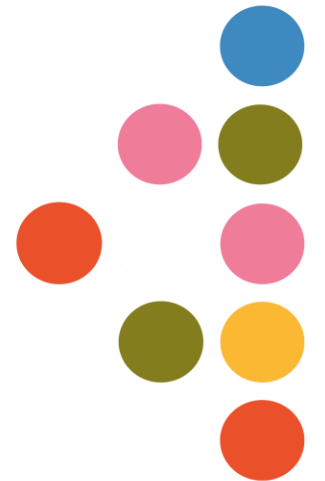


Report: Quarter 4 25/26

Date: 16th Feb 2026

1. Visitor Data
2. Curatorial update
3. Volunteer and staff update
4. Social Media update
5. Events
6. Exhibitions
7. Consultation update
8. Upcoming activities
9. Finances and grants
10. Additional updates



1. Visitor Data

Museum Visitors	Year to Date	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Full Year
24/25	11847 (8th Feb)	3942	3505	3464	3154 (936 from 1st Jan – 8th Feb)	14065
25/26	12644 (8th Feb)	3809	4309	3544	982 (from 1st Jan - 8 th Feb)	12644 (to 8th Feb only)
School Visitors	Year to Date	Summer term	Autumn term	Spring term		
24/25	1902	922	483	497		
25/26	2083 (including bookings to Easter)	824	824	435 bookings confirmed		



1. Visitor Data

- School visit numbers were very good for the Autumn term and are looking good averaged across the academic year. Enquiries are coming in for the rest of the Spring term and the Summer term. The outreach sessions have been well received.
- Museum Tots is thriving! Numbers are very high and we are exploring putting on separate sessions for childminders and regular Home Ed sessions. This can be linked to the large number of families who got involved with the Elmer Trail and exhibition.
- In December 2025 we had 1029 total visitors which included Elmer and Father Christmas. In December 2024 we had 562 total visitors. This is an increase of 54% footfall and shows the great engagement with our festive offer. Huge thanks to the Town Council for making this happen!



2.1 Silk Museum Collections update



- **We made nearly £1000 during Father Christmas and Weaving Workshops.** Will definitely look at transforming the Machine Gallery into Santas Grotto again next year.
- **Disposals Policy** has been approved at Board Level. Now we can officially start the process of rehoming objects that do not fit within the collection policy. The first focus will be the library.
- **4 Research Visits (20 people)**– an independent researcher (paid visit). This was the first time in 8 years the photographic collection and oral history collection has been requested. The Nicholson Museum team visited our Wardle Collection. The Embroidery Guild and Becca Smith’s home educated student also explored pattern books for an upcoming exhibition.
- **New Exhibition** – The Three Annies by the History Hunters: in the Community Case, online exhibition and Phone Box in town.

2.1 Silk Museum Collections update

- **Football exhibition** – will be featured on TV. Currently looking at collecting small items that relate to the historic win Macc Town Football club recently had to add to the display.
- **2 new volunteers – Marianda and Kaye** have joined the collections team, currently digitising pattern books (8 books have been digitised so far).
- **An image of Carbonised Linen from the West Park Collection will be reproduced in *Stitches Forever. Ancient Egyptian Textiles: significant museum collections in the North of England* by a team of six academics from the University of Manchester, namely R, David, A, P, Thomas, J. Finch, J. M. Robinson, K. N. White and B. Van Dongen.**
- **3 new weaving workshops are in development**, building on the demand of the Christmas Weaving Workshop. The first is a 2 day course (21st and 28th March) inspired by the Macc Stripe Collection.



2.2 Paradise Mill Visitor Offer Update

For 2026 we launched a **new visitor offer for Paradise Mill**. Visitors can choose one of our **guided tours** or **explore** the mill at their own pace. In March we are launching our first **special interest tour** for Women's History Month.

Income via ticket sales in January 2026 has more than trebled compared to January 2025.

Mill Entry

Timeslot entry gives you access to Paradise Mill where you can discover the lives of the people who once worked there.

Adults can scan QR codes to hear about 20th century workers' experiences, while children can step into the shoes of a Victorian child millworker with our interactive activity trail.

Loom restoration and weaving by resident weavers are ongoing, so you may also catch a glimpse of our mill team at work.



