National Archive Research and Innovation Grant (Scoping)

https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/archives-sector/grants-and-funding/research-and-innovation-grants/how-to-apply/

Applications open: **August 11th to September 12th**

We offer grants of up to £10,000 focused on addressing digital transformation, environmental sustainability and inclusive practice in the archives sector.

Bids score 1-5 on:

- Innovation
    - *Research is defined as creative and systematic work undertaken in order to increase the stock of knowledge, and to devise new applications of available knowledge. It is a process of investigation leading to new insights and practice. Innovation describes a new approach: it is the implementation of new ideas and ways of doing, that results in a change to the ways in which we deliver our services and manage our collections.*
- Need
    - *why your project is needed, and why it is needed now. Every archive service will have different needs, both short-term and long-term: use this response to tell us what they are*
- Impact
    - *"the demonstrable contribution that a project makes." How is the project going to change things: for you, for your archive service, for your users and audiences, for the archives sector, or for society.*
- Delivery and management
    - *how you intend to carry out the project's activities, spend its budget and achieve its delivery milestones; what you are proposing to do, who will deliver the project and what skills they have. Outline at least three key milestones that need to be achieved to ensure your project's success; rusks nd risk mitigation.*
- Knowledge sharing
    - *how you intend to disseminate the knowledge generated, both internally to your organisation and externally to your audiences and the wider archives sector*

Draft notes for bid

The Carisbrooke Castle Museum Archive and Library, situated within the Carisbrooke Castle Museum at Carisbrooke Castle, Newport, Isle of Wight, maintains a small, visitable on request, physical collection of books and papers relating to the Isle of Wight.

The book collection includes several hundred works dating back to the eighteenth

century, including rare and hard to find publications. The collection is managed using Excel spreadsheets and no public catalogue is currently available.

The project, which is complete in its own right but may be seen as a pilot project for other small collections elsewhere, aims to provide an online, full text online searchable view over a subset of the collection (50 to 100 or so works relating to out of copyright 18th, 19th and early 20th century guides to the Isle of Wight), using freely available, off-the-shelf online resources:

- scanned versions of works available in the Internet Archive and Google Books;
- catalog management using the Wikimedia Foundation "Open Library"
- full text, semantic search, and named entity recognition using open source natural language processing tools
- free web hosting (simple html+css+javascript website) using GitHub Pages

The resulting site will:

- provide online access to a subset of the catalogue
- support existing users by providing full text searchable versions of the works in the collection
- improve discovery of works through searchable content
- support the discovery of illustrations
- support discovery through named entities (people, places, etc.)

The project will by carried out by Dr Tony Hirst, a recently retired academic with a long history in developing open data and lbrary related tools, and supervised by Kate Tiley, Curator of the Carisbrooke Castle Museum.

Risks:

- editions or works not available on Internet Archive / Google Books (mitigation: scan the copy locally [financial implication])
- low quality OCR from Internet Archive / Google book scans hampers search (mitigation: provide a derived / corrected copy of a transcript [project time implication])
- Internet Archive copies of editions / works, or the Intenet Archive itself, disappears (mitigation: maintain local copies of editions and works)
- Open Library disappears (mitigation: maintain backup copies of collection / list feeds / data that can be subscribed to in place of Open Library feeds)

Form Details (draft)

https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/Research_Innovation/

Eligibility

1. Are you an applying on behalf of an archive, heritage organisation or for projects working with an archive collection?

YES

Applicant details

2. Please state the full legal name of your organisation, if this is different to the name by which the organisation is commonly known please add the other name(s) in question 3.

Carisbrooke Castle Museum

3. If your organisation is known by any other name(s) please state them below.

Carisbrooke Castle Museum Trust

4. Please state the lead organisation's address.

Carisbrooke Castle, Castle Hill, Newport, Isle of Wight

5. Please state the lead organisation's postcode

PO30 1XY

6. Please state your organisation number if applicable (charity number, company number or other registration number).

Registered Charity No. 1188568 Accredited Museum No. 0250

7. Please state the name of the lead contact for this project.

?? Kate Tiley, Curator, Carisbrooke Castle Museum

8. Please give a contact email address for this application.

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9. Please select from the below, the most appropriate category for your organisation

UK Charity

10. Please select from the below, the region in which your organisation is based,

South East, England

11. Please select from the below the size of your organisation, based on the number of contracted staff members

?? Less than 10 employees ?? Less than 50 employees

12. Please state the title of your proposed project.

Online searchable collection of historical guides in the Carisbrooke Castle Museum Library using free, openly licensed, tools and resources

13. Please state the project's proposed start date.

? TH: I expect to spend 4-5 weeks equivalent on the project, over about 3 months.

