



**Association of
Independent Museums**
Helping Heritage Organisations
Prosper

AIM E-News – August 2015 – Number 72 – **EXTRACTS**

Business rates - new free consultations for AIM members

AIM is working with Colin Hunter of Lambert Smith Hampton on a campaign for fairer business rates for museums, and has offered **free 15-minute consultations** to members. The majority of museums haven't challenged their rating assessment and the Valuation Office uses this as evidence that most museums are happy with the levels of value that they have applied. Colin Hunter suggests that if you want to make an appeal it might be helpful to get advice from a qualified surveyor who understands rating valuation and has experience at dealing with historic properties and charitable organisations. The rules on appeals have changed so that they can no longer be back-dated any earlier than 1 April 2015. But there is a loop hole. Any appeal based on a Valuation Tribunal decision made before this date can still be back-dated as long as the appeal is made within six months of the date of the decision. Appeals must be made before 25 September 2015 or the right to back-date the appeals will be lost. There was an article about these issues in the August **AIM Bulletin**. AIM would like to hear from museums about their experience, issues or concerns with regards to business rates as we build up a fuller picture of the situation and gather evidence to support the case for reducing museums' rateable value. Please email: sassy@aim-museums.co.uk. For further information contact Colin on 0113 3801579, email CHunter@lsh.co.uk. Colin Hunter is the author of the AIM Success Guide, *Successfully Negotiating Business Rates*, which can be downloaded [here](#).

Your views on Gift Aid for AIM's submission to Government consultation – deadline 5 September

The Government is reviewing the Gift Aid donor benefit rules and AIM is keen to hear members' views on their own experiences with Gift Aid before making its submission. AIM will be taking a lead but joining with Arts Council England, the National Museum Directors Council and the Museums Association to provide a joint response. The Government aims to simplify the current rules following its consultation, *Simplifying the Gift Aid Donor Benefit Rules*, which was originally announced in the 2014 budget and extended to include the rules on membership and entrance fees. AIM has played an important part in helping to shape the Gift Aid framework over the years, and has taken every opportunity to pass on details of members' experiences in operating Gift Aid. Evidence is now being sought on: how well the current rules are understood; the type of benefits offered and why; membership benefits; the use of the split payment, averaging, literature and lifetime benefit valuation concessions; and the use of the admission disregard rules. "This is another important opportunity to help shape the future of Gift Aid," says AIM's executive director, Tamalie Newbery, "and we hope our members will let us know their views, issues and concerns, so that we can contribute our most recent experiences to this latest review". The deadline for comments to AIM is 5 September – please send your thoughts to sassy@aim-museums.co.uk. More on the consultation can be read [here](#).

Giving to Heritage – latest workshop dates

With the Heritage Alliance's major two-year programme [Giving to Heritage](#) coming to an end in March 2016, 24 new workshops have been scheduled across the country from September to mid-December. This is the last chance to participate in these successful sessions. AIM is represented on the steering group for The Heritage Alliance's Heritage Lottery Fund-supported scheme, which empowers heritage enthusiasts with the

skills they need to improve their fundraising capability and diversify their income. Facilitated by an Institute of Fundraising trainer, workshops are in the following categories: Trusts and foundations; Major donor fundraising; Measuring success and reporting heritage impact to attract new funding sources; Developing a heritage fundraising plan; Making the heritage case to donors; Legacy fundraising; Using digital and social media; Corporate partnerships; Heritage fundraising in the community and Marketing your organisation and audience analysis.

Resilience Fund closed temporarily

Arts Council England (ACE) has closed applications to the Museum Resilience Fund pending the result of the Government's spending review in November. The next round will be launched in January 2016 with projects covering an 18-month period beginning in October 2016 and completing in March 2018. The fund was launched with a budget of £10 million in September 2014, but a statement says: "We're postponing applications until after [the spending review] so we know exactly how much money is going to be available for the next round". The fund is the only ACE pot that provides grant in aid awards.

Trying something new – sustainable improvements in the North West

Museum Development North West has published the impact and variety of projects supported through its Sustainable Improvement Fund 2012-15, Small Change, Big Change. The programme, funded by Arts Council England, aimed to drive development and deliver sustainability, resilience and innovation in museums in the North West, distributing just over £200,000 to 39 projects, including many in independent museums. The foreword is by AIM chairman, Matthew Tanner, who congratulated the museums involved who had taken the opportunity "to try something new". "Those museums that have prospered over the past few years are the ones that have a positive attitude towards change," he says. "They welcome it as the evidence they are being successful in their ongoing efforts to innovate – to find ways of doing things better, or with fewer resources. They know that without change there can be no improvement." Read about the projects [here](#).

