

Report: Quarter 1 26/27

Date: 10th July 2026

1. Visitor Data
2. Curatorial update
3. Volunteer and staff update
4. Marketing 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
25/26	15272	3809	4309	3544	3610	15272
26/27	3849	3849				

School Visitors	Year to Date	Summer term	Autumn term	Spring term
25/26	2002	824	824	354
26/27	964	964 (booked to end of July)		



1. Visitor Data

- We are now fully booked for the summer term for schools. Enquiries have been later than usual and we are doing several outreach sessions to add capacity.
- Museum Tots numbers have been lower since the weather improved. However, we are still exploring additional sessions for childminders and regular Home Ed sessions.
- We are well on track to exceed visitor numbers for last year for the first full quarter of this year.





2.1 Silk Museum Collections update



Bloomberg Connects App – building the app has been the main collections project over the last few months, which is now LIVE. This is a FREE app to download, but can be accessed via QR codes without needing to download the app.

The app is a great way to enhance the visitor experience with:

- **links to video content** of moving machines and oral histories as well as a highlight tour.
- **A new site map** to help direct you round the spaces, giving insights into what you can discover here.
- **A highlight tour**, which takes you to 12 objects on display across the museum (chosen by staff and volunteers).



Future Potential:

- **To tell stories** we are struggling to tell onsite due to lack of space.
- **Share more** behind the scenes work and collections with audiences, creating authentic, relatable content.
- **Reach wider audiences** as the app is used around the world with 7.8 million users of the app.



2.1 Silk Museum Collections update

Main Event as part of Womens History Month - Costume Event: Treasures from the Collection

- **8 costumes** spanning over 100 years of fashion, including the Map Dress were brought out. The event was led by Jane and Christine our amazing collection volunteers, with help from Kathryn, Head Curator.
- **136+** visitors came on the day, some had come especially for the event.
- Social media for the event – Facebook: **17k views across 3 posts** and **144 shares** and Instagram: **10k+ views**. It just shows the desire for fashion related content and events in the area.
- Amazingly well received **with 100% visitors wanted more** events like this. and **100% of visitors wanted MORE costume on display!**



2.1 Silk Museum Collections update

Other Highlights

- **New Cabinet Display** – We have a full program of exhibitions for the community case booked in. Varied works have been exhibited so far, from local groups, women's history and artists works. Next month we will be installing Prestbury Primary Schools artwork in connection with their National Gallery project and further artworks inspired by the Pattern Book Collection.
- **Book sale** – **sold 62 books from the library collection** that were highlighted for rehoming, making £300+ in the process. We still have hundreds left to sell/ rehome but the process has begun.
- We have finished cutting the **jacquard cards for a major exhibition coming to us in 2029, by Paper Artist Stephanie Smart and in collaboration with Historic Royal Palaces**. The cards will form part of a paper dress (one of 15) that are being created in inspiration of dresses and stories in our collection and at HRP. It is due to be installed at HRP 2027, then going on tour to Whitchurch and Worthing Museum in 2028, finally ending with us in 2029.



