

Annual Review 2020 - 2021



Working for a stronger, more resilient museums sector

In 2020-21 Museum Development Yorkshire supported museums across Yorkshire and the Humber as they adapted to an alien landscape of social lockdowns and restrictions, at the start of the first pandemic for a century. The museum community responded with great resilience. We all made rapid and unprecedented changes to our ways of working, in a context of great uncertainty and health anxiety.

The legal closure of all but essential services created unimagined social pressures and financial risks, alongside the introduction of working and schooling from home, and staff furloughing. The question of "what now?" was quickly answered in a whirl of new restrictions and regulations, but also a new era of state and charitable financial intervention.

Supported by Arts Council England, Museum Development Yorkshire was able to keep its staff working throughout. The MDY team were already experienced in collaborating via online software, with the team dispersed around the region and most being homeworkers. Videocalls now became an everyday tool, rather than an occasional one.

MDY's key roles were:

- facilitating museums' access to emergency funding;
- enabling communication between museum staff and volunteers;
- adapting our training provision to online delivery.

Museum Development Yorkshire provides advice and development support to museums in Yorkshire and the Humber. We support museums large and small to enable them to achieve their ambitions: to understand and care for their collections, to share them with wide audiences, and through this to become more sustainable as organisations.

We work directly with museums, providing one-to-one support and group learning that builds on existing skills and progress. We give information and advice, award grant funding, and connect museums with expert, bespoke consultancy. We also provide confidential advice and support for museums, where needed.

For a small museum like ours, there's no doubt that MDY is vital to our long-term success, and one of the most important sources of support. Combining professional advice, networking and small grants is an excellent system. MDY make us feel part of the mainstream museum world.

**Martin Watts, Honorary Curator,
Museum of the Wagoner's
Special Reserve**

Nurturing the museum community

Visiting museums and meeting staff and volunteers is at the heart of MDY's work. However, lockdown immediately suspended our usual menu of site visits, training days and forum meetings.



Elevenes with MDY

We quickly recognised the need to maintain communication with people, and facilitate contact between museums

to share ideas, information and response strategies. The idea of an online **Elevenes with MDY** was born. We began convening a weekly open forum for any museum staff or volunteers to join us online, to share experiences and seek support.

Elevenes with MDY proved very valuable. Some days, contact with different people was a vital social act for us and our guests. We also sensed a community of shared experience and support growing.

Regular contact with a varying group kept us in touch with museums' challenges and created a channel for discussing a constant flood of information.

As the situation settled, we developed Elevenes with MDY into a more structured offer. We advertised a discussion topic and invited guest speakers. This reflected the change from the fleet and frenetic response to first lockdown, to museums becoming able to grasp new development opportunities despite the challenging context.

Elevenes with MDY ranges across the breadth of museum activity, from collections care to diversifying volunteering to developing digital skills. These short online sessions enable us to connect with different people, and nurture the museum community in a new way.



"I really enjoyed the format and discussion. It felt informal and inclusive, helpful and informative."

A festive museum object shared at Christmas Elevenes. It is a mother of pearl shell with a Nativity scene cut into it, probably dating from the 19th century.
© Rotherham Museums, Arts & Heritage

MDY delivered 55 online Elevenes with MDY in 2020-21, welcoming over 550 attendances.

Developing and delivering online learning



Inspired by the success of **Eleveses** with MDY, we quickly adapted to delivering online learning sessions, co-ordinated by Joanne Bartholomew.

A vital innovation was **Covid-19 Re-Opening** training. We supported museums to welcome visitors back in safe ways, focusing on:

- front of house procedures
- equal access for disabled people
- family-friendly welcome
- collections care

MDY delivered over 40 online learning sessions to over 700 participants.

93% of evaluation respondents improved or acquired new skills from online learning.

The Re-Opening training was really informative, and guided a lot of our work during that period. I like what MDY do as it is always friendly so makes me feel at ease and welcome for my neurodiversity. I always get benefit from meeting other Yorkshire curators.

The programmes have provided us with time to reflect, together with the inspiration, skills and knowledge to move forward with confidence.

"The main benefit for us was the **peer support** and **networking**. Because you quickly shifted to online training, we could start participating in **Eleveses** and the online learning which was **invaluable** to the team."

