquidate the charitable company or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Auditor’s responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

We have been appointed as auditor under Section 44(1)(c) of the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 and under the Companies Act 2006 and report to you in accordance with regulations made under those Acts.

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor’s report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

As part of an audit in accordance with ISAs (UK) we exercise professional judgement and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. We also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.

- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purposes of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the charitable company’s internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by the trustees.
- Conclude on the appropriateness of the trustees’ use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the charitable company’s ability to continue as a going concern.
- If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditor’s report to the related disclosures in the financial statements or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our auditor’s report. However, future events or conditions may cause the charitable company to cease to continue as a going concern.
- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial statements, including the disclosures, and whether the financial statements represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

- Obtain sufficient appropriate audit evidence regarding the financial information of the entities or business activities within the group to express an opinion on the consolidated financial statements. We are responsible for the direction, supervision, and performance of the group audit. We remain solely responsible for our audit report.

We communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit.

Explanation as to what Extent the Audit was
Considered Capable of Detecting Irregularities,
Including Fraud

Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. We design procedures in line with our responsibilities, outlined above, to detect material misstatements in respect of irregularities, including fraud. The extent to which our procedures are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud is detailed below.

The objectives of our audit in respect of fraud, are; to identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements due to fraud; to obtain sufficient appropriate audit evidence regarding the assessed risks of material misstatement due to fraud, through designing and implementing appropriate responses to those assessed risks; and to respond appropriately to instances of fraud or suspected fraud identified during the audit.

However, the primary responsibility for the prevention and detection of fraud rests with both management and those charged with governance of the charitable company.

Our approach was as follows:

- We obtained an understanding of the legal and regulatory requirements applicable to the charitable company and considered that the most significant are the Companies Act 2006, the Charities Act 2011, the Charity SORP, the Charity and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act, Charities Accounts Scotland Regulations (2006) and UK financial reporting standards as issued by the Financial Reporting Council.
- We obtained an understanding of how the charitable company complies with these requirements by discussions with management and those charged with governance.
- We assessed the risk of material misstatement of the financial statements, including the risk of material misstatement due to fraud and how it might occur, by holding discussions with management and those charged with governance.
- We inquired of management and those charged with governance as to any known instances of non-compliance or suspected non-compliance with laws and regulations.
- Based on this understanding, we designed specific appropriate audit procedures to identify instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. This included making enquiries of management and those charged with governance and obtaining additional corroborative evidence as required.

There are inherent limitations in the audit procedures described above. We are less likely to become aware of instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations that are not closely related to events and transactions reflected in the financial statements. Also, the risk of not detecting a material misstatement due to fraud is higher than the risk of not detecting one resulting from error, as fraud may involve deliberate concealment by, for example, forgery or intentional misrepresentations, or through collusion.

Use of our report

This report is made solely to the charitable company’s members, as a body, in accordance with Chapter 3 of Part 16 of the Companies Act 2006 and to the charitable company’s trustees, as a body, in accordance with section 44(1)(c) of the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005.

Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the company’s members those matters we are required to state to them in an auditor’s report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to any party other than the charitable company and charitable company’s members as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

Date: 18/09/2025

Jonathan Aikens, Senior Statutory Auditor
For and on behalf of Moore Kingston Smith LLP
9 Appold Street
London EC2A 2A

Moore Kingston Smith is eligible to act as auditor in terms of Section 1212 of the Companies Act 2006.

Statement of Financial Activities

Statement of Financial Activities

(incorporating an Income and Expenditure Account)

For the year ended 31 March 2025

	Note	Endowment £	Restricted £	Unrestricted £	2025 Total £	2024 Total £
Income and endowments from:						
<i>Donations, grants and legacies</i>	3	0	230,980	40,000	270,980	345,235
<i>Investment income</i>		11,665	6,861	233,089	251,615	276,891
<i>Charitable activities</i>	4	0	0	1,588,812	1,588,812	1,661,370
<i>Other incoming resources</i>	-	0	0	62,874	62,874	69,128
Total income		11,665	237,841	1,924,775	2,174,281	2,352,624
Resources expended						
<i>Charitable activities</i>	5	22,570	358,066	1,939,193	2,319,829	2,930,703
Total expenditure	5	22,570	358,066	1,939,193	2,319,829	2,930,703
Net gain/(loss) on investment assets	11a	(23,453)	(12,849)	(97,329)	(133,631)	36,473
Net incoming/(outgoing) resources before transfers and other recognised gains and losses	6	(34,358)	(133,074)	(111,747)	(279,179)	(541,606)
Gross transfers between funds		-	-	-	-	-
Transfer of funds out of the charity		-	-	-	-	-
Actuarial gain/(loss) on defined benefit pension scheme		-	-	(183,000)	(183,000)	(196,000)
Net movement in funds for the year		(34,358)	(133,074)	(294,747)	(462,179)	(737,606)
Reconciliation of funds						
Funds brought forward at 1 April 2024		413,222	491,789	1,407,854	2,312,865	3,050,471
Funds carried forward	14/15	378,864	358,715	1,113,107	1,850,686	2,312,865

All of the above results are derived from continuing activities. All gains and losses recognised in the year are included above.

Movements in funds are disclosed in Note 14 to the financial statements.

Balance sheet

As at 31 March 2025

	Note	2025 £	2024 £
Fixed assets			
Tangible fixed assets	9	36,844	35,906
Intangible fixed assets	10	45,851	53,337
Investments	11a/11b	1,907,294	2,354,338
		1,989,989	2,443,581
Current assets			
Debtors	12	476,102	413,840
Cash and cash equivalents		15,296	45,579
		491,398	459,419
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	13	630,701	590,135
Net current assets/(liabilities)		(139,303)	(130,716)
Net assets excluding pension asset		1,850,686	2,312,865
Defined benefit scheme asset	18	-	-
Net assets including pension asset	14/15	1,850,686	2,312,865
Funds			
Endowment funds		378,864	413,222
Restricted funds		358,715	491,789
Unrestricted funds			
Designated funds		614,352	669,988
General funds		498,755	737,866
Unrestricted income funds excluding pensions asset		1,113,107	1,407,854
Pension reserve	18	-	-
Total unrestricted funds		1,113,107	1,407,854
Total funds	14/15	1,850,686	2,312,865

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies regime with Part 15 of the Companies Act 2006.

Approved by the board
on its behalf by

Steve Miller
President

Rachael Rogers
Vice President

Company Number: 252131

Statement of cash flows

For the year ended
31 March 2025

	2025 £	2024 £
Cash flow/(outflow) from operating activities		
Cash generated from operations	(287,601)	(120,144)
Interest paid	-	-
Net cash provided by/(used in) operating activities	(287,601)	(120,144)
Cash flow from investing activities		
Bank interest received	-	-
Acquisition of fixed asset investments	(56,093)	(46,869)
Disposal of financial instruments	292,000	-
Net cash used in investing activities	235,907	(46,869)
Net increase in cash and cash equivalents	(51,695)	(18,433)
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of year	23,394	41,726
Cash and cash equivalents at end of year	15,296	45,579
Reconciliation of net income/(expenditure) to net cash flow from operating activities		
	2025 £	2024 £
Net income including endowments	(462,179)	(737,608)
Adjustments for:		
Depreciation charges	62,642	16,426
Amortisation	-	37,205
Bank interest received	-	-
Net (gains)/ losses on investments	133,632	(36,473)
Decrease/ (increase) in pension asset	-	-
Decrease/ (increase) in stock	-	-
Decrease/ (increase) in debtors	(62,262)	665,771
Increase/ (decrease) in creditors	40,566	(65,465)
Net cash provided by/(used in) operating activities	(287,601)	(120,144)

Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended
31 March 2025

1. Accounting policies

a) The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention except for investments which are included at market value. The statements have been prepared in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) FRS 102, Accounting and Reporting by Charities published in 2015, the Companies Act 2006 and applicable accounting standards. The financial statements are prepared in sterling, which is the functional currency of the charity. Amounts presented are rounded to the nearest pound.