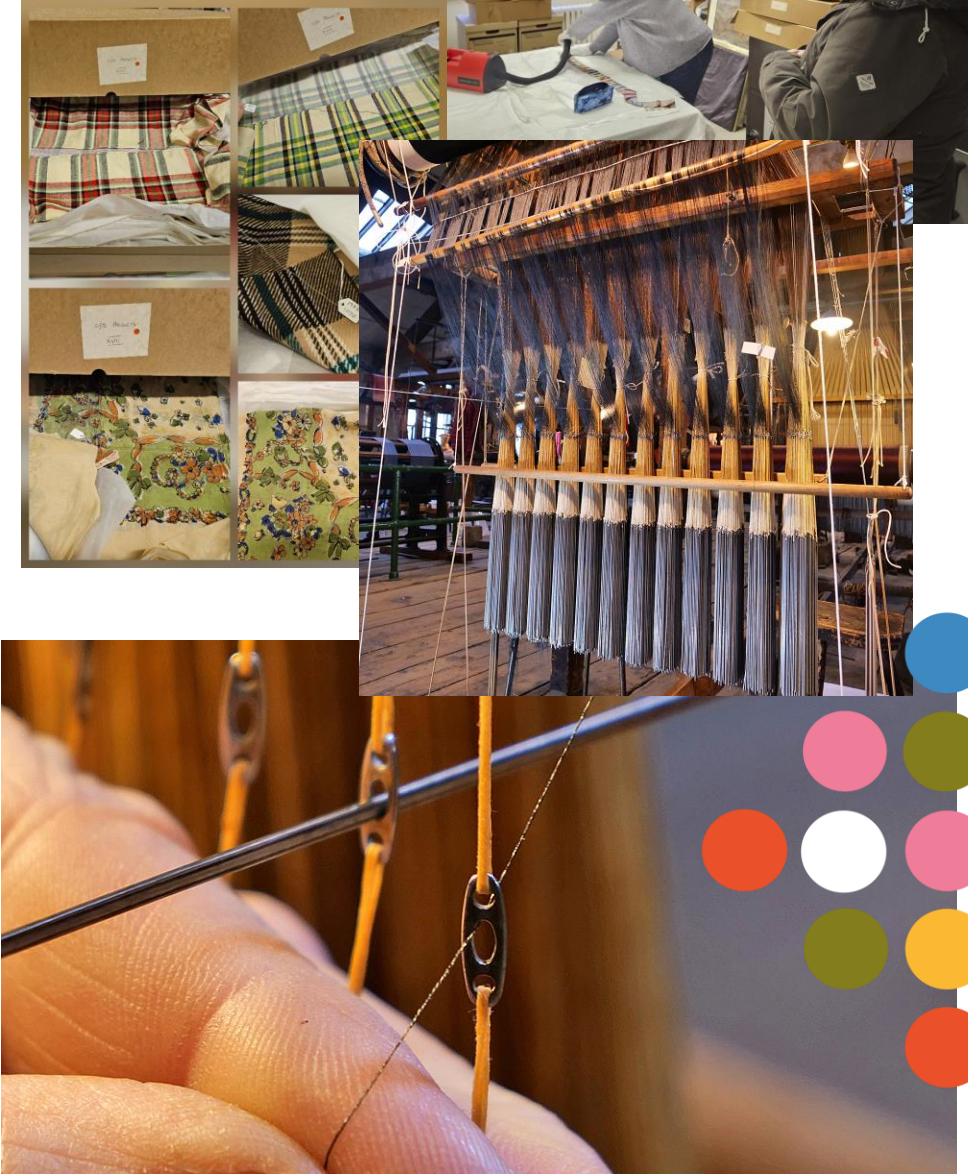
2.2 Paradise Mill - Exhibitions

- For **Womens' History Month**, we held our **first large-scale exhibition** in Paradise Mill.
- **Aimee Spilsted** displayed **45 artworks** around the mill for her exhibition **Unravelling in Paradise**.
"A collection of works shining a light on the evolving legacy of Macclesfield's Silk Industry, whilst exploring emotional breakages and celebrating our hidden flaws."
- Aimee also led an immersive slow stitch workshop with the **New Macclesfield School of Art** to complement the exhibition.
"My children had been here on trips with school but I had never been. It's the art classes that made me come. It's an incredible place." – workshop attendee feedback



