



Nantwich Museum

IMPACT REPORT 2023



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INTRODUCTION

Vision

Nantwich Museum will be the number one destination for telling the story of the town.

Mission

To tell the story of the town's rich history by understanding the past and inspiring the future.

Manager's summary

2023 was a very busy year at Nantwich Museum with lots of highlights. In particular we ran an ambitious *Summer of Science* project, welcomed new volunteers (including four new trustees), acquired new objects, and further developed our permanent exhibitions. We welcomed three new members of staff including the recruitment of Kerry Kirwan to a new Learning & Engagement role. We have exciting plans for the future and have made significant progress in working towards achieving our key aims:

- To be a key destination for locals and visitors to the area (Audiences).
- To provide access to the Museum and the collections to as many people as possible (Programmes).
- To be a resilient, sustainable organisation (Organisation Health).

We are extremely grateful to all of our volunteers who have made this year's achievements possible.



Kerry Kirwan joined the staff team as Learning and Engagement Officer bringing with her 26 years of experience.

PEOPLE

Equality

The Museum is **free entry**. In 2023 we made the decision to make all activities for children free of charge to encourage families to access the Museum.

Family offer


Family workshops ran throughout the year, primarily during the school holidays. They were very popular and raised public awareness about the history of the town. Over the summer holidays, our family workshops attracted in the region of 800 visitors.

Drop in coffee mornings

We ran monthly coffee mornings for the local community where we asked for donations only. People came along to socialise and to enjoy a safe, welcoming and relaxing environment. Three other community groups; Nantwich in Bloom, Sustainable Nantwich and Nantwich Town Council joined us during the summer to share information with those attending.



Volunteers from Engelsea Brook helped at one of our summer workshops and demonstrated spinning.

 In 2023, we received 18,683 individual visitors to the Museum

 Individual visitor numbers increased by 23%

Dementia Friendship Group



The Dementia Friendship Group on their annual trip to Overwater Marina



Members of Pear Tree Primary School choir who sang for the group on two occasions.

A twice monthly dementia friendship group continues to run. It is open to anyone in the community who is living with dementia and aims to improve the wellbeing of those attending.

Other groups and local organisations have contributed to the sessions over the last year. These includes Nantwich in Bloom and Pear Tree Primary school who brought in members of the choir to perform for the group including a Christmas song session before Christmas.

Other sessions included clothing through time and cheese tasting with Nick from The Cheese Shop, Hospital Street, Nantwich.

