

STRATEGIC PLAN

2022-2032

ALFRED
GILLETT
TRUST

INTRODUCTION

The Alfred Gillett Trust is a small organisation with big plans. Based at the Grange in the village of Street, we are the custodians of a magnificent collection based around the Clark family and their 200-year-old shoe making business. With aspirations to build a museum and to expand the archive and with £4.26million to realise this vision we are poised and ready to convert the site as a public offer. This document sets out our aspirations and how we will achieve them. The next ten years represents a departure from current ways of working as we transform ourselves into a working museum with visitors coming from near and far. It will require change at all levels from Board, to staff, to volunteers and significant disruption to established ways of working. Our plans will be made possible by harnessing the ingenuity and determination of those both within and outside of the organisation, with the support of donors, the Clark family, our neighbours, and our community.

This plan is the result of a visioning workshop with the Board and staff and a series of planning days and meetings with staff which established the mission, values, strategic priorities, opportunities and challenges.

STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

Our Vision

Inspire the world with the family and community stories behind Clarks shoes

Our Mission

Provide engaging spaces for developing and sharing stories of the collections we care for



Our Values

Our core values function as an ethical compass. They indicate who we want to be and what we want to radiate. Together, the core values are the yardstick by which we will measure ourselves and all our activities – existing and new.

Inclusion

Everyone feels
welcome

Collaboration

Maximising
potential

Learning

Inspiring
curiosity

Sustainability

Optimising
opportunities



Our Themes

Our stories will be based on the following major themes:

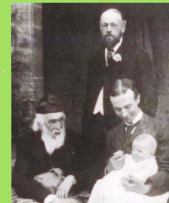
The Fossils



The Quakers



The Family



The Company



The Shoes



STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES & PRIORITIES

**Protect, develop
and understand
our collections**

**Share the
stories of our
collections**

**Be open
and known**

**Stand on our
own two feet**

1. Protect, develop, and understand our collections

Improve the care and storage of our collections

Large parts of the collection are stored in relatively poor conditions. Our aim is to house and care for the whole collection in such a way that meets accreditation standards.

Document and digitise the collections

Curatorial staff and volunteers will undertake a major project to document, clean, repack, transfer, store and digitise thousands of historic objects and archive material. Priority will be given to the parts of the collection that link to our five major themes with the potential for public access.



Achieve archive and museum accreditation

Currently working to high curatorial standards, we will work towards and gain both museum and archive accreditation. We will work with accreditation mentors to help guide us through the process.

Improve our knowledge of the collections

We have extensive knowledge of some areas of the collection but are lacking in others. Research will initially concentrate on the agreed themes with a view to museum opening. External assistance will be sought where necessary.

Continue to develop and grow our collections

In the short term we will concentrate on disposals as we increase our knowledge of the collection. In the longer term, we will become proactive in acquisitions.

2. Share the stories from our collections

Develop interpretation and exhibition capability

This includes permanent, temporary, and travelling exhibitions both internally generated and partnership driven. Our inhouse capability will be enhanced through career development opportunities as well as the addition of new staff. External assistance from museum design and interpretation specialists will feed into the capital development project at an early stage, working with staff and the architect's team to shape and influence our new public offer.



Connect with and understand our global audiences

We will reach as many people as possible, inspiring them through our collections and stories, both in person and online. Using research, we will better understand potential and actual visitors whether they are families, older adults, day trippers, local, international or academic audiences. We will work with stakeholders to make our new museum a destination visitor experience, open and accessible to all.

Embed digital

We will think digital in everything we do and with all our interactions with our audiences. The collection will be digitised according to an agreed plan and be available to a worldwide audience. This will allow people to interact with the collections on their own terms and at their own pace and according to their interests. Our gallery interactives will be at the forefront of digital technology and we will gain the knowledge and skills necessary to realise its potential.



Learning for all

We will contribute to learning at all levels through our exhibitions both temporary and permanent, national, and international. Our archive will be available to researchers, members of the public, academics, schools, and other learners both in person and on-line. A “pathways to employment” programme will assist in getting young people “employment ready” through work placements, internships, volunteer opportunities with links to government training schemes. A specific schools programme will attract learners in all key stages.

3. Be open and known

Open a museum

Our absolute priority is to open a museum and visitor experience that, over time, encompasses the whole of the Grange site. The Clarks family history will be at the centre of this new experience from which the story of C&J Clark will be told, interwoven with the themes of Quaker concerns (social, economic, political), local history including the highly significant collection of ichthyosaur fossils, and the history of industrial shoemaking. Surrounded by stunning landscaping, the visitor experience will include an education room, event and venue hire space, retail, and café as well as collections management and archive research space.



