

The D-Day Story

Keeping the story alive

Forward Plan 2022 to 2026

Introduction

Since opening in March 2018, The D-Day Story has achieved a variety of successes and exceeded all pre-opening expectations. This has included.

- Positive feedback on sites such as TripAdvisor and Google which is testimony to the quality and relevance of our offer to a broad audience.
- Visitor numbers and income targets ahead of projections in the first two years of opening.
- Awards - shortlisted for European Museum of the Year in 2019 and finalist for Beautiful South award for our inclusion and access work in 2021.
- Good practice visits from peers (including IWM and the Tank Museum).
- Soldier of Sacrifice PR campaign.
- Use of the DDS branding for city's D-Day 75 commemorations.
- Match funding target achieved by Portsmouth D-Day Museum Trust.
- Strong visitor numbers post lockdowns and throughout the summer & autumn of 2021 including return of organised group visits in significant numbers.
- Move and arrival of LCT 7074 and successful integration into the existing visitor offer and journey at the museum.
- Successful launch and positive reaction to new audio guide in summer of 2021.
- Positive reaction to varied events programme across the year.

The DDS team is passionate about the museum and recognises that we have created something very special that resonates with the people of Portsmouth and visitors who travel from further-a-field. We see ourselves as being at the cutting edge of what constitutes good museum practice (endorsed by the response of our peers) and as having extracted significant value for money out of the project funding.

The business plan is based on the premise that The DDS is a high quality offer to which people of all ages and backgrounds can relate, significantly enhanced by the arrival of Landing Craft Tank 7074 which adds a different dimension to a visit. Our priority over the next five years will therefore be marketing and events to ensure that the museum is promoted and attracts the level of visits it merits.

In addition, DDS will need to adapt to the end of lottery funding for the activity / audience development programmes in 2021 and the recovery from the coronavirus pandemic which is likely to impact for some years on visitor numbers and demographic - the overseas group market for example.

The 80th Anniversary of D-Day and the Normandy Landings in 2024 will be a significant opportunity for The DDS to consolidate its position as the national hub for D-Day and springboard for the next 10 years.

Vision

Our vision is to be the national D-Day hub with an international reputation. We want to bring the D-Day narrative to life for the 21st Century, explain how ordinary people played extraordinary parts in a turning point in history, and reveal D-Day's legacy for the present day.

Aims

- i) Create an exciting 'must-see' environment which everyone feels is for them.
- ii) Deliver an imaginative mix of events and activities for visitors of all ages, ensuring there is always something new to see and do.
- iii) Deliver excellent formal and informal learning programmes to inspire young people.
- iv) Establish The D-Day Story as the national hub for learning about D-Day, working with UK and international partners to share knowledge about D-Day with audiences around the world.

By 2026

- Achieve over 600,000 ticketed visitors.
- One third of new visitors to hear about DDS through social media.
- Young people and children visiting DDS (including with family or in school groups) to make up 30% of the visitor demographic and 20% of the volunteers.
- Every Portsmouth Primary School to have visited the museum.
- Build formal collections research relationships with three universities.
- All collections accessible online.
- DDS viewed as a place to be, a multipurpose venue with a variety of reasons to visit.
- Growing ownership and galvanising people's pride in Portsmouth for all things D-Day.

Create an exciting 'must-see' environment which everyone feels is for them

Marketing

Marketing and communications has and will continue to focus on:

- The arrival of The DDS's latest exhibit LCT 7074 (with usps):
 - only survivor, can go on board, outdoor (different experience to inside DDS), exclusive tours (inc beneath vessel)
 - multi-layered inclusive approach
 - new model of working, paid staff supporting volunteers / opportunities to gain new skills
- Marketing communications will drive visits both locally and regionally (2h drive time). The main activity will be digital marketing supported by an away from home campaign and radio advertising.
- Commissioning new marketing assets based on DDS brand.
- Pursue Joint ticketing opportunities with the NMRN (owner of LCT 7074) and other attractions across the city.
- Market the museum as an accessible destination (following accessible and inclusive tourism award).
- Ongoing implementation of social media strategy.
- Develop our offer to groups and actively market this, particularly in the domestic market.

