



worthing theatres and museum

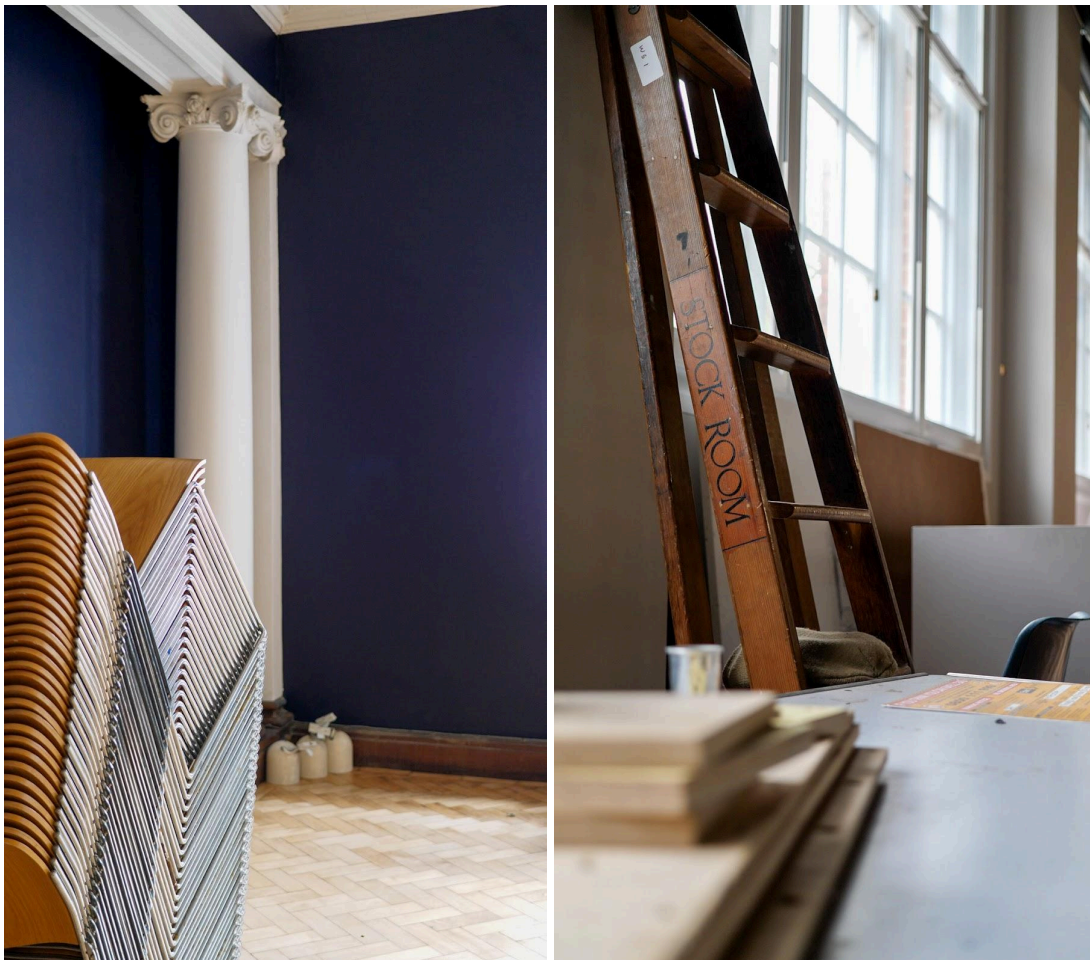
PRESS RELEASE

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Press Release - for immediate release

## **Worthing Museum to reopen with revitalised galleries and major community exhibition OPEN26, supported by Headline Sponsor GWCA Solicitors**



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Worthing Museum & Art Gallery will reopen on **Saturday 28 March** following an extended closure for major improvement works – unveiling

revitalised galleries and displays, enhanced sustainability features and the return of its much-loved OPEN exhibition.

The reopening marks an important moment for one of Worthing's most valued cultural spaces. Visitors will discover carefully restored interiors, with new heritage paint colours selected to complement the building's historic character. Collections have also been thoughtfully reinstalled throughout the galleries to create a renewed sense of clarity and connection.