Develop and grow archive research capability

We will build academic partnerships with a view to increasing our understanding of the archive, attracting funding, and raising the profile of our collection. As the pandemic eases, we will seek to increase engagement through our enquiry service.

Create anticipation

Our transformation starts by connecting to different audiences. We will use our communications and public programming to build support and involvement. We will hear from and include people's voices in telling the stories of Street and the family and business in which they were and still are involved. User profiling, consultation, running a fundraising campaign, outreach to schools, and connecting more broadly with key stakeholders, are some of the ways we can achieve this.

Build partnerships, collaborations and connections

We are intrinsically connected to Clark's family members, Clarks International and Clarks Village. We will work in partnership with the people of Street to tell their stories from their very own perspective. Reaching beyond our local community, we will build new academic, donor, and sector related partnerships to increase our reach.

4. Stand on our own two feet

Be financially sustainable

We aim to be increasingly financially sustainable, generating income from a number of sources, including ticketing, retail, catering, venue hire and public events. Entrepreneurship will be valued across the organisation and all staff will understand their role in generating income for the Trust.

A new Fundraiser will assist not only in raising funds for the capital project, but for on-going conservation of the collections, the site, and for new exhibitions and events. We will nurture existing relationships and create new ones in order to raise the funds we need to realise our plans.

We are mindful that operational expenses will increase over the coming years. We are thankful for our income from investments that assist in covering a portion of core operating costs.

Protect and care for our sites

We are the owners of two sites – the Grange which is Grade II listed and Donnes in Castle Cary which resides in a conservation area - which we will maintain to high standards and in line with best practice and Historic England guidance.

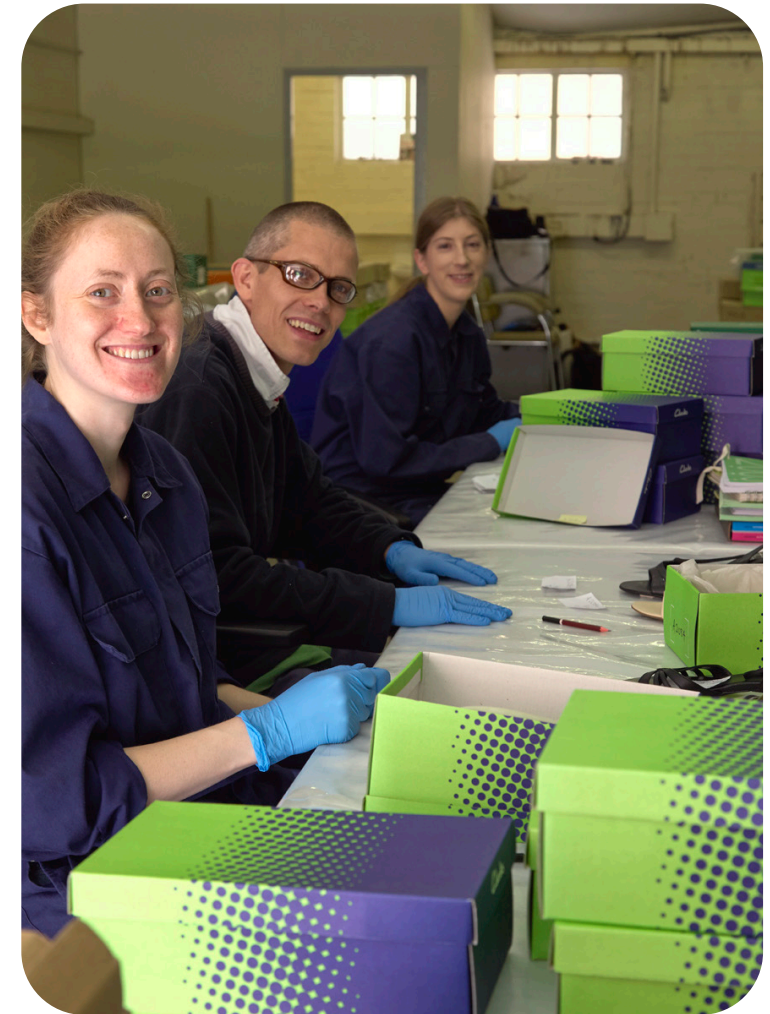


Be a great place to work and volunteer

Transforming ourselves is an essential part of the transition to becoming open and outward facing and we must prepare for change. The process of opening a museum provides many and varied career development opportunities for staff and a wider range of involvement from volunteers. It will require our governance systems to develop and mature attracting individuals with diversity of thought, skills, and perspectives and to harness the skills of people in a volunteer capacity. As part of the capital development project, we will invest in staff accommodation. Staff engagement in the evolution of the organisation and involvement in the decision-making process is key to transformation and change management.

