

Museum Essentials: Working with Collections

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The vision for Bridport Museum is that it is at the heart of its community, and it is responsive to the community.

We did a lot of community consultation and that really helped to shape the plans for the museum.

Back in December we received a grant from the Esmée Fairbairn Collections Fund to enable us to do a community engaged collections review.

In our collection we have about 20,000 items like many museums it's no longer sustainable to keep all of these.

We tend to forget it's not just about the objects we already have, it's about the objects we might want to collect in the future.

Knowing that we've got the right collections in the right place and what our future capacity needs are is vital.

We've still got to behave with absolute integrity, but it doesn't mean that we shouldn't be prepared to kind of change our way of thinking and let it develop over time.

The things that I would encourage anyone else to think about are: Learn from your previous experience. Think really hard about evaluating your successes and your failures and use that to take you forwards into your next phase.

Make sure you resource your project properly, particularly in terms of project management. The knowledge and skills that you can absorb from those people I think is really valuable.

Be brave, push the boundaries but make sure your process is really rigorous and you've done your homework so that when you're taking that risk, you're kind of confident that you've at least taken a calculated risk.

A collections development policy is exactly that, it develops, and it changes over time so we shouldn't see it as a static immovable thing.

The end result will be a collection that is both reflective of its community, loved by its community and is much more relevant to its community.