14. Please state the project's proposed end date.

?? Start + duration

? I expect to spend about 5 weeks on the project, over about 3 months.

15. Please indicate the challenge areas your project will focus on:

Digital Transformation

16. Tell us your idea: in no more than 400 words, please provide a summary of your project. It should be written in clear and simple language, suitable for a lay audience. If necessary, please use bullet points.

The Carisbrooke Castle Museum Library contains a small but important collection of physical collection relating to the Isle of Wight and its history, heritage, folk-lore and geography.

The project aims to provide an online, full text online searchable view over a subset of the physical collection (up to 100 or so works relating to out of copyright 18th, 19th and early 20th century guides to the Isle of Wight in the first instance), using freely available, off-the-shelf online resources.

The project's collection catalogue will be managed using Open Library (an Internet Archive project). Online viewable copies of works will be provided using the Internet Archive reader. Full contents listings and, where appropriate, lists of illustrations, will be added to each catalogue record. A gallery view over illustrations will form part of the final digital exhibit. The full text of a work, as used for search, will be initially sourced from the Internet Archive.

The project will be complete in its own right but may also be seen as a pilot project that might be picked up on by other small collections elsewhere. Documentation and open source software to allow other institutions to develop a similar offering will be a second key deliverable.

17. Need: tell us why the project needs to happen now, focusing on the current needs of your archive or heritage service. (Maximum 400 words)

The Carisbrooke Castle Museum Library has no scheduled opening hours, but may be visited by appointment.

Awareness of the Library and the Library collection is low. The lack of any form of online access limits engagemnt with the collection to physical visitors. There is no publicly available library catalogue, although a reduced form copy of the catalogue, which is currently held in an Excel spreadsheet, is available on request. The lack of an any form of online catalogue limits the ability of potential users to discover what resources are actually available in the collection even if they could visit.

Although many of the books in the physical collection have an index, the ability to search the full text within a work is often desirable, particularly for online researchers. Named entity recognition and semantic search will also offer additional benefits to casual browsers and digital researchers alike.

Many of the works include illustrations, which may be considered as hidden resource items within the collection. Making illustrations contained in the works visible in a gallery view will extend the reach of those items and provide another discovery route into the physical collection.

In 2025, the Isle of Wight Mardi Gras had an Island folk-lore theme, and the Arts Council funded Creative Island "Past Futures" project sought applications for small projects relating to the grassroots celebration of the island's "everyday" heritage. Both of these projects are continuing into 2026 with related themes. Improving awareness of, and access to, the Castle Museum Library collection could act to support and enrich such activities, as well as opening up possibilities of joint future projects, with the Castle Museum as a recognised partner. An online catalogue, and fully searchable digital shadow collection, of part of the collection at least would provide an entry point for potential collaborators, users and researchers wanting to discover more about the Island's 18th and 19th century heritage in particular.

18. Innovation: tell us how your project uses research, new ideas, fresh perspectives or new ways of approaching a problem, to develop new knowledge and/or devise new products or methods (maximum 500 words).

The project will will co-opt pre-existing, freely available and openly licensed tools, services and resources, along with a simple custom developed open source HTML web application, to provide a fully searchable and viewable "digital twin" online catalogue of some of the works that exist in the Carisbrooke Castle Museum Library.

The project will build on:

- scanned versions of works available in the Internet Archive and Google Books;
- catalog management using the Wikimedia Foundation "Open Library"
- full text, semantic search, and named entity recognition using open source natural language processing tools
- free static web hosting (simple html+css+javascript website, no backend server database requirements or user logins) using GitHub Pages

The digital twinning of online accessible resoruces and the physical collection items will not be identical: scanned copies of works will not typically be scans of the actual physical copies held by the Castle Museum Library. Rather, they will be scans of equivalent editions (where available), or the nearest equivalent work otherwise.

19. Impact: tell us what the potential impact of your project might be, focusing on the positive changes you expect to see in your institution and/or in the

archives sector as a whole (maximum 500 words).

The project aims to increase awareness of the physical collection and the works available in it, and improve ways of working with the collection. Providing a digital view onto elements of the collection supports both of these aims.

At an organisational level, the project will:

- provide online access to a subset of items in the Carisbrooke Castle Museum Library, improving reach and awareness of items that are available in the collection;
- support existing users by providing full text searchable versions of the works in the collection
- improve discovery of works through searchable content
- support the discovery of illustrations
- support discovery through named entities (people, places, etc.)

As well as providing access to the content of works, the project aims to increase of awareness of the physical collection and the works that may be viewed (by appointment) in the physical collection.

The project will also provide a template and worked example for other organisations who would like to make their own small collections available in a similar way.