Embed environmental awareness and sustainability

We are conscious that our environmental footprint will increase as we transform the site. We will invest in new and old technology that reduces our carbon footprint, generating our own energy wherever possible. Our landscape will be maintained by organic means and a biodiversity plan will improve habitats and local species populations.



CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES

Of utmost importance in realising our vision of a new outward facing museum is:

- **We own the freehold of the Grange site**
- **We own the majority of the collections on which our vision is founded**
- **We have significant funds to realise our vision**

The current climate of uncertainty

*"As the Covid-19 pandemic enters its third year, the only certainty is that nothing is certain."*¹

The economic outlook for 2022 and beyond is generally positive although the pace of change is uncertain. This includes how businesses and consumers respond to decreasing government support, people's confidence in the vaccination programme, the arrival of new COVID variants, and how businesses adapt to our new trading arrangements. Hospitality and entertainment are expected to be the slowest sectors to recover. Recruitment of key personnel is affected by the current recruitment crisis. Supply chains are an issue across the construction sector and beyond. The CPI between January 2021 and 2022 was 5.5%.

¹<https://www.theartnewspaper.com/2022/01/01/museums-hope-for-a-busy-year-despite-covid-19-uncertainty>

More locally, Somerset's five councils will be replaced with one single council to deliver all council services, the affects of which are yet to be determined.

Fundraising for a capital project

Funders changed their focus and priorities in 2020 and 2021, away from capital development projects to people focused and welfare projects. Significant funding was provided to cultural organisations at risk of closure via the Cultural Recovery Fund and others, although these funds are now diminished. AGT is in an excellent position with more than £5million in funds, over £4million of which is restricted to capital development. Whilst this is an extremely positive position to be in, it will not be sufficient to realise our new vision of the future. However, it is a significant sum we can leverage to raise further funds. Whilst fundraising is always a challenge, opportunities exist for corporate funding, major donor fundraising, securing legacies, as well as from institutions, trusts and foundations. As we take a phased approach to development, funding post the planned 2025 opening will be investigated further.

Visitor trends

Whilst visitors are returning to indoor cultural venues, numbers are still below 2019 levels of engagement.

The 4 million visitors to Clarks Village represent an enormous opportunity for engagement: our challenge will be in demonstrating our relevance to an audience whose primary objective is retail bargains. Whilst Somerset is home to an array of tourist and day trip experiences, we must work hard to get on visitors' itinerary. Opportunities exist to work in partnership with Clarks Village to improve the experience of shoppers and museum goes to create a full day's visitor experience as well as repeat visits through a programme of joint public events. Uncertainty as a result of the pandemic could further impact how people choose to spend their time: developing an outdoor offer would be prudent.

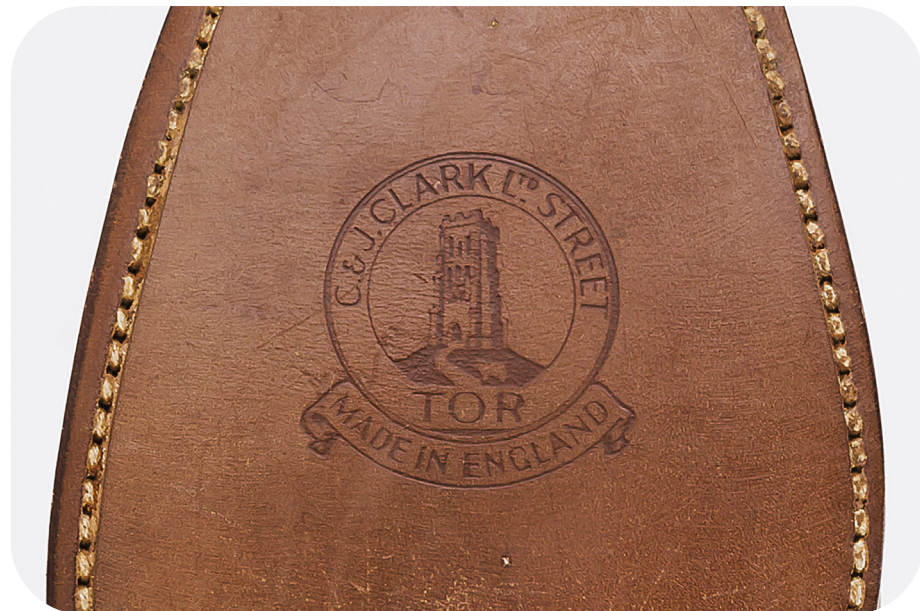
However, the southwest remains a popular destination and saw high visitor numbers during 2021 as staycations became the norm. How people react to the gradual easing of travel restrictions remains uncertain but we can assume a return to vacations abroad over the next few years.

