



The Armitt Library and Museum Centre – Digital Access Consultancy Brief

Introduction

The Armitt Library and Museum Centre has received funding from Museum Development North West (MDNW) under their Sustainable Improvement Fund grant to work towards planning and specifying the requirements of an online audience focussed collections catalogue to improve access to the collection. We are looking for a consultant to prepare a digital strategy for the collections, support with training, and to advise on the first steps to creating this catalogue. This will ensure we are working towards enhancing the accessibility of the museum collections for the benefit of the public for enjoyment, interest, and research purposes. It will also consolidate the digitisation approach that the museum is already undertaking with the digital equipment and software that volunteers and staff use. We intend for The Armitt to be much more digitally knowledgeable and accessible in the next 3-5 years and this project will support this goal.

About us

We are a small independent accredited museum in Ambleside, Cumbria. Founded in 1912, the museum recently celebrated its 110-year anniversary, and we have been in the current premises since 1997. The Armitt is run by a Board of Trustees, all of whom are volunteers, and then the Manager & Curator (full time employed staff member) manages a team of 3 part time staff that support administration, front of house, marketing, and events. There are around 13 active volunteers who assist with archive and digitisation tasks, front of house, and garden and general maintenance. Our general admission audience is made up of 74% UK, 20% overseas, and 6% local, whilst our events audience is primarily local, based in Cumbria or Lancashire. Our online audience across website and social media channels has a higher percentage of women than men engaging, with a high proportion of UK and American visitors.

The museum collection contains a wide range of items, including books, art, archaeology, photographs, manuscripts and documents, maps, and other objects. These number 75,000+ and mostly cover Ambleside, its people, as well as the wider Lakeland world. The library catalogue is already online and searchable, but we would like to extend this to the wider collection, making it user friendly and to provide more information and images.

Staff and volunteers have a good knowledge of digital products and technology. In the last 18 months, work has been undertaken to refresh the website, reactivate and expand social media channels, and purchase new equipment – DSLR camera, lights and light pad, laptop, scanner. However, more can be learnt through training and development to improve digital skills and access further.

Project brief

We are looking for an external consultant to help us work towards developing an online catalogue for our collections, that is user/visitor friendly and can be used to access information for research and as part of a digital experience if they cannot attend the museum in-person. We are looking for a consultant to assess our current set up in order to then produce an initial digital strategy that takes us on the road to the first steps of creating a catalogue. We would like to see appropriate advice based on our needs, requirements, and size of organisation. We are looking for an easy to implement strategy, that is low cost or has opportunity for being funded. We are not looking for an



expensive or bespoke solution. The next steps following the consultant's advice must be simple and straightforward for staff/volunteers to take forward.

Key deliverables

We are looking for the consultant to:

- Produce a digital strategy based on making more of The Armitt's collection accessible online, including providing an advisory/guidance document on next steps for working towards the production of a digital catalogue
- Support staff/volunteer with some digital training, specifically related to Capture One, camera vs scanner

We are not looking for the consultant to provide the catalogue solution but would welcome future recommendations and ideas on cost/implementation.

Project timescales

The MDNW grant requires us to have spent the funds and completed the work by 28 February 2023. Invoice for fees would need to be received before this date, after formal strategy, guidance and training have been completed.

Project budget

£1,950 including VAT.

What we are looking for

Expertise in digital museum strategies, online user collections catalogues (separate from internal museum catalogues such as MODES), and use of digital software.

References

We require the consultant to supply two references from heritage or arts organisations where they have undertaken similar work.

How to apply

CV with covering letter, no more than one side of A4, highlighting key experience relevant to this project, to be sent to Faye Morrissey, Manager & Curator, The Armitt faye.morrissey@armitt.com by 14 December 2022.

Contact details

Faye Morrissey, as above.

Timelines

The MDNW grant requires us to have spent the funds and completed the work by 28 February 2023. As such, we would like the work to be completed during December-January, but if can be completed earlier, this would always be welcome. We intend to award the work to the successful candidate soon after the application deadline, following an in-person interview.

Payment, tax etc

The museum will pay the consultant within 30 days of completing the work and issuing the invoice. The consultant will be responsible for paying their own tax and National Insurance.