

Introduction

Museums of Cheshire requires a freelancer/s who can design and build a website for the network.

Museums of Cheshire (MoC), until 2013 known as Cheshire Museums Forum, is a group formed over 25 years ago. Members of MoC are Accredited museums (as administered by Arts Council England) or museums that are recognised as “working towards Accreditation”. It is a voluntary group, though until local government re-organisation in 2008 it had the support of the County Museums Officer as its Secretary. The group was formed to support and promote museums within Cheshire as it was defined before the local government boundary changes of 1974, 1998 and 2009. Today this is represented by museums within the local authority boundaries of: Cheshire East, Cheshire West and Chester, Halton, Warrington, Wirral.

The collections of each museum are unique and offer an individual experience for its visitors and communities. Together they tell the rich and diverse story of the people and events of the area. The full list of current MOC venues is as follows:

Managing Organisation	Venue
Culture Warrington	Warrington Museum
Port Sunlight Village Trust	Port Sunlight Museum
Macclesfield Silk Museums Trust	Macclesfield Silk Museum
	Paradise Mill
	The Old Sunday School
	West Park Museum
Wirral Borough Council	Williamson Art Gallery
	Birkenhead Priory
Englesea Brook Chapel and Museum	Englesea Brook Chapel and Museum
West Cheshire Museums	Grosvenor Museum
	Lion Salt Works
	Stretton Watermill
	Weaver Hall
Museum of Policing in Cheshire	Museum of Policing in Cheshire
Congleton Museum Trust	Congleton Museum
Nantwich Museum	Nantwich Museum
Norton Priory Museum Charitable Trust	Norton Priory Museum and Gardens
Cheshire East Council	Tatton Park
Anson Museum Trust	Anson Engine Museum
Cheshire Military Museum Trust	Cheshire Military Museum
Catalyst Science Discovery Centre and Museum Trust	Catalyst Science Discovery Centre

Museums of Cheshire Purpose and Aims

The purpose of the group is to work collaboratively to enhance the aims of the constituent museum services to increase:

- Use
- Accessibility
- Learning opportunities
- Community engagement
- Awareness and promotion
- Sustainability
- Income and Value for Money
- Partnerships

MoC bring museums to work together on projects and initiatives that would not be possible for individual museums on their own or where there is clear advantage in sharing resources and collaborating for mutual benefit. Working together the group aims to:

- Promote best practice – through sharing experience, skills and expertise
- Increase awareness of the role and work of museums today
- Be a voice for all museums and the collective activity of the Museums of Cheshire
- Improve marketing and publicity for the museums
- Develop skills of staff and volunteers – through training and continuing professional development
- Establish and nurture partnerships that are more effective on a larger scale
- Increase efficiency and value for money through economies of scale – through joint purchasing and commissioning
- Maximise inward investment from external funding opportunities

Each of the Museums of Cheshire member organisations has their own web and social media presence.

Museums of Cheshire currently has a twitter and facebook presence but no website.

Museums of Cheshire now requires a freelancer/s who can design and build a website for the network. We require this project to be completed by the end of March 2016, in order to comply with the terms of our grant from ACE.

Aims of the website

- To be a first port of call for local people and visitors seeking information about museums, heritage sites and things to do across Cheshire
- To signpost website visitors to further information about each MoC venue through an individual venue information page and a link to MoC venue websites. (NB. We do not intend to provide event and exhibition listings on our website, but to signpost visitors to individual venue websites)
- To be a resource for staff in MoC venues, particularly in customer facing roles, which enhances their knowledge of venues across Cheshire and enables them to signposts visitors to other venues of interest.
- To explain MoC's aims, purpose and current programme of work to other professionals in the museums sector, and showcase our ongoing projects.

Functionality

We require the website to have the following content/functions:

- An introductory page about Museums of Cheshire, its aims and objectives
- Embedded twitter feed
- Thematic pages which explore the collections, shared stories and content of our museums
- Simple individual information pages for each MoC member venue (text and images, with downloadable PDF versions available)
- A downloadable map which shows the location of each of our venues (not a detailed roadmap, the map will be illustrated attractively to show each museum's relative position across the county – to be commissioned separately)
- Encouragement to engage with MoC via twitter and facebook, with appropriate buttons/links
- Information for teachers
- Information for potential volunteers
- Potential to add pages at a later date to promote future MoC projects and initiatives
- Contact page.

The software chosen to create the website needs to be flexible enough to allow us to expand the range of functions over time. Specifically we would want the website to have the capacity at a later date to host an online shop, and newsletter sign up. We would also like to take advice from our web designer about how best to approach the use of images on the site(for example through use of slideshows or static images?)

Members of staff from venues across the network who are part of our social media team will take on responsibility for the management and updating of the site, and therefore we require a site which is easy to update and change.

Look and feel

Museums of Cheshire has a logo and colour scheme designed in an earlier phase of the project, and we would like to ensure that the design of the website is consistent with our logo, and uses it effectively and creatively. (logo design attached)

We require a website which is contemporary, clear and easy to use, and which is search engine optimised to maximise our reach to anyone looking for museums and heritage content related to Cheshire, or content related to our key collections themes. The website must work across a range of devices, including PCs and laptops, tablets and mobile phones.

We also require the site to be designed and built in line with best practice to ensure accessibility for the widest possible range of users.

Information and material available

- Logo artwork
- Descriptive and informative text for each museum venue
- Text for homepage, volunteering page, schools information page
- Image bank of photographs of each venue and key objects from the collections which can be used to source illustrative images for each page
- Thematic content text (to be provided by freelance researcher by early March 2016)
- Map artwork (to be commissioned January 2016)
- Established twitter and facebook accounts

Fees

This is a fixed price tender and the fee available for this piece of work is £3500. This is to include time spent on designing and building the website so that it is ready for launch, VAT and other expenses. We would expect the consultant to deliver a handover training session for staff, so that they can take over the management and updating of the website.

Purchase of a domain name and any web hosting fees will be met by Museums of Cheshire.

Submissions

To apply for this piece of work, please email a full CV/portfolio and links to up to 5 websites you have designed and built. Please also outline your approach

to the work, and detail what you will need from us in order to be able to complete the project successfully.

- Deadline for submissions is Friday 22nd January 2016 at 5pm

We intend to make an appointment within a week of that date with an immediate project start. A working version of the website for testing and sign off should be ready by mid March and the site launched by the end of March.

Please email submissions to katerodenhurst@mac.com

Contact: If you have any queries about the project, or for any further details please contact Kate Rodenhurst, Project Manager for Museums of Cheshire on 0151 724 1608 / 07956 352 779 or email katerodenhurst@mac.com