

Strengthening the Museum Workforce in Cambridgeshire Museums



Evaluation Report

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Appendix 1: Plans to measure and provide evidence of the intended project outcome

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1. Introduction: context, aims and intended project outcomes

Strengthening the Workforce in Cambridgeshire Museums ('SWIM' for short) aims to build the capacity and skills within a group of independent Cambridgeshire museums, primarily through volunteer and Trustee recruitment, accompanied with a programme of training, coordination and management supported by two Project 'Volunteer Coordinators'. This is to deliver improved customer services in the participating museums thereby impacting positively on the experience of their audiences. It builds on the lessons learnt through the 'Wide Skies' project which finished in 2014.

The project also aims to build partnership working amongst museums participating in the project. These museums comprise:

- Burwell Museum and Windmill
- Chatteris Museum
- The Cromwell Museum
- Ely Museum
- Farmland Museum and Denny Abbey
- March and District Museum
- Nene Valley Railway
- Prickwillow Engine Museum
- Ramsey Rural Museum
- St Neots Museum
- Wisbech and Fenland Museum
- Whittlesey Museum

The intended project outcomes were to:

- Provide museum staff, both paid and voluntary, with new opportunities to acquire/ and/or develop skills
- Bring about economic benefits for participating museums
- Encourage a more diverse museum workforce (including volunteers' demographic backgrounds and skills)
- Enable increased community engagement with museum collections
- Create opportunities for learning, leading to pride in local heritage and increased tourism
- Effect positive social experiences and enhanced wellbeing, especially among BAMER communities in Fenland

It should be stressed that the above outcomes were developed at a time when the project was intended to be delivered over a three year period; funding in fact was only available for a shorter period of time (Summer 2015 – Spring 2016). This means that some of the outcomes must be considered as longer-term impacts that may be realised beyond the scope of this evaluation, and so it would be unfair to judge the success of the project against the achievement of all the intended outcomes.

Also key to point out is that during the delivery of the SWIM Project, The Cromwell Museum has been working through plans that are preparing and implementing changes to its governance structure, from local authority control (Cambridgeshire County Council) to a Trust. As part of this process, the museum is losing its paid staff, with the exception of a curatorial post, and there has been a need for the organisation to become more community-led than it was previously. Recruiting a sufficient number of Trustees and volunteers with the necessary skills have been vital tasks to ensure the sustainability of the museum once it becomes a Trust. The SWIM Project was therefore in a good position to offer support to The Cromwell Museum with volunteer recruitment and training, through the assistance of one of the Project Volunteer Coordinators.



The Cromwell Museum

2. Methodology

The museums taking part in the project are diverse, with different reasons for participating. It was recognised early on that each museum should be able to commit to contributing to some, rather than all, of the outcomes, and that this could be achieved in different ways. The evaluation methodology therefore needed to be sensitive to this, and not measure achievement across the museums against the same criteria. For this reason, a framework was developed, in consultation with 'SWIM museums', which sought to articulate the measures of success for each outcome, and the evidence that would need to be collected to demonstrate these successes (see Appendix 1).

2.1 Qualitative Research Methods

Therefore a large part of the evaluation was based on collecting qualitative data and assessing this against the intended project outcome areas. Feedback was received from stakeholders in the following ways:

- Semi-structured telephone interviews with seven volunteers covering topics such as why they had volunteered, what training they had attended and its usefulness, any other opportunities to acquire or develop new skills/knowledge, whether volunteering had made an impression on how they felt about the museum/area.
- Semi-structured telephone interview with one of the Project Volunteer Coordinators about changes at The Cromwell Museum.
- Written surveys completed by:
 - Two volunteers (their preference was to respond this way rather than be interviewed) covering the same topics as the interviews mentioned above
 - Four of the Cromwell Museum Trustees covering questions on why they had chosen to become a Trustee, what positive outcomes and challenges there have been from the museum transferring to a Trust and what opportunities there were moving forward.
 - The Interim Manager at The Cromwell on similar areas to those broached with the Trustees
- Just over 130 written surveys completed at training sessions which asked about what people had learnt if anything, how they planned to apply this learning in their volunteering role, and how the training could be improved if at all.
- Feedback from participating museums at three SWIM Steering Group meetings and via e-mail correspondence
- Ongoing consultation with both Project Volunteer Coordinators and the Cambridgeshire Museums Partnership Officer via telephone and e-mail contact

Thematic analysis of this information was undertaken in order to identify any emergent topics and these were mapped against the project outcome areas as well as against Generic Learning Outcomes (GLOs) and Generic Social Outcomes (GSOs), where relevant. Examples of qualitative evidence that were considered include:

- Feedback that demonstrated both formal and informal ‘learning’ had taken place (*learning* here includes finding out new things as well as changes in attitude, well-being, feeling positive about your community etc.).
- Details of partnership working, both with new and existing partners.
- Instances of skills and resource sharing (e.g. examples of museums sharing expertise, such as in volunteer management, with other museums in need of this advice).
- The impact of recruited Trustees and volunteers in terms of bringing new skills and ideas into the museums.

2.2 Quantitative data

Some of the evidence collected was quantitative and applied across the project/to certain museums, for example:

- The number of training sessions
- The number of participants and range of topics covered
- The numbers of volunteers and Trustees recruited
- The number of hours worked by volunteers at SWIM museums that previously did not collect this information accurately
- The number of website visits, Facebook likes or followers, Twitter followers.

3. What has the project delivered to date?

3.1 New opportunities to develop skills

23	The number of training sessions delivered through the project
220	The number of attendances from SWIM museums at these training sessions
10	The number of attendances from other organisations at these training sessions

Training sessions have covered a range of topics, including:

- Modes
- The role and responsibilities of Trustees
- First Aid
- Collections Care
- Fundraising
- Organising educational activities for children and families
- The Cromwell Museum: several sessions for volunteer induction as well as guided walks of historic Huntingdon.

Appendix 2 presents a breakdown of the number of training sessions held on each topic and how many people participated in these. The training was open to organisations outside the SWIM Project, for example two Library Officers attended the training for Trustees in March.

Feedback from participants has been very positive, demonstrating that they learned or developed new skills and knowledge in relation to the training topics. There was a significant amount of feedback collected which could not all be reported here, therefore a sample of comments and responses have been collated below – even so the number of comments is quite large but certainly reflects the success of the training element of the project.

At certain training sessions, participants were asked to rate how capable they felt (on a scale of 1 to 10, where '1' was 'not at all capable' and '10' was 'very capable') in relation to areas that the training was exploring. Some 'snapshots' of these completed scales have also been included as they demonstrate how participants felt more capable in many areas as a result of the training. Some increased across all areas, others increased more in certain areas than others.

3.1.1 Modes Training

The survey about the Modes training was a simple postcard with room to write a few short comments. Participants found different parts of the training useful, depending on their ability and prior experience (if any) with Modes:

Have learned lots that I didn't know before. Will feel more confident

[Modes was] completely new to me so all [the training] was useful.

I learned tips and tricks that I didn't know existed! I have only a basic knowledge of Modes so the morning session was a lot to absorb. More 'do' sessions would have helped me but difficult in a mixed ability group!

[I found more useful the] 'Index searching' and 'Reports' especially in entry and exit forms.

[I found out about] the flexibility of the system and the powerful searches. Interesting introduction to terminology used.

Learned about the new features on Modes Complete compared to modes Compact.

Augmentation of existing knowledge of the Modes computer system. Plus new knowledge of the new version of Modes.

3.1.2 Training for Trustees (Governance):

In terms of what participants gained from the workshop, many were able to cite specific knowledge they had gained in relation to effective governance; a few mentioned new skills in addition:

I have learnt I need to be more diligent about returns and what should be supplied to trustees and how to carry out recruitment, interview and induction"

[I have] learnt the need to possess specific skills and to delegate".

[I picked up] incredibly useful background information – also of interest in terms of understanding what the Trustees do in one or two organisations I volunteer for! Good ideas re. recruiting for volunteers.

[What was] especially [useful was] in regard to un-incorporated organisations, employment, whistle-blowing and conflict of interest policies.

[I now have better] understanding of a [being a] trustee and their role and some understanding of legal implications.

