

A woman with dark hair and a young child with blonde hair are looking up at a colorful, abstract mural. The mural features large, overlapping shapes in shades of orange, yellow, and green, with a stylized sunburst pattern. The woman is smiling and looking towards the right, while the child is looking towards the left. The scene is brightly lit, suggesting an indoor museum setting.

Royal
Cornwall
Museum

**Things are
changing at the
Royal Cornwall
Museum**

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“

This exhibition is profound

and thought-provoking ”





Our founding values **hold true today.**

We want to establish and share collections and archives that celebrate Cornwall and Cornish culture, create a space at the heart of Cornwall where ideas can be discussed and challenged and become a place for sharing knowledge, learning, creativity, and ambition.



**WATCH THE ROYAL
CORNWALL MUSEUM
INTRO VIDEO**

OUR MISSION AND 1818 FOUNDING VALUES

To establish and share collections and archives that celebrate Cornwall and Cornish culture.

To create a space at the heart of Cornwall where ideas could be discussed and challenged.

To be a place for sharing knowledge, learning, creativity, and ambition.

Welcome from the chair



JULIE CAPLIN-GREY
CHAIR

The Royal Institution of Cornwall is a museum, art gallery, library, and archive.

We care for and share some of the most significant collections in Cornwall that, together, tell the story of this nation and our links to the rest of the world.

With our communities, we use these collections to look back in order to make sense of our lives today and improve our future. We believe that, in building understanding together, we build stronger communities.

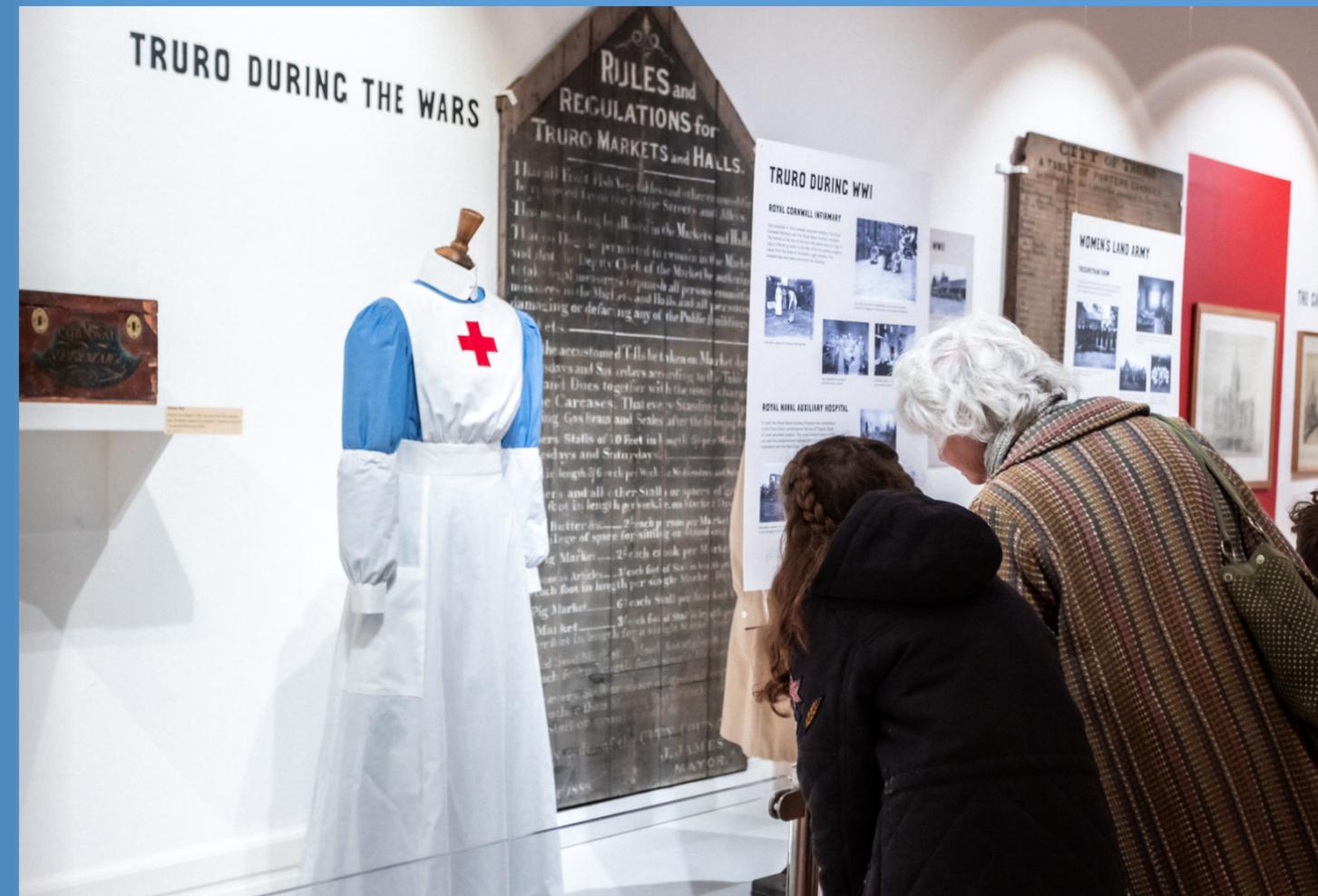
Through our activities we contribute to Cornwall's cultural, educational, social, and economic development. We create inclusive opportunities for learning, inspiration, social gathering, and well-being. We want to enrich people's lives by engaging with all our communities through exciting and inspiring activities that explore current issues through the lens of Cornish culture and heritage.