Home to nationally significant collections, **Worthing Museum & Art Gallery** holds one of the most important costume collections in the UK, alongside notable holdings in fine and decorative arts, social history, toys, dolls and archaeology. The costume collection alone comprises around 30,000 pieces – ranging from everyday garments to remarkable items such as Princess Amelia's slippers and Queen Victoria's underwear.

At the heart of the museum's identity is a focus on everyday dress – clothing worn, altered and lived in – recognising the cultural importance of ordinary lives. By celebrating the craftsmanship and creativity found in our daily lives, the museum offers a distinctive and deeply human perspective on history.

The reopening will be celebrated with **OPEN26**, the museum's much-loved open exhibition showcasing the creativity of artists and communities across Worthing and Sussex.

This year's theme is 'Sustainability', reflecting both the museum's recent transformation and the wider importance of environmental responsibility. Artists are invited to submit up to three 2D or 3D artworks inspired by the theme.

Thanks to generous support from The National Lottery Heritage Fund, entry to **OPEN26** is completely free this year, removing the usual submission fee and making participation more accessible than ever. While entry is free, donations to support the museum's ongoing work are welcomed.

Alongside **OPEN26**, visitors will also be able to experience **Another Sussex**, a vibrant new exhibition created by learning-disabled, autistic, and neurodivergent artists from Figment Arts Studio. Running from 28 March to 21 June, the exhibition explores the rich folklore of the Sussex coast through original artworks and large-scale collaborative paintings shaped by the contributions of more than 600 people who took part in community

workshops. Visitors are invited to discover mythological creatures from the local area, browse a pop-up folklore library and even share their own superstitions as part of this imaginative and inclusive celebration of regional storytelling.

**Gerry Connolly, Head of Museums and Exhibitions said,**

“The museum has always been shaped by its community, so reopening with OPEN26 feels especially meaningful. It’s a celebration of local creativity and a reminder that the museum belongs to everyone. Alongside improvements to the building itself, we’ve taken the opportunity to rethink how the collections are presented, bringing new attention to the everyday stories that make our collections so distinctive.”

During its closure, the museum has undergone significant sustainability upgrades, including connection to the **Worthing Heat Network** and improvements to environmental controls, providing more consistent temperature and humidity levels to safeguard its collections for future generations.

An **OPEN26 Launch Party** will take place in March, marking both the reopening of the museum and the return of one of Worthing’s most highly regarded community exhibitions.

Initially, the museum will reopen three days a week, with a return to full opening hours planned in the coming months.

**Opening hours will be:**

**Thursday 10am–8pm**

**Friday 10am–5pm**

**Saturday 10am–5pm**

Entry to all exhibitions at Worthing Museum & Art Gallery is **free**. Visitors can enjoy the galleries without booking – just turn up and discover what’s on.

For further information about our exhibitions, contact:

[exhibitions@wtm.uk](mailto:exhibitions@wtm.uk)

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For further information, interviews or high-resolution imagery, contact:

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## **More about Worthing Museum & Art Gallery and Worthing Heat Network**

Worthing Museum & Art Gallery has also recently been connected to the **Worthing Heat Network**, a town-wide low-carbon energy system designed to provide heating and hot water to public buildings through a network of insulated underground pipes. Delivered by Worthing Borough Council in partnership with low-carbon energy company Hemiko, the project replaces individual fossil-fuel heating systems with shared infrastructure powered by lower-carbon energy sources. The museum is among the first group of civic buildings connected to the network, alongside Worthing Town Hall, Worthing Hospital, Assembly Hall, Portland House and the Connaught Theatre, forming part of a wider plan to reduce carbon emissions across the town centre.

## **About Worthing Theatres & Museum (WTM)**

Worthing Theatres & Museum is one of the South Coast's leading cultural organisations, bringing together live performances, heritage and visual arts across multiple venues in the heart of Worthing. WTM's mission is to enable everyone to access arts and heritage, offering a diverse year-round programme that reflects and celebrates its community.

The reopening of Worthing Museum & Art Gallery and OPEN26 is proudly supported by Headline Sponsor GWCA Solicitors, whose partnership reflects a shared commitment to culture, community and creativity across Worthing and West Sussex