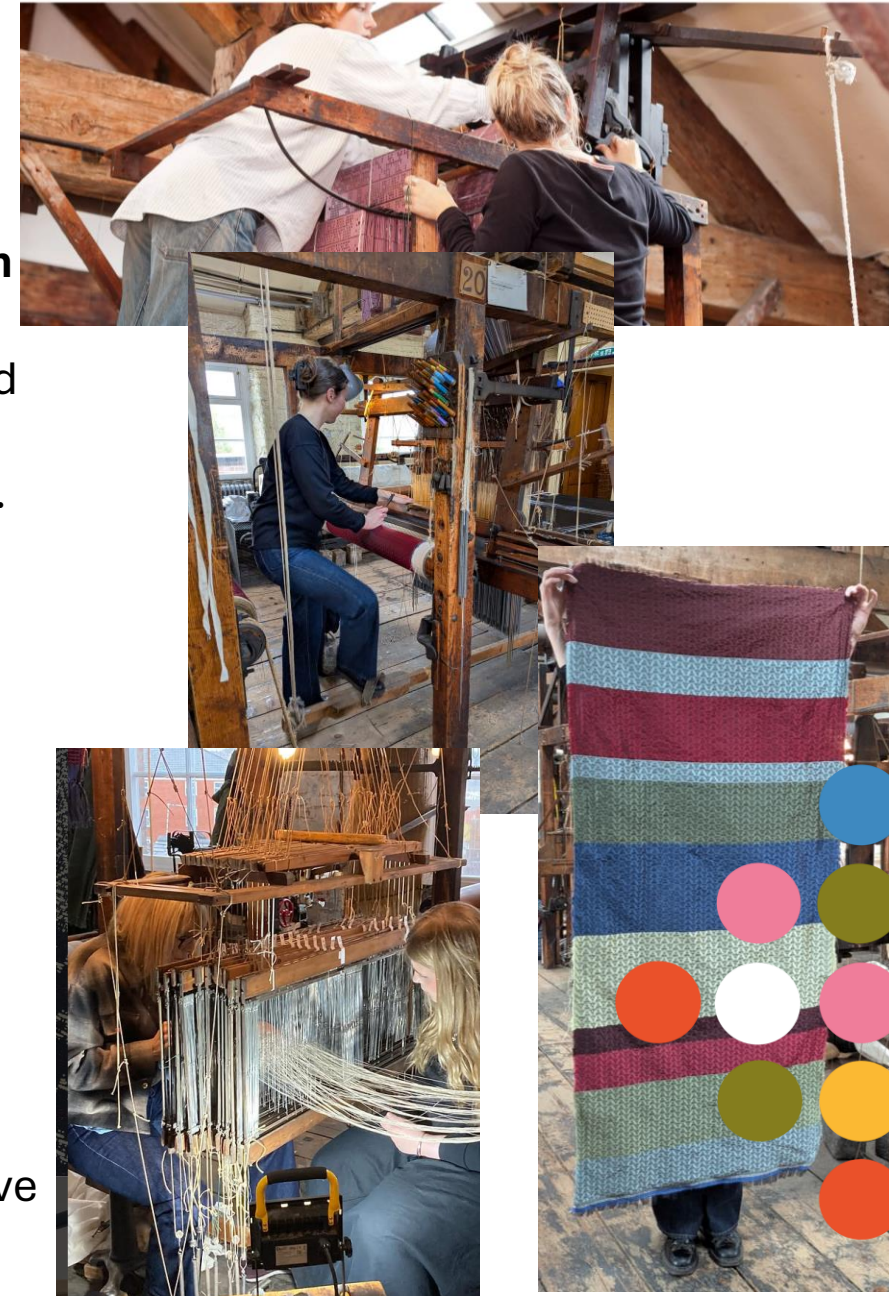
2.2 Paradise Mill - Projects

- Volunteers and staff attended **Paper Conservation Training** by conservator **Mark Furness** as part of a project to conserve the Cartwright & Sheldon Archive of **1000+ textile samples and business records**. Funded by **The Pilgrim Trust**, the project revealed a part of the collection **untouched for 40 years**. While the project has now finished, the **conservation team**, led by **Jill Brown**, is continuing to **work on the collection in view of visitors**.
- Part of the **NLHF resilience project** was to continue to **restore machinery in Paradise Mill**. So far, we have replaced the warp on the '**Leslie Winnell**' Loom and **rediscovered how to twist** a new warp onto an old warp, a **rare and dying skill**. The **16-Shaft Dobby Loom** and **Library Loom** now have new warps and are awaiting final tuning before they can be used. External restorer, **Tim Jenkins**, restored our **creel, horizontal warping mill and beaming machine** and is due to return soon to train the team on how to use and maintain this equipment. This will allow us to **wind our own warps** for our working looms, enabling the **restoration of further looms**.



2.2 Paradise Mill - Weavers

- **Karin Kauppi**, weaver at **K. A. Almgren Silk Mill and Museum, Stockholm** came to Paradise Mill to **produce a new design** and **make connections** with our team. In just three weeks, she punched and laced her card set and wove a piece of fabric roughly her height! Museum Director, **Mari-Louise Franzen** also met the team and we hope to **collaborate** more in the future.
- Weavers **Bea Uprichard** and **Ruth Farris** are continuing to build their business, **Fishbone & Sycamore** in the mill by developing new products. They recently held a **weaving workshop** at Masson Mills as part of the **Derbyshire Makes** Festival and exhibited at the **Great Northern Contemporary Craft & Art Fair**.
- **Weaver in Residence Eleanor Godfrey** has been working with **Claire Malley**, to set up the **16-Shaft Dobby loom** so they can weave their **new Ancient Egypt inspired designs** for the museum shop.
- The mill team has expanded with new volunteers **Des** and **Callum** who have been helping with **Paradise Mill Tours and Visits**.



2.3 Update for Future Collections Projects & Exhibitions

- **September** – A collaborative Textiles week across Macclesfield, where we are planning activities, events and creative workshops.
- **By October** – It is hoped better interpretation for the introduction of the museum is starting to be developed, creating clearer messaging for our visitors.
- **In Autumn** - We hope to have finished moving the Pattern Books into the Jacquard Studio, finally granting access to this important collection of design history.
- **Throughout the year:**
 - ***Looking to achieve the next digital phase of collections***, putting parts of the museum database online and adding our image assets onto flicker.
 - ***Starting researching LGBTQ+ stories in Macclesfield*** to build a display online and onsite next year during the Drag Exhibition with body positive.
 - ***We will be conducting audits of the collection*** to understand what we have and how we can better use and store collections, this will include rationalising the collection to create much needed space in the stores.
 - ***Develop a program of Treasures from the Collection events*** aimed at taking place once a month.