[I'm] very much more aware of responsibility in my role.

I learnt what Charity Commission expects from Trustees. What policies we should have and where to go for this information.

I learned so much about the importance and responsibilities of my role as a Trustee (Director).



Workshop for Trustees, Wisbech & Fenland Museum, March 2016

When asked how they expected to put the training into practice, they were able to cite tangible outcomes, such as sharing the information with others and updating policies and procedures:

[it's given me] mainly background [information], but will be helpful when advising our Community Management Board/Friends group on what their options are.

[I will be] updating and [making time for the] creation of recruitment and induction packs.

[It will mean a] total overhaul of how I act as a Trustee and research and start putting policies forward to the Board.

[I am going to] review and implement all policies necessary, Financial / Health & Safety / Employees / Job Descriptions. Very worthwhile training.

A selection of the scales completed before ('B') and after ('A') the session by three individuals, shows how the training was particularly effective for two people, with the third already having extensive experience, but noting that the training was helpful in *"reinforcing/confirming my existing knowledge levels gained in a different sector. Recruitment module was new (and helpful)"*.

Item	Not at all capable ← → Very capable									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. I understand what the Charity Commission expects from trustees.	B					A				
2. I feel able to define skills and experience needed as part of trustee succession planning.	B					A				
3. I have the confidence to develop a trustee induction pack.	B						A			
4. I know how to use alternative approaches to recruit trustees.		B						A		

Item	Not at all capable ← → Very capable									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. I understand what the Charity Commission expects from trustees.						B			A	
2. I feel able to define skills and experience needed as part of trustee succession planning.				B					A	
3. I have the confidence to develop a trustee induction pack.							B		A	
4. I know how to use alternative approaches to recruit trustees.				B					A	

Item	Not at all capable ← → Very capable									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. I understand what the Charity Commission expects from trustees.							A ✓			
2. I feel able to define skills and experience needed as part of trustee succession planning.							A ✓	B ✓		
3. I have the confidence to develop a trustee induction pack.							A ✓	B ✓		
4. I know how to use alternative approaches to recruit trustees.								✓ B	✓ A	

3.1.3 First Aid

This was a popular course being held over four dates and welcoming 50 participants in total. Participants were asked how confident and willing they were to use First Aid skills in an emergency on a scale of 1 (low) to 10 (high), both before and after the training. In all cases where the form was completed, people moved up the scales for both confidence and willingness. The most common written response was around people feeling more confident

and several mentioned that they had learned how to use an Automatic External Defibrillator. One comment that summed up the response of most people was:

Excellent course – helpful information/good booklet and appreciate the practical element. Delivered in a relaxed and supportive manner – also very helpful. Glad to have taken part. Thank you.



First Aid Training, The Cromwell Museum, February 2016

3.1.4 Collections Care

Most of the people responding to the survey on the course had never attended Collections Care training before. Several responded that they had enjoyed the session and found it interesting. When asked what they had learnt, they were all able to cite something. A selection of comments included:

That it is essential to ASK and that analysis of each problem has to be dealt with separately

Things about pollutants preserving. Thought provoking things.

How contamination can affect artifacts

Lots. What to do and what not to do.



Collections Care Training Participants, Whittlesey Museum, February 2016

3.1.5 Fundraising Training

Participants at this session were asked specifically about new knowledge they had picked up as a result of the training. In answer, they said that they had learnt new ideas to bring in more income, how best to approach funding bids and which organisations to apply to:

[I found out] useful information about donations, making applications work.

Networking with museum volunteers

[I learnt of the] points to consider when raising income – let people know what money is for. Funding bids – sources of funding and things to consider – match funder to your service.

[I discovered] income generation ideas. Thinking about how to approach funders and write bids.

[I learnt] which funders would be appropriate. Elevator pitch. CRMS.

[I found out about] Clear donation boxes. How to fill in the criteria for fundraising.

[I now know about] putting together fundraising applications. Places to apply for funding.

The need to explain projects succinctly, giving details of the project that are of interest. Well received. Superb delivery, friendly and informative.

In response to the question about the skills they had acquired, participants cited the following:

- Communication skills
- Information management skills
- Practical skills
- Social/interpersonal skills
- Organisational skills
- Creative skills
- Increased Confidence
- Information/techniques to raise funding
- Marketing skills

3.1.6 Training on organising education activities for children and families

People attending this training mentioned that it had increased their confidence and given them new ideas:

Looking at examples of good children and family packs has increased my confidence in creating these resources.

[I learnt about] being more targeted. With reduced staff/resources/time this will be necessary. Also ideas for adapting what we do / using volunteers more so we can still manage to run sessions.

Learnt new ideas for engaging families, ideas for simple low cost ideas. For schools – ideas about ‘school talk’ in advertising.

The first part of the training was more useful for [our museum], however the second part was useful for the future.

I have gained more confidence and picked up some useful tips that will help me with my role.

Good, practical day and learnt a lot from other participants and course leader.

For one person who was new to museums, the session had been very enlightening:

I have come into the session as a complete novice with no experience of the ‘museum’ sector. The session gave me a comprehensive insight into the viewpoint of the museum and the service it wishes to deliver.

They cited a number of ways in which they would be putting the training to good use and most of the participants moved significantly up the scale in what they had learnt at the training, for example:

[I'll be] developing a whole family activity trail and not just using it for children to do separately! [Also useful in] Linking educational offer to national curriculum.

[I am going to be] planning a children's area, but also some simple resources to be used during the visit – to take around.

Item	Not at all capable ← → Very capable									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. I understand how visitors learn in museum environments							✓B			✓A
2. I understand how to engage families effectively at our venue						✓B		✓A		
3. I have the confidence to work with schools								✓B		✓A
4. I have the necessary skills to deliver a successful school service							✓B	✓A		

Item	Not at all capable ← → Very capable									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. I understand how visitors learn in museum environments					B✓			A		
2. I understand how to engage families effectively at our venue					B✓			A		
3. I have the confidence to work with schools						B✓		A		
4. I have the necessary skills to deliver a successful school service						B✓		A		

Item	Not at all capable ← → Very capable									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. I understand how visitors learn in museum environments				B✓				✓A		
2. I understand how to engage families effectively at our venue				B✓				✓A		
3. I have the confidence to work with schools				B✓			✓A			
4. I have the necessary skills to deliver a successful school service				B✓			✓A			

Item	Not at all capable ← → Very capable									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. I understand how visitors learn in museum environments			B				A.			
2. I understand how to engage families effectively at our venue					B				A.	
3. I have the confidence to work with schools										BA
4. I have the necessary skills to deliver a successful school service										BA.

Item	Not at all capable ← → Very capable									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. I understand how visitors learn in museum environments								B A		
2. I understand how to engage families effectively at our venue							B		A	
3. I have the confidence to work with schools						B		A		
4. I have the necessary skills to deliver a successful school service						B		A.		

3.1.7 Training for new Cromwell volunteers

At the induction sessions, participants were asked to indicate what skills they felt they had developed or learnt as a result of the training. The following areas were cited:

- Communication skills
- Information management skills
- Practical skills
- Social/interpersonal skills
- Organisational skills
- Creative skills
- Confidence

'Cromwell Walks' training for new volunteers at The Cromwell Museum, Huntingdon, February 2016



People commented very highly on feedback forms about the trainer, one of the Volunteer Coordinators, for his friendly and knowledgeable approach, and for the usefulness of what was covered. A selection of remarks made by volunteers during interviews to highlight this latter point is given below:

I've been on the walk around the town and the [induction] training in the museum showing us where bits and pieces are The training was definitely useful.

I attended a one-day training session for volunteers. The day was extremely useful and informative - I was able to ask questions at any point, and everything was explained clearly and enthusiastically by the trainer. The mood was relaxed, which was especially important because the volunteers all meeting each other for the first time. We were made to feel very welcomed and valued. I took away a training pack for the event, which contained excellent information and resources. The training clearly defined what's expected of us as volunteers and how our role will fit in within the new framework of the Museum. The training will help me to: assist with opening/closing the Museum, housekeeping and security, provide a useful visitor experience, assist the curator, record my shifts correctly, sell museum books and stock, understand and interpret the objects for visitors, offer wider visitor assistance, such as suggesting other attractions in the area/offering additional information via the internet, for example. I learnt about the environmental controls in place, and more about the collection itself, such as the 'star' objects, and how to answer the sorts of common questions the public might ask about the museum and collection.

