



THE STAINED GLASS MUSEUM

Developing a national
centre for the discovery,
appreciation and
preservation of stained glass

THE STAINED GLASS MUSEUM

Patron: **HRH The Prince of Wales**
Registered Charity No. 1169842
Arts Council Accredited Museum No. 574

FOREWORD LOYD GROSSMAN

For centuries stained glass has captivated people with its dazzling beauty, revealing images in coloured light. In the 21st century it remains a symbol of hope, and a valuable part of our architectural heritage. Visitors to The Stained Glass Museum are fortunate to experience over 150 examples of this precious heritage - illuminated in full glory. This heritage includes images of saints from medieval Britain and France, post-reformation portraits of kings and queens, Pre-Raphaelite-inspired biblical and allegorical scenes, and stunning modern examples of the art form by Harry Clarke, Wilhelmina Geddes, John Piper, and Brian Clarke.

The Stained Glass Museum was originally

set up to rescue windows from redundant churches. In saving this beautiful and fragile part of our architectural heritage the museum has been a leading light in introducing people to and encouraging the appreciation of stained glass. It has since gone from strength to strength as an organisation, with increased visitors and a growing and renowned collection. I am delighted to present this prospectus, which highlights the museum's key successes and its ambitions to play an even greater role in the heritage sector as a dynamic, exiting and inspirational visitor attraction. On reading the document I hope that you are as encouraged as I am to support the museum's developing plans.



Loyd Grossman CBE PhD FSA
Chairman of The Heritage Alliance; Honorary Liveryman of the Worshipful Company of Glaziers



A MESSAGE FROM OUR CHAIRMAN

After almost 40 years of running a successful museum, trustees are now looking firmly to the future of the Stained Glass Museum with a view to enable its continued growth. This document provides an overview of the museum's past achievements, outlines its current activities and sets out our aims and ambitions for the future. The publication of this document marks an exciting and inspiring moment in our mission to keep alive the inspiration and appreciation of stained glass in the 21st century. We hope that you will share in our vision, play a part in shaping our future plans, and help them come to fruition.



Jeffrey West PhD FSA



BUILDING ON OVER 40 YEARS OF SUCCESS: OUR STORY SO FAR

Founded in 1972 to rescue stained glass windows from redundant buildings, the Stained Glass Museum opened to the public in the north triforium of Ely Cathedral in 1979. After a successful 25th Anniversary Appeal launched in 1997, the museum relocated to the south triforium of Ely Cathedral, where it reopened to the public in 2000 and is presently located.

Over the last 40 years the museum has developed a nationally significant collection of stained glass from both religious and secular contexts. Its collections span the medieval to the modern period and its post-medieval collections are unrivalled; enhancing existing public collections at the Victoria & Albert Museum, London, and Burrell Collection, Glasgow. Today, it is the only museum dedicated to stained glass in the UK, and one

of only a handful of such museums worldwide.

The museum offers great value and enjoyment for visitors, both locals and tourists, and currently welcomes over 26,000 visitors per year. The museum is financially self-sufficient, its income derived from admissions and retail. Visitor numbers have increased year-on-year over the past decade, generating healthy revenue streams and an increase in the museum's reserves.

The south triforium of Ely Cathedral, which is leased from the Dean and Chapter, provides a unique setting for the Stained Glass Museum. But due to the growth in visitor numbers and activities as well as our expanding collection, the museum's current premises offer limited capacity to improve visitor access and facilities, and to develop the display and storage of its collection.

In 2018 The Stained Glass Museum received a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) for a two-year project to investigate options and produce a masterplan for the museum's future development. The project, aptly named 'Windows onto the future', will enable the museum's trustees and senior management team to form a vision and strategic plan for a more accessible, sustainable and resilient museum with improved visitor facilities, which meet the needs of a growing visitor base and diverse audiences.

The strategic masterplan will be developed with the assistance of external consultants and consultations with stakeholders and audiences. The project has been funded through the Resilient Heritage scheme, and has been made possible by money raised by National Lottery players.





OUR COLLECTIONS

We care for a world class – and growing – collection of stained glass windows, dating from the middle ages to the present day. With original designs, tools and an extensive research library, our collections tell the story of an art form which began over a thousand years ago and is still flourishing today.

Less than a quarter of our collections are

currently on display, due to limited space and the difficulty of controlling the environmental conditions of our building. Our special collections require appropriately monitored and controlled display and storage environments within recommended ranges, with regards to temperature, humidity and light.

We will improve and expand our galleries and storage facilities, enabling us to care for our collections properly and ensure that they can be enjoyed by future generations.



The Stained Glass Museum welcomes over 26,000 visitors per year



OUR VISITORS

Every year more people visit our museum, enjoying the unique experiences of our permanent display, our temporary exhibitions and our special events.

Families enjoy our free discovery packs and trails, which encourage exploration, experimentation, discovery and creativity.

Group visitors enjoy specialist guided tours of the museum, which enhance their

understanding and appreciation of our exhibits.

We know that we could provide a better experience for more people, welcoming old and young alike, but we have limited space and facilities. Our gallery is inaccessible to many, since it is located on an upper level which can only be reached by climbing a circular staircase.