**BODY
POSITIVE**



3. Volunteer and Staff update

- Volunteer hours
- **Q1 – 1,370hrs** (956.75hrs Q1 2025/26)
- 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.



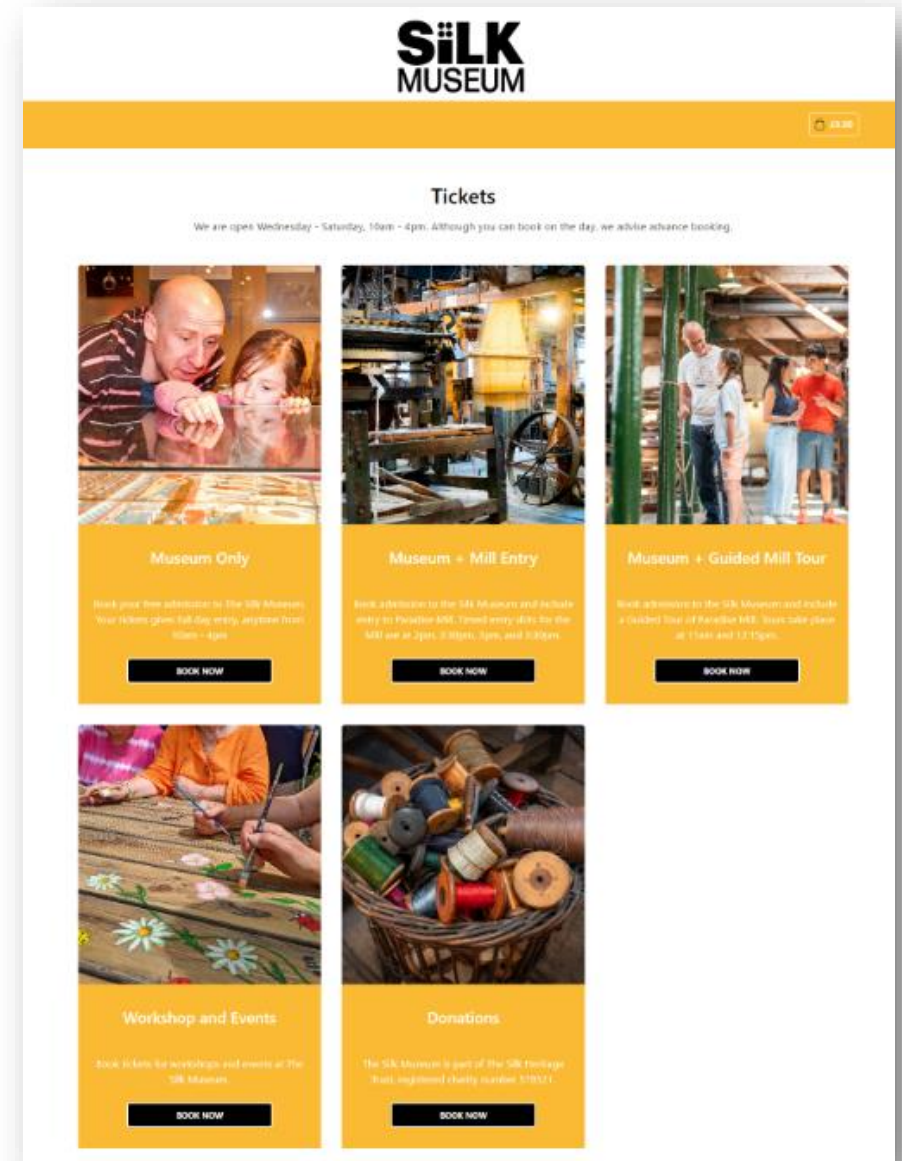
4. Marketing & Comms

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.



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



Regular groups have continued to meet:

- Welsh Language group
- Have a Dabble art class
- Museum Tots
- Creative Textile group



Plant, Book and
Fabric sale



Adult art workshops with New
Macclesfield School of Art:

- Lino print
- Natural dyeing
- Stitching (in preparation for
Macclesfield tapestry)



School holiday activities for families:

- Easter – egg decorating and 'Women of Macclesfield' trail
- May half term – Expedition Egypt, interactive play space and workshops



Community FC! Exhibition – beautiful launch event
with an emotional audience. Participants have been
bringing family and friends to see the pictures.