I've attended the one in Huntingdon Library (induction training) and I've been on the Guided Walk one in the town. They were very useful, especially the induction session in the library. They took us over to the museum and showed us where the keys are, the panic alarms, that sort of thing. I picked up new knowledge I found out about the building, dealing with the public and the anticipated questions we are most likely to be asked.

[There was] a series of [induction] training days and I went to one of those. They were really, really well done. It was about 3 hours long and we covered what our role would be, and we went across to the museum to look at practical things like what is behind the desk, where the panic alarm is, how to re-stock, the sort of things you would be worried about if you hadn't been introduced to them. It was very useful.

People attending the Guided Walks sessions said via the feedback forms that they had improved their understanding of Huntingdon's heritage and that this knowledge had

improved their confidence and was something that they would be passing on to visitors to the museum. A few illustrative comments include:

Very interested to see the sites Cromwell would have known. Revised historical details and dates.

[I discovered] the story of Charles I's invasion/occupation of Huntingdon during the Civil War.

[I found out about] the Battle of Huntingdon.

3.1.8 'On the job' learning

There have also been opportunities for new volunteers to acquire or develop skills through 'on the job' learning, for example:

I've learnt how to use the card machine and till. I have had opportunity to speak more English. The ladies I work with are very nice, and we chat together, and I have been speaking to visitors. (BAMER volunteer from outside UK)

I have been able to develop my skills. I'm working on photographing photographs at the moment and they are more difficult to photograph than objects, especially the more modern ones which are more glossy. So I've been working with a white tent and trying to get the lighting right. These are new things for me.



Evidence of:

GLO – New Knowledge and Understanding

GLO – Enjoyment, Inspiration, Creativity

GLO – Increase in Skills



Evidence of:

GSO - Strengthening Public Life: Building capacity of community and voluntary groups

- Voluntary group members have increased communication, team working and decision making skills to achieve their goals.
- Access that the voluntary group has to funding, resources or information has improved.

3.2 Economic benefits

Economic benefits for the museums have not so much included increased visitor numbers or increased admission or other income so far. This is because outcomes such as these are likely to take longer to come to fruition, being realised once the work and activities of the new volunteers has been embedded; an example might be visitors brought into the museum as a result of exhibitions created by SWIM volunteers. This is therefore an area for consideration if financial support for the continuation of the SWIM project is secured.

Despite this, there have still been numerous economic benefits to the museums participating in the project. These can be considered in terms of the fact that the Cromwell Museum is transferring to Trust status and remaining open, through enhanced museum standards and practices at many of the SWIM museums, and because of increased partnership working. These are hopefully making the museums more resilient in the longer term, thereby impacting positively on their economic sustainability. Each of these outcomes is explored in turn below.

3.2.1 The Cromwell Museum

In addition to the four Trustees recruited outside the remit of the project, SWIM has contributed directly to one further Trustee joining the Board and 52 people committing to becoming volunteers there (see Section 3.3.1). This is a significant achievement and a vital one if the museum is to pass successfully from local authority control, where there had been paid staff, to Trust status, where volunteer support will largely be relied on to keep the museum open on a daily basis. This transition is expected to happen in the near future. Feedback from four of the Trustees reveals how they hope to make the museum more community focused and its collections more accessible nationally and internationally.



*Cromwell Museum
Trustees*

Furthermore, there is a clear commitment from the local community to keep this museum open. The value of the museum as a heritage asset was identified even by people who are not traditional museum audiences, as expressed by one of the Project's Volunteer Coordinators:

I've been surprised by how well the community has pulled together: the library staff, the museum staff, the council at a working level. Organisations in Huntingdon have also offered us advertising space. The Huntingdon Bid [the town centre consortium] have given the museum social media coverage and, as well as these local businesses, there have been people signing the petition to keep the museum open who have not visited the museum before but felt it was important enough to save.

The importance of The Cromwell Museum and its collections, on both a local and national level, were often cited as the reason that prompted people to sign up to volunteer there:

I particularly wanted to help the Cromwell Museum because it is such a unique collection, and because for a while that has seemed under threat and the town was in danger of losing something that makes it unique. I love all areas of history and have no particular connection to Cromwell or this period, though I think it's very important this story is told and remembered - I believe that learning from the past informs so much of our lives today.

I didn't like the idea of a local facility shutting because of a lack of funding so I decided to sign up as a volunteer.

It seemed such a shame that the museum would shut down if volunteers weren't found, as it covers such an important part of history. Cromwell was born very close to where we live and I've found that the history of the period draws you in. So far, I've found that the more I look into Cromwellian History, the more I learn and the more I want to volunteer in the museum.

The museum is bringing people to the town, it's a big draw for visitors to the town. The museum covers things of importance to Huntingdon and nationally. Even royalists come into the museum as they recognise it covers an important part of British history. Also, the museum collected enough signatures on the petition to keep the museum open for it to be discussed in Council Chambers. The museum has been there since 1962/63. If it were to close, I suppose this would mean the collections being dispersed which would be a shame.

These comments illustrate that people feel they have a ‘stake’ in the museum and care enough about its future to invest their time and commitment to volunteer there and help to keep it open. The third quote was made by an individual who, since signing up as a volunteer, has gone on to undertake research into Cromwell and the period, learning many new facts along the way.

Furthermore, the last quote comes from an individual who has been employed by the local authority at the museum for 15 years, and would like to continue as a volunteer, saying ‘I’m just keen to continue my association with the museum’.



Evidence of:

GSO - Stronger & Safer Communities: Supporting cultural diversity and identity

- New relationships have been forged between the museum and local communities.
- People have discovered new information.
- People expressed an interest in finding out more about their own culture.

3.2.2 Enhanced museum practices and standards

Through the sharing of good practice, and with the support and guidance of the SWIM Volunteer Coordinators, many of the participating museums are enjoying more effective volunteer management through improved or newly written policies and practices. Examples include:

- A volunteer policy and associated documents/procedures have been written for The Cromwell Museum.
- The number of hours given by volunteers is now being recorded at The Cromwell Museum, Chatteris Museum, Ramsey Rural Museum and Prickwillow Engine Museum (see box below). At these venues, volunteer hours were previously not collected at all or estimated, whereas now there is in place a ‘signing in/out’ book to record this. It is hoped that being able to call on accurate figures will lead to improved planning of volunteer capacity/work delivery in the future. Already at Prickwillow Engine Museum, it has highlighted to regular ‘Tuesday’ volunteers how many hours volunteers working on other days or tasks are delivering, which was previously unknown.
- At Burwell Museum and Windmill, the Trustee pack (which was created as an outcome from Trustee training delivered through SWIM) is now being made

available to existing Trustees. This should lead to greater consistency in the approach of the Trustees and healthier management of the museum longer term.

- The creation of a 'Volunteer Equality and Diversity Form', as museums were not collecting this information at induction. Museums that have committed to using it are Burwell Museum and Windmill, The Cromwell Museum, St Neots Museum and Ramsey Rural Museum. This should help them to monitor the diversity of their volunteer workforce.
- With advice and support from one of the SWIM volunteer coordinators, Nene Valley Railway is now offering 'free' short term volunteering opportunities to Peterborough Regional college students. Previously the museum required that all volunteers, whether short- or long-term, became a member of the railway, and this involves an upfront cost. Removing this potential barrier to volunteering means that younger people from the college may be encouraged to volunteer at the museum, thereby diversifying the age profile of its volunteers. The museum is currently investigating the possibility of offering this option to all short term volunteers.

Number of volunteer hours for July 2015 to February 2016 (i.e. 8 month period)

Prickwillow Engine Museum: 4,582 hours (2013-14: 3,500 hours*)

Ramsey Rural Museum: 9,202 hours (2013-14: 15,650 hours*)

Chatteris Museum: 2,156 hours (2013-14: 1,582 hours*)

** 2013-14 were estimated figures for a 12 month period provided on the annual 'Benchmarking' survey*

Collectively, over an 8 month period, the hours provided by volunteers in these museums equate to £159,000 investment in these museums (based on Volunteer England guidance where 1 hour = approx. £10)

New volunteers are also leading to improved museum standards in a wider context, for example, by assisting with a rationalisation project at March Museum and by addressing a cataloguing backlog at Wisbech & Fenland Museum and at Nene Valley Railway.

