

## Portsmouth Museums

### Stakeholder and audience consultation

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February 2022



# Contents

<b>1. Introduction .....</b>	<b>3</b>
1.1 About the Audience Agency .....	3
1.2 Research aims .....	3
<b>2. Methodology.....</b>	<b>3</b>
2.1 Topic Guide Outline .....	4
2.3 Stakeholder consultees.....	4
2.4 Qualitative analysis .....	5
2.5 Sample size and margin of error .....	5
<b>3. Recommendations .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>4. Detailed Findings.....</b>	<b>7</b>
Purpose of a museum .....	7
Participating/contributions .....	13
Relevance of Portsmouth Museums .....	18
Inclusivity/exclusivity.....	22
<b>Appendices .....</b>	<b>28</b>
Appendix 1: Survey data demographics .....	28

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 About the Audience Agency

This report has been produced by The Audience Agency. The Audience Agency is a mission-led organisation, which exists to give people better access to culture, for the public good and the vitality of the sector.

We hope to contribute in increasing the number and diversity of people engaging with a broad range of culture, and the depth and scope of their involvement.

Our purpose is to lead insight-driven, audience-focused practice and policy. We put our knowledge and skills in creating and using insight at the disposal of the sector, as agents for positive change.

## 1.2 Research aims

Portsmouth Museums, part of Portsmouth City Council (PCC) have developed a new museums strategy, one which sets out the ambitions and focus for the next 4 years, until 2025. The strategy was informed initially by a peer challenge from Derby Museums who have led thinking across the sector in user centred consultation in museums. This was followed by community consultation in the format of two facilitated workshops to inform thinking around the strategy.

As a local authority museums service, the museum is also required to undertake a public consultation before the strategy is finalised. Following a conversation with Arts Council England regarding the NPO funding round (Jan-Apr 21) they have also highlighted the requirement for further consultation to inform the business planning process.

The Audience Agency (TAA)-undertook the following to further support the consultation process. The following report shows how The Audience Agency has supported Portsmouth Museums to further meet consultation requirements during January 2022.

# 2. Methodology

A short survey, lasting about 10 minutes, was created by TAA and set up and distributed by PCC via their website, through their social media channels and on social media ads. This survey was aimed at the general public living in Portsmouth and analysis included in this survey is taken from data collected between 14<sup>th</sup> January and 1<sup>st</sup> of February.

A set of 15 interviews took place, facilitated by expert TAA researchers with a range of stakeholders thought to be well placed to provide informed feedback on the needs and preferences of themselves and the range of communities they represented. Each interview last up to 40 minutes and took place via Zoom between 17<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> of January 2022.

## 2.1 Topic Guide Outline

### **Purposes of a museum**

To your mind, what are the overall *purposes* of a museum?

And what does a museum mean to you personally? And to your community

### **Participating in museum activities/events etc.**

What are the ways, if any, that you/your community would like to take part in or contribute to the Portsmouth Museums [or any museum for those who haven't been to a Portsmouth Museum]?

In what ways did you or your community engage digitally with Portsmouth Museums during the pandemic? Any drawback of these? Any unique benefits?

If there was the option to attend evening events such as 'Meet the Expert', Artist Q&A's, Night at Museum gallery tours or late opening hours, would this be of interest?

### **Relevance, do Portsmouth Museums represent them?**

#### *Those who have been to a Portsmouth Museum*

Which of the Portsmouth Museums have you been to/are you aware of? What were your motivations/reasons for visiting?

Do you feel these represent you? How?

What do you think about the range of stories and activities that are available through the museums?

What do you think about the way that Portsmouth is shown through the stories the museum tells and the activities they put on?

#### *Everybody*

How inclusive or exclusive do you think the Portsmouth Museums are?

## 2.3 Stakeholder consultees

Below is a list of all of the stakeholders with whom TAA held a discussion including their name and the organisation they work for

#### Column 2

Member of the Portsea Action Group

Enable Ability

PCC HAF

Wildlife Trust

PCC Libraries Service

PCC Independence and Wellbeing Team

CEP/Aspex

University of Portsmouth x2

The Hive

Resident of Paulsgrove

Dinosaur Isle Museum

Chat over Chai

The Parenting Network

University of Portsmouth

Polish Community School

## 2.4 Qualitative analysis

Data gathered through the discussions has been analysed thematically alongside comments from participants to illustrate some but not all of the analysis.

### Acronyms

PCC - Portsmouth City Council

PHD - Portsmouth Historic Dockyard

NMRN - National Museum of the Royal Navy

TPN - The Parenting Network

LCT - Landing Craft 7074

HAF - Holiday Activities and Food Programme

## 2.5 Sample size and margin of error

1612 survey questionnaires were completed; this gives a margin of error of c. 2% at the 95% confidence level. This means that we can be 95% sure that if we had asked any of the questions shown to the entire population (i.e. the population of Portsmouth), a proportion of no more than between 2% higher and 2% lower than the one given would have also picked that answer.

The margin of error is affected by the number of responses that you have in your sample. If a question has less than 100 responses, then the margin of error will be quite high so you should use the results in an indicative way only.

### 3. Recommendations

These recommendations are drawn from what interviewees and survey respondents have said to us; we recognise that some ideas may be financially impossible and others are already in your plans, however, they have the endorsement of your users - people with whom you have partnered, or will in the future, and of members of the public - and so have interest and potential value.