Mill Tours

Our [guides](#) will demonstrate how this luxurious textile was made on these incredible handlooms.

Explore the lives of the millworkers who created silk here throughout the 19th and 20th centuries. Discover the social history and political background of the silk industry.

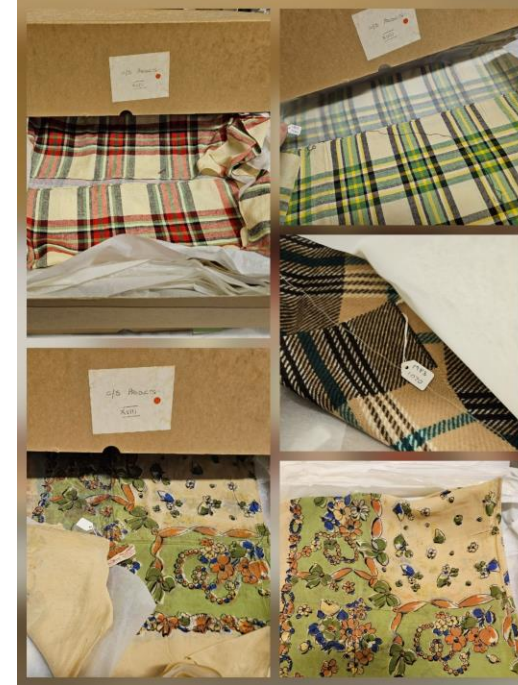
Special Paradise Mill Tour: The Women of Silk Town

This women-centred tour of Paradise Mill tells the story of the skilled and often overlooked women who kept the silk industry running. It brings the mill to life through their work, resilience and everyday experiences



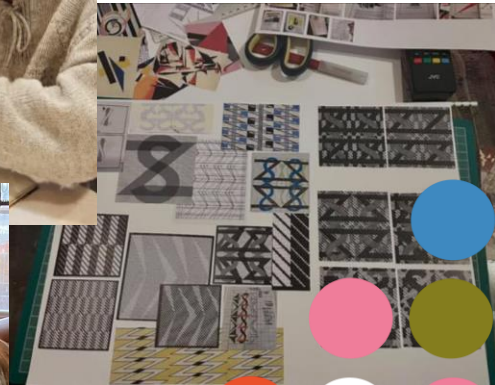
2.2 Paradise Mill - Projects

- A project to conserve the Cartwright & Sheldon Archive of **1000+ textile samples and business records** is coming to an end. Funded by **The Pilgrim Trust**, the project has revealed a part of the collection **untouched for 40 years**. The **conservation team**, led by **Jill Brown** and advised by **professional conservators, Michelle Harper and Mark Furness**, engaged with the public through popular **social media posts** and **working in view of visitors**.
- Part of the **NLHF resilience project** was to continue to **restore machinery in Paradise Mill**. This has now commenced. The priority is to set up the Leslie Winnell loom ready for an **international placement starting 30th March 2026**. **Karin Kauppi** is a weaver from **K. A. Almgren, Stockholm**.
- The **trade union card** of a Paradise Mill weaver was **rediscovered** in a stool by an **Arts Award student** at the **New Macclesfield School of Art**. **Undisturbed since 1939**, it will feature in the **Community Case in March**.
- The mill team has expanded with new volunteers **Elin and Lorna** who have been helping with **loom maintenance** and the **Pilgrim Trust** project respectively.



2.2 Paradise Mill - Weavers

- Weavers **Bea Uprichard and Ruth Farris** are establishing their business, **Fishbone & Sycamore** in the mill and are currently working on a private commission.
- **Halle Sivyour and Cecile Driver** have completed **NLHF funded** placements to design and **weave a new fabric** on one of our Jacquard looms. They took inspiration from our **World War 2 collection**. An exhibition of their fabric and designs is in the works.
- **Weaver in Residence Eleanor Godfrey** finished her **Granada Foundation** funded residency in **January**. Her **exhibition** of Egyptian inspired designs has **relocated to the Silk Museum**. Following her residency, Eleanor will work with fellow weaver, **Claire Malley**, to weave **new designs for the museum shop**.
- **All weavers are also involved in the restoration of machinery in the mill as part of the NLHF funded resilience programme.**