Furthermore, new skills and expertise are being brought into participating museums (see Section 3.3.2 for more details). Examples include five highly skilled trustees who have been recruited (one of whom is to become a Finance Trustee at the Cromwell) and a higher profile of some of the museums on social media networks (see Table 1 below), resulting from volunteers with a specific remit for updating these sites, and volunteers working specifically on marketing in Whittlesey Museum and Prickwillow Engine Museum.

	Tweets	Tweet Impressions	Profile Visits	Mentions	New Followers
Jan-15	2	2,202	114	5	13
Feb-15	6	1,903	122	7	6
Mar-15	3	2,385	133	4	10
Tot	11	6,490	369	16	29
Jan-16	3	2,181	141	0	12
Feb-16	52	12,600	1736	5	18
Mar-16	90	17,100	2321	18	21
Tot	145	31,881	4,198	23	51

Table 1: Twitter Analytics at Burwell Museum and Windmill

The museum welcomed a social media volunteer in February 2016, recruited through the SWIM project. As a result, the profile of the museum on Twitter has risen significantly compared with the same period 12 months previously (see 'Tweet impressions' which equates to the number of times the Tweet was seen on Twitter, and the number of 'Profile Visits'). The museum's tweets are enjoying more mentions and it has a larger number of new followers.

Recognition that support from the SWIM volunteer coordinators has led to a step-change in volunteer management, also comes from the fact that two of the participating museums, The Cromwell Museum and Ramsey Rural Museum, have been awarded the 'Huntingdonshire Volunteer Centre 5 Star Focus Accreditation Award'. Burwell Museum is also in the process of applying for this as well. The award was made in recognition of the museums' high standards and approach to volunteer management.



Ramsey Rural Museum receives its 5 Star Focus Accreditation Award for volunteer management, from Huntingdonshire Volunteer Centre.



The Cromwell Museum receives its 5 Star Focus Accreditation Award for volunteer management, from Huntingdonshire Volunteer Centre.

Indeed, it should be stressed that support and advice from the two SWIM volunteer coordinators have been instrumental in raising standards at the participating museums, as well as providing additional capacity for tasks that previously could not be achieved. The curators at Nene Valley Railway and Ramsey Rural Museum summed this up with the two respective comments below.

For us the SWIM project brought us increased contact with people able to help us and who had the time to assist (VERY IMPORTANT). Museum professionals do seem to overlook that what for them is routine is often difficult for non-professional, but enthusiastic, individuals to understand or even access. I cannot emphasise enough the value of the SWIM project in providing our organisation with a person who had the time to listen, advise and act upon our many queries. [Also welcomed were] help with volunteer recruitment, trustee training, MODES training and advice as to best use of resources. Being able to pick up a telephone or send an e-mail and to receive a response in a short time was very much appreciated.

Not knowing what to expect I was pleasantly surprised to find our ... [Volunteer] Coordinator at the museum asking what it was that RRM would most like to see happen on the project. Very quickly [he] was there at our event days handing out leaflets and making real efforts to obtain volunteers for the museum. This took the load off the committee as they could now concentrate on making the event a success, leaving [the Volunteer Coordinator] to persuade the visitors that volunteering would be good for them and more importantly the museum. [The Volunteer Coordinator] has also provided first aid training, Modes and fund raising courses, and is always available to assist; he has written adverts for the local free papers on the value volunteering can bring to the community.

At St Neots Museum, the curator said that their SWIM volunteer coordinator ‘helped us to update our policies and procedures relating to volunteers’ and the project had ‘revealed a need for policies and procedures for Trustees, and how to recruit [them].’

Indeed, effective methods for volunteer and Trustee recruitment have been a key learning point to emerge from the project, for the museums and those coordinating the project:

- Posters about volunteering opportunities placed in local libraries seem to have been a particularly effective method for St Neots Museum and The Cromwell Museum.
- Advertising for Trustee vacancies through The Cambridge Edition, a lifestyle magazine, has resulted in five people being recruited to participating museums: one at The Cromwell Museum, two at the Farmland Museum, one to Prickwillow Engine Museum and one at St Neots Museum. Low numbers of Trustees at some museums had been a cause for some concern, but with healthier numbers now in place, this should impact positively on long term sustainability at these museums.

The curator at St Neots Museum summed up that in their case, this had “provided evidence for other volunteers / trustees/ management committee that advertising DOES work”.



The posters used in Huntingdon and St Neots Libraries to advertise volunteer vacancies. One of the St Neots Museum volunteers recruited via the poster, commented favourably on how it detailed the tasks volunteers could complete (see overleaf):

I wasn't looking to become a museum volunteer but I saw a poster in the library and it appealed because it said what jobs were vacant, that the museum needed someone who could photograph the collections. I think it's important to tell people what jobs need doing as they are more likely to join, otherwise they might think the only roles are on reception [and this might not appeal to everyone]

One of the Project Volunteer Coordinators and the Cambridgeshire Museums Partnership Officer presented some of the outcomes from the project to showcase its good practice in recruiting volunteers and raising standards in this area. Called 'Getting volunteers into local museums', it was a Pecha Kucha style presentation (where 20 slides are shared for 20 seconds each) at a 'Community Insight' meeting attended by staff from Cambridgeshire County Council and Fenland District Council. This helped to raise the profile of the project and the participating museums.

3.2.3 Partnership working

The project has enabled opportunities for networking and the sharing of ideas and good practice amongst participating museums. For example, the idea of an electronic Gmail rota for volunteers at Burwell Museum and Windmill has subsequently been implemented at The Cromwell Museum, and the following comment from one museum illustrates how much they valued the opportunity to participate in the project:

The SWIM project has been a real boost for Ramsey Rural Museum, as the start meeting gave the smaller museums in Cambridgeshire the opportunity to network and exchange ideas, which happens all too infrequently. The meeting explained that the resource was provided by the ACE Resilience Fund to provide 2 volunteer coordinators each to look after 6 smaller museums in Cambridgeshire. This was very welcome news as were the terms of reference to help recruit, train and coordinate volunteers and trustees for the six museums.

Furthermore, many of the museums have worked together, with assistance from the project volunteer coordinators, to develop a 'Joint Rewards System'. This will allow volunteers from participating museums (St Neots, The Cromwell Museum, Ramsey Rural Museum, Burwell Museum and Windmill, Ely Museum, Chatteris Museum and the Farmland Museum) to visit other museums in the scheme for free/reduced entry. This should promote continued links between the venues and hopefully enable the cross-fertilisation of ideas and good practice amongst volunteers across all the museums concerned.



SWIM Steering Group Meeting, Burwell Museum and Windmill, July 2015

It is important to note that some museums have been more responsive and/or participated more fully than others in the project. In these cases, it has been observed that they have enjoyed greater benefits from the project.

New partnerships with external organisations have also been brokered through the project. These include relationships that Nene Valley Railway has established with Peterborough Volunteer Centre and Peterborough Regional College, and St Neots Museum which is working with Longsands School History department to offer volunteering opportunities. The SWIM Project also played a full role in helping to set up the SHARE Volunteer Coordinators Forum, running a breakout session at a recent meeting in Ipswich.

Lastly, a 'Time credits scheme' adopted at St Neots and The Cromwell Museum have only been taken up because their Volunteer Coordinator publicised this scheme and its benefits. All volunteers have the opportunity to earn a Time Credits voucher for every session that they attend, to spend at other participating venues across the country. The quantitative reward is being used by these museums to recognise the valuable contribution made by its volunteers.



Evidence of:

GSO - Strengthening Public Life: Building capacity of community and voluntary groups

- Networks and contacts the group has with other useful organisations, the wider community, or groups working to similar goals have expanded.

