

Museum Development Yorkshire Case Study

Museum of North Craven Life – Coffee House Project

What was the issue?

The Museum of North Craven Life was not previously able to open daily, all year round. Additionally, the museum was not appealing to a wide ranging audience, and was not considered to be as financially stable as it could be.

How did Museum Development Yorkshire help?

MDY were able to assist the Museum of North Craven Life by providing the assistance and expertise necessary to improve. A consultant with experience of integrating catering facilities into heritage attractions was assigned to the museum and proved invaluable. Problems arose soon after the coffee house was opened, but these were manageable due to the expertise offered by the consultant. The consultancy facilitated workshops to bring trustees, museum volunteers, and coffee house staff together to consider the development of the organisation as a whole.

What happened?

The consultancy led to a better understanding of roles and engendered a shared purpose. Visitor numbers rose and efforts continue to be made to open the Museum of North Craven Life all year round. The opening of the coffee house is benefitting the local economy by attracting visitors all year round as a destination with a good wet-weather attraction, open daily. A wider range of people are being introduced to the historic house and museum as a result, with many local people experiencing the building for the first time. The museum is experiencing a great increase in room hire bookings for a wide range of events, including group meetings, workshops, book launches and private parties. This is because hirers appreciate the convenience of on-site catering and the ambience of the building. Furthermore, with the help and advice of a specialist governance consultant over a period of 18 months, the museum has been able to completely update and revise the Trust's governing document and

register it with the Charity Commission and Companies House. The revised document now embeds the museum as one of the two main objects of the Trust and clearly defines its purpose and relationship with the building preservation objective. The exercise proved very fruitful in engaging all Trustees in carefully thinking through all aspects of the Trust's governance and has led to a greater understanding of their duties and responsibilities. This has been further reinforced by attendance at an AIM seminar on Trustee performance and recruitment.

Find out more

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