**Bournemouth Natural Science Society & Museum (BNSSM)**
**Forward Plan 2025-2027**

## A. Statement of Purpose

The Society's constitution states that its objects are:
'*The promotion of the study of science in all its branches and of public education by means of operating a museum, lectures, field meetings, the reading and discussion of papers and in any way that the Trustees, in consultation with the membership, shall deem advisable'.*

To this end, the Society shall conserve and maintain its collections and premises and promote the natural sciences through public exposure to the displays and exhibits including for educational and research purposes. We shall, after consultation with the public and other local bodies, ensure that its collections, displays and exhibits meet the needs and expectations of its visitors and follow the ethical and environmental standards expected of such a Society. To enhance the experience of the museum collections, the Society will continue with its open access to the museum, lectures & field trips.

The activities of the Society are inextricably linked with those of the Museum and it is not felt to be possible or helpful to try to separate them for the following reasons:

- Members' annual subscriptions in part maintain the Society's premises which are used almost exclusively by the museum.
- Cost of utilities, council charge and waste disposal are directly attributable to museum activities.
- Lectures & field trips are organised by the members as part of the museum activities
- Funds from sales, group visits and 'Young Explorers' were all attributable to museum activities and used to fund further activities.
- Funds raised from the hire and letting of the Society's facilities are used to support the museum activities.

## B. Introduction to the Museum

The Society was formed in 1903 but moved to its current site following the purchase of the late Victorian Grade II listed Italianate style property in Christchurch Road in 1920 where it established a museum the Bournemouth Natural Science Society Museum to house the exhibits donated by its members. A lecture hall was added in 1929. The museum is located on the east side of Bournemouth on a main road, separate from the town centre but on bus routes, and only a 15-minute walk from the station. Exhibits continued to be donated throughout the 20$^{th}$ century by members, or members of the public, acquired from other museums or through the occasional purchase of a private collection. Many of the Natural Sciences as well as Archaeology and Egyptology are included. Many specimens relate to local sites e.g. Barton Fossils and the Heywood Sumner's Roman pottery. Since 2010, the museum has been open to the public on each Tuesday and during school holiday on other days and also on two Open Weekends in April and October each year. The BNSS Museum is the only natural history museum in the area.

## C. Visitor Profile

The Bournemouth, Christchurch & Poole (BCP) area had a population of more than 400,000 in 2021. BCP contains areas in the most and least deprived deciles of the population. Bournemouth and the surrounding area has a large population of retired people who have the time to visit the museum. Families with young children mainly visit the museum in school holiday openings and Open Weekends The ‘Young Explorers’ monthly Saturday morning sessions have continued to attract a membership of some 50 young persons with 25 attending each session. Young people between the ages of thirteen to twenty-five are generally significant by their absence although we have some volunteers in that age bracket. The Arts University have used the museum’s resources for study projects and local primary schools bring parties of children either for general visits or for curriculum-related topics. We are also visited by other organisations such as the U3A & cub scouts. Visits are also made to local schools and libraries to exhibit insects and fossils.

## D. Funding

The Society’s income is predominately derived from the members’ subscriptions with an income from investments, donations, hiring of rooms and facilities, and sales. Expenditure is mainly on the maintenance of the building and facilities to enable the running of the museum, lectures and other activities. Damage to the lantern on our roof caused by weather was the subject of conservation work funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund and Canford Environmental and completed in 2021. We were in receipt of Covid-19 Recovery Grants following the pandemic in 2020-22.The projected finance plans for 2024/25 and 2025/2026 are shown below:

### BNSS Finance Plan

| | 2024-25 | 2025-26 |
|---|---|---|
| **A1 Receipts** | **Unrestricted Funds** | **Unrestricted Funds** |
| Subscriptions & Donations | **26650.00** | **28000.00** |
| Legacies | **0.00** | **0.00** |
| Lettings | **5000.00** | **5000.00** |
| Activities inc Teas | **4100.00** | **4250.00** |
| Income from Investments | **9500.00** | **9800.00** |
| Sales Receipts | **6650.00** | **7200.00** |
| Young Explorers | **1450.00** | **1500.00** |
| Gift Aid (Tax Rebate) | **3660.00** | **3850.00** |
| | **57010.00** | **59600.00** |

| **A3 Payments** | **2024-25** | **2025-26** |
|---|---|---|
| Accommodation & Services | **35,000.00** | **36,750.00** |
| Salaries & Tax | **3300.00** | **13200.00** |
| Administration in legal, web, mkt | **4250.00** | **4675.00** |
| Activities inc. Coach | **1650.00** | **1725.00** |
| Museum | **2500.00** | **2500.00** |
| Lectures | **1225.00** | **1285.00** |
| Garden | **1500.00** | **1500.00** |
| Young Explorers | **400.00** | **500.00** |
| Sales Expenses | **500.00** | **600.00** |
| Lantern Roof Expenses | **1500.00** | **0.00** |
| | **51825.00** | **62735.00** |
| | | |
| Balance | **5185.00** | **-3135.00** |

**Notes:**
A designated fund (DF) for major items of potential expenditure on the building is not included as the timeline for each is uncertain but it is expected expenditure can be met from reserves and includes: Refurbishment of Caretaker's flat (£15K), Upgrading of Lighting circuits (£20K), Upgrading of Firedoors (£20K), Orrery Case (£5K).