Elizabeth Llabres,
Collections Manager,
Bradford Museums & Galleries

"I really like the way members of my team are seeing what's **relevant** to our work, and joining in with it online. There's been some **excellent** and **timely** training available. Online activity has brought us **closer to colleagues** around the region and broken down barriers. I'm glad it's being sustained."

Deborah Marsland,
Museums and Galleries Manager,
Kirklees Museums & Galleries

"Please keep going with online events even when the pandemic is over. We have been able to **attend far more** than our service could have facilitated in the old world and we have really valued and expanded our horizons as a result."

Cathryn Pike,
Cultural Engagement Officer,
Kirklees Museums & Galleries



Members of the Front of House team at Clifton Park Museum.
© Rotherham Museums, Arts & Heritage

Moving learning cohorts online

As MDY and museum staff and volunteers became familiar with online learning, we adapted our cohort learning programmes to online delivery.



MDY Front of House Cohort

The well-established **MDY Front of House Cohort**, organised by Liz Denton, continued successfully online. Museums enabled their front of house staff to pursue development opportunities during museum closures.



At **Clifton Park Museum** in Rotherham, three members of the front of house team co-produced an exhibition with contemporary artist Pippa Hale. Staff explored personal stories and their own connections to Rotherham and its communities. They also worked with colleagues from collections, and learning and engagement, to create the exhibition and associated tours and events.



A volunteer dressed as a Roman soldier engaging children with history in Malton.
© Malton Museum

Angie in her exhibition, which shared personal stories and connections to the collection.
© Rotherham Museums, Arts & Heritage

The front of house team became more visible within the museum, and became more recognised for their skills and knowledge, which in turn boosted their confidence. They also used their **tour guide training** to interact with visitors and gained confidence to initiate conversations.

Volunteers at **Malton Museum** chose to focus on outdoor tour training. They had two training sessions with Laura Malpas, one of them on site in Malton. Using the **tour guide training**, volunteers developed four different public tours which have received excellent public feedback after delivery to over 100 people.

During their Covid closure, volunteers also participated in online learning sessions. This led them to revitalise their Front of House handbook, update visitor information, and review their induction process.



MDY Banish the Backlog Cohort

Working with Collections Trust, Alan Bentley delivered MDY Banish the Backlog Cohort online.



Kirklees Museums & Galleries wanted to address a complex documentation legacy. The service has different object numbering

and collecting methods resulting from the historic merger of several museums into one service. Objects have also been passed around different sites and collections merged. Whilst documentation exists in multiple object registers and indexes, large amounts of information are not yet computerised.

The collections team recognised the need for a comprehensive documentation manual to consolidate and provide continuity of knowledge about the collections and their documentation.

Regular meetings helped to drive forward progress with the documentation manual. This created useful deadlines, and supported a structured process for writing, revising and reviewing procedures and information. External support and peer input helped clarify internal discussions about the detail of the acquisition procedure.



A Paralympic lantern used during the 2012 Paralympics at public events to promote disabled sport. Here it is being put on display in Huddersfield Leisure Centre.
© Kirklees Museums & Galleries

Collections
Trust

By joining Banish the Backlog, we knew we would benefit from the support and expertise of Collections Trust and Alan Bentley at MDY. It was really useful to work with our peers, including Bradford Museums & Galleries who had been through similar processes. We also valued being able to speak to regional colleagues who were managing collections during restricted site access in lockdown.

We now have a realistic documentation plan identifying the number of people-hours needed to complete the work, which is brilliant for seeking funding. The cohort also really helped our internal advocacy for documentation. It is a vital behind-the-scenes function which enables the wider, public outcomes of the museum service as a whole.

Frances Stonehouse,
Curator,
Kirklees Museums & Galleries

Participating in Banish the Backlog online during Covid helped me to identify the scale of work required to address the needs of our collection. This supported a decision to increase the Museum's staffing capacity, and initiate work towards a larger project to move the Museum forward.

Sarah Maultby,
Collections Manager,
Beck Isle Museum

Accreditation



Museums' work to maintain or obtain Accreditation status should be a continuous process. MDY continued to support museums with their improvements whilst Accreditation renewals were paused.

In 2020-21, Arts Council England paused the Accreditation scheme due to the pressures of Covid-19 on museums, and the difficulty of preparing for and assessing Accreditation. All Accredited and Provisionally Accredited museums had their current award status extended for a further 12 months. For museums who had recently submitted their return, Accreditation assessments were postponed until after April 2021.

