



## National Mining Museum Scotland Website Design & Development Brief

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Experienced Web Design/Development Company required to undertake the design and build of a brand new website for National Mining Museum Scotland to enhance our visitors access to all elements of NMMS'S activities and information. In particular this should include; the museum's Recognised Collection, commercial functions – venue hire, retail, catering and café and improve our means for wider engagement with our local and national community.

### 1. Introduction

National Mining Museum Scotland is a 5 star visitor attraction based in the Lady Victoria Colliery, a Grade A listed site, in the village of Newtongrange, Midlothian. NMMS is a museum of national importance that holds a collection of objects and documents that reflect and pay homage to mining and other associated industries. We receive visitors from all corners of the UK and from across Europe and North America. We are part of the cohort of museums – Industrial Museums Scotland - and are a key player in protecting and safeguarding Scotland's Industrial Heritage

The mission of the National Mining Museum Trust is to preserve and promote Scotland's mining heritage for current and future generations through events, exhibitions, collections management, research and outreach.

### 2. Background

Prior to the impact of Covid-19, the museum team had already identified a need to improve our digital literacy in order to bolster and improve community engagement and collaboration along with access to its collections to consolidate our educational offer. This need has now been amplified due to the ongoing impact of government restrictions on the Museum's community engagement and visitor involvement.

To enable us to continue to support our community and to build up our resilience and sustainability, we aim to develop and provide an accessible website that facilitates digital engagement with our collections, stories, projects, learning and research. The new website will allow us to become a more accessible and collaborative organisation in line with our organisational aims and values and in keeping with current issues and trends.

While the museum is currently encouraging community engagement with our collections, projects and events through social media, our website itself is insufficient to facilitate the level of digital engagement required to fulfil our audiences' current needs. The current website is difficult to navigate, information is not clearly displayed and it does not convey a sense of what the vision, mission and value of the museum are.

Built around 6 years ago, the themes and plug-ins, which were once cutting edge technology, are now outdated and cause regular errors. When the site goes down it is often days before the

problems are resolved which has impacted on our on-line ticket sales and engagement opportunities.

Frequent feedback from learning practitioners highlights these issues as well as emphasising that our methods of hosting resources on the website are not adequate for multiple resources, ease of use or in formats needed by teachers. In addition, we have no way of recording essential data such as number of downloads, localities etc.

Keeping the website running is a continuing struggle because it is no longer compatible with the technologies of today. With the threat of covid-19 unlikely to diminish in the near future, it is imperative that NMMS develops an improved, sustainable website capable of handling a variety of interactive elements for our online audiences as the impact on our in-house audience continues to increase.

### **3. Brief**

We want to explore new, innovative approaches for our digital engagement and be able to provide public access to our unique museum and its heritage. This will include our oral history interviews, videos of how our machinery works and insights into staff expertise, our educational resources and research, enhanced access to the collections, an interactive timeline of mining in Scotland, improved interactive capability for younger audiences, and encourage our local audiences to share their stories, photographs and memories of Scotland's mining history.

The creation of a virtual tour and digital, graphically designed content, using professional equipment would enable online visitors to view the colliery and our exhibition floors from their own homes. We will also develop more videos and oral histories of the site itself and of our current Tour Guides. Coupled alongside our collection of oral histories, this process could eventually be expanded to former miners still living in the community who wish to participate and leave behind their legacy of life as a miner. This would bolster our education and outreach programme with these resources also being used for reminiscence and inter-generational work.

Improved access to the museum's collections online and the opportunity to host some larger images would provide increased research and educational access for many who cannot currently visit the Museum. The digitisation of some of the Museum's collection, most notably a selection of maps and plans, and the inclusion of particular photographs would be developed with interaction in mind e.g. online visitors able to assist in identifying particular places or people.

Overall, the curatorial page should promote the Recognised Collections, 'behind the scenes' work and ongoing projects. This should smoothly tie into other sections of the website.