- Outreach work is key for communities in danger of exclusion - taking interesting and appropriate activities and artefacts to centres in the north of Portsmouth for example
- Mapping excluded or diverse areas could be a useful exercise (perhaps for a student group?) as in addition to established such communities in the city, these can change, expand or are added to over time
- Ensure, in consultation, that these areas and communities all have representation in the museums as appropriate
- Discuss potential student involvement with Claire Sambrook, possibly including feasibility studies for some of her wider-ranging ideas
- Investigate partnership working with The Parenting Network to access their audiences
- Create a stronger identity for the PCC museums as a group - create a physical trail linking them? (cf Lymington town trail by Trudi Lloyd Williams) and also revisit names - Portsmouth Museum is still identified by most as City Museum
- Re-purpose a museum building into a hotel, or sell one of the buildings to fund changes

- Deliver pop-up cafes in summer in the gardens of Portsmouth Museum and Art Gallery and Cumberland House
- Continue family activities in the museum spaces and in, e.g., north areas of Portsmouth, possibly in collaboration with other cultural organisations
- Explore possibilities around a free bus service to bring people to the Museums or create a new building in the vein of Plymouth's The Box.

## 4. Detailed Findings

### Purpose of a museum

- Interviewees had many thoughts around the purpose of a museum and, more specifically, the purpose of Portsmouth Museums. A theme that connected most interviewees' responses was **to share the history of its local community**, and to preserve those stories and related objects for future generations.
- These ideas were around **sharing a story and knowledge with visitors**, whether that was the immediate local community looking to learn more about where they live, or for tourists from further afield finding out about the place they are visiting. This corresponded with results from the survey, in which **85% of respondents felt that Portsmouth Museums tell the stories of local people, wildlife and place**.
- There was an element of purpose as showcasing here, of **displaying Portsmouth's history and developments and instilling a sense of identity and place** to those who visit, but also of acknowledging and exploring any difficult or challenging aspects of that history too.
- Two interviewees had further thoughts around a museum's role in wider research, and the impact it could have on specialist subjects. **Sharing research** was an important role of a museum's duty as was **aiding the research of others**, for example, students found the D-Day Archives to be a helpful resource for their academic work.
- Museums should **offer a sense of what is to come** in ways that are surprising and engaging.
- And of course there was a sense that museums purpose is to **preserve** the artefacts they hold and make sense of them for the public.

*Showcasing. Things are of interest to both local community and tourists...There are specific ones, the D Day Museum.*



*It should be a record of information of our history.*

*A museum is for maintaining the collections of a place - people's own collections, collections bought in - to make them accessible to local people and to visitors e.g. tourists*

*You should be able to go to a museum to understand more about the world.*

*The key word there is local, to celebrate the history and the culture of the local community or city in this case, and to tell its story... There's an awful lot of people understand where their family fit into this kind of the city and its story... They want to understand, how does that fit into the bigger story of what was going on in the city at that time? I think people just the number of social media sites that you find just wanting to understand, why is that building where it is? Why is that road name like it is? There's that kind of folk history stuff almost, that I think people searching for.*

*Hold old objects in trust for the benefit of the public... That's what that's what museums do. But they should also exhibit them and provide additional services in relation to those collections as well.*

*A place to think, be educated, to learn, to be creative, to be surprised. A key part of the cultural infrastructure of any city*

*Museums up and down the country are important [replace the oral tradition up to a point], for making sure things are remembered, recorded, and kept safe and that they safeguard these items and make sure they are not forgotten about, or disappear into private collections, or that information can be misconstrued and rewritten incorrectly - they provide that accurate knowledge base where people can come together, share their experiences and keep history alive.*

*A museum is there to inspire people to be curious.*

*It's a city built of immigration, it's a city built of war... To provide that sense of identity that museums should do, [Portsmouth Museums are] probably very well placed to do that, because of the breadth of what they what they present in their different venues.*

*A good museum collection should be enabling research. That might ultimately lead out to just a small part of society, those people who are interested in that particular subject but it can be broad enough... It's to provide that material evidence background, to enable people to research and therefore maybe publish on an aspect*

*of the history of Portsmouth, and that may feed through to feed back to a broader population.*

*Should be surprising, should make you think of the past, but not be stuck in the past - show heritage, things that have gone before e.g. the Science Museum is very much about today and the future, but that makes me think back to the past as well*

*A way of preserving history, making sure it's not confined to school books, a place where you can physically see and touch - makes that learning much more alive, particularly for young people, but also for everyone, which addresses various learning styles. Need to be more hands-on, more visual. A museum can do that, providing a social space, where you can experience together. Not necessarily these boring places where things are collecting dust - these days they are exciting, for instance, the D-Day Museum who put us on to this - their new exhibit [LCT 7074] is amazing! The way the technology has kind of come together there - you have the projection of the soldiers that were in the landing craft.*

*Museums should collect, curate and preserve items/artefacts; written, fabricated, filmed, recorded in whatever ways possible and available, which reflect aspects of the human condition, the way we have lived and continue to live of our lives past and present in various contexts and environments. They should reflect our relationship with, use of, and custodianship of the natural world.*

*Museums should inform, educate, enlighten and give room for exploration - they should be a place of questions more than answers. They should present things with as much honesty and objectivity as possible*

*In ancient times stories would be passed down from person to person - and that doesn't really happen these days, so museums...are important for making sure things are remembered, recorded, and kept safe and that they safeguard these items and make sure they are not forgotten about, or disappear into private collections, or that information can be misconstrued and rewritten incorrectly - they provide that accurate knowledge base where people can come together, share their experiences and keep history alive.*

## **Personal meaning**

- Thinking of their personal feelings about museums, respondents tended to consider museums as the best possible source of informal learning, of material that reflects

their own professional interests, of a store house for their own memories, and as a positive corrective to 'fake news' in historical terms.