b) The charity is a company limited by guarantee and incorporated in England & Wales. The members of the company are the individuals and institutions in membership of the Association. In the event of the charity being wound up, the liability in respect of guarantee is limited to £1 per member of the charity. The company is a public benefit entity.

c) The trustees have assessed whether the use of the going concern basis is appropriate and have considered possible events or conditions that might cast significant doubt on the ability of the charity to continue as a going concern. Trustees have reviewed and approved revised budgets and forecasts, in particular taking into account pressures on events, membership, publications and investment income. Trustees have made this assessment for a period of at least one year from the date of approval of the financial statements. After making enquiries the trustees have concluded that there is a reasonable expectation that the charity has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future. The charity therefore continues to adopt the going concern basis in preparing its financial statements.

d) General funds are unrestricted funds which are available for use at the discretion of the trustees in furtherance of the general objectives of the charity and which have not been designated for other purposes. Designated funds are unrestricted funds that have been set aside by the trustees for particular purposes. The aim and use of each designated fund is set out in the notes to the financial statements.

e) Restricted and endowment funds are to be used for specific purposes as laid down by the donor. Income generated from investments held by the funds is restricted to use by the fund. Expenditure which meets these criteria is charged to the fund.

f) Incoming resources, including grants, are included in the Statement Of Financial Activities (SOFA) when there is entitlement to the funds, the receipt is probable and the amount can be measured reliably, net of VAT where applicable.

g) Membership income is included on a receivable basis with amounts relating to future accounting years deferred as subscriptions in advance. For subscriptions of publications the amount recognised is calculated on a pro-rata basis covering the period paid for in the accounting year. Events income is recognised in the accounting year in which the event takes place.

h) Investment income and gains are allocated to the appropriate fund.

i) Resources expended are accounted for on an accruals basis and allocated to the particular activity where the cost relates directly to that activity. However, the support costs of overall direction and administration of each activity, comprising the salary and overhead costs of the central function, is apportioned first to restricted funds in accordance with funding restrictions and then to the remaining unrestricted activities on the basis of staff numbers. Liabilities are recognised once there is a legal or constructive obligation to transfer economic benefit to a third party, it is probable that a transfer of economic benefit will be required in settlement and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably.

j) Governance costs are no longer presented as a separate category of expenditure in the Statement of Financial Activities as they are now regarded as part of support costs which are allocated to the cost of activities undertaken by the Charity.

k) Grants and bursaries payable are recognised when a decision to make an award has been made and communicated to the recipients.

l) Cash and cash equivalents include cash in hand, deposits held at call with banks, other short-term liquid investments with original maturities of three months or less, and bank overdrafts. Bank overdrafts are shown within borrowings in current liabilities.

m) The company has elected to apply the provisions of Section 11 ‘Basic Financial Instruments’ and Section 12 ‘Other Financial Instruments Issues’ of FRS102 to all its financial instruments.

Financial instruments are recognised in the company’s balance sheet when the company becomes party to the contractual provisions of the instrument.

Financial assets and liabilities are offset, with the net amounts presented in the financial statements, when there is a legally enforceable right to set off the recognised amounts and there is an intention to settle on a net basis or to realise the asset and settle the liability simultaneously.

Basic financial assets
Basic financial assets, which include trade and other receivables and cash and bank balances, are initially measured at transaction price including transaction costs and are subsequently carried at amortised cost using the effective interest method unless the arrangement constitutes a financing transaction, where the transaction is measured at the present value of the future receipts discounted at a market rate of interest.

Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended
31 March 2025

Basic financial liabilities

Basic financial liabilities, including trade and other payables, are initially recognised at transaction price, and subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method.

With the exceptions of prepayments and deferred income all other debtor and creditor balances are considered to be basic financial instruments under FRS102. See notes 12 and 13 for the debtor and creditor notes.

n) Tangible fixed assets costing more than £1,000 are capitalised and included at cost including any incidental expenses of acquisition. Depreciation is provided on all tangible fixed assets at rates calculated to write off the cost of each asset over its expected useful life. The depreciation rates in use are:

Furniture & equipment

10.00% per annum, straight line method

IT & computers

33.33% per annum, straight line method

Depreciation costs are allocated to Support Costs.

o) Intangible fixed assets costing more than £1,000 are capitalised and included at cost including any incidental expenses of acquisition. Amortisation is provided on all intangible fixed assets at rates calculated to write off the cost of each asset over its expected useful life. The amortisation rates in use are:

Website & database

33.33% per annum, straight line method

Amortisation costs are allocated to Support Costs.

p) Investments held as fixed assets are included at mid-market value at the balance sheet date. The gain or loss for each period is taken to the statement of financial activities. Unrealised gains are shown in note 11a. Gains are shown on the face of the SOFA. The investments are assessed for impairment at each reporting date and any impairment losses or reversals of impairment are recognised immediately in the profit or loss account.

q) Rentals payable under operating leases, where substantially all the risks and rewards of ownership remain with the lessor, are charged to the statement of financial activities on a straight line basis over the length of the lease.

r) The charity used to operate a defined benefit pension scheme on behalf of its employees. The scheme is now closed. The assets of the scheme are held separately from those of the charity in an independently administered scheme.

Current or past service costs and gains, as determined by the scheme’s actuary, are charged to the statement of financial activities each year. Pension finance costs or income are included within total resources expended or incoming resources as applicable. Actuarial gains and losses arising are recognised within ‘gains and losses’ on the statement of financial activities.

In addition, any deficit on the scheme, representing the shortfall of the value of the scheme assets below the present value of the scheme liabilities is recognised as a liability on the balance sheet to the extent that the employer charity is able to recover a surplus or has a legal or constructive obligation for the liability. A corresponding pension reserve is included within total unrestricted funds.

s) The charitable company also agrees to contribute to personal pension schemes. The pension cost charge represents contributions payable by the charitable company to the individual schemes. The charitable company has no liability under the schemes other than for the payment of those contributions.

t) Trust funds are funds:

- i) which are administered by or on behalf of the MA
- ii) whose funds are held for specific purposes which are within the general purposes of the MA; or
- iii) which are subject to a substantial degree of influence by the MA, are treated as branches and accounted for as part of the MA.

u) The MA undertakes an administrative role in the running of the Esmée Fairbairn Communities and Collections Fund. The MA undertakes this service in return for a grant which is recognised as income in the statutory accounts.

The MA also hold funds as an intermediary, awaiting instructions from an approval panel (where control is retained by the Principal: Esmée Fairbairn Foundation), to distribute the funds. Although the MA monitors and reports against the use of the funds in its administrative capacity, the ultimate control over the distribution of the funding and legal responsibility for ensuring the charitable application of the funds is retained by the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation.

Funds received and expended in this manner are excluded from the accounts as income and expenditure. Further details can be found in note 19.

2. Judgements and key sources of estimation uncertainty

In preparing financial statements it is necessary to make certain judgements, estimates and assumptions that affect the amounts recognised in the financial statements.

In the view of the trustees in applying the accounting policies adopted, they are required to make judgements, estimates and assumptions that have a significant effect on the amounts recognised in the financial statements and carry a significant risk of material adjustment in the next financial year. No judgements or key sources of uncertainty have been identified by the trustees.

Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended
31 March 2025

3. Donations, grants and legacies

	Restricted £	Unrestricted £	2025 £
Trusts and funded projects			
Members Support Fund	-	-	-
UKRI Mindsets + Missions	36,330	-	36,330
Paul Hamlyn Foundation	-	48,000	40,000
Julia Rausing Trust	13,650	-	13,650
	49,980	40,000	89,980
Esmée Fairbairn Communities and Collections Fund	181,000	-	181,000
	230,980	40,000	270,980
	Restricted £	Unrestricted £	2024 £
Trusts and funded projects			
Members Support Fund	-	251	251
UKRI Mindsets + Missions	103,491	-	103,491
Paul Hamlyn Foundation	-	48,000	48,000
Esmée Fairbairn Foundation	-	31,379	31,379
	103,742	79,379	183,121
Esmée Fairbairn Communities and Collections Fund	162,114	-	162,114
	265,856	79,379	345,235

4. Charitable activities

	Restricted £	Unrestricted £	2025 £
Membership	-	1,015,945	1,015,945
Publications	-	159,178	159,178
Events	-	389,657	389,657
Professional development	-	24,032	24,032
Research and innovation	-	-	-
	-	1,588,812	1,588,812
	Restricted £	Unrestricted £	2024 £
Membership	-	959,480	959,480
Publications	-	194,301	194,301
Events	-	343,499	343,499
Professional development	-	24,025	24,025
Research and innovation	-	140,065	140,065
	-	1,661,370	1,661,370

Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended
31 March 2025

5. Total Expenditure

	Publications £	Events £	Membership £	Professional Development £	Policy & Public Affairs £	Governance £	Support £	Trusts/Projects £	Total £
Staff costs – direct (Note 7)	195,357	154,068	263,797	87,631	230,147	-	323,563	180,191	1,434,754
Direct costs	126,673	169,970	25,698	1,775	1,975	6,278	306,655	133,685	772,709
Grants and bursaries	-	-	-	-	2,000	-	-	37,315	39,315
Depreciation	-	-	-	-	-	-	34,911	27,731	62,642
Trustees’ expenses	-	-	-	-	-	10,409	-	-	10,409
sub total	322,030	324,038	289,495	89,406	234,122	16,687	665,129	378,922	2,319,829
Allocated support costs	181,818	90,909	204,545	68,182	136,363	(16,687)	(665,129)	-	-
Total resources expended	503,848	414,947	494,040	157,588	370,485	-	-	378,922	2,319,829

For the year ended 31 March 2024									
	Publications £	Events £	Membership £	Professional Development £	Policy & Public Affairs £	Governance £	Support £	Trusts/Projects £	Total £
Staff costs – direct (Note 7)	186,451	147,334	230,336	172,647	213,133	-	311,721	123,875	1,385,497
Direct costs	125,730	162,877	20,607	1,936	4,500	4,911	272,613	841,703	1,434,877
Grants and bursaries	-	(17,000)	(13,332)	(1,720)	-	-	-	68,496	36,444
Depreciation	-	-	-	-	-	-	26,881	28,691	55,572
Trustees’ expenses	-	-	-	-	-	9,313	-	-	9,313
sub total	312,181	293,211	237,611	181,863	217,633	14,224	611,215	1,062,765	2,930,703
Allocated support costs	166,783	83,392	187,632	62,544	125,088	(14,224)	(611,215)	-	-
Total resources expended	478,964	376,603	425,243	244,407	342,721	-	-	1,062,765	2,930,703

Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended
31 March 2025

6. Net incoming/(outgoing) resources for the year

This is stated after charging/crediting:

	2025 £	2024 £
Interest payable	-	-
Bank charges	28,066	24,781
Depreciation	62,641	53,631
Operating lease rentals		
— property	93,000	93,000
Board’s remuneration	-	-
Board’s reimbursed expenses (travel and subsistence)	13,123	5,158
Auditors’ remuneration:		
— Audit	16,247	18,250
— Other services	6,000	6,000
Income from quoted investments	64,706	74,357
Bank interest receivable	-	-

No trustee received any remuneration for their role as a trustee during the year (2024: none, £nil). Expenses reimbursed to trustees, or paid directly on their behalf, in relation to travel and subsistence totalled £8,054 (2024: £9,135). These expenses were incurred wholly in connection with the trustees’ duties. Trustee indemnity is covered by the organisation’s Charity Care insurance.

7. Staff costs and numbers

Staff costs were as follows:

	2025 £	2024 £
Salaries and wages	1,039,555	961,477
Settlement payments	-	-
Social security costs	111,862	105,528
Temps/consultants	59,804	63,918
Costs of pension scheme – defined contribution	96,175	123,630
Costs of pension scheme – defined benefit	62,871	57,877
	1,370,267	1,251,647
Other staff costs	64,487	73,260
	1,434,754	1,385,497
Total emoluments paid to staff were:	1,039,555	961,477

The Charity considers its key management personnel comprise the trustees, the Chief Executive Officer and 3 heads of departments. The total employment benefitsof the key management personnel were £410,814 (2024: £ 394,820). Trustees receive no remuneration.

Earnings over £60,000 (including pension)

	2025 No.	2024 No.
Number of employees receiving £90,001 – £100,000	1	1
Number of employees receiving £80,001 – £90,000	1	1
Number of employees receiving £70,001 – £80,000	2	2
Number of employees receiving £60,001 – £70,000	-	-

The employees above participated in the pension scheme. Contributions paid on behalf of the employees totalled £31,785 (2024: £30,100).

The average weekly number of employees during the year was as follows:

	2025 No.	2024 No.
Publications	4.0	4.0
Restricted projects	3.0	3.0
Events	2.0	2.0
Membership	4.5	4.5
Professional development	1.5	1.5
Policy and public affairs	3.0	3.0
Support	3.0	3.0
	21.0	21.0

Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended
31 March 2025

8. Taxation

The charitable company is exempt from corporation tax as all its income is charitable and is applied for charitable purposes.

9. Tangible fixed assets

	Furniture & equipment £	IT & computers £	Total £
Cost			
At 1 Apr 2024	75,982	212,905	288,887
Additions in year	8,351	11,219	19,570
At 31 March 2025	84,333	224,124	308,457
Depreciation			
At 1 Apr 2024	52,623	200,358	252,981
Disposals in year	-	-	-
Charge for the year	5,762	12,870	18,632
At 31 March 2025	58,385	213,228	271,613
Net book value At 31 March 2025	25,948	10,896	36,844
At 31 March 2024	23,359	12,547	35,906

10. Intangible fixed assets

	Website & database £	Total £
Cost		
At 1 Apr 2024	545,455	545,455
Additions in year	36,523	36,523
At 31 March 2025	581,978	581,978
Amortisation		
At 1 Apr 2024	492,118	492,118
Disposals in year	-	-
Charge for the year	44,009	44,009
At 31 March 2025	536,127	536,127
Net book value At 31 March 2025	45,851	45,851
At 31 March 2024	53,337	53,337

Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended
31 March 2025

11a. Investments	2025 £	2024 £	11b. Investment in subsidiary	2025 £	2024 £
Rathbones Greenbank			Shares in subsidiary at cost	2	2
At 1 April 2024	2,354,336	2,641,038			
Disposal proceeds	(292,000)	(323,175)			
Adjustment for cash held in portfolio	(21,413)	-			
Additions during the year, at cost	-	-			
Disposals during the year, at brought forward value	-	-			
Realised (losses) gains	-	-			
Unrealised (losses) / gains	(133,631)	36,473			
At 31 March 2025	1,907,292	2,354,336			
At the balance sheet date, the market value of the portfolio comprised:					
Fixed interest	389,246				
UK equities	615,912				
Global equities	782,467				
Property	119,667				
At 31 March 2025	1,907,292				
No individual holding represented more than 5% of the market value of the portfolio at the balance sheet date.					
Analysis of investment portfolio	2025 £	2024 £	12. Debtors	2025 £	2024 £
Rathbones Greenbank	2,354,336	2,641,038	Trade debtors	128,561	57,278
			Grant debtors	171,000	185,914
			Other debtors	1,949	9,813
			VAT recoverable	20,936	20,171
			Prepayments and accrued income	153,656	140,664
At 31 March 2025	1,907,292	2,354,336		476,102	413,840
			13. Creditors : amounts falling due within one year	2025 £	2024 £
			Trade creditors	61,073	81,473
			Accruals	29,760	41,705
			PAYE, social security and other taxes	39,804	37,898
			VAT payable	-	-
			Other creditors	23,038	8,011
			Subscriptions in advance	477,026	421,048
				630,701	590,135
			All deferred income recognised in 2024 was released in 2025.		

Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended
31 March 2025

14. Movements in funds

	31 March 2024 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfers £	At 31 March 2025 £
Endowment funds					
Beecroft Bequest*	413,222	11,665	(46,023)	-	378,864
Total endowment funds	413,222	11,665	(46,023)	-	378,864
Restricted funds:					
Members Support Fund*	230,812	6,861	(54,794)	-	182,879
Esmée Fairbairn Communities and Collections Fund	126,095	181,000	(169,354)	-	137,741
UKRI Digital Learning	16,589	-	-	-	16,589
UKRI Mindsets + Missions	109,845	36,330	(141,289)	-	4,886
Wellcome Trust Bold Futures	(200)	-	-	-	(200)
Museum Freelance	400	-	-	-	400
National Lottery Heritage Fund NI	(134)	-	-	-	(134)
Decolonisation programme	7,490	-	(2,973)	-	4,517
Communicating Decolonisation	707	-	(2,505)	-	(1,798)
Julia Rausing Trust	-	13,650	-	-	13,650
Arts Council Engand Culture Recovery Fund	185	-	-	-	185
Total restricted funds	491,789	237,841	(370,915)	-	358,715
Unrestricted funds:					
<i>Designated funds:</i>					
Pension Company	600,000	-	-	-	600,000
Fixed Asset reserve	12,574	-	(12,574)	-	-
Access	(691)	-	(14,486)	25,000	9,823
Campaign and membership support	58,105	-	(58,576)	5,000	4,529
Total designated funds	669,988	-	(85,636)	-	614,352
General funds*	737,866	1,741,775	(1,950,886)	(30,000)	498,755
Total unrestricted funds	1,407,854	1,741,775	(2,036,522)	-	1,113,107
Pension reserve fund	-	-	-	-	-
Total funds	2,312,865	1,991,281	(2,453,460)	-	1,850,686
*Includes gains/losses on investment assets					

Purposes of endowment funds

The Beecroft Bequest originates from a legacy made in 1961 which is used to make grants to museums to help fund purchases of pictures and works of art produced no later than the 18th century.

Purposes of restricted funds

The Members Support Fund (formerly the Benevolent Fund) assists financially distressed members of the MA and now includes within its purpose the promotion of education and professional development of members of the MA.

The MA runs the Esmée Fairbairn Communities and Collections Fund (formerly the Esmée Fairbairn Collections Fund), offering grants of £20,000 to £100,000 to museums for time-limited work with collections. Through this fund the MA and the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation seek to develop a series of projects that demonstrate the inspiring and engaging potential of collections to deliver social impact for people and communities.

UK Research and Innovation provided grant funding of £633,125 to fund the Digital Learning programme in 14 UK museums.

UK Research and Innovation provided grant funding of £895,445 to fund the Mindsets + Missions science programme in 12 UK museums.

Wellcome Trust provided funding of £238,000 for the Bold Futures programme supporting science-based projects in seven museums and cultural institutions.

Museum Freelance provided £30,000 funding to support freelancers during the pandemic.

The National Lottery Heritage Fund Northern Ireland provided £5,000 to fund a research project on the social impact of museums in Northern Ireland.

The Decolonisation programme was supported by £90,000 grants from the Art Fund, the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, the John Ellerman Foundation and the Paul Hamlyn Foundation to provide guidance and support to the sector. The programme was supported by funders to produce Decolonisation guidance and support.

The Esmée Fairbairn Foundation supported communication of decolonisation guidance with a grant of £10,000.

The Julia Rausing Trust provided £13,650 for the Health and Wellbeing in Museums programme.

Arts Council England Cultural Recovery Fund provided a £150k donation during Covid.

Purposes of designated funds

A fund of £600,000 was set up in 2012 in place of the charge on the property sold that year held by the MA Pension Plan.

The Fixed Asset Reserve has funds set aside for future capital expenditure.

The Access fund was established to support access and inclusion needs for MA events and activities.

Designated campaign and support funding was established to support MA campaigns and membership.

Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended
31 March 2025

15. Analysis of net assets between funds				
	Endowment Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Unrestricted Funds £	2025 Total Funds £
Intangible fixed assets	-	-	45,851	45,851
Tangible fixed assets	-	-	36,844	36,844
Investments	342,721	180,673	1,383,898	1,907,292
Net current assets	36,143	178,042	(353,485)	(139,300)
Pension scheme asset	-	-	-	-
Net Assets at 31 March 2025	378,864	358,715	1,113,107	1,850,686

	Endowment Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Unrestricted Funds £	2024 Total Funds £
Intangible fixed assets	-	-	53,337	53,337
Tangible fixed assets	-	-	35,906	35,906
Investments	416,107	226,076	1,712,155	2,354,338
Net current assets	(2,885)	265,713	(393,544)	(130,716)
Pension scheme asset	-	-	-	-
Net Assets at 31 March 2024	413,222	491,789	1,407,854	2,312,865

16. Related Party Transactions		
During the year, the charity entered into the following transactions with related parties:		
During the year, the following Trustees were employed by organisations which the Museums Association purchased products and services (venue hire) from:		
	2025 £	2024 £
Hasina Dabaque, Programme Manager, Wellcome Collection	-	13,213
At the year end, the amount outstanding to Wellcome Collection was £0 (2024, £nil)		
During the year, the following Trustees were employed by organisations which the Museums Association made grants to:		
	2025 £	2024 £
Christine Mclean, Head of Cultural Heritage and Wellbeing, OnFife	-	61,655
During the year, the following Trustees were employed by organisations which purchased products and services (membership and events fees) from the Museums Association:		
	2025 £	2024 £
Christine Mclean, Head of Cultural Heritage and Wellbeing, OnFife	1,928	1,845
Steve Miller, Director of Cultural Heritage, Norfolk County Council	2,830	4,754
Rachael Rogers, Museums and Arts Manager, MonLife Heritage Museums	696	666
Michael Terwey, Director of Public Engagement and Research, National Trust for Scotland	3,513	4,358
Hasina Dabaque, Programme Manager, Wellcome Collection	3,248	3,265
Georgina Young, Head of Collections and Exhibitions, Manchester Museum	5,863	1,845
Kate Steiner, Editor, Science Museum Group Journal	5,029	5,741
Janet Dugdale, Director, Museum of Liverpool	3,391	-
	26,498	22,474

Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended
31 March 2025

16. Related Party Transactions (continued)

At the year end, one organisation which a Trustee was employed by had an outstanding balance (membership and events fees) with the Museums Association:

	2025 £	2024 £
Kate Steiner, Editor, Science Museum Group Journal	2,963	-
Nivek Amichund, Chief Exhibitor, Historic Royal Palaces	-	80
	2,963	-

In the year, one Trustee was paid for work carried out for the charity.

	2025 £	2024 £
Hasina Dabaque	900	-
Beloved Adonai	-	300
Sara Kassam	-	1,000
	900	1,300

Hasina Dabaque carried out Lived Experience Consultancy for the Anti-Racism and Decolonisation Steering Group.

All related party transactions were carried out in line with the conflicts of interest policy. No Trustees exerted influence over commercial transaction to or from the Museums Association. Where relevant payments to Trustees were authorised in line with the articles of the Museums Association.

(c) Donations from Related Parties

Donations from Trustees and other related parties during the year amounted to £nil (2024: £nil).

