



BISHOP'S
WALTHAM
MUSEUM

FORWARD PLAN: MARCH 2025 - 2030

1. Introduction

Bishop's Waltham Museum Trust ('the Trust') was founded in 1987. It moved to its present location, *the Farmhouse*, in 2009, under a tenancy agreement with English Heritage (EH). This property is the grounds of the privately-owned *Bishop's Waltham Palace*, under the guardianship of EH. The Museum gathers onto a single site historical collections relating to Bishop's Waltham Parish and artefacts and displays connected with the Palace itself.

The Trust holds full Museum Accreditation, and is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO). Its newly signed Managed Property Agreement (MPA) with EH runs from 2025 to 2030, under which the Trust manages Bishop's Waltham Palace and Grounds on a day-to-day basis.

2. Mission

Our mission is to enable visitors to gain an understanding of the historical development of the local area, as well as of Bishop's Waltham Palace, the latter a residence of the Bishops of Winchester in the Middle Ages, and a place that King and Court would visit and reside from time to time. Through its Collection and resources, the Trust's aim is to illustrate and interpret the social heritage of Bishop's Waltham Parish and surroundings for the enjoyment and education of all.

3. Values

We are a community-focussed organisation working to bring enjoyment and understanding to those who live and work locally, to visitors and tourists.

We endeavour to care for and develop our collections and to enrich lives through learning and understanding.

We seek to maintain an excellent working relationship with EH, to build mutually beneficial relationships with local schools, community groups, companies and institutions, and to benefit from the experience of local and national Museum Services.

We value greatly the natural environment in which the Museum and Palace is set, and are committed to working with EH to facilitate its availability to all as a beautiful green space.

4. Key Aims

The Collection

We will:

- promote enjoyable learning opportunities for all through the display and interpretation of the Collection.
- develop relationships with the wider community to stimulate curiosity and wonder, encouraging opportunities for deeper engagement with the Collection through exhibitions, talks and events.
- Safeguard, conserve and develop the Collection for existing and future generations

- provide physical and online access to the Collection, particularly to the photographic archive.

The Palace and Grounds

In partnership with EH we will

- help to ensure that the Palace and Grounds are a valuable resource for those who live and work locally, and for visitors: a place to relax, explore and wonder.
- achieve this by opening the grounds as often as possible and through our day-to-day management of the site.
- encourage visitors to improve their historical and social understanding, by visiting the EH display in the Museum and the complementary collection.
- Provide educational programmes and promotional activities from time to time.

5. Review of previous plan and achievements

- Renewed MPA with EH from April 2019 – 2023 (subsequent renewal delayed by Covid)
- Established regular trustee meetings solely to address issues and opportunities arising from our Action Plan (Appendix 1), the latter being regularly referenced and updated.
- Sharing, more widely, responsibilities and tasks, with Trustees and Volunteers.
- Improved electronic means of accepting visitor donations.
- Eliminated the documentation backlog

- Acquired the Austin and Wyatt Collection and completed initial sorting prior to eventual distribution of items not being kept and accessioning items to retain.
- Held one major exhibition in each of the past 5 years and a small exhibition in 2020.
- Reformed the Trust into a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO), with new banking arrangements.
- Begun printing and selling local interest postcards to visitors.
- Developed / Improved relationships with a range of local institutions, societies and schools.
- Expanded our reach by joining the Heritage Open Day scheme offering tours since 2022.
- Modified an antique radio to enable visitors to listen to Oral History audio clips to create a diverse experience.
- Contributed to Oral History Bench in the town which plays clips from the museum's oral history collection
- Improved storage facilities.
- Improved display of some collection items (e.g. guns, etched shop advertising glass, cast iron signpost roundel).

5a. Review of consequences of Covid in 2020-2021

The Museum responded to the COVID outbreak by adapting and opening in a limited way, while extending the opening hours of the grounds. It prompted the first of our virtual exhibitions themed around the 75th VE and VJ day anniversary and more have now been created.

6. Priorities

We set out below the six areas for development over the next five years based on our Key Aims. These will be executed by continuing to implement our SMART Action Plan (Appendix 1), including Compliance and Accreditation. It is cross-referenced to the current SWOT analysis (Appendix 3).