We have ambitious plans. We need to undertake a major transformation to secure our future and realise our potential. This will involve building audiences, a dynamic programme, and generating more income. To achieve this, it will be vital to undertake

a large-scale capital development to secure the building, creating a significant visitor attraction and meeting our aim of being net carbon zero by 2030.

The next five years will be critical to the success of the organisation, and we are grateful for the extraordinary support of Arts Council England through Cornwall Museums Partnership, Cornwall Council, The National Lottery Heritage Fund. This report is a thank-you and a call to action to our partners, members, and communities. The unwavering support throughout the pandemic has made all the different to our museum. We have a clear set of priorities and challenges. Success will come from the way we work together.

This is an exciting next phase of the Royal Institution of Cornwall's journey, and we need your continued support to make it happen.



Welcome from the directors



BRYONY ROBINS
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

In March 2020, the entire world had to face up to significant change as the COVID-19 pandemic brought our lives to a standstill. Everyone was affected by the global crisis, and not one leader across the world was fully prepared for the challenges ahead.

The global events that have shaken our world have led to all cultural organisations reflecting on how they contribute to a society that promotes inclusivity, well-being, and equality. This is at the heart of the RIC's vision and values. Over the last year, the Royal Institution of Cornwall has been undertaking a transformation process following several years of under-investment, and a re-boot to keep up with sector change.



JONATHAN MORTON
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The transformation started at the point that the pandemic struck and, whilst this impacted the pace of change, lockdown afforded an opportunity to experiment and explore the boundaries of what a museum can and should be.



There are challenges along with some significant successes.

We developed a new vision that places visitors and communities at its heart.

We created a new team structure that includes a cutting-edge leadership model, invested in individual team members to develop skills and retain knowledge, and introduced a matrix structure that has created a culture of collaboration and creativity.



We established an ambitious, inclusive, and high-quality programme that has introduced new ways of working with our diverse communities, and uses the historic collections to engage with relevant issues in Cornwall today.

We've developed new partnerships that align with our vision and values, and adopted different ways of working that connect the RIC with communities across Cornwall.

We've increased research, both academic and community based, that keeps our knowledge of the collections relevant and ensures ethical standards in future collecting and programming.



We've formed a new Board, led by a new Chair, that are passionate about the future of the organisation.

We've developed an outline capital project with a phased, environmentally responsible approach that has secured initial investment towards its realisation.