Applications remained open for museums who wished to become eligible for the status of Working Towards Accreditation. In our region, the Saltaire Collection achieved Working Towards Accreditation status in October 2020.

Beginning in 1986, as a collaboration between Saltaire residents and the librarians at Shipley College, the Collection relates to Saltaire's industrial and philanthropic heritage.

During 2020-21, Helen Thornton rejoined the MDY team as Regional Accreditation Adviser, following an internal secondment at York Museums Trust. She was succeeded by Kelly Chapman in April 2021.

Image courtesy York Museums Trust.
Photo by Charlotte Graham Photography.



Sharing the website for the Saltaire Collection. Saltaire became a World Heritage Site in 2001 and is one of the earliest, largest, and most complete industrial model villages in the world. The collection is now managed by the Saltaire World Heritage Education Association (SWHEA).

© Saltaire World Heritage Education Association

Delivering bespoke support



Governance

MDY provide tailored and expert support across the range of museum functions. Effective governance and trusteeship is vital to a museum. Our team is experienced in supporting trustees to develop and evolve their museums' purpose. Covid restrictions proved no barrier to this essential work.

Ilkley Manor House

By 2020, trustees at Ilkley Manor House had recognised a need to take stock of their structure and activity, especially the balance across arts, culture and heritage. Trustees had the skills to facilitate this activity themselves, but results proved hard to achieve through purely internal conversations. So, they decided to seek MDY's **bespoke support to revisit their organisational purpose and charitable aims.**

Working with Alan Bentley and Dieter Hopkin from MDY created focus and a safe space for potentially difficult conversations. Their

experience and expertise also provided trustees with appropriate challenge, making discussions more creative and energetic. They introduced valuable context and validation in terms of what other organisations had done. The process created opportunity to explore the organisation's different options and - rather than some of the anticipated differences - arrive at a strong, shared consensus validated by external, professional advisors.

Online meetings during social restrictions were focused and productive, and were followed up with a practical on-site workshop exploring scenarios for collection acquisitions. The preceding discussions enabled more detailed and nuanced exploration of trustees' potential future collecting decisions.

Going forwards, Ilkley Manor House is confidently embracing an identity as a museum, gallery and live venue. Trustees have been liberated by the clarity of viewing the Manor House as the main heritage asset, without being tied by past collecting decisions. Their next steps will use this clarity to establish a new framework for interpretation, storytelling and audience development, using the Manor House as a backdrop.



An outdoor performance of Shakespeare at Ilkley Manor House during Covid restrictions. © Ilkley Manor House.



Equality, diversity & inclusion



MDY work with expert external consultants to support the full extent of museum development needs. We are encouraging and supporting museums to develop inclusion in their work.

The Peace Museum

The Peace Museum are committed to making their museum more diverse throughout, and to attracting more diverse audiences. They requested support to engage and build sustained partnerships with local people who they had not worked with in-depth. They chose to focus on the three protected characteristics of race, religion and sexual orientation because of an opportunity to develop past work and reawaken contacts from previous work.

MDY funded **consultancy support in equality, diversity and inclusion** by Verity Smith, who worked with curator Charlotte Hall and trustee Aisling Serrant to set up online consultation sessions with three groups: Touchstone, LGBTQ+ History Month, and Biasan, a group working with asylum seekers. Through their consultations, The Peace Museum clarified:



(Above and right) Participants at a Spoken Word Event, part of the Peace Out equality programme at The Peace Museum, which engaged people from LGBTQ+ communities.

© The Peace Museum

- how to improve engagement using exhibition content, projects and events
- how to reach people through advertising
- how to encourage people to engage digitally
- how to encourage people to volunteer

Verity helped the museum develop and distribute a survey to the groups, and then develop an **Equality Action Plan** to guide their work going forwards.

The consultation will inform The Peace Museum's future. They are keen to include diverse audiences in their engagement, as they progress plans for a site move.

One-to-one

We also provide responsive, one-to-one support for people working in a wide range of museums. We can offer confidential advice where needed.

Support from MDY was invaluable to me as the sole museum professional leading a small organisation. Their detailed knowledge of governance helped me to advocate for the changes and investment necessary to safeguard a collection and make it eligible for Accreditation. They offered sound practical advice and the support I needed to have confidence in my own professional knowledge and judgement.



Supporting museums' response to Covid-19

MDY's past and current work enabled our museums to rise to the challenge of meeting audiences' needs during social restrictions.

