

## Museums

# Proactive Approach to Funding – Private Funding Streams

## Shetland Islands Council

### Contact for Enquiries

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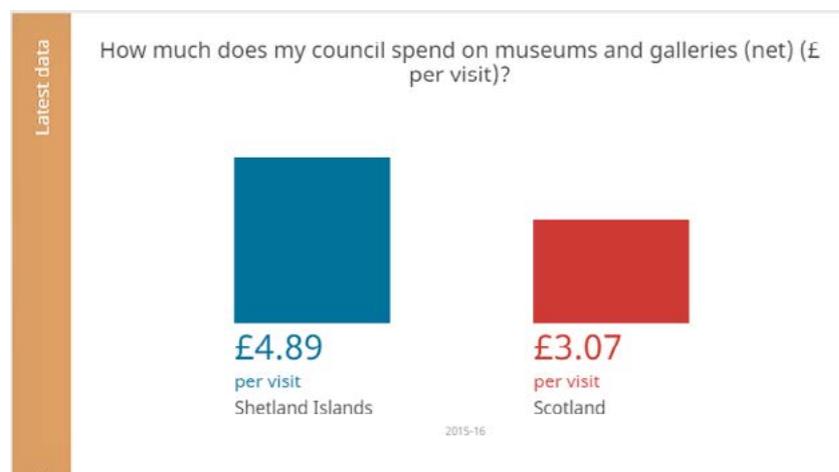
Shetland's museums services engaged with the private sector to secure financial support to cover transport costs which brought unique artefacts from other parts of the UK to the museum encouraging increased visits from local residents and tourists.

## Background

Travel to other parts of the UK from the island is expensive and this creates a barrier for local residents, particularly young people, who would like to see and engage with interesting artefacts and exhibitions at other museums in the UK. To address this disadvantage, Shetland's museums services makes bids and arranges for artefacts and touring exhibitions from museums in others parts of the UK to make their way to Shetland.

It can be a huge cost to the museums service to get exhibition items to Shetland, with transport the biggest cost involved.

The cost per museum visit for Shetland Council is £4.89, £1.83 higher than the Scottish average for 15/16, but about the same as the Family Group average.



The Council employs different approaches with the aim to deliver a quality museum service that encourages visitors from outside and especially local residents such as school pupils and families to visit, and to generate income to continue to deliver our museum

services.

The museums service has worked to engage with local private companies and to forge partnerships to help with the high costs involved. This recent approach has proved to be successful.

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## Key Activities

Key activities include:

### Local business support

The museum recently approached a local haulage company, Shetland Transport, to see if they would like to support efforts to encourage local residents to make use of their museum services. The owner of the local company had a keen interest to help and agreed to cover the transport costs involved to transport artefacts. In addition, they supported the marketing of the museums artefacts also as they were very keen to help in encouraging local residents to visit and make use of their museums services. The owner and his wife also took part in judging of a competition held at the museum showing the museum's active approach to maintaining relations with sponsors interested in supporting the museum. Similarly, as part of Shetland Boat week, local business Ocean Kinetics sponsored the museum gifting money and contacts.

### High profile collections

The museum decided on the approach of displaying high profile collections in the winter, when visitor numbers are comparatively lower than the summer, to attract local residents to revisit.

Prior to 2007, before the new facility was installed, the museum programmed a distinct tourist season (from May to end of Sep) to attract tourists during that season such as from holiday buses and cruises. This part of the year is where the museum would aim to meet income targets. However, since the new facility which is a purpose built building meeting optimum conditions of humidity levels, light levels, and security, the museum can now obtain long-term borrowing of artefacts as part of touring exhibitions.

### Lewis Chessman

The Lewis Chessman was brought up from the National Museum of Scotland. The museum bid for it for the winter period to fit in with local residents and school timetabling as the schools are keen to see and it also draws in local tourists, keeping numbers stable.

### Income generation

On the back of the museum exhibitions, the museum generates income through the use of the restaurant café and purchasing of souvenirs.

The museum will also hold family workshops bringing curators to give public lectures, or high profile speakers.

## Benefits and Impact

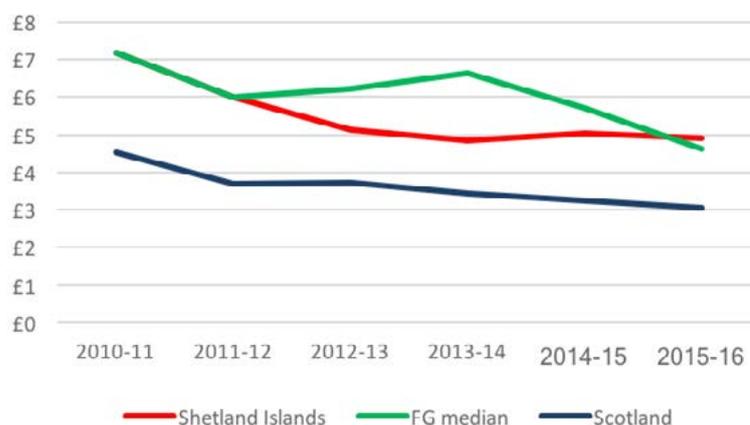
A benefit of the partnership approach has been an increase in visitor numbers. There has been a 20% increase in overall museum visitation on 2010 and 40% of all schools in Shetland visited. The majority of the visitors to the museum services in Shetland. By comparison, 43% of visitors to Edinburgh's museum services were from overseas and only a quarter of visitors at Stornoway were local.

An average of 67% of the visitors were visiting specifically to see the Chessmen exhibition. For 74% of visitors this was the first time they had seen the Lewis Chessmen on display. This indicated a success in Shetland's aim to enable local visitors to see exhibition that they would normally have to travel quite far to see.

An overwhelming majority of visitors gave the exhibition a very good or good rating at all venues and comments in the visitor books were positive.

Overall, the council has reduced the net cost per visit by almost 30% since 10/11.

Cost of Museums per Visit



## Learning

When engaging with local business, the council has learned to make contact with the Individual owning the company rather than a board to decide.