



Community Grant Report to Felixstowe Town Council

1. Summary

The Community Grant from Felixstowe Town Council has enabled the Museum to initiate its project to 'Create a creative space at Felixstowe Museum' and has attracted volunteers with different skills to the museum to help create the space and to co-create the exhibition fabric of this seasons temporary exhibition, while protecting the significant features of the Grade 1 listed building.

2. Museum Purpose

The object of the Museum Society is to engage visitors and volunteers through participation, promotion, support and development of a museum in Felixstowe. As a community museum we encourage residents, learners of all ages and visitors to take an informed interest in the local environment, social history, past historical events and memories formed by the residents and visitors to our town. We collect information and promote research about the history of the Felixstowe area and communicate this information through displays, learning activities and events, engaging volunteers and others from the local area and beyond.

3. Creating a creative space at Felixstowe Museum

Felixstowe museum is supported by its volunteers, with the appointment of a paid manager and curator we looked to expand our volunteer base and broaden our reach in the community by engaging more people in the creation and authorship of our displays and learning activities.

The Museum does not have a dedicated workshop and design studio. This project was the first stage to adapt an existing storage area to provide:

1. A creative workshop space shared by Landguard partners including the museum, fort, nature reserve and others.
2. A space that can double as a creative learning activity space for children, school visits and family activities.
3. Offer creative opportunities and skill sharing in museum design, graphic design, photography and making, to enable us to expand the reach of our volunteer recruitment across the whole demographic spectrum of Felixstowe residents.
4. Provide a neutral space, enabling residents to create and curate stories that matter to them and the community, past, present and future.

4. Outcomes

The initial plan had been to work with the Felixstowe Men's Shed and share their machine tools. However, they were offered larger premises and have moved from the Museum. Fortunately, the Museum was able to source further grant support for equipment from the

Association for Suffolk Museums (AfSM) and the Association of Independent Museums (AIM) to replace some of these tools.

A recruitment drive was held for volunteers to assist in the planning, development and fitting out of the space and we were fortunate to obtain offers of help from new volunteers with making experience. Working with the Museum Manager the volunteers designed the space and determined the most effective use of the space and available funds would be to build the workbenches and other furniture required (figure 1). This work has begun but unfortunately some volunteers were not able to attend due to COVID or other health issues for a considerable time. However, sufficient progress was made to enable the team to use the space to assist in the creation of the new 1980s exhibition. This has involved the fabrication of display walls constructed from panels donated by Ipswich Museum which has totally transformed the Felgate Temporary Exhibition Gallery allowing the whole of the space to be used for hanging without impacting on the original structure of the Grade 1 listed building (Figure 2).



Figure 1 Workbenches under construction



Figure 2 Display wall created in the Creative Space

5. Conclusion

The Museum would like to thank Felixstowe Town Council for their continued support. While still in its preliminary stage of development, the 'Creative Space' has helped to attract new volunteers with different skills and the co-creation of the new temporary exhibition celebrating the 1980s.

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Manager and Curator
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