Technological

Significant opportunities exist to increase our engagement through the use of cutting-edge technology. Development and adoption of audio-visual capability will enable people to engage from afar as well as increase the depth of their engagement. New technologies will allow us to reach a more diverse audience, such as young people, and those less inclined to visit a museum. The shift to online, accelerated by the pandemic, provides an opportunity to reach potential visitors via social media platforms and to achieve a higher return on investment in comparison to more traditional forms of marketing.

The brand

The Clarks brand is well known both nationally and internationally and will attract those already connected to the brand. However, our autonomy from Clarks company has been hard won. There is a balance to be struck between engaging with the brand and maintaining our independent identity.



Deadline for opening

Opening a visitor attraction in 2025 to celebrate the 200th anniversary of the founding of the company is both an opportunity and a threat. Whilst a deadline concentrates the mind, both the budget and date will influence what opens as an initial offer. We are mindful that the first phase of development must be substantial enough to attract a diverse audience and must open in such a way as to positively influence remaining phases if our vision is to utilise the whole of the site for public engagement.

Climate change

“England’s climate is changing. It will continue to change as a result of greenhouse gas emissions. Communities, businesses, service providers and the natural environment are already feeling the impacts of the changing climate. Continued change is now unavoidable and will disrupt everyday life”².

Hotter drier summers, milder wetter winters, rising sea levels and more extreme weather events are expected in future. We will all need to adapt to this new scenario as well as do what we can to mitigate the changes.

Our challenge in the first instance is to limit damage to the environment either during the capital build or in its maintenance and on-going operation. Hard choices will be made at early stages as we balance budgetary constraints and our desire to be as environmentally responsible as possible.

²www.gov.uk/government/publications/climate-change-impacts-and-adaptation

RISKS & ASSUMPTIONS

A register of organisational risks is kept by AGT and monitored at Board level on a quarterly basis. Three are highlighted here.

Finance

The Trust's income is generated predominantly through an SLA with C & J Clark International and investment income from shareholder dividends. Since 2015, the Trust has seen a large reduction in income from investments. This plan assumes there will be no income from Clark's shares for the first half of the plan.

AGT currently holds over £5 million in cash on its balance sheet, over £4 million of which has been restricted for the purpose of building the museum. Whilst £4 million will not be sufficient to realise the vision, it is an excellent starting point. The risk lies in our ability to raise additional funds, and then, once open to the public, to generate earned income sufficient for our needs.

Recruitment and staffing

Although the vast majority of jobs have survived the end of the Furlough scheme, there are currently 1.24 million job vacancies in the UK³. This has been heightened by the departure of more than 400,000 people from the labour market since the pandemic started - typically those who have become students, taken early retirement or are long-term sick. By the end of 2021, wages had failed to keep up with rising inflation, leading some employees to successfully seek higher wages. The Real Living Wage increased by 4.2% between November 2020 and November 2021. Staff costs will increase as we expand our staff group to include departments associated with the capital build (e.g. fundraising, community engagement) as well as in the operational running of a visitor attraction (Visitor Experience, Retail and Catering). In order to reward and retain staff, salaries will keep up with the cost of living increases, funds permitting.

The pandemic

The pandemic is expected to influence people's behaviour over the medium term but visitors to museums and indoor attractions are assumed to be back to pre-pandemic levels by 2025. With plans to improve and expand, visitor numbers to Clarks Village are assumed to outperform 2019 levels by 2025 providing an audience on our doorstep.

The cost of goods and services are currently increasing, thus reducing our purchasing power. Supply chain disruption and inflation are assumed to continue in 2022. Delays to capital works are likely as workers continue to become infected. These will ease with the passage of time as the pandemic changes and the construction industry adjusts to a new normal.

³ <https://www.theartnewspaper.com/2022/01/01/museums-hope-for-a-busy-year-despite-covid-19-uncertainty>