Kiplin Hall and Gardens

For a museum dependent on visitor income, the pandemic was an absolute threat to organisational survival. Whilst a 400-year old house could survive in the short-term, the finances and people who make the organisation work were at immediate risk.

Communication with the museum's volunteers was key. As well as frequent information emails, Kiplin ran a weekly newsletter devoted to their volunteers' lockdown social activities – crafts, artwork, walks, quizzes, and recipes from Kiplin's chef.

As the prospect of re-opening grew, volunteers were regularly surveyed on social distancing rules. Their feelings about mask-wearing informed Kiplin's approach. The museum is proud that no volunteers left them due to loss of contact or feeling undervalued.

Kiplin's independent status also allowed them to make agile, site-specific decisions. They brought forwards a change to their business model, informed by participation in the **MDY Income Generation Cohort**, with a 12-month ticket offering local people much better value.

They also accepted the offer of a mobile pizza outlet, Proper Pizza, to meet their need for outdoor catering. Outdoor pizzas proved a huge local draw and drove social media engagement too.

Kiplin is a place where people come to relax and recover from the pandemic. That's something Kiplin does in spades, so that's what we did.

Our volunteer team love Kiplin, and it's an important part of their social life and routine. As well as keeping people fully informed, we wanted to ensure they were looked after. We called more vulnerable people at least fortnightly to check in with them.

James Etherington,
Director,
Kiplin Hall and Gardens

The desire to play their part also saw Kiplin gift over 100 free-visit vouchers to key workers nominated via social media. These were converted to a 12-month pass at people's first visit.

Strong instincts and agile decisions made Kiplin's 2020 season an unexpected success. They consolidated that in 2021, with a 65% visitor increase despite a shorter opening season. Informed by work through the **MDY Audience Champions Cohort**, Kiplin shifted to hyper local marketing via social media and local magazines. This has boosted their core audience of older people, and also developed a new, local family audience.



A view of Kiplin Hall from across the lake. © Kiplin Hall and Gardens.



Children with their family's Key Worker pass for Kiplin Hall and Gardens.
© Kiplin Hall and Gardens.



Luxury and elegance inside Kiplin Hall.
© Kiplin Hall and Gardens.

Providing Museum Development Art Fund Recovery Grants

With Art Fund support, MDY offered Covid-19 emergency grants of up to £10,000. Grants were for museums which were unable to access other funding. They supported valuable work by museums.

Kirklees Museums & Galleries

My School is at The Museum was an innovative schools offer which responded directly to the impacts of Covid-19 on learning. Working with a local school, together with Chol Theatre and Children's Art School, Kirklees Museums & Galleries designed a creative week-long programme for Year 5 & 6 children. Each week for three weeks, a whole class took up residence at the Tolson Museum, using all the galleries as teaching, discussion and activity spaces.

Every week began with a mystery to solve around missing museum objects and a letter from Mr Tolson asking for help. Being immersed in the museum was much more powerful than a short visit.

The project effectively increased children's understanding about the locality and developed their pride of place – what Huddersfield has been in the past and is today. It helped the children understand collective memories and local identity, and developed their confidence, communication skills and self-esteem. Other visitors enjoyed the buzz of children working around the museum, and enjoyed seeing their work.

Art Fund_

In my time here, I have made myself and my school proud.

Archie

It felt like a week of golden time.

Tianney

Inside my head was screaming with excitement.

Gabriel

We hope children will remember it forever as a wonderful experience after the challenges of Covid-19. We are looking for ways to mainstream this programme for all Kirklees schoolchildren to take part in.

**Cathryn Pike,
Cultural Engagement Officer,
Kirklees Museums & Galleries**



Children made time machines, wrote letters and produced crafts at the Tolson Museum.
© Kirklees Museums & Galleries

Burton Constable Hall

Enforced closure of the Hall during lockdowns, and at times the parkland, saw financial pressure increase at Burton Constable. It also prompted a shift in audience types. A Recovery Grant enabled Burton Constable to pursue new opportunities which also maintained their financial sustainability. Their aims were to:

- extend interpretation of the complex site into the parkland
- consolidate new local audiences by increasing engagement with visiting families
- promote the use of green spaces for mindfulness and wellbeing

Burton Constable created ten large outdoor panels featuring images, infographics and 'Little Explorers' activities, celebrating the natural treasures of a new parkland trail. Additional indoor panels made available Covid-safe information when the Hall reopened. An extension of the Little Explorers trail from the grounds into the Hall created a cohesive experience and improved engagement with all visitors –



New interpretation panels indoors and out, at Burton Constable Hall. © Burton Constable Foundation

not just children! New online resources allowed a step into the digital realm with an audioguide, online feedback form, and visitor information available via QR codes.