17. Operating lease commitments

Expenditure committed to under operating leases falling due in;

Property

	2025 £	2024 £
Less than one year	93,000	93,000
2 to 5 years	372,000	372,000
More than 5 years	139,500	232,500

Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended
31 March 2025

18. Defined benefit pension scheme			Based on the mortality assumptions detailed below, the following illustrates the life expectancies used to place a value on the Scheme’s liabilities as at 31 March 2025:		
TThe association operates a defined benefit scheme in the UK which was paid-up at 31 March 2008 so no further service liability will accrue.			Life expectancy		
The most recent full actuarial valuation was carried out in 2022 by a qualified actuary. As the scheme was fully funded no contributions were made in 2024/25.				Male	Female
Defined benefit cost:			Member aged 65 at the effective date of the calculations	19.7	21.9
			Member aged 65 at a date 20 years after the effective date of the calculations	20.9	23.3
			Demographic and other assumptions		
				2025	2024
			Mortality before retirement	Nil	Nil
			Mortality after retirement base table	101% male and 104% female. S3PA with ages rated up 2 years	101% male and 104% female. S3PA with ages rated up 2 years
			Future improvements	CMI_2022 [1.25%]	CMI_2022 [1.25%]
			Cash commutation	All members will commute 20% of pension on current terms	All members will commute 20% of pension on current terms
			Retirement age	Normal retirement age	Normal retirement age
			Proportion of members with a spouse	85% males; 75% females	85% males; 75% females
			Average age difference between member and spouse	Females are 3 years younger than males	Females are 3 years younger than males
			Discretionary increases	No allowance	No allowance
Remeasurements recognised in Other Comprehensive Income:			The expected return on the plan assets is based on the fair value of the assets at the beginning of the period and the expected long term rate of return as estimated at the start of the period.		
			The employee benefit obligations recognised in the balance sheet are as follows:		
				2025	2024
				£’000	£’000
Remeasurement of defined benefit obligation			Present value of defined benefit obligations	2,297	2,438
Return on plan assets			Fair value of plan assets	(2,297)	(2,438)
Change in effect of the asset ceiling			Net asset recognised in the Balance Sheet	-	-
Principal actuarial assumptions at the balance sheet date (expressed as weighted averages):					
Financial Assumptions:					
				2025	2024
				%	%
Discount rate at the end of the year				5.8%	4.9%
Retail Price Inflation				3.3%	3.1%
Consumer Price Inflation				3.0%	2.6%
Increases in deferment				3.0%	2.6%
Rates of increase to pensions in payment					
Pensions earned before 6/4/97				0.0%	0.0%
Pensions earned after 5/4/97				3.2%	3.1%

Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended
31 March 2025

18. Defined benefit pension scheme (continued)

Movements in the present value of the defined benefit obligation are as follows:

	2025 £'000	2024 £'000
Opening defined benefit obligation	2,438	2,402
Service cost (current and past)	-	-
Interest cost	119	119
Remeasurement arising from changes in assumptions	(221)	(52)
Remeasurement arising from experience	-	13
Benefits paid	(38)	(44)
Liabilities at end of period	2,298	2,438

Changes in the fair value of plan assets are as follows:

	2025 £'000	2024 £'000
Opening fair value of plan assets	3,761	3,974
Interest income	183	196
Actual return on plan assets, excluding interest income	(380)	(365)
Contributions by employer	-	-
Benefits paid	(38)	(44)
Assets at end of period	3,526	3,761

The actual return/(deficit) on plan assets was £ (0); (2023: (£0)).

The major categories of plan assets as a percentage of total plan assets are as follows:

	2025 £'000	2025 %	2024 £'000	2024 %
Equities	610	17%	527	14%
Bonds & Gilts	2,805	80%	3,122	83%
Property	88	2%	75	2%
Cash	23	1%	38	1%

19. Funds held by the MA as an intermediary agent

The MA receives an annual restricted grant from the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation to support the research, development and administration of the Esmée Fairbairn Communities and Collections Fund. This is recognised as income in the financial statements.

The MA also receives £1.3 million per year for 2024/25 over the extended life of the programme for distribution to grant recipients. Under the terms of the agreement, the MA will receive, review and filter applications which will be sent to an approval panel for consideration. The panel consists of two Esmée Fairbairn trustees, the Esmée Fairbairn chief executive, the MA’s chief executive and two members from the museums community. Based on the composition of the panel and the fact that the Esmée Fairbairn chief executive has the casting vote on the approval of awards, the MA has no ultimate control over the distribution of the awards.

Under this arrangement the MA is holding the funds as an intermediary, awaiting instruction from the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation to distribute the funds. Although the MA will monitor and report against the use of the funds, the ultimate control of the funding and legal responsibility for ensuring the charitable application of the funds would appear to remain with the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation.

As such, funds received and distributed under this arrangement have been excluded from the MA’s accounts. This year, £84,830 was carried forward, £1,340,523 was received and £1,049,454 was awarded. At the year end, the MA held cash of £375,900 which is payable to grantees under the programme. This bank balance and corresponding liability have also been removed from the financial statements.

AMA and FMA Awards 2024/25

AMA and FMA Awards 2024/25

AMAs awarded:

- Rosie Barker
- Jaki Collison
- Ben Dale
- Tina Eyre
- Caitlin Gingell
- Alexander Goodger
- Alison Grange
- Tracey Hebron
- Angharad Jones
- David Juler
- Ruth Lewis
- Emily Robson
- Sophie Sage

FMAs awarded:

- Amna bint Abdull Aziz Al Thani
- Libby Buckley

Notice of the AGM

Notice is hereby given that the 2025 Annual General Meeting of the Museums Association will be held digitally and voting will commence on the 17 September, with the results announced on 7 October at 1630 at Sain Ffagan Amgueddfa Werin Cymru – St Fagans National Museum of History, Cardiff and via our chosen conferencing platform:

A. Apologies for absence

B. Minutes

To consider and adopt the minutes of the last Annual General Meeting held on 12 November 2024 at 1320 at the Royal Armouries Museum, Leeds and via our website and conference platform.

C. Annual Report and Accounts of the Museums Association

To receive the Annual Report and Accounts of the Board for the year 2024/25.

D. Report on financial position

To receive a report from the board on the estimated financial position and forecast in respect of current and future financial years.

E. Individual membership subscriptions

To consider, and if thought fit, pass the following Ordinary Resolution (see note 1 to agenda). That with effect with 1 April 2026 individual membership subscription rates will be increased as follows:

	2025/26	2026/27
Essential member	£52	£53
Student, Retired, Unwaged, Volunteer, Trustee	£67	£68
Full member, Associate, Fellow	£100	£102

F. Institutional membership subscriptions

To consider, and if thought fit, pass the following Ordinary Resolution (See note 1 to agenda). That with effect with 1 April 2026 institutional membership bands and subscription rates will be increase as follows:

2025/26	
Operating budget	Fee
Less than £109,500	£88
£109,501 – £329,500	£219
£329,501 – £1,098,000	£713
£1,098,001 – £2,196,000	£1,098
£2,196,001 – £10,979,000	£1,976
Over £10,979,000	£2,526
Federations, friends’ organisations and specialist groups	£67
Non-UK member	£219

2026/27	
Operating budget	Fee
Less than £111,500	£90
£111,501 – £336,000	£223
£336,001 – £1,120,000	£727
£1,120,001 – £2,240,000	£1,120
£2,240,001 – £11,198,500	£2,016
Over £11,198,500	£2,577
Federations, friends’ organisations and specialist groups	£68
Non-UK member	£223

G. To adopt the revised Code of Ethics

To consider, and if thought fit, pass the following Ordinary Resolution:
That the Code of Ethics be revised as set out in the Note 2.

H. Auditors

To appoint auditors to the association until the conclusion of the next general meeting of the association at which accounts are laid before members and to authorise the board to fix the remuneration of the auditors.

Notes to the agenda

1. Items E and F

Following an inflationary increase in rates and bands last year, this year with our individual and institutional members reporting significant financial pressure, we propose a rise of 2.0%, which is half the level of inflation. For our institutional members, this sees bands as well as fees increasing, meaning some organisations may pay significantly less.

Increases in individual membership fees are £1 per annum for Essential and Concessionary members and £2 per annum for Full members. Institutional members will pay between £2 and £51 more per annum, with the majority increasing by £4 or less.

2. Item G

The MA has acted as the guardian of UK museum ethics since the first Codes of Practice and Conduct were introduced in 1977. These were updated in 1987, 1991, 2002, 2007 and 2015. The revised Code of Ethics for Museums aims to better changes in the sector and society since the last review in 2014/15.

The new draft Code of Ethics follows a two-year consultation and drafting process from 2023 to 2025. This has been a collaborative piece of work led by a working group, and has included consultation through open surveys and meetings, engagement with key sector bodies and Accreditation partners, an online consultation event with community partners of museums, and consensus-building workshops.