Funding for energy efficiency projects

Ken Shaw of AIM Energy Action Group says there are two key funding streams available to help you save money and energy next year. The first is the **Energy Efficiency Fund** from British Gas, designed to help micro-businesses manage their energy costs in the long-term, by providing free expert advice and energy efficiency measures. Eligible businesses will receive a free on-site energy survey, as well as fully-funded installations of energy saving measures to the value of £6,000 (inc. VAT). Measures might include LED lighting, boiler replacement or new insulation. The second is the **Electricity Demand Reduction Pilot** from the Department of Energy & Climate Change. If you're thinking of improving your motor or pump systems, replacing your old light fittings with LEDs or making other improvements to deliver lasting peak time electricity savings you could be eligible to take part. Eligible projects must deliver at least 50kW savings during the peak winter times of between 4-8pm. Projects must have a payback time without funding of some two years, and participants will receive a price per kWh for all electricity saved. To find out if your project is eligible, see further information [here](#). See more on AIM Energy Action Group under 'More AIM' below.

New European collections standard – your opportunity to comment

A new European Standard, *New Sites and Buildings Intended for the Storage and Use of Collections* is to replace the existing standards - BS/PD 5454: 2012 Guide for the Storage and Exhibition of Archive Materials and PAS 198: 2012 Specification for Managing Environmental Conditions for Cultural Collections - and will cover all collecting institutions, applying to all museums and galleries, archives and libraries. It is a full standard, not just a guide, so new buildings in particular will be expected to meet its specifications to claim compliance. It applies also to building improvements projects in existing structures and can be used as a guide for those working in historic buildings or wishing to review their current provision. (Because this

standard was under development 5454 was issued as a guide rather than a full standard). All interested must comment using the CEN (European standards organisation) template [here](#), and send it to Jonathan Rhys-Lewis, secretary of the UK mirror committee for the standard, at the email provided on the web page. Comments must be received by him by 4 September, so that they can be forwarded for the CEN deadline of 9 September. Publication is expected in late 2016 or early 2017.

New forum for ideas exchange

The **Heritage Lottery Fund** has launched a new general online forum which will act as a mechanism for asking questions, exchanging ideas, discussing common issues, sharing learning and celebrating successes. Whether you are interested in applying for HLF funding, have received an HLF grant, or work on heritage projects, the general forum is the space for you. You can join in by posting about job, training and volunteering opportunities related to your project, examples of good interpretation, how heritage education is impacting young lives, or start a new thread on any topic. HLF will also be hosting live chats. Find the forum [here](#).

A new White Paper is to be published by the **Department for Culture, Media & Sport** later this year or in early 2016. It will cover the full range of cultural sectors including museums and galleries, and heritage, as well as issues such as regional devolution and new funding models. Culture minister Ed Vaizey has promoted the idea of 'Place Making' as a means of cross-departmental collaboration. A debate was held on regional support for the arts in July, and can be read [here](#).

Taking Part survey review A consultation on user engagement in the Department for Culture, Media & Sport's *Taking Part* survey is open for submissions until 16 October. *Taking Part* is a national survey quantifying how people spend their time in leisure, culture and sport across England, and has been running for 10 years. DCMS want to review the survey content to increase its impact and reduce costs. Have your say [here](#).

Arts and culture in England contributes £7.7 billion to the UK economy from an investment of 0.1% of public spending, new research from Arts Council England has shown. The report, [Contribution of the arts and culture sector to the national economy](#), finds that the arts and culture industry generated an increase of 26% in turnover since 2010. Greatest contributor was earned income (ticket sales and merchandise) which increased by 6% between 2012-2013 and 2013-14. The report was launched in conjunction with another from the Creative Industries Federation, Arts and Growth: How public investment in the arts contributes to growth in the creative industries.

New research shows that the industry supporting historic vehicles was worth over £4 billion in 2013, with export earnings of some £300 million, and providing skilled jobs for over 28,000 people. The [Federation of British Historic Vehicle Clubs \(FBHVC\)](#) argues that preserving historic vehicles is good for the UK economy – around a quarter of historic vehicles in the EU are in the UK (some 400,000). FBHVC argues that the numbers are important when communicating with key decision makers.