



Appendix 5: Sharpe's Pottery & Heritage Arts Trust Overview Report 2021-22

By way of background, in March 2020 the museum closed its doors as a result of COVID-19.

In June 2020 the Trust secured funds from the Heritage Lottery Fund to implement the Securing the Future of Sharpe's project, revised business plan and layout and visitor flow changes to the museum.

From September 2020 to May 2021 project delivery took place with a rebrand, new website, changes to the building to create new visitor flow, retail space and a Changing Places toilet.

On June 26th, 2021, Sharpe's Pottery Museum reopened its doors to visitors following national lockdown implemented as a result of the pandemic.

Business Development & Management

The Trust has continued to build on the work achieved during closure, with positive new partners, initiatives and new audiences. There have been several changes to the staffing and to the trust board since March 2022, that has slowed the rate of positive change.

The current structure leaves the museum with a single full-time post (Visitor Experience Manager). Although the post is supported by fixed term appointments, there has inevitably been a period of transition. We will be seeking to replace the marketing post and consolidate the assistant/part time roles alongside volunteer support.

The previous Business Development Manager and the current Chair have been working with a business mentor from the Heritage Compass Programme to explore ideas for 2022 and actions for the next 3 years, this work followed on from the Board away day in February 2022, to ensure any developments align and feed into the priorities set by the Trust.

We now have Amazon Smile in place, so when people purchase items and choose Sharpe's as their chosen Charity, we get a percentage of their purchase.

There are new makers in the shop – The Ageode resin jewelry, coasters and more. The Bee Farmer, honey from Leicestershire, along with LouLou local hat maker. The shop requires further work to build a positive brand presence.

The improvements to the venue have enabled the Trust to offer more options for venue and group hire including Coin Valuations (Willow Coins), business meetings and recruitment Towards Work-Derby College, Derwent Woodturners Club, South Derbyshire Drummers, and the Big Welcome Café (People Express).





As a result of the Murder Mystery event that took place in November, we have had a booking for a book launch.

There is a planned programme of activities up to and including Christmas 2022, this is being supplemented by new bookings and initiatives as new staff settle into their roles.

Fundraising and partnership

From January 2022 the Trust has been working with Louise Muffitt, from Louise Mary Design the jeweler in the retail unit to develop a plan that will attract new artists and crafters. This will include the creation of an arts event in June, which will align with the launch of Tom Hackett's, art installation (project developed with Chris Beech). Tom Hackett is a sculptor <https://tomhackett.org/>

Sharpe's is continuing to work in collaboration with People Express, and the Swadlincote Asperger's Society (SAS) 'Big Welcome Cafe' project.

In addition to the Welcome Café sessions, we are exploring other funding streams to provide opportunities in the community for those who are isolated, have barriers to being economically active and to provide a space in the community for people to share and learn about local heritage, as well as develop confidence and skills through volunteering.

Sharpe's worked with 13 Tourism and Travel Students from Burton & South Derbyshire College on developing and implementing events and an understanding of what life is like working in a museum.

There have been two Industry Placements from Burton & South Derbyshire College. The business students will provide 350 hours of their time in return for experience, guidance, and support in completing their business studies. This is a great opportunity to support a young person and potentially secure a future recruit / apprentice for the museum.

In July 2021, Sharpe's provided opportunities for work experience for sixth form students from the Pingle Academy, mentoring them through the Career Ready Programme. Great feedback was received.

Change and People Management

The museum has gone through a major transformation over the past 18 months as a result of COVID and with the loss of the previous café and Tourist Information Centre, although this has been a significant change for many of our former visitors, and there has been some quite negative criticism as a result on social media and through networks in the community, this is far outweighed by the positive changes and the new people who both work and engage with the museum.

We now have a space that can react and adapt to changes in the environment such as COVID, the building is now recognised as a museum / visitor attraction. Most importantly for





me as Chair is the change in culture within the workforce, it is a place where individuals want to learn, volunteer, work and support one another. There are challenges as we have a diverse team with a range of skills and abilities, but everyone works together to overcome these and provide a good service to our visitors and users of the museum.

These changes have resulted in an increase in enquiries for work experience, we have attracted young volunteers to help with activities and events, we have secured new groups such as the South Derbyshire Drummers and we continue develop a place for everyone to enjoy.

Communications and profile

A successful interview was held with Radio Derby, thanks to all the events we have been putting on and the hard work of the Marketing and Programme Assistant who, together with myself have been working behind the scenes to push and promote the events that had been developed by the team. To date, these have attracted over 2,500 visitors since opening the doors on the 26th of June 2021.

The social media platforms that we use continue to grow and as a result of our advertising in magazines such as Ashby Life and Aspect Magazine we are increasing the reach of our visitors across Leicestershire and Nottinghamshire. This has also driven more enquiries from larger advertisers such as Reach PLC, What is on Derby have asked us if we want to feature on their website and other local magazines and advertisers, are contacting us regularly too.

Since June 2021, 15 volunteers have been recruited although it has been difficult to secure enough volunteers particularly at the weekends when we are busiest. We continue to get volunteer enquiries: the challenge is matching their availability with the needs of the Museum.

Challenges and developments

The team and I have achieved a lot since we re-opened in June 2021, managing the transition from covid restrictions, building the new brand and operating a new building layout. Since the opening of the new café (Sweet Caroline's) in January, it became more challenging to manage the front of house. Securing funds from the Culture Recovery Continuity Fund to assist in securing a Team Leader for the Visitor Experience Team, provided capacity and help alleviate these issues. This was a temporary situation, following two rounds of recruitment and resignations (for positive reasons), the museum is now in a place where future plans can now be discussed and implemented.

We are currently appointing new Trustees to the board and have exciting plans to reengage partners (Magic Attic, Sweet Caroline's, South Derbyshire VIC, and the National Forest). This includes an incubator scheme to showcase and support local makers, open exhibitions, touring exhibitions, and further development of the retail shop.





Marketing

Facebook

Reach: 24553 Page Likes: 3304 Followers: 3370

Instagram

Reach: 1152 Followers: 1007

Twitter

Tweet Impressions: 11.7k Profile Visits: 851 Followers: 1232

Website

Number of Users: 2326 (2148 of these were New Users): Number of Page Views: 9162

Most viewed pages in order from highest: Homepage, Upcoming Events, Easter at Sharpe's (news item), Easter Family Trail, Weddings, Parties and Functions.

Advertising

Adverts promoting events have been submitted to Raring 2 Go, Primary Times, Leics Aspect, Notts Aspect. Many of these include editorial and free online listings too.

Events have been submitted to free websites including Visit South Derbyshire, Visit Peak District and Derbyshire, Made in Derbyshire and Google.

Summer activity

- Wild Minds sessions – regular sessions across the week
- Komedy in the Kiln – monthly Friday night sessions, gaining in popularity
- Sharpe's Summer Activities - Summer Clay Play and Messy Play are very popular
- Wednesday Talks – extended to include artist talks

Short term goals

- Increase our profile and improve awareness
- Engage with and influence local mindset about the museum
- Embed vision and values internally

Long term goals

- Improve street appeal
- Increase footfall and income
- Reinterpretation of the museum around a compelling theme/personality





The Year in Pictures: Staff & Volunteers, Industry & Work Experience, Venue & Group Hire, Activities & Events



Burton and South Derbyshire College