*For me personally, I like to see the collections, not just the local history but also the art and sculpture - I'm more interested if that has local connections, but still really interested whatever its origins*

*If you go in, you should find things that connect to who and where you are, sharing artefacts and resources that you wouldn't necessarily otherwise get to see*

*I suppose I gravitate towards the natural history stuff, my background and degree is in environmental science: Cumberland House represents that, but more in-depth information lacking*

*For me, it's the art - and the representation of different parts of society*

*For informal education it's the best ever source e.g. the Natural History museum and children*

*As a child, I found history quite boring, as I grew older, it became so important to me and I love it and I've always been a personal supporter of it...museums are so important.*

*D-Day is very accurate - the only problem I would say is, in the age of the internet, people can present information in a very convincing way that sounds factual and true, with 'fake news' and right-wingers who want to misuse history to meet their own modern agenda e.g. certain factions who will misconstrue the facts around the Holocaust. People can go into D-Day Museum and fact-check, without relying on something they have been told on the internet. A museum can counter this.*

### Personal responses to specific museums

- There was praise for the range of activities put on for families and children in the city museum over the years. There was also the suggestion that more could be made of the art gallery section of this venue, and one who missed the old exhibits that showed Portsmouth through the ages from the ice age and in chronological order.
- There was a feeling that the D Day story is too expensive for some local people, and that there could be a scheme to cater to this part of the population. The Overlord Embroidery and Landing Craft were seen as key parts of the collection there.

*The activities and displays which have been put on over the years have been very good free entertainment for children and great for parents too. I think more could be made of the art gallery. I wonder if perhaps the City Museum is trying to do too many things in a limited space and if some sympathetic extensions could be built - given the funding of course!*

*Cumberland House Museum is all the poorer for losing those fascinating if rather ghastly specimens which used to occupy one of the rooms, The geology bit around the dinosaur gallery was very tired last time I was there, my children are in their late 20s now and it looked tired when they were small. I took them there frequently when they were small and wonder if there is perhaps more space and less content now? The butterfly house is lovely and may be an improvement on the old one in some ways but there doesn't feel like much room to discover anything, just a little too neat and tidy maybe.*

*I haven't visited the City Museum for well over a year so there may be changes I don't know about. There isn't a great deal of space there but I miss the older exhibits which took us through the history of Portsea Island, explaining the geography and gradual development. My children used to be fascinated by that section and it had a natural progression as we went from the ice age and through 'early 'human life then jumped to the snoring man and wife in the upstairs room! The D Day story is, too expensive but it is a great attraction - we are so fortunate to have the Overlord Embroidery, and the Landing Craft is a superbly renovated additional feature of which the museum must be very proud - it is fascinating and well worth seeing. Should consider free or at least reduced rates for Portsmouth residents.*

## **Community meaning**

- Museums are **community resources that have a civic responsibility to the whole population**. To enable the stories and the history held by museums to be shared and learned about, a number of interviewees found it important to discuss themes of accessibility and inclusivity. Considering how museums can be enjoyed and utilised by a range of people was important, ranging from designated quiet times, exhibits and events which are child friendly, and prices which are suitable for low-income households. One interviewee noted that to it was important for people with disabilities to be represented in museum staff, whilst another discussed the

advantage of play areas to entertain children whilst the adults could relax with a drink.

- The museum was seen as **an important part of the community**, not just for sharing knowledge and history, but as a social space in which to make memories and spend quality time together. One interviewee described how visiting the museum was a core part of her children's lives, and how she'd like to bring her grandchildren in future too.
- Beyond the exhibition content, one participant **described the importance of helping the community in other ways**, referencing a recent event which enabled families - who she presumed were from deprived areas of Portsmouth - to visit the museum and have **food** whilst they were there.

