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# FUTURE PROOF MUSEUMS

'Future Proof Museums  
is an exciting new  
programme to help  
museums prosper at a  
time of challenge.'

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**John Orna-Ornstein**  
Director of Museums  
Arts Council England

This notebook provides a sample toolkit from the AMA's Future Proof Museums programme designed to help museums explore how they will change, adapt, influence and remain relevant in an ever-changing world.

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**Julie Aldridge**

Executive Director

AMA

Trainer on the Future Proof Museums programme



Image courtesy of The Museum of Science and Industry. © Chris Foster

# Your future direction

How does your organisation define its role and purpose, its core beliefs and values? How is the museum seeking to make a difference to the world?

If you just want to organise the world a little more efficiently, you'll get away with just a business plan. But if you want to change the world, leave your artistic mark, make a cultural impact or have ever used the word 'transform', then nothing short of a manifesto will do.

Manifestos are open letters of intent that are fundamental and defining. They terminate the past and create a vision of new worlds. They demand attention, inspire and galvanise communities around us and knowingly antagonise others. They provoke action.

Writing a manifesto is not easy but it is a true act of leadership. After all, it's hard for people to follow you if they're not sure where you are headed. Manifestos leave them in no doubt. They can and should trigger internal debate of the healthiest kind. They can and should trigger external debate of the most exciting kind.

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## Andrew McIntyre

Director

Morris Hargreaves McIntyre

Trainer on the Future Proof Museums programme

# A starting point for team discussion

## AT OUR BEST...

(verbs to describe what we do)

## AT OUR BEST...

(nouns to describe what we are)

## AT OUR BEST...

(adjectives to describe what we're like)

## WHAT DIFFERENCE DO WE WANT TO MAKE TO ... ?

(insert geographic area)

## WHAT DIFFERENCE DO WE WANT TO MAKE TO VISITORS?

## WHAT WOULD IMPROVE THE VISITOR EXPERIENCE?

## WHAT WOULD HELP VISITORS TO UNDERSTAND AND ENGAGE MORE DEEPLY?

## WHAT WOULD WE LIKE PEOPLE TO SAY ABOUT US?

## WHAT'S SO SPECIAL ABOUT THIS ORGANISATION?

(what makes us different?)

## WHY DO WE HAVE COLLECTIONS?

## WHO AND WHAT ARE COLLECTIONS FOR?

## WHAT CAN VISITORS LEARN FROM US?

## WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM VISITORS?

## MOST PEOPLE DON'T VISIT AND MANY FEEL WE ARE IRRELEVANT.

(what do we need to do differently to change that?)

# Spectrum of Audience Engagement

Deliver	Inform	Involve	Co-create	Empower
<b>WE BELIEVE</b> Museum knowledge and research underpin our civilisation	<b>WE BELIEVE</b> Education sets you free and improves your life	<b>WE BELIEVE</b> Museums inspire curiosity and fire the imagination	<b>WE BELIEVE</b> Sharing experiences and identities builds community	<b>WE BELIEVE</b> Sharing ideas builds an empathetic and participatory society
<b>PERSONALITY</b> Trusted expert	<b>PERSONALITY</b> Benevolent educator	<b>PERSONALITY</b> Inspirational storyteller	<b>PERSONALITY</b> Generous partner	<b>PERSONALITY</b> Egalitarian facilitator
<b>THE MUSEUM IS A</b> Storehouse of knowledge	<b>THE MUSEUM IS A</b> Centre for learning	<b>THE MUSEUM IS A</b> Portal to an amazing world	<b>THE MUSEUM IS A</b> Community builder	<b>THE MUSEUM IS A</b> Platform for ideas
<b>WE OFFER</b> Authoritative reference	<b>WE OFFER</b> Interpretation	<b>WE OFFER</b> Immersive experiences	<b>WE OFFER</b> Emotional connections	<b>WE OFFER</b> Debate and discussion
<b>YOU'LL GET</b> Knowledge	<b>YOU'LL GET</b> Understanding	<b>YOU'LL GET</b> Active engagement	<b>YOU'LL GET</b> A sense of community	<b>YOU'LL GET</b> New perspectives
<b>OUR PROMISE</b> Our expert knowledge is credible, authoritative and accurate	<b>OUR PROMISE</b> We will open your mind and expand your horizons	<b>OUR PROMISE</b> We make learning and discovery fun and magical	<b>OUR PROMISE</b> Share your story and ours to find personal relevance	<b>OUR PROMISE</b> You will not be judged and can make up your own mind
<b>OUR BRAND ESSENCE</b> Keepers of the flame	<b>OUR BRAND ESSENCE</b> Explain the world	<b>OUR BRAND ESSENCE</b> Hands on, minds on	<b>OUR BRAND ESSENCE</b> Self-discovery + Shared identity = Community	<b>OUR BRAND ESSENCE</b> Safe place for challenging ideas
<b>CONTEXT OF EXCHANGE</b> Institutional	<b>CONTEXT OF EXCHANGE</b> Individual	<b>CONTEXT OF EXCHANGE</b> Social	<b>CONTEXT OF EXCHANGE</b> Communal	<b>CONTEXT OF EXCHANGE</b> Societal
<b>OUR COMMUNICATION STYLE</b> Single, authoritative voice	<b>OUR COMMUNICATION STYLE</b> One group telling another	<b>OUR COMMUNICATION STYLE</b> Telling relevant stories	<b>OUR COMMUNICATION STYLE</b> Two-way exchange	<b>OUR COMMUNICATION STYLE</b> Multiple viewpoints with as many questions as answers

