

**Macclesfield Town Council**  
**Grant Funding to the Silk Heritage Trust**  
**Impact Report January – February 2025**

**Funding: - To support the 3 year project ‘A Stronger Future: Developing the Silk Heritage Trust’s vision for culture and heritage in Macclesfield’**

Key delivery areas	Delivery in Quarter 4 2024
<p>1. Achieving substantial fundraising towards capital development and building improvements, as well as ambitious engagement projects</p>	<p>We have successfully applied for two grants in the period: THE HERDS Art Fund Grants awarded £2000 towards a series of puppet workshops with Babbling Vagabonds, which will highlight the environmental impact of dyeing in the textiles’ industry.</p> <p>The Foyle Foundation awarded £15000 towards the development of the Silk Museum café as a community hub for creative activities. We are working to connect with a wide range of community groups to understand their needs so this can inform our plans.</p>
<p>2. Making our buildings accessible to all</p>	<p>East Cheshire Eye Society are planning an exhibition in April to celebrate their 150 year anniversary. During the exhibition run there will be a full programme of activities linked to the Eye Society and vision. These will include a number of health information sessions around visual impairments. There will also be a set of accessible workshops for families and adults, including giant knitting and sensory books. While these will be awareness raising, they will also be fully supported and accessible for people with visual impairments. The exhibition will include work from 8 local schools including Park Lane SEN specialist school.</p> <p>The next Corridor exhibition (installed 26<sup>th</sup> February) has been produced by students from Macc College. These students are aged 16 – 21 year olds, have been on a structured visit, and made follow up independent visits, to produce their work. Later this year there is a similar exhibition planned with the Access Students from the college. These projects are diversifying our audience.</p> <p>Work has started with Plnc on a project to decorate the area outside the Jacquard Studio. These students are undertaking regular work experience with us as part of this project, and they are regular visitors now.</p> <p>The current Gallery exhibition presents work by Ava Reid, a local young artist with Downs Syndrome.</p>
<p>3. Reducing the environmental impact and energy consumption in our buildings</p>	<p>We have received funding linked to the HERD project (<a href="https://www.artfund.org/professional/get-funding/programmes/the-herds">https://www.artfund.org/professional/get-funding/programmes/the-herds</a>). This national project has the focus of engaging people with a conversation around climate change through storytelling, arts and community engagement. We will be working with The Babbling Vagabonds (an art collective from Buxton) to develop puppet workshops</p>

	<p>with a focus on birds and the disruption of climate change on migratory patterns. This will link with our Tunncliffe collection.</p> <p>Plans are underway for the Tunncliffe garden for this year. Work is due to take place over the next month to get it ready for warmer weather and this planting season. Activities are planned to get our visitors more involved with the garden and spending time in nature. This includes the Museum Tots making bug hotels, a sunflower growing competition, dyeing workshops, and a plant sale.</p>
<p>4. Establishing strong local partnerships and buy-in to our vision with key organisations, communities, and stakeholders</p>	<p>On 1<sup>st</sup> February we were one of the hosts for the Town Council Lunar New Year celebrations. The museum was packed for the afternoon with good takings in the café and shop. Donations were also received through the new 'Good Box' donation station. Feedback has been very positive.</p> <p>PATTERN exhibition was developed to start developing interest in our Pattern Book Collections ahead of the Jacquard Studio opening in the early summer. It has drawn many visitors to the museum over the past few weeks. Adult and family workshops were well attended. We trialled a new model of 'special' tours in the mill which proved very popular and may influence our offer there.</p> <p>We had a huge interest in volunteering at the museum in connection with the PATTERN exhibition and linked to the new Jacquard studio. A growing volunteer body will benefit the museum and the activities that we can support.</p>
<p>5. Putting local people and local voices at the heart of engagement of the stories we tell of Macclesfield's heritage</p>	<p>The PATTERN exhibition involved History Hunters working in the gallery talking to visitors about the collections – we trained 14 volunteers to engage visitors with our Pattern Book collections.</p> <p>The Scientific Rambles exhibition presents work by four artist-antiquarians, inspired by the archaeology, cartography and storytelling from the local landscape, interwoven with the Victorian text 'Scientific Rambles Around Macclesfield' by J. D. Sainter. It includes poetry, sound, assemblage pieces, painting and textiles, based on the four artists' individual and joint rambles around Macclesfield, from Bullstones to the ancient copper mines of Engine Vein and Danes Moss.</p> <p>The History Hunters exhibition has been taken out into the community. The 'People of Paradise Mill' is currently on display in Macclesfield library. The exhibition has forged connections with local groups who the History Hunters are now visiting to deliver talks or handling sessions, such as MHA and WIs.</p>
<p>6. Strengthening its financial resilience</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Total visitor numbers to 1st April 2024 - 25th January 2025 = 12,431</li> <li>• Total volunteer hours 1st April 2024-25th February 2025 = 4271.21hrs – this has an approximate value to the organisation of over £51000.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Total retail spend 1st April 2024 -25th February 2025 = £37,325.44</li> <li>• Average retail spend per head 1st April 2024 - 25th February 2025 = £3.00</li> <li>• Average total spend per head = £5.51</li> <li>• Total spend through the till 1st April 2024-25th February 2025 = £68,451.25</li> <li>• Average Transaction value = £14.38 1st April 2024 - 25th February 2025</li> <li>• The Trust continues to face significant challenges in increasing overheads and salary costs, combined with our efforts to expand the reach of our work</li> </ul>
<p>7. Raising our profile, increasing audiences and participation in our work.</p>	<p>Update on diverse events' programme</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Treacle Tots – Museum Tots has been very successful recently and there is an appetite for more of it. We are trialling it on Treacle Sundays. February session is sold out!</li> <li>• Outreach development of Education offer. Producing sessions that can be delivered in schools for those who can't afford to visit (or choose not to). These sessions are due to be trialled during the summer term in mainstream and SEND specialist schools. This will make it possible for more schools to engage with us.</li> <li>• We are focussing on improving social media and reach in relation to the Paradise Mill offer.</li> </ul>