#### **Collections**

- Online collections
- Research
- Donations
- Exhibitions
- Projects

- Blog

The Online Collections page would promote the Recognised Collection at NMMS. Initially, this would include highlights from the collection (text, images, video or sound) which would be added to over time. Once possible, we would like to upload the majority of our collections online, which would tie into our new Collections Management System, Axiell Collections. This transfer of information would include selected text and images, would be searchable and broken down into specific groups e.g. large machinery, art, photographs etc. This means we would end up with two separate sections to this page – one with in depth information on collection highlights, and one with basic, searchable data.

The Research page would highlight how our library and collections can be used in personal and professional research, including text, photos and downloadable documents. An online form system would be helpful.

The Donations page would give visitors information on potential donations in simple text format. An online form system would be useful.

The Exhibition page would include some text, photos and video on current and temporary exhibitions.

The Projects page would include some text, photos and video on current projects.

The Blog page would allow for staff, volunteers, students and interns to provide text, image or video on behind-the-scenes life.

The online collections page will be the most difficult as this involves tying into the new system (which isn't up and running yet!)

## **Education**

NMMS has an award winning education programme that reaches most corners of the country. During "lockdown" our educational department created our new "Learning at Home" digital resources, to support our communities and schools, which proved to be extremely popular. However, the main criticism from schools and community groups was that our website was difficult to use and most found it easier to simply email directly for the resources. Many voiced their surprise at never knowing we had resources at all and advised they would rather come directly to us rather than use the website. This is a clear need which this activity seeks to address directly. Our resources created during lockdown were simple, in that they were Microsoft Word based, and, while as a short term solution were very effective, long term they do not make best use of our collections, need to be more accessible, and, in turn, are not as digitally engaging as they could be. With the wealth of digital and accessible content from Museums and learning organisations from across the UK developed during lockdown, we are at even higher risk of losing engagement and therefore, must improve our website and digital resources in order to stay relevant in light of this wealth of competition. Following best practice guidelines, it would be our aim to create a new learning section of the website which not only supports the Curriculum for Excellence and attainment, like our "physical" learning programme does, but also uses education to enhance engagement with our collection.

With the current lack of outreach and large groups visiting the museum, this provides us with an opportunity to continue our community engagement. With our outdated website, we are not able to

log the number of downloads, popular resources, request feedback or even to track imperative data such as locality. All necessary information to best support our communities.

Our education programme not only supports schools but also adult community groups. Due to current restrictions our loan box service is unavailable meaning we are losing an important contact with vulnerable groups, such as care homes. The creation of 'downloadable loan boxes' will give people access to our photographs, annotated photographs of objects, maps and plans, oral histories and film clips of the Museum and our guides. There will be the opportunity for those using this content to provide their own commentary as to how mining has affected their lives or the lives of those around them. These recordings or letters could then be added to the museum's collection, giving an insight in to the impact mining is still having on lives today, very insightful in the present climate and for future inter-generational work. We will also encourage the public to submit anecdotes and photographs for the Scottish Mining History timeline to be displayed online.

For the learning part of the website it would be great to have an area which teachers can access in order to view our activities and workshops, download resources and to book visits. Within this section the ability to gather information on which resources are downloaded, how often and from which local authority would be very informative. A project page with gallery functionality to show longer term projects and events we run/take part in. Also, an area for community groups, including families and young people, which hosts resources, photographs, information on our outreach workshops and our loan box service. A booking system for this as well would be ideal.

### **Community & Blogging**

Alongside the development of the website, the digital engagement project will involve a number of community-based activities to introduce our audiences to the new website. A new community page for hosting content, such as online exhibitions, would target community wellbeing and continue to build on the sense of community ownership in the new website.

We want to encourage our volunteers, a number of which currently lack digital skills, to produce content for the new website. Where possible (due to changing government guidelines and restrictions) we will organise training for staff and volunteers in creating online content e.g. writing blogs, photography, video creation and interviewing techniques.

We will also encourage signing up to our e-newsletter via our website.

