

Media release
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The Bowes Museum Receives Connected Communities Funding



Jess, Co-Production Volunteer Manager and Abbie, Lead for the Young Volunteers
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The Bowes Museum is thrilled to announce it is a recipient of a grant from the Association of Independent Museums' Connected Communities fund, which is funded by the UK Government's Know Your Neighbourhood Fund through Arts Council England. The grant will enable the museum to continue its successful volunteering programme in co-production partnership with **Teesdale School and Sixth Form**, engaging young people aged 14–18 in meaningful and relevant volunteering opportunities that build skills and confidence.

Volunteering roles at the museum are diverse and engaging, including helping to conserve the collection, gardening in the 22-acre parkland and assisting as public guides. The Young Volunteers programme provides hands-on learning, as teams across the museum share expertise and inspire young people.

The programme, supported by the Connected Communities fund, provides opportunities to create new connections for young people and, at its core, aims to establish a strong and supportive volunteer community. Feedback from young volunteers highlights how volunteering can boost self-confidence, improve wellbeing and reduce feelings of isolation. **The museum has worked with 138 young people through the programme since 2024.**

Jess White, Co-Production Volunteer Manager, said: "Receiving the Connected Community fund is incredibly meaningful to us. Volunteering is transformational. I have seen firsthand the power it holds, especially for young people. From watching their confidence grow to seeing them

secure their first paid roles in the museum sector, it's truly inspiring. This funding will allow us to continue empowering young people through meaningful volunteering opportunities."

Abbie Nicholls, Lead for the Young Volunteers, commented: "I first discovered volunteering while I was still at school and completed the Young Volunteers programme at the museum, it was a fantastic introduction. Since then, I've developed new skills and met so many incredible people along the way. I'm now proud to be the Lead for the Young Volunteers, volunteering has opened so many doors for me, and I'm excited to see where it takes me next."

-ENDS-

Note to editors:

A photo of Jess and Abbie can be found [here](#).

For film and photography requests and more information, please contact Marketing & Communications Coordinator:

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About The Bowes Museum

The Bowes Museum is a charity managing a Grade 1 listed accredited museum and Grade 2 listed parkland in Barnard Castle. Founded by Joséphine & John Bowes 150+ years ago, this purpose-built museum brings together an extraordinary, designated collection of European fine and decorative art as a cultural resource for the people of Northern England, where today we celebrate artists, designers and makers.

The Bowes Museum receives funding from Durham County Council and, as a National Portfolio Organisation, receives support from Arts Council England. Arts Council England is the national development body for arts and culture across England, working to enrich people's lives. artsCouncil.org.uk

The Bowes Museum is a member of the Discover Durham partnership of attractions, whose commitment is to promote Durham as an exciting and vibrant group travel destination and to provide the travel trade with a professional and knowledgeable service. discoverdurham.co.uk

Admission to The Bowes Museum is £17.70 for local members (residents of County Durham and Darlington), £20.00 for members (residents elsewhere), £19.50 for a day ticket, £21.45 for a day ticket including gift aid. Under 18s, full time students and carers are free. As a registered charity (number 1079639) The Bowes Museum needs to generate more than half of its income each year to care for the historic collection, buildings and parkland. Your donations are vital to that work. Visit thebowesmuseum.org.uk/support/ for more information.



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