*They should be preserving what they hold and always looking for new ways to make the collections more accessible e.g. taking elements of the collection out to different parts of Portsmouth.*

*For the community at large, it should give ownership of those spaces, they belong to the city and should help understand our place in the city*

*It really doesn't relate to them*

*It is relevant to the TPN 'family' - a lot of families may be struggling financially at the moment for things to take their children to and for their children to do - the cost of living is going up - and Portsmouth is a very historical city to which they have access. (Pleased that PHD has now allowed free admission to general grounds again, opening up a bit). Making these things accessible where possible - e.g. Portsmouth Museum and Art Gallery and Cumberland House all these places are free for families to go to. The dinosaur in Cumberland House is still a draw - a bit dilapidated now but I still love seeing it!*

*I think these are important to families, I think if they were to go, the city families would be outraged. It's part of Portsmouth life as a kid, to go to Portsmouth Museum, which teaches you about where you live.*

*It's nice when they do like little things like the fun days or even just little trails...then the kids join in and it keeps us in there longer. And it is nice that they're free, because we wouldn't go to them if they were charging for it because they would charge a lot of money.*

*It'd be really sad if they weren't there. Just because it's like some sort of sort of routine that we've built up with the kids. And eventually, when my children start to*

*have grandkids, I'll probably bring them there as well, you know, it's, it's, it's just nice to go somewhere where you're there with the children, and you're spending time with them, rather than going to the park where I can't join in.*

*They were involved in a project, I don't know if it was a one off or anything, where [families] could get something to eat and they could go along to the museum.*

## Participating/contributions

### Survey

- The most popular way people would like to be involved with Portsmouth Museums was directly related to the exhibitions and collections. **Deciding what should be on display and assisting with** exhibitions was the most selected choice in the survey, with **47%** of respondents indicating they are potentially interested in this.
- This was closely followed by **taking part in a forum or visitor consultation group, to inform future developments at the museums**, of which **46%** of respondents were potentially interested in.
- **Volunteering behind the scenes** (e.g. working with collections, exhibits, helping at events and activities or online / social media) was also appealing for survey respondents, with **44%** showing potential interest in this.
- Whilst there was a lot of interest in these opportunities, only a very small percentage were already involved in any of these.
- **Donating towards the upkeep of the museums, their collections or a display** was the option which received the least interest from survey respondents (**26%**).

### Interviews

- Similar to the themes discussed earlier, much of the discussion around participation and contribution within the museums revolved around sharing stories, objects and history, and opportunities for the local community to do so. One interviewee suggested the importance of local publication - such as the Parish Magazine, which holds written experiences as told by people living in the city - would be a key way to participate. **An opportunity for people to tell their stories, personal and shared histories.**
- **Volunteering** in general was also discussed here, and the importance of this opportunity for all walks of life - from students and young people beginning their

careers, to older people in retirement or individuals seeking the company of others.

- A parent interviewed described the appeal of **drop-in voluntary work**, which didn't require a regular commitment, to enable her to fit it in flexibly around her other commitments. She also suggested voluntary opportunities such as litter picking, which could involve her children and provide a sense of 'giving back' to the museum and the community.
- Other **voluntary elements discussed were centred around students**, particularly with the proximity to the university. One interviewee described the interest in students to work with exhibition revamps or events, on both practical and consultation/discursive levels. Another felt that there was an opportunity for a research community, which helps to find new ways of telling the story of Portsmouth.
- One interviewee discussed the opportunity for **consultation** with people with disabilities, to enable museums to learn about how they can become more accessible. He emphasised that informal events, including refreshments, may work best and help people to feel comfortable in sharing their experiences.

*I think for me, the interesting question in terms of history, and museums and archives, is what we archive now for the future. Because social media is a very transient kind of thing, but that's where we are recording our daily life...It's no longer in a written document that can be filed away somewhere and 100 years later, dusted down and read. (Bob)*

*If it was a concern about accessibility, one of our service users who has spent many, many years in a wheelchair would be more than happy to come along and give feedback.*

*If you make it kind of informal and casual, and almost like an open event, so that we could then put out to a number of our service users and say, Portsmouth museums are at four o'clock on next Wednesday, are offering refreshments. And we'd like feedback and input as to what they can do...I think doing in an informal way is much better. Because I think if you make it too formal, then it will put certain people off if they got to get up and speak in front of people.*

*It would be good for local people to volunteer...I'd like to do it with the children, it would be good for the children...Maybe litter picking or something...Because I want to do more with the kids, I want them to give back a little bit...Maybe do it where they're not committing each week, maybe do certain days where people could turn*

*up if they wanted to...I'd be too scared to commit to something and then let people down...Because I can't tell whether I'm going to feel bad or good.*

*I'm sure there'd be lots of people out there from Portsmouth that would be interested in taking part in the group's discussions about what's going to happen.*

*I think Portsmouth Museums are incredibly well placed [for volunteers] because it's a university city...the university covers a wide range of natural sciences, history, architecture, all sorts of subjects...It seems natural to me to build up relationships between universities and the museum's service.*

*When they were doing a revamp of the D-Day story, they obviously did a lot of consultation in terms of getting feedback from people who used it, or would think about using it. And the group of students who were working on the D-Day project that year were part of that consultation. They went down earlier, and I chatted with them about what they wanted...A lot of our students, because we do social cultural history, really wanted to look at the people and their experiences...We're excited that sort of stuff...sort of the personal element to it.*

## **Digital engagement**

- Whilst a number of interviewees felt that **engaging digitally** was important - particularly **online activities and digital tours** - others felt that there was an oversaturated market of online activities already, or that the challenge was in making something meaningful and functional with limited budget or infrastructure to do so. Prior digital engagement with museum output wasn't high among these respondents, although for the most part they were busy professionally and potentially time poor.
- It was noted that the **digitisation of archives** was a key activity for the heritage sector going forward, albeit it can be difficult and costly to then make that archive accessible to professionals and the public.

