

“We can’t let the Museum become a thing of the past”

Members of Vision Buxton raise their concerns about the the continued closure of Buxton Museum & Art Gallery and the lack of progress by Derbyshire County Council.

Buxton Museum & Art Gallery (BMAG), which is run by Derbyshire County Council (DCC), was suddenly closed on 1st June 2023 with DCC citing a temporary closure due to the discovery of dry rot in the building’s structural timbers, posing a safety risk [\[ref\]](#).

Its continued closure has been raised at Vision Buxton’s recent meetings with questions over the lack of progress made on addressing the dry rot or a plan moving forward.

The museum displays have been taken out and artefacts processed and boxed up but the promised survey [\[ref\]](#) has not begun, no alternative short-term venues have been proposed and no update has been posted on the DCC website since August 2023 [\[ref\]](#).

There are deep concerns within the town, and further afield, that the building and museum will never reopen if left to DCC, particularly considering its current financial situation – an expected £46 million deficit for 2024-2025, now reduced to £33m [\[ref\]](#).

With museums not being deemed an ‘essential service’, the future of BMAG is not looking secure, despite DCC’s statements committing to its future [\[ref\]](#). The adjacent and interlinked Peak Buildings, also owned by DCC, has stood empty ever since the courts closed back in June 2016.

“We can’t let the museum become a thing of the past” says Vision Buxton Chair, Roddie MacLean. “The museum is so much more than just a building and, as a town, we should come together to demand progress so that this important resource is not allowed to be lost.

Dave Green, CEO of Buxton Civic Association, who has only recently moved to the town, says, *“There seem to be ideas and expertise that are being ignored. Without discussion and dialogue we can’t help find a way forward, and the ongoing lack of communication is disrespectful to the citizens of the town.”*

Cathy Grange, resident and Vision Buxton member adds, *“It is unthinkable that Buxton, with all its rich heritage, should be without our museum and we need to know where we stand with DCC and what they intend to do about the building itself, the collection and its staff... Museums make a positive difference in communities, giving pride in their history, creating jobs and providing education to schools and we must do all we can to preserve them.”*

A town event is being planned for June 8, one year on from the hurried closure, hosted by the We Are Buxton Community Forum, of which Vision Buxton is a key member, to highlight the concern for BMAG’s continued closure. Questions and ideas for how the town can support the museum moving forward are also being collated.

In the meantime, Vision Buxton has set up a petition on change.org for local residents and the wider public to show their support for the museum. You can sign it at <https://www.change.org/p/save-buxton-museum-art-gallery-from-permanent-closure>. Please share it with anyone you think might like to sign it.

See further information about the museum on the Vision Buxton website along with the questions, concerns and ideas submitted by its members and others. Read it at <https://www.visionbuxton.co.uk/we-cant-let-the-museum-become-a-thing-of-the-past/>.

Image: Buxton Museum and Art Gallery - June 2020. Source: Wikimedia Commons