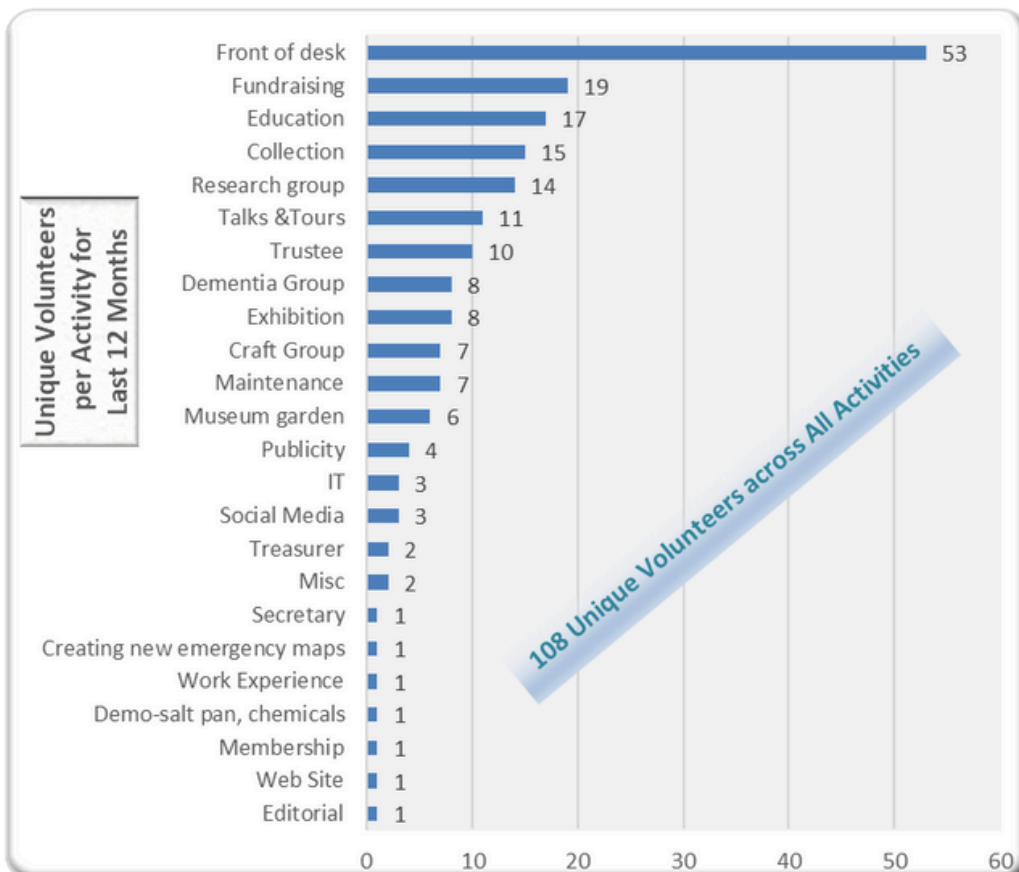
Volunteer opportunities

Volunteers join us for a variety of reasons including to combat loneliness, to counter mental health concerns, to develop new skills and to make a positive impact in their local community.



A new volunteer gardening group was created. It has six members who developed and look after the garden. They aim to increase bio-diversity and create a relaxing, sensory space for our visitors to enjoy.

In 2023, 13 new volunteers joined the team



Volunteers are involved with a huge array of activities.

Inspiring the Future

In 2022/2023, we welcomed approximately 2500 children who visited on organised school trips. Classes came from as far as Manchester and the Wirral. For our more local schools, they learn about the area that they live in, developing local pride and identity.