We will engage with, inspire and cater for visitors of all ages and backgrounds in spacious accessible galleries, providing excellent catering, comfort and retail facilities.



LEARNING

People of all ages enjoy and benefit from our outstanding learning programmes.

Each year more than 1,500 students from across East Anglia participate in our curriculum-based workshops. Suitable for EYFS and Key Stages 1-3, these combine detailed exploration of our collection with hands-on creative activities linked to key topics in Science, Art and History.

Our practical glass workshops, designed to promote and develop skills in this historic craft, are increasingly popular with adults and children alike. They include traditional painting on glass, leading, and more recent techniques of copper foiling and glass fusing.

Our learning programmes are currently at capacity, limited only by lack of space and suitable facilities.

We will rejuvenate and extend participation in our learning programme by providing dynamic new learning and studio spaces for workshops, schools and other groups.



ABOUT OUR ORGANISATION

GOVERNANCE

The Stained Glass Museum is governed by a Board of Trustees, recruited and selected for their experience and understanding of business, management, finance, the museum and heritage sector, and expertise in stained glass. The museum is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO), registered with the Charity Commission (no. 1169842) and is fully accredited with the Arts Council (no. 574).

FINANCES

The Museum does not receive any government or local council funding. Its main income sources are admissions and shop sales, supplemented by donations, and small grants. Its turnover is approximately £200,000 a year. Statements of financial activities and annual reports are available from the museum's website and the Charity Commission.

A PROFESSIONAL SKILLED WORKFORCE

The Museum is managed by a full-time Curator, and small team of part-time staff, supported by volunteers. We are committed to ensuring the museum has a professional skilled workforce, and aim to diversify skills and experience amongst current employees and volunteers, as well as creating new jobs and opportunities where possible.

PARTNERSHIPS

We work with others to promote and raise public awareness of Britain's historic stained glass. We maintain close links with the Victoria & Albert Museum, The Royal Collection, the British Society of Master Glass Painters (BSMGP), the Corpus Vitrearum Medii Aevi (CVMA), and the Worshipful Company of Glaziers and Painters of Glass. We enjoy successful collaborative working relationships with local partners Ely Cathedral, Ely Museum and Oliver Cromwell House, as well as local schools, colleges and universities. The Museum has a supportive Friends network with members across the UK.

WIDER HERITAGE ADVICE

We remain active in rescuing and preserving the heritage of this unique art and craft working together with the London Stained Glass Repository, a charity run by the Worshipful Company of Glaziers and Painters of Glass. We also run an enquiry service, sharing information on the history of stained glass with members of the public, as well as other organisations and institutions, and fielding advice on the maintenance, protection and conservation of stained glass more broadly, to ensure its future preservation and appreciation.

In 2016-17
the Stained Glass
Museum contributed
£591,018 to the local
economy.¹

¹ The total economic impact combines impact of visits and tourism, employment, and visitors' spend on goods and services. This figure is taken from SHARE Museums East Annual East of England Benchmarking Results 2016-17, www.sharemuseumseast.org.uk/benchmarking/



OUR VISION FOR THE FUTURE

With your help, we would like to build on the last 40 years of growth and success, and develop a national centre for the discovery, appreciation and conservation of stained glass.

WHAT WE WANT TO ACHIEVE

In the coming years we would like to be able to provide better facilities for our collections and our visitors and continue to develop our learning programmes. We aim to:

- improve and expand our galleries and storage facilities, enabling us to care for our collections properly and ensure that they can be enjoyed by future generations.
- engage with, inspire and cater for visitors of all ages and backgrounds in spacious accessible galleries, providing excellent catering, comfort and retail facilities.
- rejuvenate and extend participation in our learning programme by providing dynamic new learning and creative studio spaces for workshops, schools and other groups.

OUR NEEDS

Given the restricted access to, and spatial limitations of, our current premises, we will explore alternative suitable locations and buildings to find a long-term home for the Stained Glass Museum.

In order to develop facilities and improve access to the museum, we require a suitable site and secure, accessible building with adequate space (at least 1,500m²) for the display and storage our collections as well as studio, office and visitor facilities. A detailed building specification list is available upon request.

We recognise the mutual benefits of working with other organisations and are interested in the potential for fruitful partnerships and collaborations with like-minded institution(s) in the arts, heritage, museum, higher education, and other relevant sectors.

THE BENEFITS OF PARTNERING WITH THE SGM

We are an accredited museum and unique heritage attraction with a proven track record of funding and development. Our organisation has a strategic vision, strong governance and leadership, and is financially self-sufficient. We have close working relationships and associations with leading higher education institutions, heritage and conservation bodies, national museums and galleries, as well as contemporary artistic and studio practice. The museum's collection and its educational and events programme provide a fantastic resource and bring added benefits for local and national tourism.

JOIN US ON THE NEXT STAGE OF OUR JOURNEY

This is an exciting time to join us on the next stage of our journey and help to realise our ambitions to find a long-term home for the Stained Glass Museum and ensure its continued growth, success and future sustainability.

If you would like to find out more about our plans, get involved, support or work with us to create a successful future partnership, we would be delighted to hear from you.

More information about the museum, and a detailed building specification list is available upon request, please contact:

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01353 660355

Chairman of Trustees: Jeffrey West
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