## E. Achievements

The last forward plan ran until 2020 but the museum was then closed during the Covid-19 pandemic. Achievements since 2020 have included:

- Completion of the Lantern Repair preventing the ingress of water to the building and safeguarding the collections.
- Ensuring that the documentation for Accreditation was progressed.
- Recovering from the disruptions and loss of income caused by the Covid-19 pandemic.
- Initiating (from April 2020) and maintaining a presence throughout the pandemic by presenting a lecture programme on Zoom thus developing our digital skills and reaching a new audience.
- Upgrading our Lecture Theatre AV system which now allows simultaneous 'in house' and remote access to our talks.
- Improving our Egyptology displays by investment in conservation, a new display case with passive humidity control and new cabinet lighting.

## F. Aims & Action Plan

Our aims need to address the following areas; the museum itself, its collections, the building, the users and volunteers, potential partners and funding'.

5 aims were developed in discussion with members and trustees and from visitor surveys.

1. Significantly increase the awareness of the museums' existence to other organisations and the public.
2. Improve our reputation as a centre for the study of local Natural History.
3. Open to the public on additional days through the year with an emphasis on weekends and holidays.
4. Increase the flexibility of our building and improve the environment and facilities for visitors and volunteers.
5. Ensure that the Society remains on a sound financial footing and that on average our income exceeds our costs to allow us to continue to invest in our Museum.

How we will achieve these aims is set out in the following tables showing aims, key objectives to accompany and an action plan, timetable and estimate associated cost to carry it out.

The estimated costs of the plan amount to ca. £3K per annum during the 3 years. Part of this is covered under Museum expenditure with the balance from our reserves.

**Aim 1 - Significantly increase the awareness of the museums' existence to other organisations and the public**

| Objectives | Actions | Costs | Completion Date |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1.1 Improve the profile of BNSS through better advertising, revamp of website and social media & collaborations. | 1.1.1 Develop and implement a marketing plan and re-institute a publicity team | | May '25 |
| | 1.1.2 Update the website and consider making more use of Instagram and Facebook | £750 | Dec '25 |
| | 1.1.3 Update our leaflets and make them more available by sending them electronically to other museums and organisations. | £250 | Jul '25 |
| | 1.1.4 Update our website to include quotes from visitors (Lyme Regis Museum website is a good model) and a new video. | £100 | Mar '25<br>Aug '26 |
| 1.2 Establish working relationships with Council & local specialised communities such as, home educators, private schools and special needs or disability groups. | 1.2.1 Improve liaison with BCP and joint working with local nature groups (see Aim 2 below) such eg. Butterfly Conservation and ARC | | Dec '26 |
| | 1.2.2 Make sure our resources meet the needs of different groups; home educators, private schools and special needs groups. | | Sep '25 |
| | 1.2.3 Invite organisations to visit us eg. BC, E. Dorset Beekeepers | | Ongoing |
| | 1.2.4 Establish a permanent exhibition with low cabinets in the Lecture Theatre which has easier access for the disabled. | £500 | Mar '26 |
| 1.3 Make BNSS more attractive to a wider range of people. Develop our offer to age profiles we currently fail to engage or broaden subject areas of interest (eg. Local History) | 1.3.1 Visit and engage with other museums in the area to gain from their experience. | | Mar '26 |
| | 1.3.2 Engage interest groups and neglected age profiles eg. student ambassadors (see 3.2 below). | | Aug '25 |
| | 1.3.3 Broaden subject areas of interest ie.<br>Engage Local Historians with exhibit of photo archive<br>& pump prime Local History Event Day<br>Put repaired orrery in new Astronomy display | <br><br>£500<br>See DF | <br>Oct '25<br>Oct '26<br>Mar '26 |

| **Aim 2 - Improve our reputation as a centre for the study of local Natural History** | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Objectives | Actions | Costs | Completion Date |
| 2.1 Raise the awareness of our collections with specialist organisations and seek collaborations and affiliations with them or other museums. | 2.1.1 Source information about other museums (through surveys, visits) with who we might interact eg.Portland, Red House etc.<br>2.1.2 Produce a list of local specialist groups<br>2.1.3 Arrange joint meetings/talks with reduced or limited fees or joint field trips/workshops.<br>2.1.4 Establish reciprocal arrangements to publicise events local societies and museums. | | Apr ‘26<br>Mar ‘25<br>Mar ‘26<br>Ongoing |
| 2.2 Become a hub for naturalists and get more local experts involved with the Society | 2.2.1 Increase nos. of field trips/workshops to attract especially local experts and citizen scientists.<br>2.2.2 Organise more ‘official’ training sessions eg. Botanical surveys, River health assessment through sampling, archaeological artefact ID, mothings.<br>2.2.3 Start Mothing survey/training<br>2.2.4 Ensure we have the right equipment for above (will need grant funding for set of stereo microscopes, low power objectives for microscope, video camera for demonstrations, moth trap etc).<br>2.2.5 Make available more of our own records to provide a source of information/engagement with specialists e.g. through website development. | £1500 | Dec ‘27<br>Aug ‘26<br>Aug ‘25<br>Dec ‘25<br>Oct ‘26 |
| 2.3 Improve Collections and Interpretation | 2.3.1 Complete the inventory of collections with the eventual aim of making the database publicly available<br>2.3.2 Produce an evaluation report on possible software for 2.3.1<br>2.3.3 Fit plastic film to remaining windows to reduce UV<br>2.3.4 Complete QR coding for 50 most important specimens.<br>2.3.5 Improve learning opportunities relating to key stage 4 using existing specimens. | | Ongoing<br>Dec’26<br>Dec ‘26<br>Dec ‘25<br>May ‘27 |