85 school visits

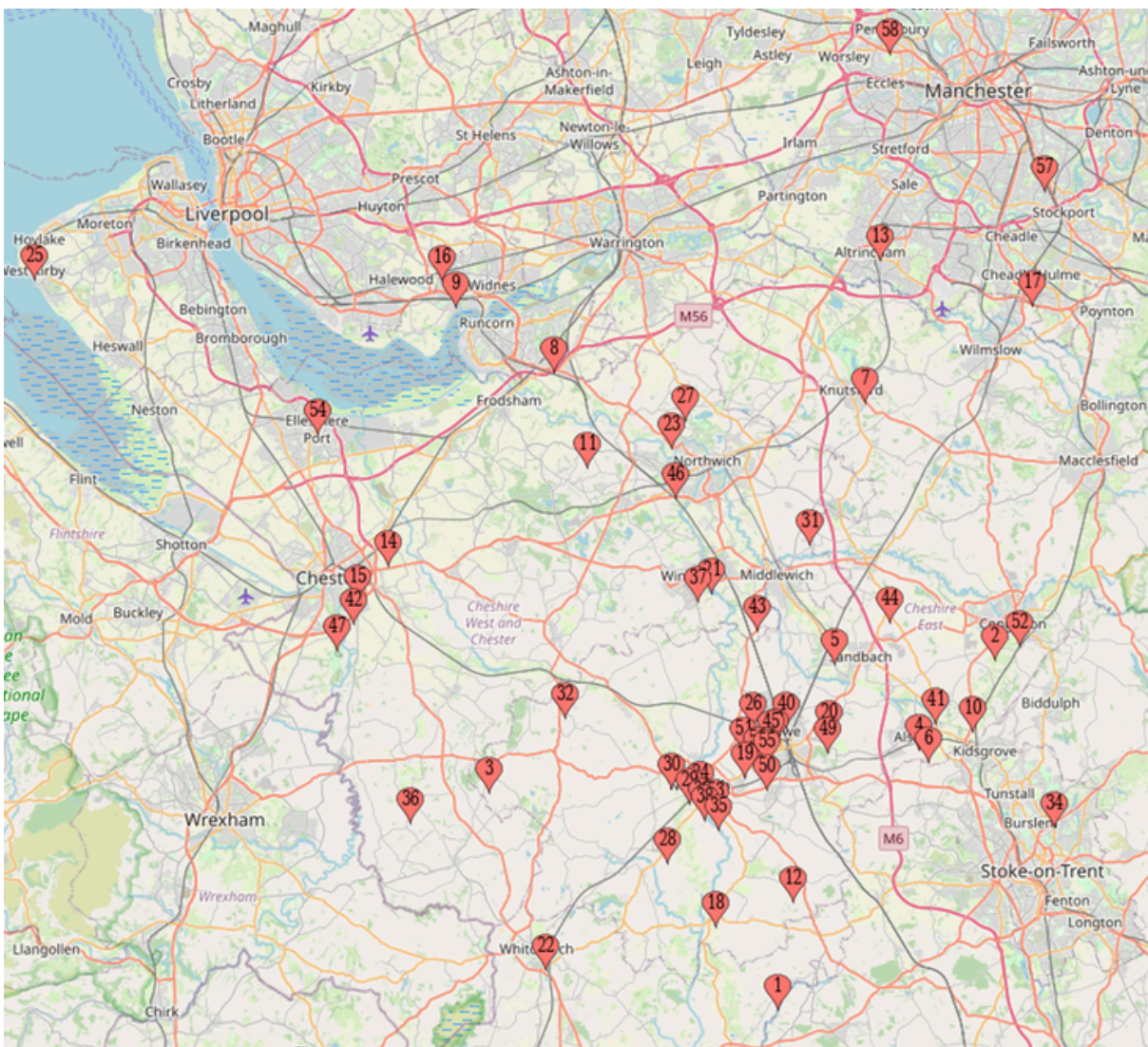
65 different schools

23 Fire of Nantwich resource box loans

1 home educated group visit

3 outreach visits

4 other resource box loans





Feedback from some of our school groups

Gainsborough Primary

Morning, I just wanted to thank you and the volunteers for an excellent visit yesterday. It was well prepared and organised - thank you.

The children (and staff) all had a great time and learnt a great deal about their local area.

Many thanks

Excalibur Primary

We had a lovely day thank you - as always!

Your volunteers do a great job

Inspiring the community

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Throughout the year, the Museum hosted numerous exhibitions by local groups and organisations. In July, temporary exhibition space was extended to include the Community Gallery which offers a smaller exhibition space, primarily for individuals and smaller local groups.

Millennium Gallery

Outlook by Intastitch

13 December - 25 February



Rescued/Revived by Textiles in the park

15 March - 13 May

Nantwich and Beyond by Creative Art Group

16 May - 13 July



Nantwich Illuminated

In-house exhibition developed by our Research Group, focused on the history of the town's former gas works site currently earmarked for redevelopment.

19 July - 30 September



In Cemento Veritas by Mario Loprete

3 October - 2 December

Within the Loop by Threadmill

6 December - 17 February

Community Gallery

People and Places by Damien Sheeky

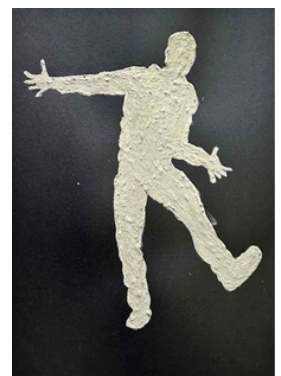
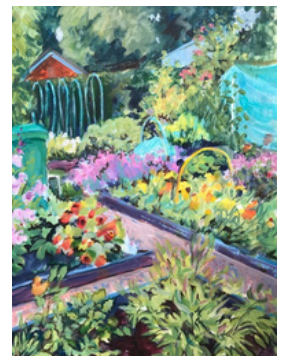
6 June - 15 July

The Street is my Studio - celebrating the centenary of local artist J. Haydn Jones

4 Oct - 11 November

Art work by Herbert St John Jones

14 November - 6 January



Talks, walks & events

A range of talks and walks connected to the history of the local area were available for the general public to attend. We made the decision that all of these activities would be free for children. In addition to those listed below, a range of talks were also developed for our project, 'A Summer of Science.' These talks enabled the community to discover more about where they live, developing a sense of place and local identity.

- Civil War coin hoards in Cheshire
- A History of the Fire of Nantwich
- Roman Nantwich
- Nantwich and the Railway
- The Story of Witchcraft - Nantwich and Beyond
- Death in Nantwich
- The Enigma Machine
- Romans in mid-Cheshire



Our outreach speakers delivered talks at care homes and community group venues, engaging with 987 people in the community.



286 people joined guided walking tours led by volunteer tour guides.

This year we developed our relationship with Keele University and held a workshop, Facing the Dead - Facial Reconstruction with Dr Chris Aris.



Participants enjoyed theoretical and practical aspects to this workshop.

