

Museum of North Craven Life: retail improvements

What was the issue?

The Museum of North Craven Life was founded in 1977 and concentrates on the social history and built environment of North Craven. Since 2001 it has been located in The Folly, a Grade I listed 17th century building in the heart of Settle

The team at Settle were aware that the 'shop' area in the entrance hall of The Folly wasn't working well. They had very few sales and no space in which to display the kind of merchandise which might attract families and children. They wanted to transform a previously uninspiring area, enhance visitor experience and increase retail capacity without creating a negative impact on the entrance hall of The Folly.

How did Museum Development Yorkshire help?

In 2013 they were given support from MDY to review their retail operation and come up with an action plan. At the same time they were encouraged to submit an application to AIM for the necessary funds to carry out the project.

What happened?

The MDY grant was used to fund support from Graham Bancroft of Heritage Retailing. Graham provided a wealth of imaginative and highly practical ideas, both for display units and a revitalisation of their stock. The AIM grant allowed them to also work with a specialist designer, Richard Dawes, who designed and manufactured retail units which were tailor-made for their space and suitable for the new ranges they wished to stock.

As the units were only installed in mid-October 2014, two weeks before the end of their season, it is still too early for any evaluation of the long-term effect of the project on visitor numbers and spending patterns. However the team are delighted

with the initial response they have received both from visitors and their own volunteers.

“The new units have successfully 'de-cluttered' the area and act as an immediate focal point, which at the same time does not detract from the architectural features of the space. This has been achieved through the calculated simplicity of the design which is very modern and does not attempt to mimic its surroundings. The units are mobile so that they can easily be moved to enable other events to take place in the entrance hall. The re-stocking of the shop has also been very well received and it is encouraging to watch younger visitors immediately 'home in' on the items we have chosen”.

Find out more

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