**Aim 3 - Open to the public one Saturday per month or additional days**
**(Primarily depends on the recruitment of volunteer and/or member stewards)**

| Objective | Action | Costs | Completion Date |
|---|---|---|---|
| 3.1 Increase nos. volunteers and member volunteers | 3.1.1 Attend more external Volunteer Fairs (as many as 7 are held in a year in our local area).<br>3.1.2 Put our details on the Community Action Network website to attract volunteers (establish why our previous offers of use of our lecture hall for Volunteer Fairs were not taken up).<br>3.1.3 Advertise for members/volunteers on our internal notice board that would be seen by visitors.<br>3.1.4 Take displays to more local events to keep our name before the public.<br>3.1.5 Make our website and noticeboards more attractive and actively advertise there for members and volunteers (mostly costed under 1.1) | £300 | Dec ‘27<br>May ‘25<br>Mar ‘25<br>Dec ‘25<br>May ‘25 |
| 3.2 Establish ‘student ambassadors’ | 3.2.1 Approach local universities/schools to engage their students to get involved for mutual benefit. Initiate contact with BU liaison officer. | | Aug ‘25 |
| 3.3 Coordinate extra open days with school holidays | 3.3.1 Ensure better liaison with Programme Committee | | Ongoing |

| Aim 4 - Increase flexibility of our building and improve the environment and facilities for visitors and members | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Objective | Action | Costs | Completion Date |
| 4.1 Improve the access and environmental conditions for visitors (in particular, heating, lighting and refreshments). | 4.1.1 Commission an independent access audit | £750 | Dec ‘25 |
| | 4.1.2 Update lighting to meet current regulations. | See DF | Ongoing |
| | 4.1.2 Prepare a plan to heat first floor. | £1000 | Sep ‘27 |
| | 4.1.3 Cost coffee/tea machine which could be in the Museum Room to allow visitors to have a better-quality refreshment and covered display for simple snacks e.g. biscuits. | £750 | May ‘26 |
| 4.2 Improve display lighting and storage. | 4.2.1 Prepare a list of lighting requirements to improve displays and prepare grant applications based on what was achieved for Egyptology. | | Mar ‘26 |
| | 4.2.2 Carry out a full storage audit in the building including Lecture Theatre, Reference Library, Curators Room, Tank Room etc. Rationalise space, provide more shelving and dispose of unwanted electrical items. Any items from the collections will be carried out in the procedure outlined in the collections development policy. | £500 | Sep ‘25 |
| 4.3 Improve lecture theatre (LT) | 4.3.1 Carry out a full audit of chairs and get a cost of new stacking/ folding chairs (sell some of current chairs). | £1500 | Oct ‘26 |
| | 4.3.2 Improve decoration of LT entrance hall. | £500 | Mar ‘27 |
| | 4.3.3 Decorate LT and re-seal floor | £500 | Mar’26 |

| **Aim 5 - Ensure that the Society is on a sound financial footing and that on average our income exceeds our costs to allow us to continue to invest in our Museum. It seems unlikely that we can re-establish tenants, instead, we will:** | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Objective | Action | | Completion Date |
| 5.1 Improve our hiring income | 5.1.1 Raise the awareness of the Society to ensure more awareness of our facilities (see Aim 1 above).<br>5.1.2 Promote more use of our lecture theatre with its modern audio-visual system and improved seating (see Aim 4 above).<br>5.1.3 Promote the garden with more social events. | | Ongoing<br>Ongoing<br>Ongoing |
| 5.2 Devise novel income streams | 5.2.1 Take photos for a portfolio to submit to ‘location hire’ firms.<br>5.2.2 Establish whether some car park spaces could be let on a long-term basis. | | Dec ‘25 |
| 5.3 Enhance Museum with grants/bequests. | 5.3.1 Write grant for science equipment. (see 2.2.4)<br>5.3.2 Write grant for cabinet lighting (see 4.2.1)<br>5.3.3 Ensure our website has information about how to leave a bequest. | | Dec ‘25<br>Dec ‘26<br>Sep ‘25 |

## G. Review

This Future Plan will be reviewed on an annual basis to evaluate achievements and updated on a three-year rolling cycle.

| **Approved by the Board of Trustees** | |
|---|---|
| Chairs signature: | |
| Name: | Grenham Ireland |
| Date: | 10th March 2025 |
| Date of next review: | Jan 2026 |