We've founded an international partnership that will contribute towards a sustainable financial model.

**THE ORGANISATION IS
NOW READY TO EMBRACE
FURTHER RADICAL CHANGE
THAT IS REQUIRED TO MOVE
THE CHARITY FORWARD
FOR THE NEXT DECADE**

“
Thank you. Powerful and
encouraging – you give
me hope”

Year at a glance



Introduced regular quiet opening hours with sensory bags and virtual reality experiences



Created the 'Guerrilla Museum', taking museum objects out into the community in parks and shopping areas, engaging with audiences whilst the museum was closed, connecting with 75 people about the climate crisis



Won Spirit of the Awards and achieved Highly Commended for two Cornwall Heritage Awards



Started a Weekly Saturday Art Club for 15 young people aged 12 - 16



Five community members took part in the Citizen Curators programme



Hosted four climate change exhibitions and a series of talks on the climate crisis

LAUNCHED AN INNOVATIVE NEW ENGAGEMENT PROJECT, IN PARTNERSHIP WITH MEMORY MATTERS: 'A DAY AT THE MUSEUM.'

For individuals living with dementia, combining Cognitive Stimulation Therapy and museum learning methods



90 children took over the museum on Takeover Day, giving climate tours of the natural history gallery to their peers



Built a relationship with the Leats day centre, providing free annual passes for adults with learning disabilities



Taken part in the Beyond Digitisation Project, creating 3D scans of part of the costume collection



WATCH THE BEYOND DIGITISATION VIDEO



WORKED WITH CURIOUS SCHOOL OF THE WILD ON A PREHISTORIC SURVIVAL IN THE WILD PROJECT

Working with 15 young people aged 8-19, exploring ways to reduce barriers to the outdoors and using museum collections alongside filmmaking, cooking, and other creative practice to explore survival

BEEN VISITED BY

1218

SCHOOL CHILDREN

CASE STUDY

A DAY AT THE MUSEUM

A Day at the Museum was an experimental pilot project between Memory Matters and Royal Cornwall museum.

The project invited a group of local individuals living with dementia to take part in the eight-week programme using Cognitive Stimulation Therapy (CST) methods within a museum context. Through the pilot project, we experimented with using CST and museum learning methods together, something we don't believe has been done before.

This involved themed sessions using CST methods such as reality orientation and word warm-ups alongside object handling, facilitated interrogative discussions, and close looking and watercolour painting using the collection and temporary exhibitions for inspiration.

A museum 'sports day' involved using a hopscotch in the main gallery to play word association games.

Project outcomes:

Following a watercolour session and discussion of Tony Foster exhibition, bought a canvas and refound a love of painting.

Partner of one participant said they found them communicating more verbally following the sessions.

One bit of the 'what we found out' section shows high scores for participants feeling 'safe and secure' and being 'interested'.

The project improved the day-to-day lives of the participants, improving their health, well-being and social lives. Following this successful partnership, we are excited to enter into a second phase of the collaborative project with the same group.



“Mum was really keen to talk about the sessions and her confidence has grown to attending independently. Mum has really benefited from having other topics of conversation and getting out of the house”

“It is very accessible to most people, it promotes recall and memory, it encourages interaction, it is inclusive, the subject matter is on the doorstep for so many interests”





OUR VALUES

Shared Vision,
Purpose-Driven

Collaboration
and Imagination

Open and Inclusive

Environmentally
Responsible

Our vision

Cornwall is unique. The seas and the landscapes, its language and its minerals, as well as countless generations of Cornish people who have lived and worked across this land, have all combined across the generations to make Cornwall a place like no other.

At the very heart of Cornwall and its cultural life, the Royal Cornwall Museum is a centre of exploration and learning.

Using the eclectic collections of Cornish culture, art, antiquities, archaeology,

science, and natural history, we take people on a journey from deep underground, up into the sky, around the world and way back in time. In doing this, we use our collections to help our communities look forward together.

The role of museums is changing, and our vision and values reflect this change whilst recognising that the founding principles that were established back in 1818 still hold true today. The RIC's activities, approach, and decision-making will always be driven by its charitable objectives, vision, and values.