It's wonderful to see visitors taking part in the park's Little Explorers trail, and to know we're raising the park's profile and public awareness of the complex processes which protect its complex ecosystems. Survey respondents felt they'd be more likely to recommend the site to friends with young families, while volunteers have commented on the increased engagement the indoor panels have inspired in our visitors.

**Philippa Wood,
Curator,
Burton Constable Hall**





The Five Monks by Hirst Walker, one of the Staithes Group of Artists. The painting from the Pannett collection was reproduced as an overlay on the doors. © Pannett Art Gallery

Pannett Art Gallery

Pannett Art Gallery took the opportunity to tackle a longstanding problem in their visitor welcome by replacing the heavy and imposing wooden doors at the Gallery's entrance. The doors had always created a physical and psychological barrier to entering the Gallery. Due to being held open for convenience on warm days, they also created a risk to collections through environmental fluctuations and insects entering the space.

Installing sliding glass doors, with touch-free automatic opening, provided a Covid-safe measure for re-opening plus many permanent benefits. The beautiful glass doors open up the space, making it lighter and changing the whole feel of the place. Curator Helen Berry commissioned a vinyl overlay, reproducing an eye-catching artwork from the Staithes Collection, which was applied to the glass doors to make them safely visible. Some detective work was needed to trace the artist's closest living relative to obtain permission to use the image, and this also led to a lovely connection during a time of social isolation.

The Gallery's entrance foyer had become uninviting with an accumulation of cables, boxing and a leaflet rack, and this was emptied and boarded out to create a clean, clear and very pleasant first impression before visitors enter via the new doors.

Looking ahead, and building on learning from the **MDY Front of House Cohort** and **MDY Family-Friendly Cohort**, Pannett will work with Whitby Museum on installing images of a visual journey through the building, and providing activity backpacks for children.



Extending a warm welcome to visitors at Pannett Art Gallery, Town Mayor of Whitby Councillor Linda Wild declares the new doors open. © Pannett Art Gallery

Bradford Police Museum

Forecasting an increase in their visitor income in 2020, and having just employed their first paid staff member, Bradford Police Museum unfortunately fell between the cracks of the main Covid-19 funding options. Ineligible for NLHF support because they had not yet submitted a prepared application, they were not yet Accredited with Arts Council England, and were too small for government grants. Whilst they could have furloughed their day-a-week staff member, this would have left them without staff capacity.

A Recovery Grant offered a lifeline. The Museum was able to keep its administrator working, prepare for eventual re-opening, and keep functioning whilst closed to visitors. The Museum built on **bespoke retail support and development**, through participation in the **MDY Front of House Cohort**. As a result, they recruited new volunteers and introduced new procedures, improving their volunteer induction process and manual. Volunteers were involved during

lockdown via videocall, with groups working very productively on the visitor journey, schools offer, ghost tours and special events.

When the Museum was able to re-open in May 2021, they were feeling fit for purpose due to the work enabled in the past year. The quality of their Covid safety planning was especially praised by staff from Bradford City Council. In the six months since re-opening, the refurbished shop doubled its previous takeover and profit, thanks to the retail development and Front of House skills training. As a result of their volunteer development, they also recruited new curatorial volunteers, increasing their diversity and skill base.

Looking to the future, the Museum will revisit tips from the MDY Front of House Cohort to continue their volunteering development, and have joined the **MDY Audience Champions Cohort** to build strong data for their audience development.

We were all able to come together to get through a potential disaster. It made all the difference in the world.

The work on re-imagining the visitor journey with Laura Malpas was excellent. We had a really good look at our audience segments, and developed character tours so that visitors can select a character and discover their fate as they progress through the galleries. It's been really popular since we re-opened.

Martin Baines,
Director,
Bradford Police Museum



Volunteer Les Vasey promoting Bradford Police Museum's Ghost Tour. © Bradford Police Museum



Welcoming new and local audiences at Beck Isle Museum in Pickering. © Pickering Beck Isle Museum

Beck Isle Museum

Beck Isle Museum used an Art Fund Recovery Grant to implement essential **audience development and marketing research** to prepare for re-opening in 2021. They identified the need to engage and build local audiences, including families. Previously the museum relied on admissions income from a tourist audience of people aged over 60, which was jeopardised by the pandemic. Changes were also planned to the admission and retail space.