2.3 Update for Future Collections Projects & Exhibitions

- **Feb** – Developing a navigational app for the museum through Bloomberg Connects. Due to be launched in May.
- **Feb** – Just Drop In Pattern Book Workshops (12 young neurodiverse people)
- **Throughout the year** – We will be combating the cramped inaccessible stores, through wider audits of the Art Store, Store 2 and parts of the Costume Collection.
- **March 21st and 28th** – Macc Stripe Dyeing and Weaving course (21st and 28th March). First trial of a course offer.
- **March 19th** – Treasures from the collection - a day event where the general public can explore a selection of the costume collection. Hoping this will become a series.
- **March – June** – Aiming to join the Museum Data Service and Flickr to help collections reach wider audiences.
- **Body Positive activities will begin around Macc Pride 2026** and prep for the Drag Exhibition in 2027.
- **September** – A collaborative Textiles week across Macclesfield, where we are planning activities, events and creative workshops.



**BODY
POSITIVE**



3. Volunteer and Staff update

- Volunteer hours Q3+Q4 (1st Oct 25 – 8th Feb 26) - 1,611.70hrs (1,849.91 same period last year)
- **Q4 only** (1st Jan – 8thFeb) - **607.20hrs** (352.95 same period last year)
- Supported by Kids in Museums we have recruited 3 Young Trustees (18 – 30 year olds). They have attended their first board meeting and are completing their induction.



4. Marketing & Comms

New Ticketing System Launch

Following the expiration of the Art Tickets service in December 2025, we have successfully migrated to Vennersys as our primary ticketing and operational platform.

Led by the marketing manager, our online ticketing went live at the start of January, with EPOS (tills) integration completed in February. This transition represents a significant upgrade in our digital infrastructure, moving us toward a unified, data-driven approach.

By combining online sales and physical EPOS, we have created a seamless journey for the visitor and a single system for our finance and operations teams. We anticipate moving group and school bookings to the same system later in the year.

The screenshot shows the Silk Museum website's ticketing interface. At the top, the Silk Museum logo is displayed. Below it, a yellow banner contains a 'BOOK NOW' button. The main content area is titled 'Tickets' and includes a note: 'We are open Wednesday - Saturday, 10am - 4pm. Although you can book on the day, we advise advance booking.' There are five ticket options, each with a representative image, a title, a description, and a 'BOOK NOW' button:

- Museum Only:** Book your free admission to the Silk Museum. Your tickets give full day entry, anytime from 10am - 4pm.
- Museum + Mill Entry:** Book admission to the Silk Museum and include entry to Pavilion Mill. Timed entry slots for the Mill are at 10am, 11am, 1pm, and 3pm.
- Museum + Guided Mill Tour:** Book admission to the Silk Museum and include a guided tour of Pavilion Mill. Tours take place at 11am and 12.15pm.
- Workshop and Events:** Book in for workshops and events at the Silk Museum.
- Donations:** The Silk Museum is part of the Silk Heritage Trust, registered charity number 119521.

4. Marketing & Comms

Strategic Pricing Review & Price Changes for 2026

Ahead of the new year and the launch of our new ticketing system, the marketing manager completed a comprehensive strategic pricing review for the Silk Museum.

This review was designed to align commercial goals with our commitment to accessibility, ensuring the Silk Museum remains a popular and welcoming cultural destination while optimising our revenue potential. The new structure is built upon four strategic pillars:

- **Accessible Entry Points:** We are introducing new, affordable ways to explore the Mill. By offering an entry-level, self-guided ticket that is more accessible and family-friendly, we ensure that more people can experience the Mill.
- **Premium Positioning:** We have repositioned our guided tours to reflect their true value. By categorising these as a 'Premium Experience', we acknowledge the expertise of our guides and the depth of the visitor experience, allowing for higher yield on these ticket types.
- **Incremental Upselling:** The new model encourages add-ons from the basic free museum entry. Whether through suggested donation top-ups or upgrading to 'Museum Plus...' tickets, we are creating a clear pathway for visitors to increase their support and enhance their experience.
- **Benchmarking and Competitiveness:** This entire framework has been benchmarked against multiple nearby and similar heritage attractions. This ensures our pricing is not only ambitious but also remains competitive within the regional tourism market.