3.3 A more diverse museum workforce

5 The Number of new Trustees recruited through the project

95 Number of new volunteers recruited through the project

3.3.1 New Volunteers and Trustees

The project has helped to recruit a substantial number of new volunteers and Trustees (see Table 2). These figures may rise further if additional people who have expressed an interest go on to commit to becoming volunteers or Trustees.

Museum	Number of new volunteers	Number of new Trustees
St Neots	12	1
Cromwell	52	1 (4 others recruited outside project)
RRM	6	
Burwell	7	(2)
Farmland	(1)	2
NVR	TBA	(6 - maintained)
Chatteris	4	
Ely	2 (+2)	
Prickwillow	4	1
Whittlesey	1	
Wisbech	2 (2)	
March	5	

Table 2: Numbers of new volunteers and Trustees recruited through the SWIM Project to museums. Figures in brackets express those that have completed an expression of interest or who are in the process of signing up.

New volunteers and Trustees are providing much needed capacity. At March Museum for example, new volunteers have already provided 101 hours of work for the museum. Also at this museum, a further 9 volunteers have been recruited as a result of work started through the project. This suggests that there is already a legacy from the project in terms of volunteer recruitment.

3.3.2 New Skills

Many of the new volunteers have helped to diversify the skills set and backgrounds of people working in the museums:

The Cromwell Museum now has a Banking Administrator, Account Auditor, a person working in a learning role and another who is a fundraiser. Others are also bringing expertise from primary education and the museum sector:

I don't have a great knowledge of history but I feel I will be contributing to keeping the museum open. I suppose that as a retired primary school teacher, I have a way of explaining things [so that they can be more easily understood].

I worked at a local city Museum for about ten years. My roles were Museum Officer, Visitor Services Manager, Marketing and Events Officer.



New SWIM volunteer working on reception at St Neots Museum

St Neots Museum has seven new desk volunteers and two new collections volunteers, one volunteer (who formerly worked for the Ministry of Defence) looking at finances, and one new Russian volunteer (who found out about the volunteering opportunity from a SWIM poster in the local library).

At **Whittlesey Museum and Prickwillow Engine Museum**, each venue has a new volunteer with marketing skills. At the latter, the individual is a journalist who wants to move into marketing and is working voluntarily (and remotely) for the museum to improve its web presence. **Prickwillow Engine Museum** also has two further new volunteers, one which will work on engineering tasks, and the other who is going to research information on tools in the collection and help out on reception.

Chatteris Museum and Burwell Museum & Windmill each have a new volunteer in social media.

Wisbech and Fenland Museum has new volunteers diversifying the age and ethnic background of its volunteers. There are four younger volunteers and two BAMER volunteers. The museum has also recruited a volunteer Curatorial Assistant.

The Farmland Museum has recruited a younger Trustee.

Ramsey Rural Museum has attracted new volunteers, most of whom are retired but they are bringing in new skills to the museum.

3.3.3 New volunteer coordination

With an increase in volunteers from different backgrounds, there has come a greater need for effective volunteer coordination. New volunteers recruited through the project have stepped into this role at Chatteris Museum, The Cromwell Museum and Nene Valley Railway, with an existing volunteer doing the same at St Neots Museum, but supported to do so by the project.

Providing support to volunteer management in this way should have a positive impact on the sustainability of outcomes already being achieved by an increase in volunteer numbers.



Evidence of:

GSO - Strengthening Public Life: Encouraging and supporting awareness and participation in local decision making and wider civic and political engagement

- People say they are more aware of volunteering opportunities and say that they are interested in, or plan to, get involved.

GSO - Strengthening Public Life: Building capacity of community and voluntary groups

- Voluntary groups feel empowered and supported, and their activity levels have increased.
- Voluntary group membership has increased or become more diverse.

3.4 Increased community engagement with museum collections

Museum audiences have not been surveyed for the purpose of this evaluation; many of the changes taking place at museums through the project which may see greater community engagement with collections are still a work in progress, and therefore could form part of future assessments beyond the scope of this report. Nevertheless, there are many examples of opportunities for greater community engagement with museum collections that have been created through the project.

3.4.1 Longer opening hours

Two museums now offer longer opening hours. These are Chatteris Museum and The Cromwell Museum. At the latter, the venue is now open over the lunch hour (when previously it was closed) and it will also be reviewing its winter opening times. This is possible without any cost to the museum thanks to the large new volunteer team which has been recruited. At the former museum, increased capacity brought about by new volunteers working on the collections have enabled another existing volunteer to pursue work on an exhibition which will hopefully benefit the museum and visitors when it comes to fruition.

3.4.2 Greater 'online' presence

Several museums are enjoying an improved digital presence, thanks to volunteers working specifically in this area, for example at Chatteris Museum, Whittlesey Museum, Nene Valley Railway and Burwell Museum & Windmill. At the latter site, a new volunteer who has taken charge of social media has led to a significant increase in activity (see Section 3.2.2).

3.4.3 Opportunities to discover new perspectives

At The Cromwell Museum, there may be significant opportunities to involve local volunteers in the future direction of the museum, through the re-interpretation of its collections.

I would love to be involved in events and exhibitions, documentation, marketing and promotional activities, children's activities and walks and talks, fundraising etc.

I'm really looking forward to promoting the collection, getting visitors interested and enthused about what's on offer in the Museum. [Also] to becoming part of a large, enthusiastic team of like-minded people, working with a professional curator, and perhaps helping update the Museum and offer ideas and suggestions for events or fundraising in the future. I think it is so important that volunteers are given a 'voice' within an organisation.

I hope I can get involved with some projects. I'd quite like to get involved with any plans to change the displays, if there are any plans. I've worked before as a graphic designer and an interior designer so I could bring this experience to the museum. [Also] I can use a computer and I have worked in sales before so I can bring communication skills to the role.

[I'm looking forward to] meeting the public and meeting other volunteers. Feeling useful – contributing to my local community.



Chatteris Museum – the model of Boudicca in Iron Age dress created by new SWIM volunteers

There are also work experience schemes with local colleges in place or due to commence shortly, at The Cromwell Museum, St Neots Museum, Ramsey Rural Museum and Burwell Museum and Windmill. These may provide the chance for the museums concerned to exchange ideas with younger people about how the collections are interpreted and the activities that are on offer or which could potentially be offered.

3. 4.4 Volunteer capacity impacting positively on visitor experience / collections care and access

At March Museum improved storage facilities mean that the attention of the newly recruited volunteers can now be focused more on exhibitions, rather than addressing the lack of storage space. It would be interesting to track the impact of this longer term, e.g. on the exhibitions that are developed and visitor feedback on these. At Ely Museum, two volunteers have expressed an interest in coordinating school holiday activities which could increase capacity, and at St Neots Museum, two new volunteers are working on the collections, who of whom is photographing them which will lead to improved accessibility.

Linking to this point, some of the SWIM museums, having taken part in Modes training, are not considering how to put their collections online. It would be worth following this up in subsequent evaluation to see if this has been achieved.



New volunteers at St Neots Museum

Left: Photographing the collections so that they are more accessible digitally

Below: Volunteer Conservator working on original drawings in the collections.



Evidence of:

GSO - Strengthening Public Life: Encouraging and supporting awareness and participation in local decision making and wider civic and political engagement

- The museum works to make its collections inclusive and accessible.

GSO - Strengthening Public Life: Providing safe, inclusive and trusted public spaces

- The work, activities and projects of local people and communities are represented in the museum / library / archive spaces.

3.5 Learning, leading to pride in local heritage and increased tourism

Given the shorter than envisaged timescale of the current SWIM project, it was not possible to achieve the outcome that learning would lead to increased tourism. For the same reason, it has also been impossible to embed yet many of the benefits which would lead to learning and pride in local heritage amongst museum audiences, although there are opportunities for this to take place. Both of these points would be worth revisiting later in 2016 and into 2017, if funding for the further development of the SWIM project is secured. Examples which could be explored include those at The Cromwell Museum, which is planning to welcome loaned-in exhibitions, as well as host an exhibition of its own developed by a newly recruited volunteer (entitled 'Cromwell's Army – a new and lasting model' and which is currently on display at Cromwell's House in Ely). Similarly, a new volunteer at Chatteris Museum will be developing an exhibition on the Somme. It would be worth taking into account what the visitor perspective is on these exhibitions, and how they may contribute to audience enjoyment, learning and interest in the local area (if applicable), as well as the impact for the museums in terms of bringing in new visitors, and greater numbers of people.