20. Delivery and Management: outline the key roles and responsibilities of the project team, how delivery will be tracked and managed, and how risks will be identified and mitigated (maximum 300 words).

Kate Tiley, curator, Carisbrooke Castle Museum, overall project manager

Dr Tony Hirst, independent contractor, technical lead

The project milestones have been equated to separate technical deliverables. Twent-five (25) days of technical work are planned, spread over three months. A weekly catchup meeting will review an intial pass of the planned week's work in the form of a minimum viable working example and sign off on the previous week's work. Each week should deliver an additional technical feature, with an opportunity for feedback built at an early stage built in to the delivery process. A public project blog will track the progress of the project and invite feedback from any third parties who happen to come across it.

The milestones appear to place the producation of documentation at the end of the project, but documentation will be developed throughout the process. This allows for some fluidity / slippage in the delivery of milestones (e.g. a milestone appearing to slip by a week but recognising that documentation has been produced en route.)

21. Delivery and Management: please populate the table below with at least three key milestones for your project. You should provide a title, date, and a description of the key project activities that are expected to be

completed by this date. A milestone is a key moment or significant stage in the project's delivery. To effectively monitor the delivery and success of your grant, we need to understand your plans and identify any changes, challenges and opportunities throughout. Your milestones will be progress points in your project, that need to be achieved to ensure its success. Please complete the table below with a title of the milestone, a description and a proposed date (this can be expressed as month/year).

Milestone	Description	Date
1. Catalog	Minimal catalog in Open Library (3 days)	Week 1
2. Catalog Viewer	Simple catalog record viewer / selector (1 day)	Week 1
3. Search Index	Simple full text search indexer (1 day)	Week 1
4. Search Engine	Simple full text search engine + minimal user-interface (2 days)	Week 2
5. Facet viewer	Simple named entity recognition tools + UI (2 days)	Week 3
6. Semantic search	Simple semantic search + UI (2 days)	Week 4
7. Illustrations	Simple illustration index and gallery viewer (2 days)	Week 5
8. Developer docs	Developer documentation (3 days)	Week 6
9. Website	End user website (3 days)	Week 7
10. Curator docs	Curator documentation (2 days)	Week 8
11. End user docs	End user documentation (1 day)	Week 8
12. Dissemination resource	Template repository + dissemination (2 days)	Week 9
13. Final Report	Final report (1 day)	Week 10

22. Delivery and Management: How much funding are you requesting from this grant? (In GBP)

25 days developer time:

25 * 1.2 * £50k / 200 = £7500

Project management / feedback / informal user testing / oversight (0.2 dpw):

0.2 * 10 * 1.3 * £50k / 200 = £650

TOTAL: £8150

23. Delivery and Management: please upload a completed budget template.

[See below for budget requirements]

24. Are you getting any cash contributions (matched funding) to support your project, if so please state the value (in GBP) of the cash contributions? Cash contributions are other funds you expect to receive towards the cost of your project. This includes any cash contribution from your own organisation. We encourage you to have cash contributions, although you do not need them.

?? Something in-kind ??

25. Knowledge Sharing: please describe how you plan to disseminate the outputs and learning from your project (maximum 500 words).

A key aim of the project is to deliver a useful application for the Carisbrooke Castle Museum using a plug-and-play design pattern integrating third-party, off-the-shelf applications and resources, that can be freely adopted by other institutions with a minimum of technical skills.

All the code will be made available under an open source license via a public GitHub repository. A project blog will track the progress of the project and will support the documentation process. Full documentation will be provided for developers and curators to support the reuse and further adoption of the patterns and code developed as part of the project.

26. If you would like to upload any other documents which are referred to in your application (such as Letters of Support)

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27. Please tell us where you heard about this grant (select all that apply)

The National Archives Website

Spreadsheet / Budget Template

Costings:

- https://www.archives.org.uk/salary-recommendations
- https://static1.squarespace.com/static/60773266d31a1f2f300e02ef/t/67c6dee6f052115c5edce2aa/174108643 %2Bfreelancer%2Bguide%2B-revised+20250304.pdf

If we are rated at £40 (lower management) or £50k (experienced middle management) each, the docs suggest a day rate of:

1.3 * annual salary / 200 = £260 / £325

Project Title:

Project Start Date:

Project End Date:

Staff Costs

(Cols: Staff Costs, Annual gross salary, Annual employer on-costs, Start date, End date, FTE, Total cost to project, Description/ Comments)

Subtotal:

Non-Staff Costs

(Cols: Unit cost, units, total cost, Description / Comments)

Subtotal:

GRAND TOTAL:

Total Project Cost:

Total Requested:

Additional or matched funding:

Other funding: