



Our Big Project: The Right Stuff?

We are currently in the middle of exciting 3.5 year collections review project. ‘The Right Stuff’ seeks to find out from our local community what you think we should keep collecting now, and also in the future. We aim to be bold: what should we keep, and why?

We only display about 5% of our [collections](#) in the Museum. We have around 20,000 objects in our stores- many of which are of national and international significance like our rope and net and fossil collections.

The remainder continues to be a challenge to manage, costly to maintain and in some cases, difficult to justify. We want to ask our community some tricky questions- why do we have certain things? Should we have them? If not, where should they go?

We also want to create space for future collections- how would Bridport like to represent itself for future generations?’

There will be lots of opportunities throughout 2022 for everyone to have their say!

[See what people are saying already!](#)

The Right Stuff? FAQs

- ***How are you going to decide what’s kept?***

We are running lots of fun activities for everyone to enjoy. Through those activities we will be asking you what you think about the kind of objects and stories we should focus on. That will help us create a framework to decide which objects we keep, which we rehome, and what objects you’d like us to collect in the future.

- ***Who will take the final decisions?***

The Museum Director and Board of Trustees according to agreed Museum Standards. For some objects and collections we will consult with external experts.

- ***Are you going to throw away something I donated?***

That’s a last resort! If we decide we would like to dispose of an object we have a set of sector guidelines to follow which make sure the process is done ethically, openly and fairly.

- ***Can I have my/my family’s object back if the museum no longer wants it?***

It depends on the conditions under which it was gifted to us and we would look at each request on a case by case basis.

- ***Why don’t you just put more objects on display, or change the permanent displays?***

It would take a lot of time and money to do this and we only have limited space, but we do rotate objects for temporary exhibitions. We are also excited about investigating other locations in the

community where some objects might be displayed

- ***Can't you just build a bigger store?***

We would love to be able to do this in the future, but we will need lots of grant funding! One of the useful findings from this project will be an estimation of how big any new store might need to be

- ***If an object's not on display, what's the point of having it?***

As well as displays in the Museum, the collection is also held for research and changing exhibitions. Through this project we want to ensure that objects are kept where they are going to be most useful and relevant- so some things might fit better with the stories of other museums, or go into handling collections to be used by schools or reminiscence boxes.

- ***Will you put anything up for sale?***

There are a lot of steps to go through before we could even consider this- and because of our charitable status the funds could only be reinvested in safeguarding the Museum and the collections.

- ***When will you be getting rid of stuff?***

It's going to take a long time as we want to approach this methodically and ethically. It will be several years before we're actually in a position to dispose of anything.



This project is funded by the Museums Association and Esmée Fairbairn Collections Fund. The Esmée Fairbairn Collections Fund is run by the Museums Association, funding projects that develop collections to achieve social impact. Since its launch in 2011, it has awarded 101 projects with grants totally nearly £8.4m in 16 funding rounds. Between 2017 and 2019 it is offering a total of £3.5 million in grants to Museums Association members, as well as providing events and resources for the whole sector. www.museumsassociation.org/collections.