It is possible however to identify organisational learning for the participating museums as well as learning on an individual basis (i.e. amongst new and existing volunteers and staff).

3.5.1 Training

The training has definitely led to increased learning amongst those taking part. Museums noted at a Steering Group meeting that Modes training in particular has led to an increase in skills; the evidence from qualitative feedback at sessions suggests that participants enjoyed developing or acquiring a range of skills across the whole of the training programme (Section 3.1).

Several requests have already been received from participating museums for further training to be offered (see Section 4, under 'Further potential opportunities').

3.5.2 Networking

Networking between the participating museums, at meetings and more informally outside of meetings, has encouraged learning on an individual and organisational level which has lead to changed practices. Examples include

- Ely Museum reported that discussions at SWIM Steering Group Meetings have prompted a review of volunteer management which has been refined in some areas.
- The Museum Manager at Burwell Museum and Windmill has said that the project has prompted consideration of how best to communicate certain information to volunteers and how to ask volunteers for support.

- Through discussions brought about by the Volunteer Coordinators, it has highlighted generally the number of museum constitutions that cap the number of Trustees (and that some caps are quite low) and encouraged discussions about whether these are still fit for purpose if they were written a long time ago.

3.5.3 Unexpected learning

As noted earlier, the project did not set out to compare the success rates of different routes to advertising Trustee and volunteer vacancies, but this was something that became apparent, having tried a large number of methods (see box below). The project established that 'The Cambridge Edition', a Cambridge lifestyle magazine, was a particularly successful way to advertise Trustee positions as it has resulted in five people being recruited to these positions. Similarly the 'Do it' website has also been particularly helpful in bringing new volunteer applications to SWIM museums.

Ways in which volunteer and Trustee roles have been advertised through the project

- | | |
|--|---|
| • 'Best of Huntingdon' website | • Huntingdon BID Town magazine |
| • 'Do it' website (very successful) | • Local libraries |
| • ACRE | • Local schools/colleges |
| • AIM website | • Local volunteer centres |
| • Archaeology group, Family History societies, Local History societies | • Museum mailing lists |
| • Archive groups | • Nene Living Magazine for NVR |
| • Cambs and Peterborough Assoc of local councils | • Other museums |
| • Cambs Libraries and Archives newsletters | • Prickwillow Ploughing Festival |
| • Cambs.net | • Probus, Rotary groups |
| • Career Volunteer website | • REACH website |
| • CCC newsletters | • The Cambridge Edition, a Cambridge magazine (very successful) |
| • Charity Job website | • The Moment, a Peterborough magazine |
| • Civic Societies | • The Straw Bear Festival |
| • Community centres | • The WI newsletter |
| • Cromwell Association | • Twitter |
| • Facebook | • U3A |
| • Friends groups | • University of Leicester Museums Jobs Desk |
| • History groups and history related mailing lists | • V inspired |
| | • Volunteer Fairs |

3.6 Positive social experiences and enhanced wellbeing, especially among BAMER communities in Fenland

3.6.1 BAMER communities

The project has been successful so far in recruiting a small number of BAMER volunteers, and one of the Project Volunteer Coordinators has established a link with the Rosmini Centre in Wisbech. There may be scope to grow the number of BAMER volunteers further in future. For example, it would be interesting to ascertain whether the new curator at Wisbech & Fenland Museum (who is herself from Romania) is able to encourage greater numbers of volunteers from local Eastern European populations that make up a significant proportion of ethnic minorities living and working in the area.

It has not been possible to realise so far any discernible positive impact on the wellbeing of BAMER communities in Fenland, given the relatively short time-scale of the project to date. This should be assessed in the evaluation of any subsequent project to SWIM.



Wisbech & Fenland Museum

3.6.2 Positive outcomes for volunteers

Nevertheless, it is clear from feedback collected from some of the volunteers that the project has enabled a positive experience for many of them. Encouragingly, across a range of different museums, new volunteers said that **volunteering had made them feel more included in their community**, for example:

By volunteering at the museum, I do feel that I am more a part of the town. I've only lived here for 5-6 years whereas some of the other volunteers have lived here all their life. Being in the museum, when people wander in, it's good to feel part of something. I'm quite delighted I did it [became a volunteer]. (St Neots Museum volunteer)

I originate from Manchester and moved to Wisbech in 2013. As a result I have little knowledge of the surrounding area and Burwell [Museum and Windmill] was unknown to me prior to my interest in helping. Since then I have researched the area, updated the Wikipedia article a little and have learned about other museums in the vicinity. (Burwell Museum volunteer)

I feel more part of the local community since joining the museum. They have been very welcoming. (St Neots Museum volunteer)

This last quote was in fact made by a BAMER volunteer who went on to comment that “it’s been a good experience. The team are very friendly and the museum is nice and interesting. They always try to explain different things about the history of the town when I have questions.” She went on to explain that she had sent books about local heritage that were bought in the museum back to relatives and friends in her native country. This demonstrates **the sharing of cross-cultural ideas and history**. Other volunteers mentioned the desire to **give something back to the community**, for example:

I wanted to do something in my community and I'm interested in that period of history. Until recently I was a Civil War Re-enactor on the Parliamentary side. (Cromwell Museum volunteer)

There was another volunteer who commented how volunteering had been a **transformational experience** in terms of **learning about museums**:

[Becoming a volunteer has] totally [made me think differently about museums]. As far as museums are concerned, volunteering has opened up a whole new world for me. I feel totally different about museums now - I understand more about how they work. An example would be that when I first started photographing the collections, I thought that the purpose of this was so that people could find more easily the

original object. Now I realise that having the photograph itself means that people do not have to get the original item out of storage to look something up. (St Neots Museum volunteer)

For another person, volunteering was about putting their existing skills to good use in an area that really interests them. Research has shown that ‘feeling useful’ by volunteering leads to greater happiness and a sense of fulfilment¹:

I was looking for a creative outlet for my love of social media as well as wishing to volunteer in my spare time. I have a post-graduate qualification in history and have always found the subject to be fascinating. It therefore made sense to develop my social media skills by helping an historical project. (Burwell Museum and Windmill volunteer)



Cromwell Museum Volunteers getting to know one another, with one of the SWIM Volunteer Coordinators and the Cromwell Museum Interim Manager

¹ For example see Paylor, J. (2011). *Volunteering and health: evidence of impact and implications for policy and practice. A literature review*. London, Institute for Volunteering Research. Available at www.ivr.org.uk

At the Cromwell Museum, some of the new volunteers are looking forward to the social aspect of volunteering, to sharing their interests and knowledge and to being part of something they feel is very worthwhile:

I'm looking forward to meeting people, both visitors and other volunteers. It will be quite nice to get to know other people.

I think the Museum is such a unique and special asset - I'm so grateful to have the opportunity of volunteering there. I think a lot of hard work has been put in over the last year by dedicated individuals and groups to organise and safeguard the Museum's future - I do wish the new Trust every success.

The main thing is to keep the museum going. I'm looking forward to being part of keeping the museum open which I think is very important.

I've never done anything like this before [volunteer in a museum]. I'm just interested and enthusiastic and want to pass on what knowledge I am picking up now. I would really like to share what I've learnt.



Evidence of:

GSO - Health & Well-Being: Encouraging healthy lifestyles and contributing to mental and physical wellbeing

- People say they feel an increased sense of wellbeing i.e. they feel inspired, relaxed or think on a higher level.

GSO - Stronger & Safer Communities: Improving group and intergroup dialogue and understanding

- People say that they enjoy meeting other people.
- People say they are making new friends or forming positive relationships with others.
- People from different cultural or socio-economic groups say that they have increased awareness or understanding of each other.

GSO - Stronger & Safer Communities: Supporting cultural diversity and identity

- People have discovered new information or have a better understanding about their own or other cultures.

