

## Shire Hall Museum Access Policy Statement

### Accessibility

We want everyone who visits Shire Hall Museum to feel included and to enjoy our exhibitions and events.

We recognise that there are many barriers that limit access to our collections and sites. To challenge and overcome these barriers we will continue to undertake initiatives to reach different sectors of the community and engage them with the museum and its collections.

We will continue to consult with users, non- users, specialist organisations, and other museums and galleries on the best and most practical ways of improving access to our museum and collections.

### Getting here

Shire Hall Museum is in the town of Monmouth. It is located in Agincourt square at the top end of Monnow Street.

Access to the Museum is across a cobbled square. It is possible to by-pass the cobbles by traveling on the flat paving slabs around the side of Agincourt square to the front entrance of Shire Hall. There are automatic entry doors that will open as you approach the reception area.

The museum does not have its own car park.

#### **Car**

The nearest parking for Blue Badge holders is on Priory Street, opposite Iceland, a few minutes away.

Glendower Street car park is the nearest public car park to the museum. The location of the car park and other car parks in Monmouth can be found here: [Our Car Parks - Monmouthshire](#) .

#### **Bus**

The nearest bus station is Monmouth Bus station. The bus station is located off Monmouth Keep. The bus stations postcode is NP23 3EG. It is approximately 10 minutes walk from Monmouth Bus Station to the Museum. The walk from the bus station to the museum is up hill. More information about Monmouth bus station can be found here: [Monmouth Bus Station - Bus Station in Monmouth, Monmouth - Visit Monmouthshire](#)

## **Train**

There is no train station in Monmouth. The nearest train stations are Hereford, Chepstow or Abergavenny. You can catch onward bus connections to Monmouth from these towns.

## **Bikes**

The Museum is located on National Cycle Route NCN 423. More information about Monmouth Active travel routes is available here: [Monmouth - Monlife](#)

## **Getting around the building**

As with many historic buildings, it is difficult to access some areas. We are committed to continuing to enhance access to the buildings and the collections for those with a physical or sensory disability in the best ways that the limitations of our historic building allow.

To access the entrance of Shire Hall you must first pass through metal gates (110cm). The front entrance door is an automated double door (250cm). This leads to the entrance foyer where the shop and reception is located. Please ask if you need assistance.

The museum is located on multiple levels with a lift providing access to each level. The lift is 90cm wide. This is the narrowest point in the publicly accessible areas of the building. Shire Hall staff can direct you to the lift and which level you need.

On the Lower 1<sup>st</sup> Floor you will find the Community Room, accessible toilet and baby changing facilities and public toilets.

On the Ground Floor children's activities, Dig Monmouth displays and The Jury Room with the Library are accessed via doorways and corridors. All doors in public areas are fixed open or have push button automated doors.

There are handrails along the main wooden staircase that lead to the other levels.

On the 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor you will find Court Room 1- the fully restored courtroom as it was in 1840 when the Chartist Trials took place. Court Room 2 is also on this level where we host Temporary Exhibitions, and the Henry the V tapestry is on display.

From the 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor you can access the cells in the Basement (-2 level) of the Shire Hall where prisoners were kept. The cells can also be accessed by the lift.

Monmouth Town Council is open for business within the building. The Council Chamber and Mayors Parlor is on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor and The Town Council Offices on the 4<sup>th</sup> Floor. All are accessible via the lift.

Staff and volunteer working areas can be accessed via the staircase or lift and are by appointment only.

Volunteers working with or visitors with an appointment with the Collection Team in Market Hall can request a copy of Market Halls access statement.

### **Accessible Toilets**

Accessible toilets are located on the lower ground floor and on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor and are accessed via the lift near the entrance. The other public toilets are located close to the lift, please follow the signage.

### **Assistance dogs**

Assistance dogs are welcome in the Museum.

We ask that Assistance dogs remain on the lead when in the Museum. This is for everyone's safety and comfort and to protect our collections.

## **Wheelchair and Physical Access**

Visitors to our Museums with limited mobility, wheelchairs and pushchairs can access the Museums' Reception Desk and ground floor displays via the Front Entrance of the Museum. All other levels can be accessed via the lift.

There is a central stone and wooden staircase leading to all levels of the building with a consistent handrail. There are many steps so those with limited mobility may wish to use the lift.

The steps from Court Room 1 down to the Cellars are very steep stone steps. Visitors are advised to take extra care when accessing these stairs. Alternatively, it is possible to access the cells via the lift.