1. Make the Museum more capable of fulfilling its Mission

- Hold one major exhibition per year where possible
- Look for ways to engage with younger generations
- Develop online research facilities
- Accommodate audience research in our decision making
- Investigate value and expense of historical Town Model
- Achieve MPA renewal in 2030

2. Conserve and Improve the Collection so that it is safeguarded and updated.

- Determine and address current risks to the Collection
[Recognised that the collection is housed in the Farmhouse under a tenancy agreement with EH].
- Improve implementation of IPM plan, pest control and training.
- Carry out further training on the revised Emergency Plan.
- Catalogue newly donated objects from 2023 onwards.
- Complete the scanning and cataloguing of the Bosworth Photographic collection (85%) and commence the accessioning of the Austin & Wyatt archive.
- Further improve how the Collection is displayed and stored.
- Restore the two Padbury clocks.

3. Improve communication and marketing so that the Museum is clearly visible to the local community
 - Determine and undertake surveys in local community to assess and improve awareness
 - Survey Stakeholders to determine how the Museum may be of greater value – use to review Key Aims, Priorities and Action Plan
 - Increase the number of Members to 70
 - Review annually Social Media presence
 - Review if increased opening hours are desirable and possible

4. Improve the physical environment of the Farmhouse so that it is a pleasure to visit
 - Keep under review significant improvements and repairs that may be needed, and raise with EH accordingly
 - Keep under review re-occurring issues and minor repairs that are needed, and liaise with EH accordingly
 - Maintain a regular cleaning programme

5. Establish and maintain an effective Trustee body.
 - Maintain up to date skills audit
 - Identify missing skills and any inability by the existing Trustee Body to complete the Action Plan within the timeframe set
 - Actively identify/seek to recruit trustees according to need

6. Compliance

- Ensure the Trust's documentation, including its policies are compliant, that Accreditation is maintained, and that the MPA remains in place.
- Work with EH to ensure that the building is adequately protected against fire and theft, accepting that it is a historical building and that funds are limited.

7. Finance

Income and Expenditure Summary 2024

Income	£	Expenditure	£
Friends subscriptions	445	Conservation	665
Donations at	2,353	Development	199
Bank Interest	462	Book purchases	737
Gift Aid	686	Equipment	1347
Book sales	357	Events	172
Grant	395	Rates & Insurance	815
Insurance contribution	237	Website	145
		Subscriptions	103
		Misc. expenses	294
Surplus	458		

In 2024 we continued our practice of buying up stocks of pre-printed books and guides, for future sale, resulting in expenditure exceeding income. Donations increased significantly, partly due to the purchase of a more user-friendly donation terminal.

Funds (year-end 2024)

Continuity Fund £3,500

Reserves Fund £18,750

In accordance with Trustee Reserves Policy dated Oct 2024

Appendices

1. Action Plan

The Action Plan sets out how we will achieve our Priorities (using SMART criteria), enabling us to monitor progress regularly.

2. Budget

The budget flows from the 2024 accounts, and allocates funds to the Action Plan as follows:

General Income and Expenditure

Estimates for succeeding two years

Extraordinary Expenditure

Categorised into three *Types*:

- 1) Materials (cabinets/storage/lighting/displays/signage) in support of existing museum activities
- 2) Exhibitions.
- 3) Special projects from 'ring-fenced' funds e.g. a historical model of the town; new exhibits otherwise beyond our usual reach; enhanced child-friendly content.

This budget and the policies that drive it, require us to maintain a general reserve of £3,500.

3. SWOT Analysis – 2025

Strengths

1. The only museum dedicated to Bishop's Waltham with a varied collection of artefacts, archives and photos.
2. The museum site is of significant historical interest, being the ancient Palace and Grounds of the Bishops of Winchester.
3. The museum is in the centre in the town of Bishop's Waltham, and has attractive open space and a car park for easy access.
4. 5-year Managed Property Agreement with EH.
5. Committed, dynamic, and locally based trustees and volunteers.
6. Support of the Parish Council and other local organisations.
7. Support of the local English Heritage team, Winchester City Museum and Hampshire Cultural Trust.
8. Acquired Accredited Museum status in 2015 and seeking re-accreditation in 2025.

