

Wisbech & Fenland Museum



Wisbech & Fenland Museum opened in 1847 when Wisbech's Museum Society and Literary Society amalgamated. It continues to collect, care for, and interpret the natural and cultural heritage of Wisbech and the surrounding Fens. The museum welcomes visitors from the whole community and beyond, inspiring them to find out about the history of the town, surrounding areas and its people.

Wisbech and Fenland Museum is one of the oldest purpose-built museums in the country. Its collections reflect the enthusiasms and interests of the members of the Museum Society founded in 1835 and include geology; zoology; archaeology; fine and applied art; paintings; local social history and important photographic collections. Wisbech and Fenland Museum also houses three libraries from The Wisbech Literary Society, the donor Rev. Chauncy Hare Townshend and the Town Library. The collections include literary archives, the manuscript of Charles Dickens's *Great Expectations*, maps and books (from the 17th century Wisbech Town Library) and is the diocesan repository for local parish records.

The current collection comprises over 50,000 objects.

Our Vision and Mission

Vision

We believe that Wisbech is a unique place with a rich and diverse history. Our vision is simple: To provide a welcoming, enjoyable environment – both physical and digital – safe and accessible to all, where people can explore the heritage of Wisbech and surrounding Fenland. We aspire to be amongst best in class, a fascinating museum at the heart of a strong community, providing a truly inspiring, engaging, and enriching experience.

Mission

The Wisbech and Fenland Museum is a perfect surviving example of the Victorian museum. Its collections are rich, eclectic, encyclopaedic, and unrivalled. They contain precious and remarkable objects – of great significance locally, national and internationally – which tell the history of Wisbech and also of the World.

Our mission is to develop, to care for, and to interpret those collections for current and future generations, to stimulate curiosity and wonder, and to make them accessible to everyone everywhere so they can discover and connect with their history and heritage.

We are committed to extending our impact:

- Learning– we are an important educational and research resource for people of all ages, abilities and backgrounds
- Enrichment and enjoyment –we exist to inspire people, to stimulate ideas, and to satisfy a passion for knowledge
- Civic pride – we illuminate and celebrate Wisbech’s proud past and distinctive present
- Stronger community and Enhanced well-being – we help people connect to their cultural inheritance and generate a sense of identity and belonging: we are a treasure-house of memories and local history
- Economic development – we are a key destination in Wisbech and surrounding Fenland’s tourism offer

We will adopt a sustainable and resilient business model so that we can continue to develop and share our collections for the widest possible public benefit.

The Museum Organisational Structure

Wisbech and Fenland Museum is fully Accredited by Arts Council England, number 670. It is a registered Charitable Company (limited by guarantee), Charity number 311307, governed by a Board of Directors.

The aim of the Charity is ‘to provide and maintain a museum and library for the benefit of the inhabitants of the area of benefit’.

The Board is made up of Directors who are responsible for overseeing different elements of the museum management and its development.