The document being presented at the AGM represents the general consensus of the sector on the ethical standards that are expected of all museums and those who work in and with them. The full version of the Code of Ethics is at page 43.

Code of Ethics for Museums (Draft)

Introduction

The Code of Ethics provides a framework for the practical application of ethical considerations to our everyday work in museums and reflects a contract of trust between museums and the public. The code is for you, your colleagues and your communities.

UK museums are not homogenous. Funding and governance structures vary between organisations, as do staffing levels and volunteer support. The museum workforce is varied and includes volunteers, trustees, staff, and freelancers ranging from senior leaders to those just beginning their career. The new Code of Ethics was developed with recognition of this variety and this updated version is informed by consultation with organisations and individuals who are representative of this diverse landscape.

The code sets out key ethical principles and ethical practice and is supported by case studies and further guidance.

Ethical reflection is an essential part of everyday museum practice. This code should be used to guide ethical decision making in all areas of museum work and to support you to navigate more complex ethical situations when they arise.

This code is a guide to best practice and does not contain all the answers. The ethical decisions you make will depend on your specific circumstances and context and may look different in different museums. Therefore, it is important to conduct open and reasoned processes when considering ethical issues.

Aspirational approach

This updated version of the Code of Ethics represents an aspirational approach to ethics in order to encourage and support reflective and responsible ethical best practice in museums.

Mandatory ethics are minimum standards, such as legal obligations and Accreditation Standards, that are explicit, clear-cut and should be precisely enacted now and into the future. The code asks those who work in and with museums to meet and exceed these minimum standards of practice and aspire towards ethical best practice.

The MA recognises that it will take time, ongoing investment, and relationship building to achieve some elements of aspirational best practice and that everyone will be at different stages in the journey towards achieving ethical best practice. The MA will encourage and support museums and those who work in them with case studies, training, advice and guidance to achieve best practice.

Everyone who works with museums should strive towards ethical best practice to the best of their ability. Regardless of role or seniority, anyone who works in and with museums can embed best ethical practice in their work. The MA recognises that there will be personal and institutional limits to being able to achieve some areas of best practice.

Museums and those who work in them should take a proportional approach, balancing working towards best practice with what is attainable and reasonable with the available time and resources. Museums should take responsibility for the wellbeing of those who work in and with them to ensure that they have the capacity to work ethically.

Museums may choose to create their own internal ethics committees to promote critical thinking and robust conversations on contemporary ethical issues and to support ethical decision making. As a membership body the MA expects all members to uphold and promote the code.

Unethical sale of collections

The MA is unequivocal that unethical sales from museum collections and targeting collections as a source of income are unacceptable. Unethical sale from collections could result in being barred from membership of the MA including not being able to apply for funding from the MA for the duration of the loss of membership.

Please read the [Joint statement on Unethical Sales from Collections](#) for more information.

Museums considering disposal by sale for the purposes of generating income should seek confidential advice from the MA at an early stage in order that we can discuss the motivation for sale, and help you understand how your proposal complies with the requirements of the Code of Ethics.

The MA evaluates proposed financially motivated disposals carefully and it is likely to take several months to provide a definitive opinion, particularly as it is usually necessary to hold a meeting of the [Ethics Committee](#) to discuss the proposal.

On occasion, sale from collections can be an ethically acceptable means of disposal, provided that it follows the full process set out in the [Off the Shelf toolkit](#).

Structure

The Code of Ethics comprises guiding Principles, which are further articulated through Practice.

- **Principles** – the fundamental guiding values of ethical museum practice.
- **Practice** – how to uphold the principles and what ethical best practice looks like in the museum sector.

Case Studies

- The Everyday Ethics Case Studies and scenarios provide examples of ethical situations that museums have encountered and explain how the Principles and Practice in the Code of Ethics can help guide decision making and support ethical best practice.

Additional Guidance

The MA has produced ethical guidance on specific areas of practice in the Code of Ethics including:

- [Supporting Decolonisation in Museums](#)
- [Off the Shelf: A Toolkit for Ethical Transfer, Reuse and Disposal](#)
- [MA Salary Research and Recommendations](#)

The MA is committed to producing further ethical guidance to support the sector.

External Guidance

The MA recognises that other organisations have produced ethical guidance which can support the sector with ethical decision making. We have compiled a list of external guidance you may find useful to consult here.

Application of the code

We expect all MA members to follow the guidelines in the Code of Ethics.

The Museums Association’s professional development programmes support application of the code and the [MA Competency Framework](#) can support individual development in ethical practice.

Under each of the four principles, we have outlined ethical statements that support best practice, these statements have been grouped under the relevant competency from the MA Competency Framework.

To achieve Associateship of the Museums Association (AMA) members must demonstrate awareness of the code and how it is used. To achieve Fellowship of the Museums Association (FMA) members must show that they promote the wider application of the code within the sector.

The [Ethics Committee](#) provides confidential advice and support to the museum sector; for all ethical queries, please contact our policy and ethics lead, India Divers: india@museumsassociation.org

Ethical principles

The fundamental guiding values of ethical museum practice.

Equitable and inclusive

Museums should be inclusive spaces, where everyone is valued and treated equitably and with respect.

Museums and those who work in and with them should:

- Provide public access to and meaningful engagement with collections
- Build equitable relationships with communities
- Be respectful and have cultural awareness when working with communities, collections and workforce
- Value their workforce

Transparent and accountable

Museums should be open and transparent in all their activities, and those who work in or for them should act honestly, with integrity, and take responsibility for their decisions and actions.

Museums and those who work in and with them should:

- Ensure that decision making is open and delivers public benefit
- Build open and constructive relationships with communities, workforce, partner organisations, funders and stakeholders
- Responsibly manage and care for collections
- Support freedom of speech, expression and debate

Responsible and sustainable

Museums should act responsibly to ensure their long-term financial, environmental and social sustainability.

Museums and those who work in and with them should:

- Maintain public trust and integrity in all museum activities
- Consider climate impacts and social responsibility in all decision making
- Treat museum collections as cultural, scientific or historic assets, not financial assets
- Manage collections for the long-term for the benefit of current and future generations

Ethical practice

Equitable and inclusive

Museums should be inclusive spaces, where everyone is valued and treated equitably and with respect.

Museums and those who work in and with them should:

- Provide public access to and meaningful engagement with collections
- Build equitable relationships with communities
- Be respectful and have cultural awareness when working with communities, collections and workforce
- Value their workforce

How to uphold the principle

Museums and those who work in and with them should:

Empowering audiences and communities

- 1.1 Build equitable relationships with communities and audiences based on respect and mutual benefit. Seek a diverse range of people and stakeholders to bring a wide variety of perspectives and insight to all areas of museum work.
- 1.2 Find ways to support everyone to participate in museums, recognising the barriers to access experienced by some individuals and communities. Work with communities to overcome the challenges of poverty and exclusion and to achieve equality of outcomes.
- 1.3 Promote diversity and equity by fostering understanding and good relations between people of different identities and beliefs. Embrace an approach that is anti-discriminatory, anti-racist and anti-ableist.
- 1.4 Value different forms of knowledge and knowledge production and recognise that narratives have multiple perspectives. Be a place where people can come together to learn and exchange ideas.

Managing people, money and organisations

- 1.5 Value the workforce, including staff, volunteers and freelancers, by ensuring fair pay, benefits and conditions. Foster a positive workplace culture to promote wellbeing. Consider using MA workforce guidance to inform practice.
- 1.6 Commit to workforce diversity to improve the work of the museum and better represent the communities you aim to serve.

Empowering collections

- 1.7 Ensure collections are documented, stored, handled and displayed respectfully, taking account of the cultural sensitivities of related communities.
- 1.8 Be understanding of different religious, spiritual, and cultural perspectives when working with collections, particularly human remains and sacred items.
- 1.9 Strive to make collections representative of and relevant to the communities the museum serves, taking account of community groups that have been historically excluded.
- 1.10 When researching and documenting collections, acknowledge a range of perspectives and expertise, especially those that have been systemically excluded.