Weaknesses

1. Physical limitations of the Farmhouse, an environment which can be cold (especially in winter) for those who work there. Limitations on electrical sockets and lighting possibilities.
2. Environment is out of our control to improve as maintenance is in the hands of English Heritage.
3. Shortage of expertise.
4. Limited storage facilities for, and access to, the Collection.
5. Absence of visitor facilities (toilets, shop, coffee shop etc.)

Opportunities

1. Capacity to raise the profile of the museum in the local community and beyond.
2. Potential for extended opening hours, especially during school holidays
3. Develop partnership with Local Museum Services / joint ventures with EH.
4. Potential to attract new Members.
5. Explore funding / grants for specified projects.
6. Increase skills and knowledge of collection management and care.

Threats

1. 5-year Managed Property Agreement is dependent on renewal by EH.
2. The maintenance and facilities of the building are dependent on EH.
3. Collection integrity is affected by the environment within the building together with normal threats and risks.

4. Risk Assessment

The Trust's risk assessment of the Museum is revised annually. It includes recommendations from EH, whose own risk assessment covers Bishops Waltham Palace Grounds.

5. Access Statement

The Access Statement addresses the Trust's commitment to increasing access to our Collection for all the community; how information about it is made available as widely as possible; and how it is interpreted. It was approved 14th January 2025 and will be reviewed 14th January 2030

6. Supplementary Information

Location

3 Station Road, Bishop's Waltham, Hampshire SO32 1DH

Charitable Incorporation Organisation (CIO)

An Association CIO is a legal entity specifically intended for non-profit organisations whose members (Friends) have voting rights. A CIO is registered with the Charity Commission only, and not with Companies House. Our CIO number is 1188140.

Accreditation

Accreditation is the Arts Council's standard by which museums in England are judged. It has been designed to assist museums to conduct their business in a professional manner and for their governing bodies to assess their performance. Our existing Accreditation is being renewed in 2025, and the quality of this Forward Plan will play a key part in a successful renewal.

English Heritage – Maintained Property Agreement (MPA)

The MPA is a 5-year agreement between English Heritage and the Trust by which the latter is responsible for the day to day care and management of the Palace and Grounds including opening and closing the grounds to the public. EH retains overall control and care together with liability for any financial outlay. EH is also responsible for the upkeep of the Farmhouse, where the Museum collection is held. The current MPA has just been renewed and runs until 2030.

In the last 3 years, EH has completed a £1.5 million consolidation of the walls of the Palace Ruins, that have been affected by ivy, and the repair and replacement of the grounds' entire boundary walls. The work was completed in 2024. In March 2025 English Heritage installed a new visitor viewing platform in the west tower, which was opened in March.

Under the MPA EH can rent the grounds out during which time the museum usually closes. Bishop's Waltham Festival is an annual event in the grounds during which time the museum is closed except for afternoon music sessions where we open by arrangement with the organisers.

Stakeholders

Many individuals and organisations have a stake in Bishop's Waltham Museum. These include friends/members, volunteers, residents, visitors, local businesses, Bishop's Waltham Society, the Town Team, Parish Council*, photographic society, local churches, schools and the trustees. Of special importance is the relationship we have with English Heritage.

* Organisation with a representation on the Trustee Body

Visitor Numbers to Museum

2022: 3,000 2023: 2,500 2024: 3,100

Visitor Numbers to Palace grounds (counters installed in 2023)

2023/4: 78,000

Major Exhibitions

2021: Maps, Maps, Maps (2020Vision in Hampshire Record Office)

2022: Henry VIII and the Treaty of Waltham 1522

2023: Sport in Bishop's Waltham

2024: 2020Vision Photography of the Town and Highlights of the Collection

2025: Bishop's Waltham Branch Line – How a small railway made a big difference (Part of Railway200 celebrations)

Future Planned Exhibitions

2026: (Railway Exhibition to be retained)

Previous Community Engagement

St Peter's Fair – annual

Parish Picnic - annual

Conservation in Action Family Day – August 2021

Henry VIII weekend – July 2022

Coronation picnic – May 2023

Party at the Palace – July 2024

D Day beacon lighting – 2024

Future Community Engagement

St Peter's Fair – annual

Community picnic - annual

D Day beacon lighting – 2025

KidsTreat – 2025

Craft day – 2025