The museum engaged an audience development and marketing consultant to:

- collate existing audience knowledge
- undertake a survey with users and non-users
- collate comparative data for benchmarking from other local museums and the wider area

With this information, the museum produced an audience development plan which included strategies for audience-focused events, and more targeted and cost-effective marketing.

The plan informed Beck Isle's introduction of Art Tickets for online bookings. It was well used by an increased number of families planning visits. A discount for National Art Pass also attracted new visitors. Beck Isle Museum also updated their approach to marketing, with a new focus on social media and redevelopment of their website and leaflet. The museum will have a longer-term, higher quality leaflet, which directs people to the website for specific information on opening, prices and events.

Changes to the retail space and offer were well-received. New lines of local craft goods drove a significant increase in retail turnover and increased spend per head. Looking ahead, Beck Isle will continue to focus on activities and events to build local audiences.

Facilitating access to Arts Council England Cultural Recovery Funding

MDY helped museums access Arts Council England Cultural Recovery Funding, ensuring that no museums were put at risk by the pandemic.

York Archaeological Trust

By early 2021, York Archaeological Trust had exhausted its options for maintaining financial viability during the pandemic. With reduced visitor numbers leaving a shortfall between visitor income and operating costs, support became vital. Following conversations with Michael Turnpenny, MDY provided **bespoke fundraising support** to develop the detail of a Cultural Recovery Fund application, helping to identify all costs and opportunities that could be included. The £1.9m grant made an enormous difference, bringing the Trust back to its formerly sustainable financial position,

maintaining visitor operations, retaining talented staff, and also developing new offers and new audiences to become even more financially viable going forwards.

As schools remained absent, York Archaeological Trust developed a new virtual learning hub at its Monk Bar site and began offering paid-for virtual learning visits. As a result, they have engaged with over 18,000 children via 335 sessions delivered virtually into schools, and 90 sessions to children learning from home. They also established two handling collections for virtual outreach, and delivered a free online Viking schools' week to over 12,000 children.

Remaining financially robust also enabled the Trust to build new partnerships and send touring exhibitions to other museums, including internationally. They offered installation support via videocall for the first time. Following further conversations with MDY, the Trust also embraced additional development opportunities during Covid restrictions, through the **MDY Health & Wellbeing Cohort**, and through **bespoke consultancy support and training** for Equality, Diversity & Inclusion and **Environmental Responsibility**.

Virtual Vikings at Monk Bar, York Archaeological Trust's new virtual learning hub. © York Archaeological Trust



It really felt like you were in the room with us and you brought everything to life with incredible knowledge but also so believably. ... it would be really great to still have the option to book a session with you again, as we are just too far away for a visit.

Feedback to YAT from Bedford Modern School

Bradford Museums & Galleries were at a critical moment when the pandemic began. Having undergone a major restructure, they had identified their development needs but had not yet secured the funding to implement changes. Applying to the Cultural Recovery Fund was a chance to secure budget for activity vital to their organisational development.

Bradford sought MDY's help and valued the **bespoke support** from Michael Turnpenny to confirm valid funding areas, develop their thinking, and generate a clear and concise summary of their needs and plans. They secured £208,000 for development activity. Key staff were seconded to deliver the work, with posts being backfilled to replace capacity in collections and learning teams. Staff also participated in the **MDY Everyday Innovation Cohort**, to enhance their skills in creative thinking and idea development.

Bradford targeted future financial sustainability. An external events consultant helped generate a policy and plan for sustainable events. This was backed up with a reworking of the marketing strategy, new branding and website, and dedicated support to generate social media content and engage audiences.

To develop commercial activity, an EPOS system was installed across all sites for the first time to enable effective management of retail product lines. Retail spaces were improved with new furniture and better circulation. Front of House staff were supported with new radio sets to improve communication, and training and development for re-opening. Digital donation points were procured to meet the rapid shift towards a cashless society.

Audience development was another key opportunity. An ambassador was recruited to work with young people from black and Asian communities who interacted with visitors in outdoor areas, including encouraging visitors in Lister Park to enter Cartwright Hall Art Gallery. Across the service, activity was moved outdoors. Outdoor shelters were used to offer community activities.