CASE STUDY

THE GUERRILLA MUSEUM

Guerrilla Museum is a project where we take some of the museum collection out into the community, getting people talking about their connections to the objects. Their insights and perspectives then form part of our on-site exhibitions.

We wanted to take the museum collections out into the community to get people engaging with objects, so we came up with the concept of Guerrilla Museum™. Guerrilla Museum pops up in parks, events, or other venues in which you wouldn't expect to see the museum, with pieces from the collection.



WATCH THE FRAGILE PLANET AND CLIMATE CONVERSATIONS VIDEO

Our Trainee Curator, Georgia Murphy, wanted to do something on the climate emergency for her trainee exhibition, so decided to run a community consultation through the Guerrilla Museum.



GEORGIA MURPHY
TRAINEE CURATOR

She took objects from the collection that related to climate change or the environment in various ways for people to engage with. She had conversations with 75 people of all ages, who filled in luggage tags with their responses to objects. These tags were added to a protest wall in the exhibition, which other visitors were invited to add to as part of an ever-growing exhibition.



“
The Guerrilla Museum is now here to stay, and will be going into the community with different themes and objects over the next few years”



Looking forwards



“
Well done. It’s been
wonderful to see such
diverse exhibitions
and to be back in the
museum again!”



Strategic **priorities**

We will build high-performing teams who are inspired by our vision and organisational values.

Create

We will provide high-quality heritage-based learning and engagement for young people.

Growth

We will grow engagement with diverse communities, building audiences by 2026.

Finances

We will stabilise the finances and future-proof the business model by 2025/26.

Heritage

We will protect and share Cornish art and heritage through effective collections management.

Sustainability

We will be an environmentally sustainable museum by 2030.

The collection holds much potential as a catalyst for connecting with our communities, as a starting point for conversations, as inspiration for creativity and as a resource for research.

We are using the collection to build and promote a better understanding of Cornish heritage and culture, in particular in highlighting the Cornish distinctiveness that underpins Cornwall as a national minority.

By 2026 we will be:

Completing a capital project which will provide the spaces to improve the visitor experience, access, community engagement, sustainability, and commercial enterprise.

2026

“

Incredibly important we keep talking about this and pushing for change ”

Governed by a diverse, multiskilled board of trustees, measured by the organisation's values and supported by a strong constitutional framework.

An important and integral part of the Cornwall cultural heritage offer, contributing to making Truro an exciting place to live, work, and visit.

Working with a new staffing structure that is flexible, agile and focused on achieving the vision, goals, and ambition.

Offering continual opportunities for young people to train, develop, and thrive in the museum, charitable, and work sectors in Cornwall.

On course to be carbon neutral by 2030, having established an environmental policy and new partnerships to drive sustainable change. We will share our learning with the cultural sector and beyond.

Recognised nationally for our creative and innovative approach.

Engaging with a diverse audience of annual visitors onsite, online and in the community through outreach initiatives.

Financially stable, building a solid foundation for the capital project which will ensure sustainability for another 200 years.

Caring for collections in optimal environmental conditions; also, a full collections audit will be undertaken.



At the heart of our community, offering a warm, welcoming, and useful space for everyone

2026

The future of the **Royal Cornwall Museum**

The museum is uniquely placed to play a significant role in our society. Using our collections, we can explore contemporary issues with our communities.

We can encourage debate and understanding, and bring people together, building well-being and connectedness. We will help our communities explore issues and ideas by providing a space to raise difficult concepts such as addressing the climate emergency, inequality and representation, social isolation, and second homes in Cornwall.

We will allow space for difficult conversations through exhibitions, engagement activities and debates. We will bring organisations and people together to help find solutions.

We have an amazing, eclectic collection, and will use it to reflect back in order to make informed decisions about our future.



The museum is best placed to tell the story of Cornwall: why our culture has led to being recognised through national minority status and how the landscape has shaped our unique creative culture.

Royal Cornwall Museum

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