

Tunbridge Wells Cultural & Learning Hub

Frequently Asked Questions

- **What is the Tunbridge Wells Cultural & Learning Hub?**

Tunbridge Wells Borough Council and Kent County Council are working together to redevelop the existing Museum, Library and Adult Education buildings to create a space to engage with art, culture, the heritage of Tunbridge Wells, learn new skills, socialise and be inspired.

- **What services are going to be available in the Hub?**

This exciting redevelopment will bring together an integrated, conserved and modernised set of buildings - the Museum, Art Gallery, Library, Registration & Archives service, Adult Education, Visitor Information and TWBC's Customer Services team. There will be more space for the museum and local studies collections and all services will benefit from being in more modern surroundings.

- **Why are services like the Council Customer Services, Library and Tourist Information going into the Hub?**

The Tunbridge Wells Cultural & Learning Hub will be a space for the entire community of Tunbridge Wells. There are already examples of co-located libraries with museums (The Beaney, Canterbury), Customer Services with Libraries (Thanet Gateway) and Museums with Tourist Information Centres (Maidstone Museum). There is a synergy between the users of all of these services and we are setting out to create one building for all their needs.

- **Who is paying for this?**

The project has secured funding from both the Heritage Lottery Fund and Arts Council England. Tunbridge Wells Borough Council and Kent County Council will jointly contribute the remaining costs.

- **Who will be designing this?**

Purcell, an award-winning firm of architects and historic building consultants, were announced as lead architects for the project following a competitive process.

www.purcelluk.com

Interpretation Designers Metaphor have been appointed to work with Purcell and bring the proposed new hub to life - ensuring that the building tells the 'stories' of Tunbridge Wells, and has the right flow, look and feel.

www.metaphoreu.org



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- **What do you mean by ‘interpretation scheme’?**

Metaphor, the project’s Interpretation Designers, are coming up with the interpretation scheme for the Hub. This means they will be designing the different galleries that tell the heritage stories of Tunbridge Wells through the museum collections. They will also be designing how the inside of the building looks, such as furniture, colour and how objects are displayed throughout the integrated services.

- **Will there be more display space for collections?**

Yes, there are a number of galleries being designed to tell new stories with the collections, along with museum objects throughout the building.

- **Will there still be library, registration & archives services?**

Yes the library will be a core part of the Hub in better, more comfortable surroundings and KCC will commission the Hub to deliver these services.

- **What facilities will be available? Will there be a shop/café?**

The Tunbridge Wells Cultural & Learning Hub will contain a brand new art gallery for temporary exhibitions, galleries for museum collections, library, reading room and archive. KCC registration of births and deaths will operate out of the Hub, along with access to Council services. There will be a community gallery space, public access computers and tourist information services. An Artist Resource will be available, along with a print room facility. There will be classes at the Adult Education Centre, including pottery, sculpture and silversmithing, along with a café and gift shop. Visitors will be able to enjoy a courtyard garden space with seating spilling out from the café.

- **Will everything be shut during the creation of the Hub?**

All services will be maintained during the development; however, some disruption is to be expected and the project team are exploring the best options/locations for interim services and accommodation to ensure services are still available during refurbishment works. A location has not been confirmed yet for the interim library/museum as the project team wants to find the best town centre option possible

While the locations will be smaller than the main site, all services will work to maintain as many of the services as is reasonable. For example, the library will have a collection of books, PCs, adult and children spaces, study spaces and a place for activities.



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- **What will happen to the buildings?**

The Museum & Library building and the Adult Education Building will be conserved and modernised. The two buildings will be joined and a two story extension will be built at the back of the site to house the art gallery, local studies and archive.

- **Will I be able to borrow books while the building is closed?**

Yes, a temporary location is being found for the Library.

- **Will there be a museum in the temporary location?**

The majority of the museum collection will go to offsite storage. However, there will be a small display at the temporary location.

- **Will I be able to access the collections for research during the interim service?**

A limited number of objects from the current museum displays will be shown in the interim location. There will be no other public access to collections during the interim period, as the collections will be going into remote storage.

Once the Hub opens, there will be great improvements to access. There will be a full searchable database that will answer many basic enquiries, and archives and collections not on display will be accessible by appointment in the new reading room next to the archive.

- **Will there still be activities and events run by the Library and museum?**

An exciting activities and events programme is set to begin in the first year of funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund. This will include one off and regular events both onsite at the interim location and offsite. The Library's core activities such as Baby Rhyme Time will continue from the temporary location. More information will follow.

- **Will I still be able to do a course at the Adult Education Centre?**

The Tunbridge Wells Adult Education Centre will close; however, courses will still be available from interim locations. More details will follow.

- **Will the Museum still offer school visits and outreach?**

Schools visits and outreach will continue as normal until the end of the school year, after which time new services will be developed and trialled.



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- **Who's going to run the Hub in the future?**

Both authorities are committed to one vision, one building and one integrated service. The project team are still developing what the final operating structure will be over the rest of 2018 and staff will be kept updated as the work progresses. The Hub and the services operated out of it will continue to be supported by both TWBC and KCC.

- **How can I get involved?**

Sign up to the C&LH mailing list <http://www.tunbridgewellsmuseum.org/cultural-hub> to receive monthly updates about the project. You can also visit the web page and have access to the latest updates as well as information about how to get involved (questionnaires and volunteer opportunities) The web page will be updated regularly with new information and opportunities.

- **When is this all expected to happen?**

The timeline for the project will evolve as work progresses but it is expected that in late 2018 the decant of the buildings will begin. Work to pack some of the specialist areas, including the work on the Museum collections, will naturally start much earlier than this. All services will be working to sort and clear areas as much as is practical while still delivering services to customers. We anticipate at present that construction work will begin on site in January 2019, with the building taking approximately two years to complete.



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