### **Events**

Events are an imperative part of our sustainability in terms of engagement, providing meaningful activities for communities and supporting national agendas. It is vital that we improve the profile of our events programme on our website by using a quality events calendar which can link through to our events/admissions booking system ( <https://national-mining-museum-scotland.arttickets.org.uk/>)

### **Gift Shop**

We would like to include an e-commerce plug in to bring our Gift Shop online where we will offer a range of mining related products and books as well as locally made/sourced products, therefore offering a revenue stream during prolonged periods of reduced/no footfall and through the quieter

shoulder months. It would be useful if the postage of the items could be calculated automatically using the weight of the items selected to enable us to give customers an accurate postage cost.

### **Functions/Venue Hire**

The museum is a popular venue for weddings, conferences, parties etc and the website will require a section to promote this, with the capacity for e-brochures, videos and online enquiries. It would also be useful to have a calendar where viewing requests could be submitted. It would also be extremely useful if we could integrate our card payments system on this page to allow function deposits and balances to be paid online.

### **Café/Catering**

Our café is open to the general public as well as museum visitors. We would like to promote it as much as possible on the website using images and current menus. Again, it would be useful to incorporate a calendar and payment system where people can request group bookings and pay for event catering.

## **4. Audiences and Customer information**

There are a number of identified target audiences. The website should cater to them all equally and therefore requires a highly engaging, user oriented design.

- Families are an extremely important audience segment for us, especially during school holidays.
- Older visitors, retired couples, ex-miners or those looking at their family history
- School visits are very popular and the museum has spent a considerable amount of time developing learning resources which require to be hosted online.
- Researchers
- Local community
- Cultural Tourists
- Foreign Visitors

We also want the new website to link with the data that we can gather on our customers as well as link with our social media platforms so that there is integration across all our digital platforms.

We also require the capacity to link with a new CRM system for the museum that we hope to set up in tandem with this project.

## **5. Technical Requirements**

### **Platform**

We would prefer our website to be built with WordPress as it is widely regarded as the most accessible and usable Content Management System available and our staff are already competent users.

## Google Analytics

We currently use the standard Google Analytics. However, we are keen to investigate how we could get more valuable information from our website e.g. event reports, download data, Blog interactions/likes.

## Hosting, Warranty and Ongoing Support

We will require a warranty for the website for a fixed period, an annual hosting package and a support package.

## 6. Masterplan

The National Mining Museum Scotland is currently going through the development of a new Masterplan for the museum. The plan will be for the next ten years and will present a phased approach in the improvement and development of the site and new a vision for the museum. Taking in to account the challenges and outcomes from the Covid-19 pandemic, the plan will strive to make NMMS a more resilient and sustainable organisation and be cognisant of decolonisation, black lives matter and climate change.

We would expect the successful candidate for this contract to be aware and reflect the findings of the Masterplan as this new development will give the opportunity to consider brand and the visual identity of the museum going forward.

## 7. Price

The cost of the new website should not exceed £35, 000 including VAT and must include a minimum of one year's hosting and technical support.

## 8. Timescales

Activity	Dates
Deadline for applications	1st March 2021
Selection process	From 2 <sup>nd</sup> March 2021
Contract award	8 <sup>th</sup> March 2021
Timescale for completion of website	End June 2021

## 9. The Selection Process

Your proposal should be made by email to [marketing@nationalminingmuseum.com](mailto:marketing@nationalminingmuseum.com) and should include the following:

- Contact details: Name, Company, email, phone, web and social media accounts
- A statement detailing: why you are interested in this opportunity

- Proposal: Please submit a full proposal detailing your approach to delivering our brief including any initial ideas to [marketing@nationalminingmuseum.com](mailto:marketing@nationalminingmuseum.com).
- 2 case studies of similar work undertaken

Submissions will be accepted as PDF or Word documents.

Proposals will be appraised on the following:

- Understanding of the brief
- Ability to demonstrate a relevant experience of delivering similar work to brief, time and budget.

#### 10. Further contact details

For further information or an informal discussion relating to this brief please contact

Gillian Rankin, Marketing & Events Manager

[marketing@nationalminingmuseum.com](mailto:marketing@nationalminingmuseum.com)



**The Scottish  
Government**  
Riaghaltas na h-Alba