We also continued to get involved with other events taking place in the town. This included Nantwich Food and Drink Festival and Holly Holy Day, which is a reenactment of the Civil War Battle of Nantwich, and saw over 400 people visit the Museum.



We ran walking tours, displayed a model of the battlefield, and had experts on hand to talk about it, and hosted 17th century musicians, Forlorn Hope, who encouraged the public to get involved with traditional dancing. During the build up to the day we also held talks and a walk.

The collection

The Museum continued to add to its collection in order to preserve and share local finds with the public. Through the Portable Antiquities and Treasures scheme we have been able to acquire the following objects:

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- Post medieval gold ringer ring from Batherton
- Post-medieval silver pierced penny from Marbury
- Medieval silver and garnet crucifix from Hurleston
- Post medieval silver dress fastener from Batherton
- Early medieval silver ingot
- A post medieval cast silver gilt eye element from a two-piece dress fastener



These local finds have enabled us to continue to develop our Treasures case. They are all locally found and add a social context to the town's history. Pictured is the coin from Marbury, ring from Batherton and crucifix from Hurleston.



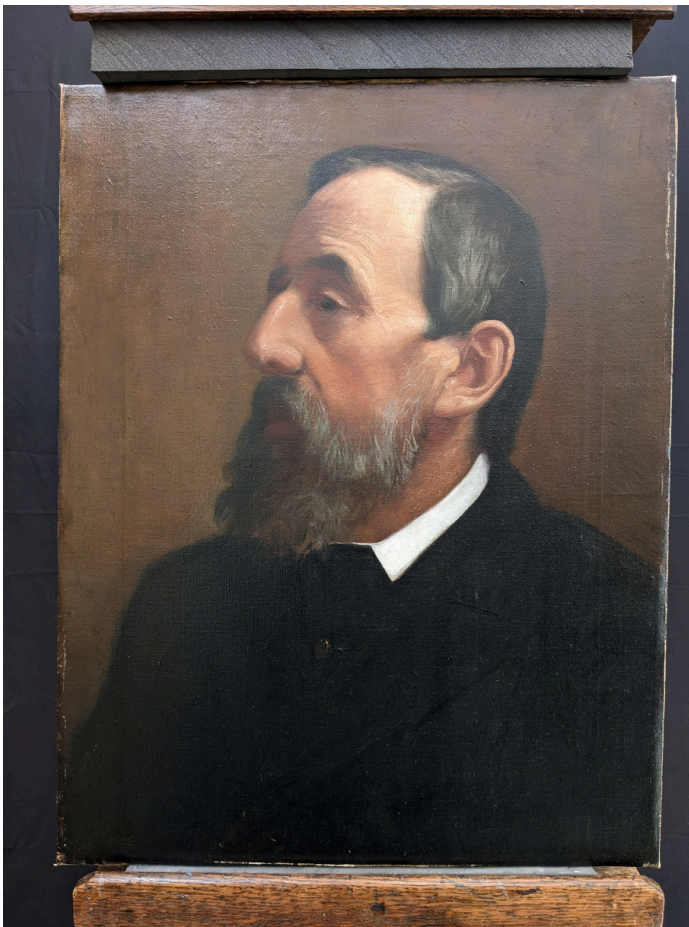
Other items were donated by members of the public.



23 Nantwich-related objects were added to the collection

Caring for the Collection

Two of the Museum's significant paintings were conserved and included in our revamped displays.



Samuel Harlock (artist unknown).
We are keen to include the stories of Nantwich people into our displays.



The Great Fire of Nantwich by Herbert St John Jones.
This is a significant local event and this painting is now prominently displayed in one of our new display cases.

Redevelopment

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In 2023 improvements were made across the Museum. Two new display cases were erected, our clocks moved, and our salt ship was lowered and moved in an effort to improve the way in which we tell the important stories of the town's past. The Millennium Gallery was replastered and painted.



Volunteers helped with a lot of the reorganisation.



Alterations made to the salt ship display have provided greater flexibility to the exhibition area.



We are improving the way in which we tell the important stories of the town.

CLIMATE

We were keen to improve environmental conditions at the Museum. This included making some changes in the Victorian part of the building by:

- Installing secondary glazing on three large windows.
- Replacing some old, inefficient storage heaters.
- Replacement of a polycarbonate lantern (skylight) with a double glazed unit.

We also explored issues around sustainability as part of our Summer of Science project.