Transparent and accountable

Museums should be open and transparent in all their activities, and those who work in or for them should act honestly, with integrity, and take responsibility for their decisions and actions.

Museums and those who work in and with them should:

- Ensure that decision-making is open and delivers public benefit
- Build open and constructive relationships with communities, workforce, partner organisations, funders and stakeholders
- Responsibly manage and care for collections
- Support freedom of speech, expression and debate

How to uphold the principle

Museums and those who work in and with them should:

Empowering audiences and communities

- 2.1 Be publicly accountable to audiences, communities and stakeholders, and be open to scrutiny.
- 2.2 Support freedom of speech, expression and debate, as consistent with Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights. Respect the right of all to express different views within the museum unless illegal to do so or inconsistent with the purpose of the museum as an anti-discriminatory organisation and an inclusive public space.
- 2.3 Consider creating a policy on freedom of expression and managing potential controversy in line with your organisational values to prevent potential harms to staff and audience members.
- 2.4 Support audiences to embrace and understand the complexity of information and knowledge by presenting multiple perspectives that have been evidenced and researched.

Managing people, money and organisations

- 2.5 Ensure that decision making is based on best professional practice, is open and transparent, and delivers public benefit.
- 2.6 Build open and constructive relationships with partner organisations, funders and other stakeholders. Share information on partnerships with staff, volunteers and community groups to build trust and encourage collaboration.

- 2.7 Ensure organisational integrity by resisting attempts from corporations, funders and governments to unduly influence practice and strategic decision making to fulfil their own private or political interests.
- 2.8 Embed decolonisation principles in your work, taking time to understand how colonialism is relevant to your organisation. Use the MA decolonisation guidance to support your journey.
- 2.9 Recognise and address inequitable power structures that are linked to legacies of colonialism and empire.
- 2.10 Avoid all private activities that could be construed as trading or dealing in cultural property.
- 2.11 When recruiting for paid roles, include information about pay and benefits in role descriptions.
- 2.12 Be responsible in the use of AI and be transparent with the public about its use in the work of the museum.
- 2.13 Thoroughly and proactively assess the risks and benefits of emerging technologies with input from the whole organisation.
- 2.14 Ensure appropriate data stewardship with transparent, secure, and accountable data management.
- 2.15 Facilitate responsible digital access while safeguarding the rights, dignity and agency of individuals and communities.

Empowering collections

- 2.16 Manage, care for, and develop collections with regularly reviewed procedures and policies designed to ensure accountability.

- 2.17 Make information about the museum collection and collections development policies publicly available. Be open about processes and procedures related to managing collections.
- 2.18 Publicly acknowledge that the museum and its collections and activities are shaped by contributions from multiple individuals and groups.
- 2.19 Verify the ownership of any item prior to acquisition or loan and confirm that the current holder is legitimately able to transfer title or to lend. Apply the same strict criteria to gifts and bequests. Treat all transfers of title and responsibility equally.
- 2.20 Discuss expectations and clarify in writing the precise terms on which all parties are accepting transfer of title. Be considerate of and sensitive to donors when accepting or declining gifts and bequests.
- 2.21 Balance providing public access to collections with providing a duty of care in line with the wishes of communities. The principle of providing access to the collections should not outweigh a duty to prevent harm to people.
- 2.22 Be clear and open about why the museum holds human remains.
- 2.23 Take an open, proactive and positive approach to repatriation and restitution. Deal sensitively and promptly with requests whether from the UK or from abroad.

Responsible and sustainable

- Museums and those who work in and with them should:
- Maintain public trust and integrity in all museum activities.
 - Consider climate impacts and social responsibility in all decision making
 - Treat museum collections as cultural, scientific or historic assets, not financial assets
 - Manage collections for the long-term for the benefit of current and future generations

How to uphold the principle

Museums and those who work in and with them should:

Empowering audiences and communities

- 3.1 Understand that the climate crisis is an ethical, social, and environmental issue and as such museums have an ethical duty to raise awareness and activate communities to create beneficial change.

Managing people, money and organisations

- 3.2 Consider climate and ecological impacts and social responsibility in all decision making and organisational activities. Take action to reduce these impacts in museum operations including protecting biodiversity and reducing carbon emissions.
- 3.3 Maintain public trust and integrity in all museum activities by exercising due diligence in partnership building, sponsorship and fundraising. Strive to secure funding from ethical sources that align with values of your organisation and serve the best interests of your communities.
- 3.4 Transition away from sponsorship from organisations involved with environmental harm (including fossil fuels), human rights abuses, and other sponsorship that does not align with the values of the museum.

Empowering collections

- 3.5 Use collections to inspire people and facilitate positive change for the benefit of the environment and society.
- 3.6 Conserve collections and optimise access for the benefit of current and future audiences.
- 3.7 Actively manage collections and their documentation for the long-term, including an up-to-date inventory. Recognise that ethical transfer, disposal, reuse and deaccessioning are everyday and necessary parts of a sustainable collections management approach and the need for this work is urgent. Use [Off the Shelf: A Toolkit for Ethical Transfer, Reuse and Disposal](#) to guide practice.
- 3.8 Refuse to mortgage collections or offer them as security for a loan. Ensure the financial viability of the museum is not dependent on any monetary valuation placed on items in its collections. Resist placing a commercial value on the collections unless there is a compelling reason to do so, and for collections management purposes only.
- 3.9 Recognise that collections should not be regarded as financial assets and that financially motivated disposal risks damaging public trust in museums.
- 3.10 Reject any item for purchase, loan or donation if there is any suspicion that it was wrongfully taken during a time of conflict, stolen, illicitly exported or illicitly traded, unless in line with relevant international conventions, or where the museum is co-operating with attempts to establish the identity of the rightful owner(s) of an item.
- 3.11 Avoid behaviour that could be construed as asserting personal ownership of collections.
- 3.12 Acquire an item only if the museum can provide long-term, sustainable care for the item and public access to it.

Glossary

Access – The opportunity to enter somewhere or engage with something without barriers. Barriers come in many forms and may be physical, sensory, intellectual, attitudinal, social, cultural or financial.

Accountability – Organisations accepting responsibility for their actions and behaviour. Being accountable to communities, audiences and stakeholders means taking into account their needs, concerns and capacities, and explaining actions and decisions to them. Information about accountability for collections can be found on the [Collections Trust’s website](#).

Anti-Ableist – Recognises abled privilege and actively looks to challenge and dismantle it through actions and practices.

Anti-Discriminatory – Be opposed to the unjust and prejudicial treatment of people based on age, gender reassignment, being married or in a civil partnership, being pregnant or on maternity leave, disability, race including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity/expression, or socio-economic status.

Actively identify and dismantle policies and practices that uphold discrimination.

Anti-Racist – Actively identify and dismantle policies, practices, behaviours, conventions, unchallenged norms, and beliefs that perpetuate institutional and systemic racism against racialised people of colour.

Audience – Individuals and groups who make use of the museum’s resources or facilities.

Collection – A body of cultural and/or heritage material. Collections may be physical, intangible or digital.

Collections development policy – A policy document which shapes a museum’s collections by guiding acquisition and disposal, and is led by the museum’s statement of purpose.

Communities – A group of individuals who share a particular characteristic, set of beliefs or attitudes. Museum communities are not fixed. Communities are not necessarily based on their geographic location.

Dealing – Making a speculative acquisition with the intention of reselling for profit.

Decolonisation in museums – A long-term process that seeks to recognise the integral role of empire in museums – from their creation to the present day. Decolonisation requires a reappraisal of our organisations and their history and an effort to address colonial structures and approaches to all areas of museum work.

The [MA decolonisation guidance](#) provides further information about what decolonisation in museums means and looks like in practice.

Disposal – The formal decision by a governing body to remove items from its accessioned collection (‘deaccessioning’) and manage the removal of those items through an agreed method. The MA guidance, [Off the Shelf: A Toolkit for Ethical Transfer, Reuse and Disposal](#), provides further information and ethical advice.