3.6.3 Improvements to the volunteering experience

There have also been improvements made to the 'volunteering experience' at several of the museums, many of which have been brought about as a result of discussions at SWIM steering group meetings or through the input of the SWIM Volunteer Coordinators:

- At **The Cromwell Museum**, there is in place a central point of contact for volunteers (a volunteer whose role it is to coordinate the other volunteers) as well as a Gmail rota which has been set up, plans for an end-of-season party and 'ideas bank' (these were all 'borrowed' from Burwell Museum and Windmill). In addition, there will be a 'welcome' social event for all volunteers when the Trust takes the museum over from Cambridgeshire County Council. Town Walks and group training sessions have also been offered to all new volunteers which are intended to enable them to meet their colleagues. Some of those interviewed for the evaluation mentioned how much they appreciated this.
- Huntingdon Community Centre adults with learning disabilities will be gaining work experience cleaning **The Cromwell Museum**, and working in the café at **Ramsey Rural Museum** from 1st April 2016.
- At **Chatteris Museum** volunteer meetings and a Christmas party for the volunteers have been introduced.
- **Ely Museum** has made improvements to its induction process which means that this is now more consistent across the museum, and there have been benefits for the Trustees and museum in that the Trustees seem more confident having considered the organisation's Forward Plan, and there has been improved attendance and engagement at Trustee meetings.
- **March Museum** has reported that existing volunteers feel more positive about the future of museum because of potential new volunteers and support with the rationalisation project and succession planning. A Trustee at the museum commented that the project has helped because 'ideas have been brought forward on how we can help better integrate everyone and help everyone understand the running of the Museum and what each person is doing. Also ideas have been generated on how we can explain better to everyone what opportunities are available in the Museum for volunteers.'



Volunteer social at Burwell Museum and Windmill



Evidence of:

GSO - Strengthening Public Life: Providing safe, inclusive and trusted public spaces

- The work, activities and projects of local people and communities are represented in the museum.
- Local people say they have been involved in the way that spaces are interpreted / have their say in how the space is used, and future developments.

4. Conclusions

The project has realised many successes in a relatively short period of time. Of particular note are the following:

1. The number of Trustees and volunteers that have been recruited across the museums.
2. The fact that project has contributed to The Cromwell Museum remaining open by recruiting over 50 volunteers to work in Front-of-House roles.
3. The training programme which covered a large range of topics, many offered at more than one session, with 220 attendances by people from participating museums. Information collected about the training indicates that it made a significant contribution to raising skills and increasing knowledge amongst those who participated.

Other positive outcomes include:

4. The support given by the Volunteer Coordinators to advise and assist with putting in place new/improved volunteer management policies and procedures. In recognition of this, two museums, The Cromwell Museum and Ramsey Rural Museum, received the 'Huntingdonshire Volunteer Centre 5 Star Focus Accreditation Award'.
5. Volunteer hours are now been accurately recorded across most of the SWIM museums with the use of sign in/out sheets.
6. Many museums are committed to using the Volunteer Equality and Diversity form, a new tool to help them monitor diversity in their organisations.
7. Volunteers with a more diverse range of skills in areas that are directly benefiting museums, e.g. social media, marketing, finance.
8. More opportunities for networking amongst participating museums, leading to improved communication and the sharing of ideas and best practice.
9. Peer-to-peer learning amongst the partnership and a willingness amongst the majority of the museums to see this partnership continue and to work together to build on the outcomes realised so far.
10. New partnerships established with external organisations.
11. Learning about the most effective ways to advertise for and recruit volunteers and Trustees.
12. An improved 'volunteer experience' brought about by greater coordination (from the two Project Coordinators, as well as volunteers who have stepped into this role at some museums) and via increased capacity (more volunteers have been recruited) and the implementation of volunteer social events.
13. Positive social experiences for new volunteers which are likely to benefit their sense of wellbeing longer term.

Some of the above points are best summarised in a quote from the curator at Ramsey Rural Museum:

The project is a success in that the smaller museums now have forum to discuss ideas, we have managed to train volunteers and [the Volunteer Coordinator] working in the partnership office is an excellent sounding board for general museum ideas giving the necessary advice and guidance when required.

The benefits brought about by the project have been mapped against the Generic Learning Outcomes (GLOs) framework and Generic Social Outcomes (GSOs) framework. This demonstrates that the project has contributed to the following:

GLOs

An increase in 'Knowledge and Understanding', 'Skills' and 'Enjoyment, Inspiration and Creativity'.

GSOs

Strengthening Public Life

- Building the capacity of community and voluntary groups
- Providing safe, inclusive and trusted public spaces
- Encouraging and supporting awareness and participation in local decision making and wider civic and political engagement

Strong and safe communities

- Improving group and intergroup dialogue and understanding
- Supporting cultural diversity and identity

Health and Wellbeing

- Encouraging healthy lifestyles and contributing to mental and physical wellbeing

The project outcomes, when considered in combination, are contributing to making the SWIM museums more resilient longer term. This would be further enhanced if a number of opportunities that have been identified by the SWIM museums themselves were to be realised in 2016 and 2017 (discussed further below).

It is important to point out that some of the SWIM museums have engaged more fully with the project than others, e.g. by taking greater advantage of support offered by the Volunteer Coordinators or by participating in more than one Steering Group Meeting. It is fair to say that those museums that have invested more in the project, have realised more benefits for themselves.

Also important to note is that some of the intended project outcomes have not been achieved or fully achieved, specifically around diversifying the workforce in terms of age and ethnic background, increasing tourism and learning opportunities for audiences and enhancing wellbeing for BAMER communities via volunteering. Other impacts, such as economic outcomes (e.g. greater visitor numbers and income), could be further developed. The main reason for this is that these outcomes were devised when the project was intended to be delivered over a three-year, rather than one-year, period.

Indeed, the current SWIM project has taken place over a short period of time, with less 'lead in' time to organise and advertise activities, such as training, than would be ideal. Once the project was up and running, much of it occurred over the winter months when some participating museums have been closed, and opportunities to offer to new volunteers in Front-of-House roles may have been limited. It would be beneficial therefore to be able to maintain the initial momentum of volunteer recruitment and training longer term, and to embed and develop the project outcomes now starting to be realised. Indeed, some of the intended project outcomes, particularly the ones about 'increased community engagement with collections' and generating 'positive social experiences and enhanced wellbeing, especially among BAMER communities in Fenland', can only be realised with longer term investment, because the building blocks of this process are already in place (new volunteers, new trustees, an extensive training scheme, partnership working and improved volunteer management practices). For this reason, museum representatives were asked to identify where they felt resources and support would best be directed in continuing the 'journey' that this project has enabled. Their response is summarised below, mapped against the project outcomes, with additional suggestions about further evaluation being made where relevant.

Further potential opportunities

New opportunities to develop skills

- To put what has been learnt at the training into practice - some of the training has only recently been completed, therefore the benefits from these sessions may not yet have been fully realised by the museums and their audiences.
- To offer further training as requested by the SWIM museums, such as 'Revisiting a museum's constitution', more on 'Modes', 'Dealing with challenging volunteers', 'Training for Trustees' (where a member of staff is trained in order to pass this on to their own trustees).

Economic benefits

- To assess whether increased capacity and new skills brought by recently recruited volunteers and Trustees lead to an increase in visitor numbers and income for the museums concerned.
- To evaluate how volunteers using the 'Joint Rewards Scheme' have received this benefit and whether or not it has led to wider positive outcomes for the participating museums.
- To encourage museums now properly counting their volunteer hours, to make use of these figures to inform Forward Plans and in 'economic terms', e.g. by placing a financial value on the hours worked.
- To provide opportunities for SWIM museums to continue to meet and share ideas and best practice, thereby contributing to their sustainability longer term. These museums have already identified two ways in which they would welcome this to take place:
 1. Support with Friends groups, e.g. legalities, how to address cliques between Friends and other stakeholder groups (e.g. Trustees, volunteers in general) and how to reinvigorate Friends groups that are no longer as active.
 2. The creation of a 'Trustees Network' which would bring together Trustees from across Cambridgeshire at an annual, well-organised conference.