We track environmental data and will be looking at impact over the following year. However, for the first time the reception area has felt warm and conditions for volunteers and visitors has improved.

CASE STUDY



A Summer of Science

This project was inspired by the “Nantwich Illuminated” exhibition, which explored the history of the site of Nantwich’s former gas works and acknowledgement that the Museum’s collection includes many fascinating historical objects that have science hidden in them. We wanted to expose this and also explain how they worked.

We were also keen to develop local partnerships and wanted to include more science in our educational activities for schools in the future.

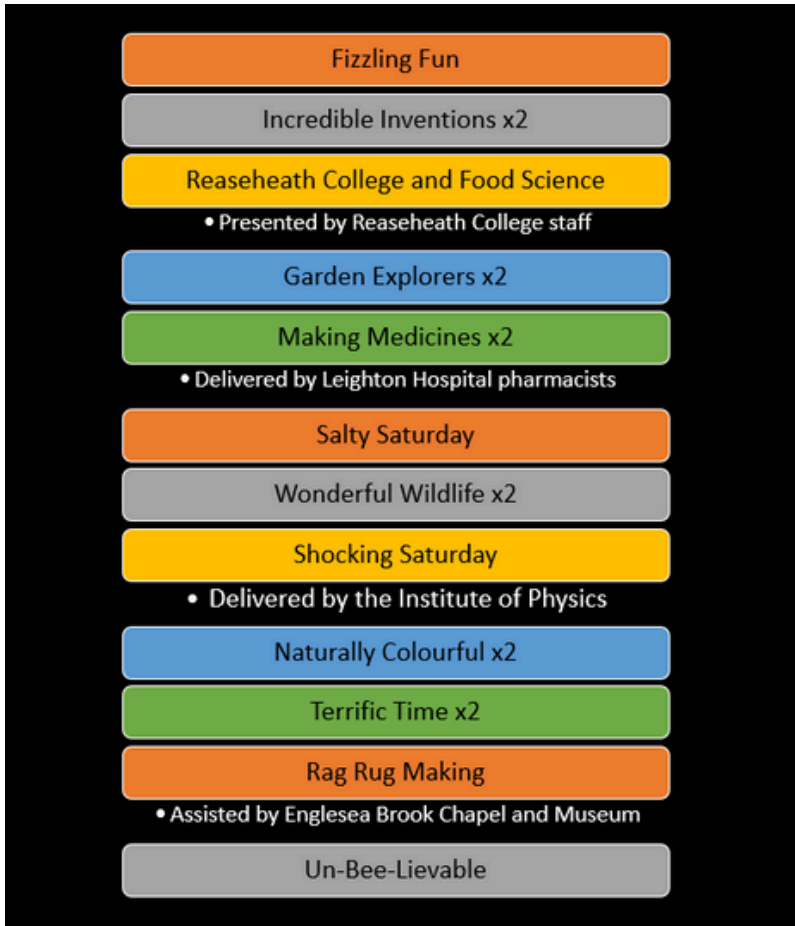
How did we go about it?

- Formed a small team of Museum staff and volunteers
- Planned a series of events and activities
- Engaged with external partners
- Successfully applied for funding from the Royal Society of Chemistry and the Museum Development North West Sustainable Improvement Fund. We also received a contribution from the Institute of Physics

What did we do?

Ran 19 drop-in family workshops (free of charge)	Led 12 science/sustainability themed guided walks	Presented 17 talks – at the Museum (15) and online (2)	Delivered 3 live chemistry and physics demonstrations
Displayed a live photosynthesis experiment	Held 3 science/sustainability themed coffee mornings	Created 10 roller banners with scientific interpretation of objects on display	Developed trails around the Museum
Demonstrated salt making the Roman way in Nantwich Town Square	Created a mini garden outside the Museum with interpretation	Displayed Grosvenor Museum's "Getting Drastic with Plastic" exhibition	Presented a film, "2040", about climate change and solutions

19 free drop in family workshops over the school summer holiday



This experiment was messy! But I loved it!

Absolutely brilliant. Very interesting and informative. Well presented.

17 talks (free for under 18s)



12 science/sustainability themed walks



Science Around Nantwich (featuring “spot the gas lamp”!)

From Reaseheath College to Coed Wen: linking green spaces

Riverside Nature: exploring nature in all its forms by the river



We reinterpreted objects with a science focus which will have a long-term benefit for visitors of all ages.