Vitality, the grant also paid freelance learning staff to create digital learning content for schools to use remotely, and to complement future site visits. An evaluation consultant helped to develop simple evaluation tools to monitor and develop work.



Bradford Museums and Galleries distributed 1,000 creative activity packs through community hubs and schools.
© Bradford District Museums & Galleries



We laid the foundations for work identified to develop the service, and made vital strategic progress that would not otherwise have been possible. The difference is huge. We have raised our profile with the Council and shown how the museums can support all the local authority's ambitions, for example around families and health and wellbeing. Our family learning packs were distributed via multiple Council sites, and Council leaders were able to engage with our work online.

Instead of having further funding cuts hanging over us, the potential of Bradford Museums & Galleries is now understood. People in the local authority want to work with us and are placing the service at the centre of Bradford's 2025 UK Year of Culture application.

Elizabeth Llabres,
Collections Manager,
Bradford Museums & Galleries

Kirklees Museums & Galleries

Cultural Recovery Funding of over £120,000 has influenced several changes at Kirklees Museums & Galleries. Through MDY, **bespoke fundraising support** was provided and enabled a new way of approaching funding bids.

Their focus was on finding ways that museum activity could support the local authority's Covid-related objectives. Future financial resilience and remote access to collections were also priorities.

The aim for learning was to help schools bring back the joy of learning. The funding supported a review of programmes. New learning plans were produced for Bagshaw Museum, Oakwell Hall and Tolson Museum. The team also delivered as much of their public programme outdoors as possible.

Digital development was also quickly recognised as vital for engagement and remote access. New photography of the collections is supporting a new website. Access is also being improved by the creation of 360-degree tours for people who cannot visit the museum sites.

Kirklees Museums & Galleries also strengthened their financial resilience by focusing on the early re-opening of income generating activity, such as wedding hire. They commissioned a fundraising plan, and contactless donation points were installed.

Outdoor spaces at Oakwell Hall were hugely in demand, so we agreed with the local authority to waive the admission fee to the Hall to create an inclusive offer. Anecdotally, we are now attracting more visitors, and from more diverse communities. The admission charge has not been reintroduced. We're now conducting an analysis, with a view to making a business case for relying on donations rather than a fee.

Rather than the narrative, the budget was the leading element. We needed to be very specific about the activities proposed and their financial outcomes. As a finance and business planning consultancy, it was really enlightening.

In the upheaval of the pandemic, and its direct impact on communities, we've refocused attention on core priorities such as learning, which had been squeezed by financial constraints. Health and wellbeing is another key area where we are gathering evidence of how our museums contribute to health targets. Through our core work as museums we can save the local authority costly measures later on. This has grown out of better conversations with Council colleagues, a higher profile, and being seen as part of the whole team that delivers on Kirklees' priorities.

Deborah Marsland,
Museums and Galleries Manager,
Kirklees Museums & Galleries



Outdoor spaces at Oakwell Hall attracted local audiences to Kirklees Museums & Galleries during Covid-19 restrictions.
© Kirklees Museums & Galleries



A living museum: the NYMR's survival is worth millions of pounds to the regional economy.
© The North Yorkshire Moors Railway

The North Yorkshire Moors Railway

As an independent community organisation, based on a membership of over 10,000 people, The North Yorkshire Moors Railway receives no regular public funding and is reliant on operating income from a busy summer season and popular, winter special trains. Out of the main season, there is substantial spending on maintenance and conservation. In cashflow terms, the March 2020 lockdown struck at the worst moment, as the Railway also balanced the funding needs of a major National Lottery Heritage Fund project.

Assessing their available Covid-19 funding routes, they found that their Accredited museum status added a vital option. They were unsure about pursuing it however, not having been previously funded by Arts Council England. Seeking **advice from MDY**, Dieter Hopkin gave assurance which was confirmed by Arts Council England: as an Accredited museum, NYMR was fully eligible for Cultural Recovery Funding. As the entire railway is Accredited, the Trust secured £2.5m to support the whole organisation – more than other options could offer.

By viewing their public realm as a living museum which helps people to experience a world that has disappeared, the Railway's

It gave us confidence that we could get through and come out of the other side, and in good condition. Without the funding, we would have run out of ideas and been weighed down by debt.

It has been the saving of the Railway, it's as simple as that.