*Online activity has a double-sided impact - amazing that people could bring the Museum into your home when you were not able to visit - good for people who had never visited to see what it was all about, but not a true introduction*

*The museums were so creative during lockdown with social media - kept people engaged - could try social media take-overs?*

*I may have seen the Museum on social media - nothing consciously? Oh but, yes, a number of things on the anniversary of the Blitz - old photos of Portsmouth, memories, records . . . and the VE Day posts. Nothing on LCT.*



*No, not really, other than from following on social media and checking in every now and again and passing on details - there was an interesting thing on 3D models, but I didn't get involved with it, just follow on social media, check what's happening and then, when having coffee with parents, I pass on what I've seen is coming that week - anything that comes through on Facebook, Instagram, twitter, Youtube etc.*

*None, except for lovely piece with DBP - virtual HAF work - lovely piece offering a gateway - Dinner with Dickens*

*Maybe one hour once a month (in the evening? Not professionally). Interested in natural history (my background is environmental science). Cumberland House does represent this up to a point, but more in-depth information would appeal.*

*Online activity has a double-sided impact - amazing that people could bring the Museum into your home when you were not able to visit - good for people who had never visited to see what it was all about, but not a true introduction*

*There's so much online now, it'd probably be wasted money.*

*I'm sure there's lots of people out there, but around me...people, they'd rather come to a meeting. The volunteers that I work with, we don't do Zooms or anything like that, we meet.*

*Digitisation has been identified over recent years as really a very important part of how you sell your collections, as it were. And therefore, lots of money has been spent on digitisation...It's very challenging for small museums, mostly due to money and infrastructure...As local authorities they have they have a wide range of responsibilities, and making a picture of few fossils available may not be a priority to them.*

## Events

- There was a mixed response to the suggestion of the events programme (specifically tested events were Q and A events with visiting artists or experts, night at the museum tours and late opening hours). While many found these to be a good idea, there was the sense for around half of respondents that they wouldn't be able to partake themselves due to a lack of time, or that there would need to be careful considerations around both timing and content. However, **there was a sense that it would be an exciting opportunity overall for the people of Portsmouth**, and a new way to engage with the museums.

*Again, absolutely, but a time thing - so much competition for one's time*

*No, Time poor; distance*

*Yes, probably evening opening combined with events and workshops*

*Depends on time commitments, time of day and of week - an hour in the evening might be do-able*

*I think you have to have a varied programme. Our dads will work days and are more around at weekends. Different timings suit different people - working dads might like evening events, young mothers with children want daytime activity - school hours and days also dictate when to a lot of families . . . never going to find one time that suits everybody, so mix it up?*

*There would be an interest in [events]. It's finding the right things and topics that people would be interested in. From where we're situated in the city there's a question of whether you'd get a better response [in the community] than having to get people down to the museum.*

*[My children would] find [night tours] quite interesting, I think and quite cool.*

*I can see in Portsmouth as a wider city that people would be interested in that. [Respondent lives close to the museum]. People would go for a coffee if it was open late, or little family groups after school.*

### Other suggestions around ways to participate [quotes]

Tours of the archives, 'backstage' access, taken by the fantastic and dedicated staff

An ice rink

Fine dining pop-up restaurants

An online shop selling things commissioned locally

Students are making illustrations currently for PHD - University support could suggest speculative exhibitions

Outdoors could have table tennis in the garden, with advice sessions offered while playing; customise the bats and balls

Merchandise: things they own that they could commercialise - high res photos and prints for example

Creative workshops for ceramicists, anything similar that produces things that are portable

Make it a destination - like going to the V and A primarily for lunch

D-Day Museum café is good, but Portsmouth Museum and Art Gallery could be improved

Research the idea of a museum hotel...a destination - work with artist-in-residence hotels - in Brighton, Cornwall etc. they are curating hotels

You could sell Cumberland House as a boutique hotel to fund changes - or a new purpose-built museum

## Relevance of Portsmouth Museums

### Survey

- **63%** of survey respondents felt that Portsmouth Museums are relevant to them and their lives (by selecting 'agree' or 'strongly agree'), whilst 5% disagreed or strongly disagreed. When prompted to expand upon their answer, it was apparent that they valued the local history and there was a sense of pride of Portsmouth, amongst those who had lived there a long time and those who had recently moved or visited.
- **69%** thought Portsmouth Museums have exhibitions and events they can relate to, whilst 4% disagreed or strongly disagreed. The participants enjoyed the opportunity to see pieces which related to their family history, their childhood or certain places they had grown familiar with.
- **85%** of survey respondents felt that Portsmouth Museums tell the stories of local people, wildlife and place, whilst less than 1% disagreed or strongly disagreed.
- **80%** of respondents felt welcome at Portsmouth Museums, and the majority of comments related this to friendly and helpful staff and volunteers.
- Just over a quarter of responses felt they only attended Portsmouth Museums when they had friends or family visiting (**27%** agreed or strongly agreed). The majority felt this was not the case for them (**46%** disagreed or strongly disagreed), and the comments suggested that many liked to drop-in whilst in town; frequently took their children/grandchildren; or kept an eye out for any exhibitions which were of special interest to them.