5. Events update – 1261 Festival



Wow! What a day.

Festival day had a lovely feel and the mix of activities at the museum worked as we had hoped.

It was busy but not rammed. It was a relaxing space where visitors could retreat from the 'busy' activities elsewhere.

It was described as.....

Magical, special, beautiful, and emotional

New partnerships were formed too. Expect to see more sensory and wellbeing activity on our future programme!

Workshop participant feedback:

'Thank you so much for a fantastic session. Engaging and exciting activities. Gained some personal insight. Left feeling energised and positive. :)'



6. Exhibitions update



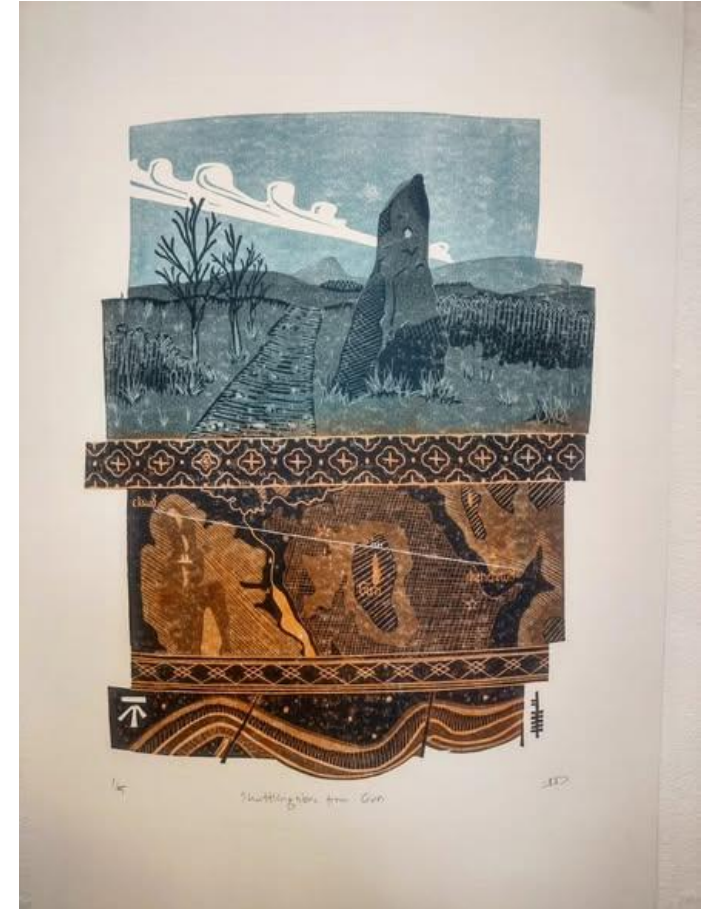
Home Ed students display of their Arts Award work.



Local artists (and museum volunteers) produced work inspired by the collections



Macclesfield College Students display work contrasting natural and built world



Scientific Rambles 2

8. Q2 Headline Community Activities

Coming up:

- **Textile Week** – in collaboration with Macclesfield Community ArtSpace and other community partners (September). Full programme of workshops, talks and exhibitions. Programme due to go live in the next couple of days.
- Installation of Macclesfield '**Summer**' **School of Art** at the end of July. Interactive exhibition space celebrating the work of Macclesfield School of Art. Accompanied by a programme of workshops for families and adults.
- Hosting **Bayeux Tapestry** project linked with New Macclesfield School of Art and linked to the British Museum. Money secured from the British Museum to fund AV element of the exhibition.



8. Finance and grants

Finance update Q1 (1st April – 16th May 26/27 only)

Time Period	Total number of transactions through the till only (not online)	Total retail spend	Average retail spend per head	Average total spend per head	Total spend through till	Average transaction value
Q1 2025/26	2919	8432.49	2.21	6.14	23,386.16	16.21
Q1 2026/27	2833	8481.37	2.20	6.00	23,103.64	11.25



9. External Funding Pipeline

Projects underway with funding from public bodies, Trusts & Foundations

Paradise Mill

£4,200 Decorative Arts Society to research the Macclesfield School of Art Collection

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

£29,000 Pilgrim Trust for Cartwright & Sheldon collections care & development

Silk Museum

£15,000 Foyle Foundation for developing Café as a Community Hub

£5,000 Museum Development North to establish Audience Baseline

£165,000 Arts Council Capital Improvement Programme – Jacquard Studio

£227,223 National Lottery Heritage Fund – Resilience programme

