Thornbury & District Heritage Trust
Thornbury & District Museum

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Future-proofing Thornbury's Community Museum

Invitation to tender: Options Appraisal for Thornbury & District Museum

1. Introduction

Thornbury & District Museum (T&DM) is evaluating the opportunity to relocate to a new facility within Thornbury, on a site provisionally identified by Thornbury Town Council (the Bakery Annex site, subject to confirmation).

T&DM is seeking to appoint an experienced consultant to:

- Undertake an options appraisal of the museum's future
- Explore the potential relocation opportunity
- Develop a clear, evidence-based strategy and recommended way forward.

The resulting report will form the basis for future funding applications and strategic decisions.

The initiative to make the new site available to T&DM came from the Town Council and initial negotiations have been constructive and have broad support from the councillors.

Suggested proposals so far are that the Town Council will be responsible for the building with T&DM having responsibility for the internal moveable furnishings. It is proposed that a small working group is formed consisting of Town Council staff, Town Councillors and Museum staff.

Although this is seen as a joint collaboration, the report is to be compiled on behalf of TD&M. The Museum Trustees need professional assistance to ensure they can represent its needs effectively.

2. About Thornbury & District Museum

Thornbury & District Museum (T&DM) is a small, independent, accredited local museum located at 4 Chapel Street, Thornbury, South Gloucestershire. T&DM is

financed principally by two service level agreements, one from South Gloucestershire Council and one from Thornbury Town Council. In return T&DM is obliged to provide a museum service to the district. Other funding is provided from donations and grants for particular projects.

Founded in 1986, the museum preserves and shares the history of Thornbury and the Lower Severn Vale. It is administered by Thornbury & District Heritage Trust, a registered charity. The museum is entirely volunteer-run, with no paid staff. It offers free entry and is open to the public on a limited basis (typically four days per week). The museum holds collections relating to local archaeology, social history, and community heritage, including archives and photographic collections.

The museum is widely valued as a community asset and repository of local heritage, delivering exhibitions, talks, and community engagement.

Current Context

The museum building is one of a complex of buildings owned by the Armstrong Hall Trust (AHT). The AHT has a single trustee (Thornbury Town Council acting as a body). The AHT leases the museum building to T&DHT. The museum sits adjacent to The Armstrong, a redeveloped arts and community venue managed by Thornbury Community and Arts CIO (TCA).

Thornbury Town Council has informally indicated that the Bakery Annex site, near the current museum, may be made available.

The proposal currently under consideration is to demolish the current building because its condition and construction is likely to make refurbishment challenging and uneconomical.

The Trust is therefore seeking to review its future direction in a structured and evidence-based way.

3. Project Objectives

The purpose of this project is to:

- Explore all viable options for the museum's future
- Assess the Bakery Annex relocation opportunity in detail
- Provide a robust, evidence-based options appraisal including costs
- Identify a preferred option (or options) and clear next steps
- Support the Trustees to make informed strategic decisions

4. Scope of Work

The consultant will be expected to deliver a proportionate, realistic options appraisal reflecting the scale and volunteer-led nature of the organisation.

Identify and assess a range of options, including:

- Retention and investment in the current building
- Relocation to the Bakery Annex site
- Partnership or co-location opportunities
- Alternative delivery or governance models
- Compare options using a clear appraisal framework (e.g. cost, impact, sustainability, deliverability, capacity, community value and risk)

5. Stakeholder Engagement

Engagement should be light-touch and proportionate, including:

- Thornbury Town Council
- Armstrong Hall Trust (AHT)
- Thornbury Community and Arts CIO (TCA)
- Museum Trustees and volunteers

6. Deliverables

The consultant will provide:

- Draft Options Appraisal Report
- Final Report, including:
  - Executive summary
  - Assessment of current position
  - Options appraisal
  - Costs
  - Recommendations
  - Action plan
- Presentation to Trustees

7. Timescale

Estimated duration: 12-15 days

8. Budget

The Trust expects bids to reflect the small scale of the organisation and proportionate scope. A maximum of £ 5,500.00 has been allocated for this project.

9. Consultant Requirements

The consultant must demonstrate:

- Experience working with small and volunteer-led museums
- Experience delivering options appraisals and/or capital feasibility studies
- Experience of advising on relocation or new-build museum projects
- Understanding of:
  - Museum accreditation

- Governance structures
- Heritage capital projects

10. Submission Requirements

Proposals (max. 5 pages) should include:

- Understanding of the brief and key issues
- Proposed methodology and approach
- Relevant experience (max. 3 case studies)
- Proposed timetable
- Fee (fixed price)
- Reference(s)

11. Timetable and Contact Details

The following time scales are provisional and are dependent on those of our strategic partner.

- Closing date for submission of proposals: No later than 21st August 2026
- Shortlisting and interviews: 31st August 2026
- Consultant appointed: 11th September 2026
- Draft report submitted: October / November 2026 *(depending on availability)*
- Final report and presentation delivered: 4th December 2026

John Shepherd will be responsible for coordinating the tender process and all questions and requests for further information should be coordinated through him. Initially, he can be contacted at: enquiries@thornburymuseum.org.uk

John Shepherd

Chairman
Thornbury & District Heritage Trust