### Interviews

- Interviewees were keen to emphasise **the importance of social history and the role this plays in making a museum feel relevant to its visitors**. One described how much his wife enjoys the 1950s exhibit, whilst another enjoyed reminiscing about a childhood spent at the seaside. It was clear that these types of exhibits

instilled a sense of nostalgia that the participants enjoyed exploring, and it seemed that exhibitions including personal experiences were the ones they felt successfully portrayed Portsmouth.

- **Whilst sharing information about the past was seen as important, so were more contemporary exhibits.** One interviewee appreciated that modern paintings and the stories they told of modern life, referencing themes such as homelessness. This interviewee presumed the artists were local, which added to the appeal.
- Interviewees felt that **Portsmouth Museums were relevant in terms of the local history they shared about the community and some participants personal histories.** However, there was a sense amongst some that there is a **lack of awareness** of the range of museums available in Portsmouth, and that the D-Day Museum is often the main focus whilst others are ‘lost’ behind it. Interestingly, this didn’t appear to be the case from the survey, as Portsmouth Museum & Art Gallery was the venue most respondents had visited at least once in the last 5 years (69%), closely followed by Cumberland House (57%). The D-Day Story was the third most visited, with 48% having visited in the last 5 years. Finally, 16% had been to Charles Dickens’ Birthplace in the last 5 years.
- Respondents were keen to stress the **diversity of Portsmouth**, socio-economically, ethnically and in the diversity of grass roots cultural activity which was thought to be missing from the museums.
- When asked if there is therefore anything missing from the Portsmouth story in their opinion, people concentrated on appealing more widely and including a **more varied social picture of the city over the centuries**, as well as making the way the information is presented in the museums more appealing to more people through immersion and interactivity.
- There were a few responses around the idea of Portsmouth being a city made of many distinct villages, in which people identify more with their ‘village’ than the city often, and in many cases do not move out of their locales regularly. These respondents wondered if the museums were cognisant of this phenomenon and whether outreach or targeted work was happening to address this and include people from all areas of the city. Additionally there was interest in Portsmouth stories that reflected these neighbourhoods’ micro-cultures.

*Portsmouth has two sides to it - amazing culture and many residents are very poor, struggling, so many artists, so many places to go; but old Portsmouth such a contrast to other areas, full of culturally interesting folk - but awareness of this is low.*

*My experiences of Portsmouth are very personal - my schools attended, my experiences. The Museum collections do represent these to an extent, but are not up-to-date enough for someone of my age - they nudge up to the 60s and 70s but it's not the Portsmouth of my life, it's that of my parents and grandparents*

*What it needs is an appealing event in the north of the city.*

*Portsmouth is an island city - unique in UK*

*It has high levels of deprivation - council estates and other areas of poverty, and crime. It is a small, community-led city, which leads to a mixed demographic in schools*

*Needs more about trade and not just wars*

*I think the social history of Portsmouth is missing - its development over the last 2-500 years, with Henry VIII and the Mary Rose*

*They could be telling a different story and things need to be hands-on, living, not stuck in a cabinet. Paulsgrove people are very tactile, the children like to dress up, to pretend*

*Or there are Bronze Age artefacts, and other time periods, that could be illustrated by e.g, more immersive experiences for the younger generation - UV puppet shows in the dark, making Iron Age shields - getting people involved in this way has to be the way forward*

*More micro local relevance*

## **Young people and families**

- A number of interviewees felt that that **the museums had a lack of younger visitors**, and described the importance of engaging parents with children so they could be involved from a young age. However, the parent interviewed felt that the museums were already exciting for younger children, but it was more difficult to keep their interest when they became teenagers. For the teen age groups there is a common thread of the need for modernisation, of a more contemporary 'vibe', a request for greater interactivity with the collections, particularly in order to seem attractive and relevant them.

*The D Day Museum is what it is. And, you know, it's completely relevant to Portsmouth. And it is very popular, and it's very good.*

*There's a 1960s room and it's easy for people my age to relate to that, so it provides a talking point for us...And one of the things I do like about that museum is the seaside connection...They've got some seating from an ice cream that used to be in the city centre and I probably sat on those seats as a boy. So I relate to it really well.*

*Something that is community orientated...If I saw in the newspaper there was a particular Charles Dickens I might think, yeah I've lived here for years and I want to learn a bit more about this...Something that is topical and relevant to the area.*

*I'm not originally from Portsmouth but the stuff is really interesting. My partner is [from Portsmouth] and obviously the kids are born here...With the fundays. they tell stories, like there was a zoo in Portsmouth which I never know and it is really, really interesting. The old war time stuff and things like that. And the kids really enjoyed it as well.*

*Some of the artists...It's quite modern stuff...There's one of a homeless man, and it just almost tells the story of him, the way it's painted. So that's really, really interesting...I think they must be local artists.*

*The museums used to come out to the youth club with projects, so the museum coming out to the community. Say it was a dinosaur project, they brought it to the youth club so we could study that...That would have been about 12 years or more ago.*

*The local school, the grammar school right opposite...get some of their young people...involved in some way and you're hitting a younger audience.*

*They need to be a bit more interactive, more modern, to appeal to young people - like the new Mary Rose Museum*

*Need more interactivity e.g. anything instagrammable for 18-24 year olds*

*Need more contemporary appeal*

*I'm different - I spent last Friday in the Dockyard archive room - I get a lot more from archives than most - but needs more modernity*

*Portsmouth is the sea, but also different cultures e.g. skateboarding*

*My own personal view is that Cumberland House is not particularly interactive, it has very static displays - nothing changes. This may partly be because of budget and covid restrictions, of course. But without changing displays he will soon lose his interest in visiting.*

## Inclusivity/exclusivity

There was a range of opinion about the performance of Portsmouth Museums in terms of inclusivity and exclusivity. In this section we explore the themes of the conversations in three parts: 1. Discussion around other inclusive and exclusive experiences of Portsmouth Museums, 2. quotes that reflect geographical, economic and ethnicity exclusionary factors, and 3. Some suggestions from respondents about ways they feel the Museums could become more inclusive.

