

Whittlesey Museum Access Policy

1. Whittlesey Museum is committed to enabling access to the museum premises and to the information and collections within for the widest possible range of users, for engagement, education and enjoyment.
2. The Museum recognises that potential barriers to access come in many forms, including physical, sensory, cultural, intellectual, financial and the barrier of opportunity.
3. The Museum also recognises that practical constraints may also be necessarily placed on some forms of access by eg: the need to balance the experience of current users against the need to also preserve collections for future generations, or the restrictions imposed by external factors beyond the control of the museum such as listed premises (etc). However, Whittlesey Museum undertakes to provide alternative solutions to minimise the effects of such constraints where possible.
4. In order to provide the most inclusive service possible each of the barriers to access should be considered in all aspects of the development of the museum and provision made to minimise their negative effects on access. In order to do this it would be necessary to consider the impacts in each area to current and potential users of the museum and decide how to mitigate them within the pre-existing constraints within which the museum must operate. This undertaking requires the museum to monitor its audiences and carry out a regular access assessment.

4.1 Physical and Sensory

Whittlesey Museum undertakes that regular assessment of museum premises for physical accessibility should be carried out, with action taken on recommendations from this process to improve physical access wherever possible or provide workaround alternatives. The needs of the elderly and of people caring for young children are to be specifically included.

Some constraints on access may not be possible to overcome directly at this time due to being the result of the leased listed building premises of the museum but issues raised by this and identified in the physical access assessment should still be addressed where possible (eg: building has a front step out onto the pavement so a moveable wheelchair ramp has to be used instead of a fixed one, an internal doorway between two rooms is too narrow to allow wheelchair/crutch users to pass through smoothly so an alternative pathway around the museum is suggested).

Safety of all visitors is a high priority and the external museum fire exit is maintained as accessible without staff/volunteer assistance.

Date of last physical access assessment on museum premises: 2002/3

Date of last review of physical access assessment: 2014 (there have been no changes to museum premises since the previous review of this assessment, by this stage recommendations from the original assessment have either been implemented, ruled out due to external constraints on the building or are incorporated into the forward plan wrt potential development of the back yard area).

Date that physical access assessment is due for review: 2016, or earlier if changes are made to museum premises.

The physical accessibility of the museum online should also be considered, with web resources designed to be compatible with assistive technology (screen readers etc) where relevant. Online and within the museum attention should be paid to eg: colour and font choices and size of text when producing written materials.

4.2 Intellectual and Cultural

Whittlesey Museum recognises a responsibility to provide appropriate/relevant content that meets audience needs and requirements over a range of learning styles and abilities, including those of individuals with learning disabilities. This may include creating special provision and outreach events for different groups and using feedback from such activities to improve the provision further.

Whittlesey Museum recognises a responsibility to meet the needs of people for whom English is not a first language, or whose background knowledge of English history and culture may be limited.

The Museum also recognises a responsibility to provide emotional and attitudinal access, by taking steps to ensure that the museum environment and the museum staff are welcoming to visitors from all sections of the community.

4.3 Financial

Whittlesey Museum is reliant on income generated from entrance fees and so it is considered essential to charge for normal entry to the museum. However, entrance fees are kept low (currently £1 for adults, 40p for children – out-of-hours school visits £1 per child and adults free) to allow the widest possible financial accessibility.

Some specific and occasional activities may be offered for free to further remove the financial barrier to access, in particular if external funding can be secured from outside sources to support associated costs or if the target audience is identified as likely to be an especially financially vulnerable group.

4.4 Opportunity

Whittlesey Museum is committed to equality and diversity and maintains a Equal Opportunities Policy describing this commitment in more detail.

The Museum is committed to providing a safe and inclusive environment for all staff, volunteers and visitors with some specific details about aspects of this set out in the Children and Vulnerable Adults Protection Policy.

The Museum is open on three different days of the week (one weekday and two weekend days) and in two different timeslots, as well as at other times by appointment, in order to maximise the potential audience reached within the limited opening hours which can be supported by current volunteer numbers.

Date Access Policy Created: September 2014

Date Policy Last Reviewed: September 2014

Date Policy Next Due for Review: September 2019