**Friends of the Bowes Museum: Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)**

**General**

**What will happen to my membership beyond 30 June 2025 when the Friends of The Bowes Museum charity closes?**

Your Friends membership will be transferred to The Bowes Museum and become part of its membership programme. Your principal benefit of free access to the museum will continue for the duration of that membership, whether Annual or Life.

In addition, for the remainder of your membership, you will be known as one of the **Friends Alumni** of The Bowes Museum. Thereafter, annual Friends members can continue their support of the museum when their subscriptions end by becoming Members of The Bowes Museum directly. See below for further information relating to renewals.

**I have a life membership with the Friends. What will happen to my subscription?**

Your life membership – or joint life membership, if applicable – will continue without break and transfer to The Bowes Museum as part of its membership programme. You will also continue to enjoy free access to the museum and be known as one of the **Friends Alumni**. There is no further action you need to take with respect to your membership.

**What will happen with my personal data?**

On 30 June 2025, all membership data will become the sole responsibility of The Bowes Museum. The museum has its own Privacy Policy which covers the use of individuals’ data and this can be accessed on the museum's website here: [Privacy Policy - The Bowes Museum](https://thebowesmuseum.org.uk/privacy-policy/)

**Renewals**

**Will I be prompted to renew my subscription when my current Friends membership runs out?**

Yes. The museum will contact individual Friends in advance of their Friends membership coming to an end and you will be offered the opportunity to join as a Member of the museum.

The museum will contact individuals whose Friends membership renewal date falls between 1 April and 30 June 2025 – the period between the Friends Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM) and the charity's closure – from July 2025 onwards. During this time – and for this group only – your membership will be extended, and access to the museum will continue without break to take account of the transition period between the two charities.

**Will my Friends membership card be valid until it expires?**

Yes. However, please note that the museum does not issue membership cards and has a ‘paperless/email only’ communications policy wherever possible as part of its approach to sustainability.

The museum aims to introduce electronic membership cards in the future. In the meantime, the Welcome Team at the museum will be happy to confirm your Friends or museum Membership each time you visit.

**Will I have to make a new Gift Aid declaration when I renew?**

Yes. Since the Friends of the Bowes Museum and The Bowes Museum are separate charities, you will need to make a new Gift Aid declaration to the museum for any future membership subscriptions or donations. There is no need to take any immediate action on this – your new Gift Aid declaration will form part of the process of becoming a Member of the museum.

**I have arranged a legacy gift in my will the Friends. Do I need to change it?**

If you have planned to make a legacy gift in your will to benefit the Friends of the Bowes Museum, you will need to update your will and, should you choose, redirect your gift to The Bowes Museum (registered charity no. 3879872). For further details, support, or guidance on this please contact [development@thebowesmuseum.org.uk](mailto:development@thebowesmuseum.org.uk)

**How will I be able to pay for my subscription to the Membership programme?**

Currently the museum accepts payments by credit or debit card and plans to set up set up Direct Debit payments (annually, monthly) in the future. It is also possible to visit the museum to renew your membership in person at the Welcome desk.

**Communications**

**How will I receive updates in the future?**

The Bowes Museum produces an email newsletter for members that is sent out once a month to keep supporters up to date with news on exhibitions, activities, special events and other opportunities. Friends Alumni will automatically receive this newsletter as part of their transferred membership. You will, however, be able to update your contact preferences at any point.

If we do not already have an email address for you, please provide us with one as soon as possible by contacting [Friends.Alumni@thebowesmuseum.org.uk](mailto:Friends.Alumni@thebowesmuseum.org.uk) or calling the museum on 01833 690606. Please note that all Friends and Members communications will be by email from July 2025, except for the final issue of *Bowes Arts,* which you will receive in the post.

**Will I continue to receive *Bowes Arts*?**

The final edition of *Bowes Arts* (issue 100) will be sent to Friends Alumni in August 2025. This will be the last regular postal mailing that Friends will receive.

**Events and benefits**

**Will I be able to book for Members’ events at the museum?**

Absolutely. We very much look forward to welcoming Friends to Members' events in the future. These special events have proven extremely popular, so remember to book early when you receive details.

**Will Friends Alumni still have discounts in the shop and café?**

No. The financial climate has changed dramatically since discounts were negotiated some years ago as one of the benefits of Friends membership. As you will know from information circulated before the April EGM, the officers of the Friends committee decided that expecting discounts now, when the museum is facing significant increases in costs, is unrealistic and not in the true spirit of friendship.

In addition, since your Friends membership will be transferring to the museum’s membership programme from 30 June 2025, it will not be possible to continue the Friends discounts in the museum shop and café beyond this date.

**Will Friends Alumni still get invitations to exhibition previews?**

Yes. A significant proportion of preview event tickets will be allocated to Friends Alumni and museum members. Spaces are always limited and demand is high, so early booking is always advisable to avoid disappointment when you get an email notification.

**Further information:**

* General enquiries: [hello@thebowesmuseum.org.uk](mailto:hello@thebowesmuseum.org.uk) or 01833 690606
* Friends Alumni enquiries: [Friends.Alumni@thebowesmuseum.org.uk](mailto:Friends.Alumni@thebowesmuseum.org.uk)
* Privacy Policy - [Privacy Policy - The Bowes Museum](https://thebowesmuseum.org.uk/privacy-policy/)