Due diligence – Ensuring that all reasonable measures are taken to establish the facts before deciding a course of action, particularly in identifying the source and history of an item offered for acquisition or use before acquiring it, in repatriation or restitution proposals, or in understanding the full background of a sponsor, lender or funder.

Governing body – The principal body of individuals in which rests the ultimate responsibility for policy and decisions affecting the governance and operations of the museum. Legal title to the assets of the museum may be vested in this body.

Inequitable power structures (in relation to legacies of colonialism and empire) – There is an unequal distribution of power that exists in museums caused by the legacy of Britain’s colonial past. White people enjoy a structural advantage and rights that other racial and ethnic groups do not, both at an organisational and an individual level.

Item – A physical, non-tangible or digital object or material held by a museum.

Partner organisation – An organisation with which a museum has built up a formal relationship relating to museum activities or funding.

Public – All individuals, groups, and communities who are not part of the museum’s internal workforce but who interact with, are served by, or are impacted by the museum and its activities. This includes visitors, audiences, community members, stakeholders, and society at large. The term reflects the broad responsibility museums have to serve diverse interests and maintain public trust.

Restitution – The process of returning cultural material to its original owners although the process can encompass more than this. Details are set out more clearly in the [Arts Council England Guidance on Restitution and Repatriation](#) and the [Museums Association’s Supporting Decolonisation in Museums](#).

Repatriation – The process of returning cultural material to its place of origin although the process can encompass more than this and is set out more clearly in the [Arts Council England Guidance on Restitution and Repatriation](#) and the [Museums Association’s Supporting Decolonisation in Museums](#).

Source community – A group which identifies themselves as a community and would normally be expected to have a shared geographical location, shared cultural or spiritual and religious beliefs and shared language; or to share some of these facets; and which is recognised as the cultural source of items held in a museum collection.

Transparent – Acting with an attitude of openness and honesty about the ideas, processes, and actions of the museum. Enable audiences to access and engage with information.

Workforce – A term that describes those who formally contribute to the operations and activities of an organisation. The workforce includes paid staff, volunteers, trustees, freelancers and consultants.

Positive workplace – An environment free from discrimination, bullying and excessive demands where everyone has space to thrive, grow, and contribute and where wellbeing is prioritised, regardless of role, status and background.

Development

The MA has acted as the guardian of UK museum ethics since the first Codes of Practice and Conduct were introduced in 1977. These were updated in 1987, 1991, 2002, 2007, and 2015.

The MA conducted a review of the Code of Ethics in full consultation with the sector between 2023 and 2025.

The aim of the review was for the code to better reflect changes in the sector and society since the last review in 2014/15.

In July 2023, the MA openly recruited the Code of Ethics review working group to:

- Review and assess the effectiveness of the Code of Ethics
- Support consultation with the wider sector on the effectiveness of the code
- Make recommendations for any suggested amendments to the code, or for any additional guidance, to the [Ethics Committee](#) and the [MA board](#)

Consultation during the review included:

- A sector-wide online survey
- Four sector-wide online consultation events on the themes of anti-racism and decolonisation, collections, climate justice, and workforce and governance
- Engagement with key sector bodies and Accreditation partners
- An online consultation event with community partners of museums
- Consensus-building workshops led by Janet Marstine, former MA Ethics Committee member and retired associate Professor of Museum Studies at the University of Leicester

The Code of Ethics and the law

All museums are bound by national laws and international conventions. The Code of Ethics for Museums defines standards that are often higher than those required by law. However, the code cannot override the legal obligations and rights of those who work in or for museums, including those arising from any contractual relationship with an employer, donor or client.

The Code of Ethics is subordinate to the legal powers and obligations of museum governing bodies and the legal powers and obligations of individual members of such bodies. However, the MA believes this code’s provisions to be in the best interests of the sector and the public and therefore urges all museum governing bodies (and where appropriate, subsidiary, subcontracted or delegated bodies such as executive committees, contractors or managing bodies) to respect it.

The Code of Ethics and other voluntary standards

Ethical standards in this document help to underpin the Accreditation scheme for museums in the UK at an organisational level. Accreditation is administered by Arts Council England in partnership with the Welsh Government, Museums Galleries Scotland and the Northern Ireland Museums Council. Consult [Arts Council England’s Accreditation Scheme guidance](#) for further information.

The MA supports the work of specialist organisations and networks in the UK whose members are involved in museum work and who may produce their own codes of ethics and ethical guidelines. The MA can help in cross-referencing to these codes and guidelines and in referring enquirers to appropriate sources of specialist advice.

The MA supports the International Council of Museums’ (ICOM) work and works closely with ICOM UK. We aim for the Code of Ethics for Museums to be consistent with the Code of Ethics for Museums worldwide produced by the ICOM. However, at the time of publishing this document, the ICOM review of its Code of Ethics is ongoing and its outcome unknown.

AGM 2024

A - Apologies for absence

None.

B - Minutes

The minutes of the 2023 Annual General Meeting of the MA held on Tuesday 7 November at 1430 at The Glasshouse International Centre for Music, Gateshead and via our chosen conferencing platform were put to the meeting for approval. Julie Taylor Kent proposed, seconded by Catherine Spencer, that the minutes be accepted as a true record. Carried.

C - Annual Report and Accounts of the Museums Association

D - Report on financial position

Mo Suleman, MA Treasurer, gave a brief overview of the key financial points for the 2023/24 accounts. 24/25 income budgets are higher than 23/24 actual. Unrestricted income is higher, in line with steady growth in trading income.

Unrestricted income is budgeted to increase in 24/25 across all areas, as we continue to recover from the impacts of the pandemic. At present we are on target to meet these budgets.

Employment costs are budgeted to be slightly higher in 24/25 due to meeting staffing requirements and a cost of living pay increase.

Direct costs increase in 24/25 due to high inflation on costs such as paper and print for Museums Journal, as well as on running more events.

Depreciation will decrease as recent capital projects are fully depreciated.

Lucy Bickley proposed, seconded by Rebecca Blackburn, that the Annual Report, Accounts and Financial Report be formally received. Carried.

E/F - Individual and Institutional membership subscriptions

Following a long period of frozen and below-inflation rises in membership rates, with inflation reduced the MA proposed an inflationary rise of 2.5%.

This represents a £1 per annum increase for Essential members and £2 per annum increase for Concessionary and Full members. Institutional members will pay between £2 and £62 more per annum, with the majority increasing by £5 or less. The proposal sees bands as well as fees increasing, meaning that some organisations may pay significantly less.

Beloved Elizabeth Adonai proposed, seconded by Hannah Mather that individual membership subscription rates are increased by 2.5%. Carried.

Janet Dugdale proposed, seconded by Stella Byrne that institutional membership subscription rates are increased by 2.5%. Carried.

G - Adoption of revised Articles of Association

Over the past 18 months we have undertaken an extensive review of our governance. The aims of the review were to recognise and reflect the devolved nations of the UK better, to improve representation and engagement and to deliver best practice.

The review has involved research on best practice across many similar organisations and consultation with our membership and stakeholders in each of the four nations as well rigorous discussions at nations committee.

The result of the review are recommendations that:

- better reflect the different contexts and interests of our members in the four nations
- improve our communications and consultation with our members
- recognise and address the barriers to taking part in governance
- better utilise and appreciate the time our many member volunteers give to the MA
- follow best practice in governance across elections, meetings, committees.

The proposals outlined in this Agenda Item are related to the technical changes to the Articles of Association. Alongside updates to governance best practice, the significant change is to have more elected trustees to our board (the balance will now be 10 elected and four appointed trustees) and to create directly elected trustee places on our board from each of the four nations – ensuring that for example members in Wales members have the opportunity to vote for a trustee from Wales.

All the changes were set out with the AGM agenda and our current board unanimously recommend these changes as progressive and positive improvements to our governance.

Steph Burge proposed, seconded by Rachael Rogers, to adopt the revised Articles of Association. Carried.

H - Auditors

It was recommended that Kingston Smith be re-appointed as auditors to the association until the conclusion of the next general meeting. David Juler proposed, seconded by Emma Heslewood, that Kingston Smith be appointed auditors to the MA. Carried.