NANTWICH MUSEUM

THE FIRE PUMP

FIGHTING FIRES IN THE PAST

Nantwich's first fire 'engine'

Nantwich had many fires because its buildings were mainly made of wood and thatch.

A fire that broke out in a salt-making house in 1717, and burnt down five houses, led to the purchase of an 'engine and other implements proper for extinguishing of fire'. The engine, technically a fire pump (as it didn't actually have an engine, was purchased in 1740, followed in 1746 by 24 leather buckets.

The Museum's engine has a lead-lined cistern, a hand operated pump and was originally fitted with rusted leather and, later, canvas hoses. It was housed in Churchfields, Filby Street and in 1869 in Market Street. Water for the pump was probably drawn from wells and later from the supply piped from the Buddiley reservoir.

How does it work?

The water pump operates in two phases, the first (Phase 1) both pumps out water to put out the fire and refills the cylinder. The process is a cycle, and so there is no ideal place to start.

Phase 1: The piston is raised, water in the upper part of the cylinder is forced out through a hose. A valve in the piston ensures that water can only leave through the hose. The ascending physics happens in the lower part. As the piston is raised it creates a partial vacuum in the lower part of the cylinder. The air pressure outside is greater than inside. The pressure of the air pushing down on the water in the cistern (the water container underneath the cylinder) forces water up into the cylinder. We often think that the pump sucks water in, this is wrong; the water is pushed in by air pressure.

Phase 2: The piston is now forced down. This allows the valve in the piston to open so water from the lower part can flow into the upper part of the cylinder. At the same time the pressure of the water keeps the valve at the bottom of the cylinder closed which prevents water escaping back into the cistern. This part of the cycle refills the upper part of the cylinder ready for Phase 1 to be repeated.

Can you see any similarities to a modern fire engine?



The Institute of Physics conducted experiments with the general public. This was to dispel misconceptions about science and to encourage people to have a go.

We also ran demonstrations, practical, hands-on demonstrations and live chemistry experiments. These images give a flavour of some of the things that took place.

A salt making demonstration took place in the town square to highlight the significance of this industry to the public.



We were delighted to welcome staff (Iain Clarke and colleagues) from Reaseheath College to talk about innovations in food science and farming, with sustainability being a key theme.

Impact

- The salt making and other demonstrations may be repeated in the future
- Roller banners will be displayed in the Museum and at visits to community groups
- Equipment purchased will be reused for future workshops and demonstrations
- Partnering with external organisations proved to be extremely fruitful, and should enable future jointly organised initiatives
- The dedication and enthusiasm of staff, volunteers and external partners was inspiring and motivating ... perhaps another science festival in the future!
- Summer of Science led to an increase in visitor numbers.
- The children's workshops proved to be especially popular
- Talks were on the whole well attended but perhaps did not show a diversity in visitor demographics
- Visitors spent longer looking at the re-interpretation
- Facebook and the website were the main means that people found out about the events
- The number of volunteer hours and expertise spent on this project equates to thousands of pounds
- The project was ambitious and showed the Museum to be a highly active organisation
- We started to use an online ticketing system

In the last year, the Museum has benefitted from the support (financial and otherwise) of its volunteers, members and the below individuals and organisations. Our partnership working has enabled us to deliver a wide range of activities and ensure that the Museum remains a vibrant and essential part of the local community.

With thanks to:

- Cheshire East Council
- Nantwich Town Council
- The Royal Society of Chemistry
- Museums Development North West
- Nantwich Rotary Club
- Amy Williams and other Leighton Hospital staff
- Andrew Fielding, Ecosal-UK
- ANSA
- Appleby's Dairy
- Cheshire Archives and Local Studies
- Cheshire West Museums
- Crewe Road Nurseries
- Englesea Brook Chapel & Museum
- Everything Genetic Ltd
- Fabio Parmeggiani, Politecnico di Milano
- Grosvenor Museum, Chester
- Institute of Physics North West Branch
- Keele University
- Middlewich Heritage Trust
- Mark Whalley, University of Chester
- Nantwich Film Club
- Nantwich in Bloom
- Nantwich Mill Community Energy
- Nantwich Swimming Pool
- Nantwich Town Council
- Phil Murray, Manchester Glassworks
- Reaseheath College & University Centre
- Sustainable Nantwich
- Chris Aris, Keele University
- The public