- **Many find Portsmouth Museums to be inclusive** and people from across the spectrum of those interviewed had positive and inclusive experiences within the museums, saying they were made to feel welcome, and that the Museums have made positive efforts to include people from across the communities.
- Some of the discussion around inclusivity stemmed from the theme of **staffing**. It was felt amongst several interviewees that to aid inclusivity, museum staff should reflect ethnicities, disabilities and genders, and that diversity training should be available too. Several interviewees said that whilst they felt welcome there themselves, it may not be the case for other people.
- One interviewee was enthusiastic about **paid work and voluntary opportunities for people with disabilities**. He described his own experience of a contact with autism who'd had the opportunity to work at another museum, and how much that had helped his confidence and employability, whilst the museum had benefitted from his knowledge and commitment.
- Another interviewee questioned whether **uniforms for museum staff & volunteers have the potential to be intimidating**, particularly for those who don't often visit. Cumberland House was provided as an example by this participant. However, it was acknowledged that uniforms can be useful in highlighting who you can ask for help if needed.
- For another interviewee, a key part of the museum's appeal is that **Portsmouth Museum staff are welcoming** and have an understanding that children may make noise. The fun days added to the feelings that the museum was family-friendly, and helped to motivate the children to attend. Even small elements, such as the availability of fizzy drinks and sweets, helped to make this feel like an exciting day out for children.
- The **cost of entry** to the Portsmouth Museum and Art Gallery ensures it is inclusive, however the D Day story entry cost is seen as exclusive of many.

- The **cost of travel** to and from the museums can exclude some in the communities of Portsmouth.
- For some respondents there was **sense of improvement in the ability of the Museums to attract more diverse audiences.**

*I have never had any problem walking through the door and I think there has been an effort to reflect many communities of the city.*

*I feel they are very open, once you are motivated to go. When there have been events in the past that I have been to, a very wide range of people were there. Often, in Portsmouth, it is about letting people know what is available - it can be difficult to know how to make people feel a sense of ownership, so they feel 'this place is for me' - which is essentially what inclusivity is all about. Schools are often the first port of call for museum visits*

*It's reasonably inclusive. I haven't had that much direct involvement with them, or particularly done that assessment...But I get the feeling they're on the right track.*

*The fun days are really, really good. I love them. It's doing something special to get the kids there, saying this is happening and it will get them there...If I say 'we're going to the museum, we're going to have a picnic, we're going to play table tennis'.*

*There have been discussions about diversifying the workforce. All of this is a consideration for resources.*

*One of the one of the things is being able to identify when you're in a museum has been able to identify somebody you can speak to ask a question to even if it's where the toilets are...So there is an advantage to having uniforms...It's worth talking about whether uniforms for the staff are relevant, whether they're welcoming or intimidating.*

*The staff, they are really, really welcoming and they are so lovely, and that makes such a difference. Because my children are hectic...Kids do make noise...They're understanding of the kids needs as well.*

*Accessibility and to ensure that, ideally, [everyone] can access all of the museum...So they have the same equality that everyone else has. The second thing would be, if we consider people with autism...advertise times that are quieter, rather than necessarily make it more specific, so that people who are anxious with a lot of people around know when they can access it...Special events that attract local people with disabilities.*



*Very under confident, probably in his early 30s, never really held a job down. But had a photographic memory, and a massive interest...He goes to the museum...And slowly but surely, he gets to know his way around, and he helps out...Within a month or so, he was actually confident to be speaking in front of people...And by the end of it, he was even doing tours for schoolchildren.*

*I've never seen anything to indicate people would be excluded, or a section of society wouldn't be able to attend the museums e.g. Cumberland House has made efforts to make itself more accessible physically. Portsmouth Museum and Art Gallery has lifts*

*No sense that it isn't, after all D-Day worked with us on the Polish project - trying to tell some non-English stories (the soldier's violin that he brought back with him)*

*Probably not very - collections are very white middle class - though some working class representation too. Not representing other communities, though I know it is hard to get collections from diverse communities*

*That Portsmouth Museum is free takes away a barrier, opens it up especially to large families. D-Day should be as well - it is excluding low income folk. But understand that money may be short and income necessary.*

*Public transport isn't much of an option when you don't really have much money.*

*Paulsgrove folk find it expensive to get to museums - £7 bus fare is a barrier*

*Recent projects have surprised re the demographics they have revealed - more cultural diversity and more disability than realised*

## **Geographical, economic and ethnic exclusion**

Diversity referenced included age, ethnicity, social class and disability:

