

# ASHBY-DE-LA-ZOUCH MUSEUM

North Street  
Ashby-de-la-Zouch  
Leicestershire  
LE65 1HU  
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Charity Number: 513745

MLA Accreditation: 560

## Mission Statement

Ashby de la Zouch Museum was established to provide for the people of the town, surrounding area and visitors from further afield, an accessible means of understanding the history and development of the town of Ashby de la Zouch. The Museum aims to foster and encourage the conservation and better understanding of the material heritage of the town and surrounding area. This will include not only the material heritage but also the stories and experiences which reflect the lives of people.

The Museum will acquire, catalogue, conserve, store display in a proper manner and interpret objects, photographs, pictures and books, film and audio recordings illustrating life in Ashby de la Zouch and its immediate surroundings. The Museum will also display and interpret its collections in an engaging and interesting way, using every means at its disposal to inspire and encourage participation and contribution from visitors, volunteers and others in the community.

## ACCESS POLICY

The Trustees of Ashby de la Zouch Museum will seek to ensure that the Collection and services are accessible to as wide an audience as possible. In order to achieve this, the Trustees will strive to meet the needs of people with disabilities, both users and volunteers, in all aspects of the Museum's operation.

### Background to the Policy

- Access is not exclusively about improving facilities for physically disabled people. Access issues cover emotional, physical, political and intellectual aspects.
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- Physical Access – This is the most basic requirement. If people have difficulty getting in the door, cannot reach parts of the building or are unable to see labels or objects because display cases etc. are at the wrong heights, they will not be able to appreciate their visit.
- Social Access – It is important that the museum environment feels friendly and welcoming and that it is easy for visitors to find their way around.
- Intellectual Access – Museum displays should not require prior knowledge of the subject matter. Information can be given by way of a hierarchy so that people with differing levels of knowledge can get what they want. Information should be conveyed through a variety of means to accommodate different learning styles, people with reading difficulties or people with sensory impairment. *Visitors should be able to learn at their own pace, making their own connections and setting their own agendas.*

### Access issues to consider

- Physical Access – Are the museum buildings and facilities physically accessible?

- . Sensory Access – Can the displays, and other facilities, be used by people with hearing or sight impairment?
- . Intellectual Access – Do the displays exclude people with limited prior knowledge of the Collection? Can people with learning disabilities access the museum in a meaningful way?
- . Financial Access – Does an admission fee deter people on a low income?
- . Emotional/Social Access – Is the museum environment welcoming to new visitors? Do volunteers have an open attitude to diversity? Is the style of publicity material and the displays inclusive or exclusive?
- . Cultural Access – Do the collections and displays reflect the interests and life experiences of the target audience?

### The Disability Discrimination Act 1995

This act aims to reduce discrimination against disabled people. The first duties under Part 3 of the Act came into force in December 1996. Since then it has been illegal for a service provider (in our case the museum) to treat a disabled person less favourably when providing a service. This includes:

- Refusing or deliberately not providing a service which it offers to others
- Providing a lower standard of service
- Offering a service on worse terms

From October 1999 service providers will be acting unlawfully if they do not make *reasonable adjustments* to the way they provide their services and, if this failure makes it impossible for a disabled person to use their goods, facilities and services. This means that museums must take reasonable steps to:

- Provide auxiliary aids and services to enable, or make it easier, for a disabled person to use a service
- Change policies, practices and procedures which make it ‘impossible or unreasonably difficult’ for a disabled person to use a service
- Provide a service through a reasonable alternative method that will overcome barriers presented by physical features.
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From 2004 service providers will be *required* to make reasonable adjustments to the physical features of their buildings and premises which will remove or circumvent barriers to access.

### Policy Commitments

These points must be read in conjunction with the Education Policy dated July 1999.

In order to fulfil the policy statement the Trustees will:

- Ensure that the diversity of people who live and have lived in Ashby de la Zouch are reflected in the displays.
- Ensure that people with disabilities and disability organisations, are consulted about our services and that any suggested improvements, if possible, are implemented. (The Trustees will consult with these groups during the development of the new museum to ensure that, as far as is possible, potential barriers to access are anticipated and removed.
- Seek to ensure that all users are empowered to use and enjoy our facilities independently, *without having to rely on help or assistance*
- Take all reasonable steps to ensure that people with disabilities are not unnecessarily differentiated or singled out for special treatment

- Ensure that all volunteers receive appropriate training on access matters
- Ensure that any service agreements made with a volunteer will require adherence to this policy
- Seek to ensure that intellectual, physical and sensory access to the collections is available to all visitors and volunteers
- Require that outside organisations using the premises adhere to this policy.
- Provide a ‘front of house’ checklist in the Custodians’ Handbook giving information about the provision for disabled people.
- Ensure that all the requirements of the disability legislation, as they affect the museum, are understood and observed.
- This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis
- Display a statement that this policy exists

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PKM July 1999

Re-adopted by the Trustees October 2000

Re-adopted by the Trustees 28<sup>th</sup> January 2003

Re-adopted by the Trustees 8<sup>th</sup> September 2010

Re-adopted by the Trustees 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2014

Signed:            Brian Berry  
                          Chairman