Going forward the priority will be to secure additional funding for marketing.

Audience Development

- Develop staff and volunteers to deliver a warm welcome and high standards of customer care through the 'happy museums' initiative. Monitor performance through visitor feedback and ensure the entire team remains engaged in delivering the best possible visitor experience.
- Ensure our offer and communication works especially well for visitors with disabilities.
- Maintain visibility in the city and community conversations through the use of the D-Day Jeep for example and with the support of volunteers.
- In light of price sensitivity of residents, we will continue to offer discounted tickets especially in the low season. This will also help to increase visits in what is currently a quiet period.
- Recruit and develop a team of young volunteers (in part to encourage visits from other young people).

Deliver an imaginative mix of events and activities for visitors of all ages, ensuring there is always something new to see and do

- Deliver, promote and evaluate a varied programme of events and activities including on board LCT 7074, designed to attract a broad range of audiences to the museum including families. The programme will be about adding value to a visit and generating income through increased ticket sales (as well as repeat visits) although

we will also offer privileged access events at a premium (including with partners such as the Royal School of Needlework). We will constantly review and refresh the offer.

- Prepare and implement programme for return and replacement of loaned objects and regularly refresh the recent acquisitions case.

Deliver excellent formal and informal learning programmes to inspire young people

- Develop and promote the offer for schools, including launch of the new materials funded as part of the lottery funded project - self-led trails and secondary school offer. Develop a closer relationship with the city's schools through the Culture Education Partnership (CEP).
- Work with FE colleges / sixth form colleges to incorporate DDS inspired textile, fashion and design element into national curriculum.
- Build on the success seen so far and continue to support the kickstart programme until its conclusion, providing young people with paid work experience opportunities.
- Ensure social media strategy and content engages with young people.

Establish The D-Day Story as the national hub for learning about D-Day, working with UK and international partners to share knowledge about D-Day with audiences around the world

Group Market

- Continue to market the museum to international/national tour operators, travel agents and group organisers, including through DDS membership of Liberation Route Europe (enhanced by arrival of LCT 7074). Groups likely to return from 2022 onwards.
- Develop bespoke offers to attract more groups.
- Ensure key influencers are informed about the museum such as battlefield tour guides, taxi drivers, frontline tourism staff across the destination.
- Use the 80th anniversary of D-Day in 2024 as a key milestone in the recovery the group and international market.
- Restart the dialogue with Southwick House on developing a group offer for the D-Day Map Room.

Research

- Support student research projects which form part of degree, University of Portsmouth (U/G second year) and Manchester Metropolitan University (MA).
- Offer bursaries to encourage use of the collections for research.
- Continue to digitise collections and make them available online (funding for post / recruit dedicated volunteer team).
- Investigate creation of Study Room at DDS to provide access to the museums extensive D-Day Library and digital material including oral history/video collection (potential space identified)

- Working with academic partners, historians and other museums deliver an annual conference to share knowledge of D-Day and the Normandy Landings.

D-Day 80, 2024

- National D-Day 80 project to raise awareness of D-Day heritage across South England / the UK (building on LCT journey project involving Tyne and Wear, Norfolk, Southampton and Liverpool), potential for Lottery funding.
- Explore in partnership with Liberation Route Europe and tour companies the potential for creating "battlefield tours" within the UK (due to the complications of international travel). For example, visiting Battle of Britain airfields, or D-Day troop camps.

Achieve national standards

- Prepare documentation for Accreditation (national standard for museums), including a Collections Development Policy for the D-Day Collection (Portsmouth Museums will be invited to re-apply in April 2022).
- Deliver high standards of collection care through a programme of environmental monitoring, cleaning of cases, rotation of sensitive items such as paper archives and costume, and maintenance (especially of Landing Craft Tank 7074).
- Complete restoration of the Field Gun on display at DDS with the support of the National Army Museum.

Budgets

Develop and finalise stretching and realistic budgets for both the museum and LCT 7074 which support the growth of the museum through the areas and activity detailed above.

Document originally created by the DDS team in February 2021 and updated by Ross Fairbrother (General Manager) in December 2021 to reflect activity, results and successes seen throughout 2021.