*Paulsgrove was very white British - social class mainly working class; now a higher level of black and Asian groups in the area, not represented*

*Travellers used to live around here - their descendants still part of the community*

*We get lots of information from the south of the city, but the travel times and costs are a definite barrier.*

*Portsmouth Museum and Art Gallery is not representative of the city, which has an incredibly diverse community*

*My Bangladeshi colleague feels her community is under-represented and that there is lack of access*

*When I've been in to the Museums I've not seen anyone much not white British, not seen a diversity of visitors, nor of staff. C House, some of the volunteers younger - college or university age -diversity of age range*

*There is the project with D-Day, relating to the Polish involvement - the violin carried by a Polish soldier - otherwise I don't think there is much of specific relevance to the Polish community who exist in high numbers in Portsmouth*

*I grew up in a council house in Paulsgrove with my mum and I relate to not feeling part of Portsmouth, even the museums on the hill are only accessible by car, public transport is not great and you can feel disconnected*

*The current generation of young people is a challenge to connect with, all doing their Tiktok dances on their phones. So more events? Activities? More in line to what they are growing up with. Open up the museums? Have only seen' attempts' to include everyone in our society*

*As I haven't visited for quite some time, I am not sure how to respond to this question, but I do think it would be refreshing to see how the diversity of Portsmouth has changed. I am not originally from here, moved to Portsmouth in the 1980s and it has changed (for the better) since then. So many cultures, so many languages spoken. I would hope to see the Museums reflecting these wonderful changes.*

### **Suggestions for a more inclusive Museums' service**

There were a number of specific suggestions around how respondents felt Portsmouth Museums could become more inclusive to the communities they serve. It should be acknowledged, however, that many respondents said they weren't familiar with all of the programming and marketing associated with the museums, indeed, some felt they were unaware of much of this, and so perhaps the museum is already doing some of this work. However, some of the respondents were from communities that are minority communities in the UK and felt they hadn't seen much programming from Portsmouth Museums that addresses them personally.

- Update of content to represent the diversity of people in Portsmouth, e.g. the Polish, Bangladeshi, Chinese and African communities
- Create a wider range of current local stories
- Address the storage but non-display of items precious to colonised communities

- Events held in languages other than English, such as Urdu, which would address the Gurkha community. Marketing in other languages and through a more diverse range of channels would also be beneficial.
- More diversity among staff members
- Programming that is contemporary and explore topics around e.g. fashion for a more diverse appeal
- A common thread coming through is that of taking the museums TO people, which might also address the barriers of the cost of transport.
- Open up both research and the collections to a broader range of people

*Content needs adapting - working with community to steer programming and make representative of experience*

*Create local stories*

*Hold auctions of valuable items which are stored but have meaning for certain identified groups like those colonised and immigrants*

*There is a big Polish community in Portsmouth and a massive Bangladeshi community, and I've not been aware of anything celebrating those two cultures- if there was, it passed me by, which raises the question of how these things may be being communicated and marketed? If they are not doing that we would certainly encourage that. They are as much a part of Portsmouth as anyone else, and they engage with TPN, especially the monthly theatrical events at the Guildhall, we have very diverse multicultural audiences. We hoped that might happen and we thought we might have to do a lot of outreach but within a few months it was happening organically.*

*Needs the permanent collections to contain material from e.g. Chinese and African communities, with activities to represent them. Should take work out to the various communities.*

*Would need it to tell more of a Polish story, to explore city life, to give a clear history of Portsmouth that includes our experience, for me to bring my pupils to PM; but they probably visit with their English school, so maybe not so relevant*

*To change this, events could be held in other languages? I once evaluated a project for HCC about persuading the Gurkha community to use the countryside more, and the majority of that community have English as their second language and don't use English very often, so to go to a countryside outdoor event in English was almost a no for them,*

*they wouldn't understand it, would feel out of place. However, the project was praised in that it had interpreters at those events and that made it feel more inclusive.*

*I think there is very little to appeal to our diverse community. I've only seen people I would take to be White British in the museums - no diversity evident of staff or of visitors - older folk too, except at Cumberland House where there are some younger volunteers, probably college age. But Portsmouth Museum has been closed and it is a skeleton staff, so maybe that's why they are not as representative.*

*Touring exhibitions can add to a good mixture*

*The anticipated silver collection will be coming soon - this could be related to fashion and contemporary culture*

*Need to revisit comms and have materials translated e.g.*

*Need diversity and different languages for diversity of engagement*

*Different comms methods*

*Revisit how devise work and select artists*

*Need to raise a lot more money to address these issues*

*Take exhibitions out [to communities].*

*Taking things out to communities would be good*

*Need to take work TO the community centres - show that's there a door open*

*Tell stories, encourage people to tell their own stories and to listen to those of others. Recall that which is no longer visible but is still in the minds of those who were there, like long lost factories and shops, forgotten industries, memories and voices, open up the possibilities of research, make more things/archives and artefacts, more accessible to more people.*

# Appendices

## Appendix 1: Survey data demographics

The below information details the demographics of the survey respondents.

### Gender identity

- 27% male
- 71% female
- <0% in another way
- 2% prefer not to say

### Age

- 16-29: 4%
- 30-45: 30%
- 50-69: 49%
- 70 and above: 17%

### Ethnic group

- White: 93%

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