

Museum on the Street

Background

Macclesfield Town Council was awarded £43487.04 from the UKSPF under the E8 category: Campaigns to encourage visits and exploring of local area to fund for a project called Museum on the Street.

The description within the funding bid was given as follows:

Macclesfield 'Museum on the Street' will provide information boards across the town centre that can be followed as a trail. The boards will provide interesting information about Macclesfield and its character including everything from historical information and pictures, to art installations (e.g. Ian Curtis mural) to more quirky unique information like inventing the deckchair!

A digital and paper trail will be available.

The trail will aid visitors to get around and explore all there is to offer. e.g. the wonderful museum and Paradise Mill. It will also educate residents and provide low-cost trips for schools.

Alignment with other Corporate Policies

As a project designed to showcase the culture, heritage and the unique character of Macclesfield to increase visitor numbers, it aligns with the following plans and strategies:

CEC Corporate Plan aim is for a thriving and sustainable place with the aim to continue to grow the Cheshire East visitor economy with better visitor information and an increase in visitor numbers.

CEC Environment Strategy lists a distinctive place for culture, heritage and tourism - enhancing the setting of and access to heritage, landscape and outdoor recreational assets. The area covered by this project is the priority area of Macclesfield Town Centre Strategic Regeneration Framework. This also has a vision to celebrate the 'quirkiness' of Macclesfield and its rich heritage and culture which is exactly what this project will do, as well as encouraging visitors from further afield with the related social media campaign.

It will also improve wayfinding and guide people to interesting sites in the town. For example - the Ian Curtis mural.

Finally, the Macclesfield Town Centre Recovery Working Group Strategic Plan, devised through consultation with local residents and businesses, has an action point to explore opportunities to develop a Macclesfield heritage, culture and art trail, which once again is exactly one of the aims of this project.

The Opportunity

The Town Council is committed to increasing footfall in Macclesfield, aligning with the High Street Task Force guidance. This has been achieved through a multi-faceted promotional approach, leveraging radio, social media, posters, newspapers, and leaflets, as well as delivering high-quality, free events in the town centre.

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This project harnesses the power of social media to engage a broad audience and attract visitors. The vision is simple yet impactful: imagine a visitor stepping off the train at Macclesfield Station and immediately encountering a welcoming 'Museum on the Street' board. This innovative and engaging trail highlights the town's rich heritage, encouraging visitors to explore further. Guests can conveniently download the trail map to their phones or collect a physical copy from the Town Hall or Silk Museum.

Macclesfield is a town with a unique cultural identity. It is the home of Ian Curtis, whose legacy is globally recognized and honoured with a striking mural by renowned artist Aske. The town also boasts Paradise Mill, offering an immersive experience featuring original silk looms and the captivating stories of those who worked them. These distinctive attractions serve as key entry points, drawing visitors in and revealing even more hidden gems within Macclesfield.

A crucial aspect of the project is showcasing what sets Macclesfield apart from other towns. The Town Council has embraced social media, actively using Facebook, and Instagram, while TikTok plays a strategic role in reaching broader audiences beyond Macclesfield. By engaging with a wider demographic and providing shareable experiences, the project encourages organic promotion through user-generated content, further enhancing the town's visibility and appeal.

The Steering Group

The group was made up of the following:

- Janet Jackson MBE (Chair) – Friends of the Silk Museum
- Cllr Mike Hutchison (Vice Chair) – MTC
- Cllr Emma Gilman – MTC
- Emma Anderson- Director Silk Museum
- Natalie Lane – Education Officer Silk Museum
- Helena Gowler- Assistant Town Clerk – MTC
- Abigail Sherratt- Comms Officer – MTC
- Laura Smith- Town Clerk MTC

As the project progressed, we hired various consultants and designers who became part of the group:

- Kate Martyn- Donald Insall Consultants
- Emma Welland- Social Media
- Andrew Galvin- Designer
- Lucie Fitzpatrick – Community Consultant

Community Consultation

To ensure the project truly reflected the essence of Macclesfield and resonated with both residents and visitors, we engaged a specialist consultant to lead a comprehensive community consultation. The goal was to gather fascinating local stories, uncover lesser-known historical facts, and generate enthusiasm for the initiative.

We organised inclusive, in-person consultation sessions, open to all members of the community, at key locations across town:

- Macclesfield Library – A central and accessible venue for those keen to share insights and ideas.
- The Castle Pub – A relaxed setting that encouraged informal discussions and storytelling.
- 1261 Festival – A lively event where we connected with a diverse audience, gathering valuable contributions from festivalgoers.

In addition to the in-person sessions, we conducted an online consultation, which received an impressive 53 responses. This provided an opportunity for those unable to attend the events in person to still have their voices heard.

Turning Ideas into Reality

Once all community input was gathered, the Steering Group carefully reviewed and curated the ideas to determine which stories and facts would be featured on the 'Museum on the Street' boards. Each selected fact underwent a rigorous fact-checking process by the consultant to ensure historical accuracy and authenticity.

This collaborative approach not only enriched the content of the project but also fostered a strong sense of local pride and ownership, ensuring that Macclesfield's unique history and culture were celebrated in a way that truly reflects the community's voice.

Project progression

As the project progressed, the Steering Group generated even more creative ideas. One key addition was integrating audio for the boards, accessible via QR codes. To make the project uniquely Macclesfield, we recorded local people reading the boards, further involving the community.

We also developed engaging activity sheets, available for download or collection at the Town Hall and Silk Museum. Participants who complete them receive a prize, such as bookmarks or pin badges. This not only encourages participation but also boosts footfall to the museum, where visitors can see the real panda used on the logo and explore other exciting activities.

Monitoring

A separate social media presence was created with its own branding:



We monitored the stats, and they are as follows:

Output Name	Total target	achieved to date	% achieved
Number of People Reached:	5000 (up to 2025) Exceeded all targets	Facebook (from 1st June 2024 - 25th March 2025) 82.3k views 27.7k reach Tik Tok (from 1st June 2024 - 25th March 2025) 58.5k video views 36.7k reach Insta (from 1st June 2024 - 25th March 2023) 4.6k views 4.2k reach Total Reach: 68600	688%
<i>Improved Engagement Numbers</i>	5000	Followers across all platforms- 980 Instagram – 47 TikTok – 2094 Website and Consultations – 507 Facebook 868 Engagements Total: 4496	90%

Issues

The primary challenge involved securing permission from CEC Highways for installation. Based on past experience, this risk was anticipated, so we strategically placed the boards in locations that did not require approval whenever possible. Additionally, we utilised the lightboxes at Park Green, where the artwork had remained unchanged for approximately two years. As a result, only two boards required both highway permission and installation.

Visuals

The following are examples of the boards:



The alternative side to some of the boards can be used to advertise events in the town, increasing engagement and awareness of events in the town.

Future

We are excited to install everything simultaneously, with CEC Highways indicating this will happen in April!

The next phase of our marketing plan is packed with exciting initiatives:

- Engaging schools: We'll invite students to tour the boards, share their experiences through reports and videos, and bring the trail to life.
- Showcasing Macclesfield: Influencers will explore the boards and other fantastic local attractions—Axe Throwing, Paradise Mill, and our amazing independent eateries—creating videos to inspire even more visitors.
- Exciting rewards: The first 30 people to complete the trail will receive an exclusive Museum on St goody bag, while the next 100 will earn a limited-edition pin badge. Every participant will take home a bookmark as a keepsake!

We will closely monitor the outcomes, and if successful, we aim to expand the project with even more boards across the town.