A more diverse museum workforce

- To maintain volunteer recruitment where needed via tried and tested methods that have been shown to work.
- To address the low numbers of BAMER volunteers in SWIM museums, particularly at Wisbech & Fenland Museum, and also possibly at St Neots Museum.
- To consider further the impact of 'volunteer' Volunteer Coordinators at the relevant museums.
- At The Cromwell Museum: To define and recruit for specialised volunteer roles (as recruitment to-date has focused on filling Front-of-House roles). To attract greater numbers of younger volunteers.
- At Nene Valley Railway: To consider recruiting specific volunteers in curatorial roles
- At Prickwillow Engine Museum: To provide support to diversify Front-of-House roles.

Increased community engagement with collections

- To seek feedback from audiences / museums about the benefits brought about by volunteers and Trustees recruited through the project.
- At the Cromwell Museum: To explore the significant opportunities that are available to involve local people in the running of the museum and so encourage greater engagement with its collections once the Trust is set up. This potential has been demonstrated by the keen interest shown by potential volunteers, the recruitment of five Trustees, the Huntingdonshire Volunteer Centre 5 Star Accreditation Award in

Volunteer Management, and the support from the local community to keep the museum open.

Learning, leading to pride in local heritage and increased tourism

- To explore whether there have been opportunities for audiences to learn more as a result of SWIM volunteers, e.g. through exhibitions they have developed.
- To assess the impact of opportunities for continued shared learning amongst SWIM museums, e.g. as a result of training, networking or joint meetings.

Positive social experiences and enhanced wellbeing, especially among BAMER communities in Fenland

- As noted above, to address the lower numbers of BAMER volunteers in Fenland museums and to assess what impact museum volunteering has on people in these communities.
- To 'revisit' feedback from volunteers and Trustees at The Cromwell Museum to assess how plans for the museum have developed in practice and the extent to which opportunities for community involvement are being offered.

Appendix 1: Plans to measure and provide evidence of the intended project outcomes

Outcome	Suggested Measures of Success	Evaluation Methods
(A) New opportunities to acquire skills	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Details of training sessions and the benefits for participants (new or strengthened skills, increased confidence, motivation etc.) 2. Examples of skills and resource sharing (e.g. examples of museums sharing expertise, such as in volunteer management, with other museums in need of this advice) 3. Development of, or improvements to, formal induction process and accompanying documentation 4. Increase in skills / knowledge / confidence in areas identified by museums achieved in ways other than training (e.g. through recruitment) 5. Take-up of a 'rewards system' to acknowledge commitment made by individual volunteers 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Records kept by volunteer coordinators on the number of training sessions, the number of participants and the topics they have covered. 2. Training survey which would capture outcomes relating to the topics concerned 2. Minutes of project meetings 3. Feedback from participating museums towards end of project exploring topics around skills and the impact on museums 4. Records of new or revised documentation/processes relating to volunteer management. 5. Museum feedback (verbal/e-mail) on volunteer rewards system
(B) Economic benefits and a more diverse museum workforce	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Details of partnership working, both with new and existing partners 2. Improvements, where needed, to keeping accurate volunteer records (demographic information, hours worked) 3. Increase in numbers of volunteers/Trustees recruited and retained (or numbers maintained if at capacity) 4. Increase in numbers of volunteers / Trustees within specific role(s) or with specific skills (e.g. finance, front-of-house, collections, marketing) 5. Changes to the demographic profile of the volunteer- 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Benchmarking data and audit of museums carried out July 2015 2. Results from (improved, where necessary) records concerning volunteer demographics/hours worked 3. Group interview with participating museums towards end of Yr 1 would help to evidence some of the measure of success. 4. Survey to key volunteers / Trustees at participating museums 5. Record of documentation achieved through the project's activities

Outcome	Suggested Measures of Success	Evaluation Methods
	base (e.g. age & ethnicity) 6. The recruitment of new trustees and the impact of this in terms of new skills and ideas for example 7. Any positive attitudinal changes within museums 8. Appointment of volunteer-led volunteer coordinators 9. Production of forward plans, e.g. business plans or strategies for longer term recruitment of volunteers/Trustees 10. Development of new publicity materials	
(C) Increased community engagement with museum collections	1. Increase in opening hours 2. Increase in number of visits to museums and instances of participation in activities* 3. Increased offer of activities for audiences* 4. The level of community support/input and whether this has increased (see opposite) 5. Qualitative feedback from audiences* 6. Examples of where new volunteers / new activities have encouraged new audiences* 7. Improved publicity or visibility online (this could include online access to collections) 8. Improved records relating to collections (e.g. reduction in outstanding accessions) * These cannot be assessed before the project's end date of 31 st March 2016	1. Quantitative data: number of hours museums are open, number of visits, number of project activities delivered and on which subjects, number of website visits, followers on Twitter or likes on Facebook (tracked over time) 2. Community support could include partnerships with local organisations, having sufficient numbers of trustees, a higher profile with local schools etc. Museums would be asked to consider where the project, for them, has generated increased community support. 3. Number of volunteers/Trustees recruited from the local community 4. Surveys/informal feedback from audiences* 5. Photographic evidence 6. Website hits / Facebook likes / Twitter followers 7. Collection-specific data (e.g. % of collections that are accessioned before and after project)*
(D) Learning, leading to pride in local heritage and increased tourism	Qualitative feedback from stakeholders - examples of feedback that demonstrate both formal and informal 'learning' has taken place (<i>learning</i> here includes finding	1. Surveys 2. Informal feedback that museums are asked to record and report on at project meetings

Outcome	Suggested Measures of Success	Evaluation Methods
	out new things as well as changes in attitude, well-being, feeling positive about your community etc.)	
(E) Positive social experiences and enhanced wellbeing, especially among BAMER communities in Fenland	<p>Qualitative feedback from audiences* and volunteers – examples of enjoyment, feeling inspired, creative, encouraging a sense of pride in local identity / diversity etc.</p> <p>* This cannot be assessed before the project's end date of 31st March 2016</p>	<p>1. Surveys</p> <p>2. Informal feedback that museums are asked to record and report on at project meetings</p>

Appendix 2: Breakdown of training sessions and participant numbers

Date	Topic	Venue	Planned learning outcome	No. of attendees (SWIM museums)	No. of attendees (non SWIM museums)
2015-09-24	Modes		Gain confidence in using MODES software	10	
2015-11-15	Trustee	Ely	Understanding of the roles and responsibilities of a Museum Trustee	5	1
2015-11-18	Modes	NVR	Gain confidence in using MODES software	9	
2015-11-26	First Aid	RRM	To receive training in basic first/emergency aid	9	
2016-01-16	First Aid	St Neots	To receive training in basic first/emergency aid	14	
2016-01-31	Trustee	NVR	Understanding of the roles and responsibilities of a Museum Trustee	7	
2016-01-31	Guided Walks	Cromwell	To gain an understanding of Huntingdon in Cromwell's time, and to see the sites of significance to him	15	
2016-02-03	Collections Care	Whittlesey		12	
2016-02-10	First Aid	Cromwell	To receive training in basic first/emergency aid	14	1
2016-02-12	Modes	Ely	Gain confidence in using MODES software	9	
2016-02-18	Guided Walks	Cromwell	To gain an understanding of Huntingdon in Cromwell's time, and to see the sites of significance to him	15	
2016-02-23	Induction Training	Cromwell	Training on procedures	15	
2016-02-25	First Aid	RRM	To receive training in basic first/emergency aid	10	
2016-02-26	Induction Training individual Sessions	Cromwell	Training on procedures	1	
2016-07-03	Induction Training individual Sessions	Cromwell	Training on procedures	1	
2016-03-09	Fundraising	Ely		12	3
2016-03-11	Organising activities	Chatteris		5	2
2016-03-12	Induction Training	Cromwell	Training on procedures	9	

2016-03-14	Guided Walks	Cromwell	To gain an understanding of Huntingdon in Cromwell's time, and to see the sites of significance to him	13	
2016-03-17	First Aid	RRM	To receive training in basic first/emergency aid	8	
2016-03-24	Induction Training	Cromwell	Training on procedures	13	
2016-03-17	Trustee	Wisbech	Understanding of the roles and responsibilities of a Museum Trustee	8	3
24-03-2016	Induction Training individual Sessions	Cromwell	Training on procedures	6	
TOTAL	23 sessions			220	10