Access to the Public Viewing Gallery above Court Room 1 is from a door on the 4<sup>th</sup> floor accessible via the lift. There are shallow steps and benches in the public viewing gallery. Visitors are advised to take extra care when accessing these steps. Unfortunately, visitors in a Wheelchair are unable to access the Public Viewing Gallery.

Some of the flooring in the museum is uneven. There is a variety of different flooring in the museum including stone, wood, Carpet and quarry tiles.

There are places to sit around the museum.

## **Visual access**

All interpretation text is captioned with text size 14 or above. A large print copy of temporary exhibition display texts is available on request.

There are short films on the Ground Floor and 2nd Floor that tell the story of Monmouth, and a film in Court Room 1 telling the story of the Chartists.

In order to protect some of our vulnerable collections some of our displays have low light levels. This includes some of our temporary exhibitions.

## Auditory Access

All our temporary exhibitions have written material to support the interpretation of our exhibits.

In Court Room 1 there is a touch screen interactive related to the Rockfield Music Studio.

## Sensory Access

When you enter the Museum, you will walk into the Entrance Foyer. This is where our Reception desk, small shop and some displays are. The Foyer is also from where the central staircase is. Family play and craft resources are located in the corridor next to the reception and there is a film playing that tells the story of Monmouth. This area can be noisy at times.

There are play activities located all around the building.

There are hand-dryers in the toilets, which can be loud.

On the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor landing there is a film telling the story of Monmouth and sofas to sit on. On the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor you will also find:

- Court Room 1 where our temporary exhibitions are held, this is a quieter area.
- The Judges room between Court Room 1 and 2 where there is a mannikin dressed as a Judge.
- Court Room 2 which is the restored court room from the 1840s. There are many small and tight spaces in this room. There is a video in Court Room 2 telling the story of the chartist trials. From Court Room 2 you can access the cells in the basement.
- Above Court Room 2 is the public viewing gallery (accessed both 4<sup>th</sup> floor). This looks down on Court Room 2 and feels high up.

The Basement houses the original cells where prisoners were held. This is a cold dark space. There are manikins of some prisoners in the cells.

The floors and walls in each of our galleries and rooms are made from different materials so different spaces might sound different.

Quieter days to visit the museum are normally on a Monday but we cannot guarantee this. The Museum is normally a lot busier and noisier during the school holidays.

The museum is developing a general visual story featuring pictures of the museum and information about what to expect when you visit.

## Baby feeding and changing

We welcome our visitors breastfeeding and bottle-feeding their babies in all areas of the museum. There are baby changing facilities in our accessible toilets on the Lower First Floor and 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor.

## Period Products

A selection of free period products are available for visitors to use.

## Exhibitions & Events

We want everyone to be able to enjoy our exhibitions and events. Entry to the museum is free. We also have a range of free make and take craft activities and indoor and outdoor play resources for all our visitors to enjoy. There are opportunities for handling objects and trying on replica costume throughout the museum.

Our events and learning programme is delivered at as low a cost as possible.

We try to use lots of different ways to tell the stories of our collections so that our visitors can access information in a way that is suitable for them. We constantly strive to update and reinterpret some of our more historic interpretation so that this is as accessible as possible. We acknowledge that this is a work in progress.

Our staff are always happy to provide additional information and assistance wherever possible.

As well as objects on display and informative text panels we share the stories around our collection via interactive touch screens and wall mounted television screens.

More information about our collections including those not on display can be found on our Collections website [Home - MonLife Collections](#)

Additional learning resources including films featuring some of our collections and information about our learning programme, schools loan boxes and Memory boxes can be found on our website [Learning - Monlife](#)

All new exhibition and published content is provided bilingually in Welsh and English. When engaging with community groups, we explore opportunities to provide additional interpretation in other languages.

All staff receive equality and diversity training.

## Collections

We welcome volunteers from a wide range of backgrounds to get involved in helping us care for our collections.

We are committed to working with under-represented groups to make sure their voices are heard and to improving the representation of their stories within our collections and interpretation. We acknowledge that some of our collections can tell any stories and some of these may cause offence. We are committed to working towards adding context to the way these collections are displayed, catalogued and accessed.

We recognise the importance of taking our collections and stories out to our communities so that they can be accessed by a wider range of users.

We encourage the widest possible audience to study the collection and seek ways to improve and extend access to information and scholarly research.