4. Marketing & Comms

Digital Marketing Activity

A review of the Silk Museum website has been completed and development works are in motion. Along with a major ‘tidy up’ of the website to improve navigation and to optimise for conversion (bookings, donations, email sign ups), this will also result in the creation of dedicated what’s on and blog pages, allowing for more dynamic content.

Meanwhile, social media activity is being optimised for engagement and new monitoring is in place to track growth trends.

Email marketing has also been addressed, with a major clear up of our mailing list and the merging of two mailchimp accounts.



4. Marketing & Comms

Groups Marketing Action Plan

A review of Group visits and Groups marketing activity highlighted a need to pivot away from the competitive Coach Tour market. Historically, these groups have proven expensive to market to and difficult to manage, with tight itineraries that result in low dwell time and minimal secondary spend.

By contrast, small local groups are easier to accommodate, stay longer, and spend more in our café and shop. This pivot ensures a higher ROI and a visitor experience that reinforces our brand as a premium heritage destination.

An action plan has been put together to start driving small group bookings using both a **strategic ‘price-to-discount’ model**, and **tactical network marketing activity**.

By increasing our group bookings rates for 2026, to better reflect the premium quality of the Silk Museum experience, we can now offer attractive discount incentives while still achieving, a **higher net yield per visitor** than in previous years.

By focusing marketing efforts very specifically on the **Women’s Institute (WI) networks** in Cheshire and Derbyshire and our **Internal Community** (of staff, trustees, volunteers, and partners), we can tactically target cost-effective and direct routes to market. We will evaluate this approach before **scaling it to other networked groups**.

5. Events update

Date	Event	Audience	Feedback / Comments
Nov '25	Hidden Wonders Half-term Trail	Families	The trail really helped us explore the museum and find kept the kids entertained!
Nov '25	Festive Tots	Families	The sessions ran as part of the Town Council 'Step into Christmas' event. Over 40 oranges made into pomanders, stories shared and songs sung.
Dec ' 25	Sew your Place' Bayeux tapestry workshops	Adults	These workshops, run by Becca Smith & Ailsa Holland, have linked up with the British Museum. The final product will be shown at the 1261 Festival and will be an exhibition in September.
Dec ' 25	Winter Wonderland - meet Father Christmas	Families	Magical experience with beautiful decorations. Families filled with festive cheer.
Jan ' 26	Lantern making workshops and parade	Families / adults	Over 100 lanterns made with Museum Tots, Have a Dabble and family visitors. The panda escaped and joined the parade. You can expect to see the panda at more community events!
Feb '26	RSPB Wildlife Explorers	Families	Tunnickliffe focussed session - 'It was stunning getting to see the artwork and making the connection between it and animals. The kids loved all the games and it was a real treat having the museum to ourselves!'
Feb '26	Lunar New Year	Families	Fabulous day! 'We always love the dragon' 'The museum is a stunning place to do Tai Chi'



6. Exhibitions update

Full Council 09.03.26 Agenda Item 7.3
'Absolutely fantastic exhibition. It made me surprisingly emotional!'
Foremothers

Dates	Exhibition Title	Artists	Comments/Feedback
Dec / Jan	When Elmer Came to Macc	Nicola Walker - contributions by Hurdsfield Primary School, Home Educated children, New Macc School of Art, Museum Tots	Wow! This exhibition was inspired by the Elmer Trail organised by the Town Council. It was fun and loved by many. Having a space in the museum where people could 'hang out' worked really well as well as being a workshop space. This will influence future programming.
Jan / Feb	Foremothers	Maccrate	Very inspiring, meaningful and wonderful! 'Excellent! What a lovely variety of meaningful stories, memories and reflections of the women in our lives.'
Jan / Feb	Through our Eyes	Space 4 Autism - adult art group	This exhibition was inspired by visits to the museum and the collections. It has led to conversations around sensory experiences in museums and the use of sound and handling objects. Watch this space for 3D objects and sound scapes!