Andrew Scott,
Vice Chair,
The North Yorkshire Moors Railway

future has been assured. Cultural Recovery Funding meant that they quickly regained financial buoyancy and could continue their capital projects, whilst operating with reduced visitors.

The Trust was also grateful for generous donations from its members, and emergency capital funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund. They made full use of all options.

Crucially, the funding also enabled the NYMR team to stay together. This will ensure the Trust's resilience after the pandemic, and is especially important given the challenge of recruiting the required technical and business skills in their rural location. The crisis also prompted an update of governance arrangements, strengthening the organisation's structure and diversity going forwards.

As 2020-21 drew to a close, NYMR was able to use lockdown restrictions to maintain a different revenue stream as it secured major filming contracts, underlining the Railway's role in a growing regional industry, bringing Hollywood stars and great publicity to the Railway and region.

Fast funding for smaller projects

MDY supported a range of museums with Small Grants to enable rapid and responsive changes to Covid safety needs and opportunities.



The Ropewalk, in Barton-upon-Humber, received £500 to buy a contactless donation station. This has helped them to articulate the support needed from

community partners and improved their sustainability.

Nidderdale Museum, in Pateley Bridge, received £800 to introduce contactless payment points as a response to decreasing use of cash, Covid safety, and to increase efficiency. The new system frees up volunteers from practicalities and concerns about processing cash, and is more in tune with the expectations of younger audiences that the museum would like to attract.

Hedon Museum received £3,000 towards the construction of a new entrance porch and also improved their roof insulation. This initiative reduces heat loss, so saving money and cutting their carbon footprint. It also improves preventative conservation by reducing environmental fluctuations and protecting the collections from dirt and insects, and at the same time improves the comfort of volunteers and visitors.



Visitors departing via the new porch at Hedon Museum, which re-opened safely with Covid measures in place. © Hedon Museum



Contactless donation payments made possible at The Ropewalk by a Small Grant. © The Ropewalk

It enabled an incredibly timely move to contactless payments as the pandemic accelerated people's move away from cash. More people are giving and the donation amounts have increased. We can also increase the value through Gift Aid, as we became a registered charity in April 2020.

Liz Bennet,
CEO, The Ropewalk

This gives a much better impression of the museum – that it is prepared to change with the times and strive for excellence.

Sue Welch,
Chairman, Nidderdale Museum

After 25 years as a public museum, this new addition to the building shows people that we are still growing and developing – and planning to be here for another 25 years and more!

Martin Craven,
Honorary Treasurer, Hedon Museum

The grant application and claim processes were straightforward. The grant really helped us to respond successfully to the new challenges presented by Covid-19.

MDY Internship

The Covid-19 order to work from home struck just as our fourth annual internship was about to start.

Whilst this internship has offered a different experience, there was still the opportunity to acquire new skills and develop knowledge.

In March 2020 I was getting ready for my new role with MDY. Unfortunately, due to the pandemic, the start was delayed until September. By the time I joined the team everyone was working remotely and MDY's online events were well established. While it was somewhat strange to meet my new colleagues through a screen, the induction process was very thorough. I felt welcomed and supported both by MDY and all the wonderful museum people I met online.

I quickly learned how to use Microsoft Teams and supported MDY's online training sessions, including Elevenses, Cohorts and Forums. After jumping in at the deep end with online working, I produced a guidance document for others who were new to MS Teams.

I used my front of house knowledge and worked with visitor experience colleagues from York Museums Trust to design reopening guidance for museums. I also helped produce an event for alumni of MDY's Front of House Cohort.

Working with MDY helped me develop my skills, build my knowledge of the museum sector, and grow in confidence both personally and professionally. I will take all of that with me as I move forwards in my career.

Alice Macpherson,
Intern
Museum Development Yorkshire



Front cover images:
(Clockwise from left)

Angie in her exhibition, which shared personal stories and connections to the collection.
© Rotherham Museums, Arts & Heritage.

New interpretations at Burton Constable Hall
© Burton Constable Foundation

Two images of participants doing craft activities at a Spoken Word Event, part of the Peace Out equality programme at The Peace Museum, which engaged people from LGBTQ+ communities.
© The Peace Museum

The Five Monks by Hirst Walker, one of the Staithes Group of Artists.
© Pannett Art Gallery

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Museum Development Yorkshire is one of the nine regional museum development providers in England. Together, we form a national Museum Development Network to share our knowledge and learning, and to access opportunities for museums.

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