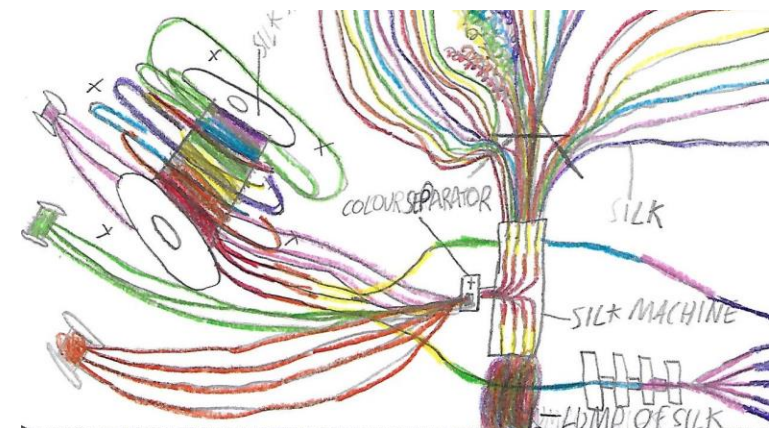
'We love Elmer! We came for the trail, found the exhibition by surprise and loved the museum. Great to have a space to hang out as a family. Thank you.'
Elmer

7. Consultation update

The National Heritage Lottery Funded consultation about the future of the museum has now been completed. We are working on compiling the results. The report is due by the end of March.

Key themes identified:

- Issues around signage and awareness of the museum and what it has to offer
- Barriers to access – front steps, heavy doors, etc
- Need for an internal narrative & clear visitor journey
- Lots of positives and huge appetite for more!
- Real passion for local stories and diverse local history.



8. Q4 Headline Community Activities

Coming up:

- **New exhibitions** – Macclesfield & Prestbury Philatelic Society, Scientific Rambles 2, Jacquard, Macclesfield College student exhibition
- **Consultation report** being compiled for sharing. Already influencing museum activities and planning.
- **Museum Tots** is hugely successful currently. Reviewing offer to ensure quality remains high and we are meeting demand.
- Watch out for the **Panda** in the community!
- Programme being launched for **Women's History Month** (March)
- Involvement in **Textile Week** (Sept '26)
- Hosting **Bayeux Tapestry** project linked with New Macclesfield School of Art and linked to the British Museum





8. Finance and grants

Finance update (Q1 + Q2) = 23,386.16 + 19,542.70 = 42,928.86

Time Period	Total number of transactions	Total retail spend	Average retail spend per head	Average total spend per head	Total spend through till	Average transaction value
2024/25	2919	21,668.58	2.91	5.73	42,675.67	14.69
2025/26	2923	16,906.83	2.08	5.29	42,928.86	15.19
Change	+0.14%	-21.98%	-28.5%	-7.68	+0.59%	+3.3%

Finance update (Q3 + Q4 1st Oct – 8th Feb

Time Period 1st October – 8th Feb	Total number of transactions	Total retail spend	Average retail spend per head	Average total spend per head	Total spend through till	Average transaction value
2024/25	1582	11,613.53	2.64	5.07	22,310.81	14.19
2025/26	1840	13,816.93	3.05	5.73	25,953.81	14.58
Change	+ 16%	+ 16%	+ 13%	+ 11.5%	+16%	+ 7%



9. External Funding Pipeline

Projects underway with funding from public bodies, Trusts & Foundations

Paradise Mill

£4200 Decorative Arts Society to research the Macclesfield School of Art Collection

£125,250 Headley Trust Senior Curator Paradise Mill - 3 years

£29000 Pilgrim Trust for Cartwright & Sheldon collections care & development

Silk Museum

£15000 Foyle Foundation for developing Café as a Community Hub

£5000 Museum Development North to establish Audience Baseline

£165000 Arts Council Capital Improvement Programme – Jacquard Studio

£227,223 National Lottery Heritage Fund – Resilience programme





10. Additional Updates

Football – we are excited by the success of Macclesfield F.C. and their F.A. cup run. It has brought interest in our football exhibition and media coverage with visits from TNT Sport and BBC Breakfast.



Pancake Race – we entered a team into the annual pancake day race. Marianne Brocklehurst elegantly competed and the Panda was a huge hit with the crowds.