## Supporting case study no.1 WA Museum



The Western Australian Museum adapted to an evolving purpose, determined for its work to reflect 'the heart of the state and the spirit of its people'.

By changing relationships with external partners and reviewing roles and processes internally, the Museum has re-positioned itself as being 'of the people, by the people and for the people'.

It is now entering the delivery phase of the largest museum building project in the southern hemisphere, creating public spaces built around its people-focused value proposition.

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**Read the full case study**

[culturehive.co.uk/resources/wam-case-study](http://culturehive.co.uk/resources/wam-case-study)

'I believe that an organisation needs to exhibit three key characteristics to be successful beyond the short term:

It must be attractive to a range of co-investors (funders, donors, customers/visitors, staff, artists and other cultural organisations).

It must be agile: able to innovate and both to initiate and respond to change, in strategic and thoughtful fashion.

It must be able to achieve its goals and to execute its strategy in cost-efficient and effective ways.

It must also be well-led, well-managed and have a strong and appropriate organisational culture, which aligns and supports its vision and values.'

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**Susan Royce**

Change Management Consultant  
Trainer on the Future Proof Museums programme

'A business model describes the rationale of how an organisation creates, delivers and captures value.'

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**Alexander Osterwalder & Yves Pigneur**

Business Model Generation  
2010

The Future Proof Museums programme uses a tool called the Business Model Canvas (see overpage), a powerful, simple, tool for understanding, designing, reworking and implementing a more resilient business model.

Co-created by 470 people in 45 countries, across a diverse mix of industries and sectors, the canvas is a tried and tested tool that you can use to summarise the story of your business model in a

way that's easy to share and discuss with staff, board, and other people.

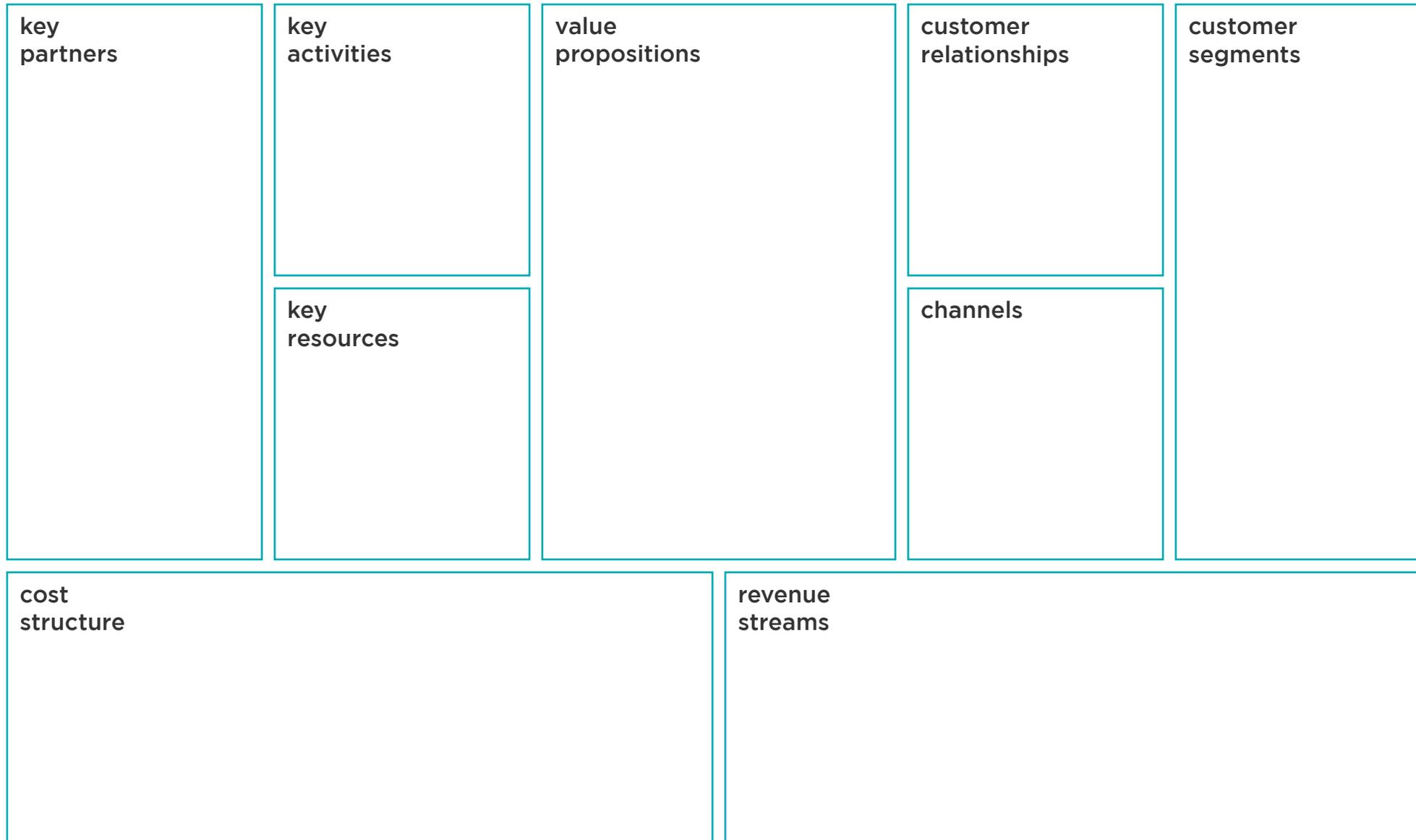
The canvas is the blueprint of how you will deliver a strategy to achieve your vision. You have a vision for the future, a manifesto describing the difference that you want to make to the world. The canvas describes how you will build a strategy and model to help you get there.

The tool represents a painter's canvas - preformatted with

nine blocks which allow you to paint pictures of new or existing models. You can use it to understand your own model and make improvements to it, or to create a new business model.

Trainers on Future Proof Museums work with the museum participants to help them to explore both of these options to start to define the future plan for their organisation.

Sketch out your current business model onto a blank canvas. Check that all key stakeholders agree that this tells the current story for your museum.



## Supporting case study no.2

# Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust

Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust is future-proofing the story of the industrial revolution by trying new things, being flexible and taking calculated risks.

The Trust manages ten museums within a World Heritage Site as well as two youth hostels, a research library and a tourist information centre. These Key Resources and the Value Propositions, and educational activities they make possible, drive the charity's business model.

By developing individual sites and enhancing offers for particular customer segments, the Trust has increased revenue while maintaining the academic credibility that's core to its appeal.

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**Read the full case study**

[culturehive.co.uk/resources/ironbridge-case-study](http://culturehive.co.uk/resources/ironbridge-case-study)





Image courtesy of University of Cambridge Museums © Martin Bond

## Reviewing your current business model

The Future Proof Museums programme looks at how to review your current model in some depth, but at broad, headline level you're looking for three key things – Is your model desirable? Is it feasible? And is it viable?

### Desirability?

- Does the range of events, experiences and services you offer deliver the value sought by your target market?
- Is there a great fit between your value proposition and what customer segments want or expect?

### Feasibility?

- Do you have the essential skills needed internally to drive success?

### Viability?

- Are you dependent on one source of income?
- Is it scalable?
- What would happen if that income was to be reduced or cut significantly?
- Would the model still work?

## Supporting case study no.3

# Santa Cruz Museum of Art & History

The Santa Cruz Museum of Art & History turned financial crisis into positive change by harnessing the energy of its community.

Tackling a loss of community relevance and a drastic halving of revenue income, the Museum worked with local people to develop a new vision.

The Museum is now conceived as being there to create a stronger and more connected community in Santa Cruz.

By placing co-creation and community at the heart of its business model, it has tripled visitor numbers and developed sustainable income streams.

It has created a space for people to spark, share and preserve stories and ideas.

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**Read the full case study**

[culturehive.co.uk/resources/mah-case-study](http://culturehive.co.uk/resources/mah-case-study)



**Museums participating in the first Future Proof Museums programme**



## A resilient future

Resilient organisations stay true to their cause or manifesto of how they make a difference to the world, while continuously scanning the environment for new opportunities to evolve the current model or even to innovate new models while their current one is still successful.

They don't wait until their business model is no longer relevant to visitors, or until other museums out-do them, or it becomes financially unviable, they are one step ahead.

The Future Proof Museums programme introduces a range of techniques to help museums to innovate around their current model and prototype new strategic directions for their museum.

**Case studies of their journeys will be shared on [culturehive.co.uk](https://culturehive.co.uk)**

'The traditional models of leadership that have sustained (or dominated) us for generations are falling into disrepair.'

Right now, our emerging leadership imperative is to create compelling, relevant and agile models of social and team engagement that prepare us for a multitude of possible futures.

Clarifying a higher purpose, delivering with flair and weaving a compelling narrative that binds us together, regardless of what the world throws at us, is the path we are all on now. We are, more than ever before, the navigators of our own success and leading with

passion, courage, grit and determination has never been more important.'

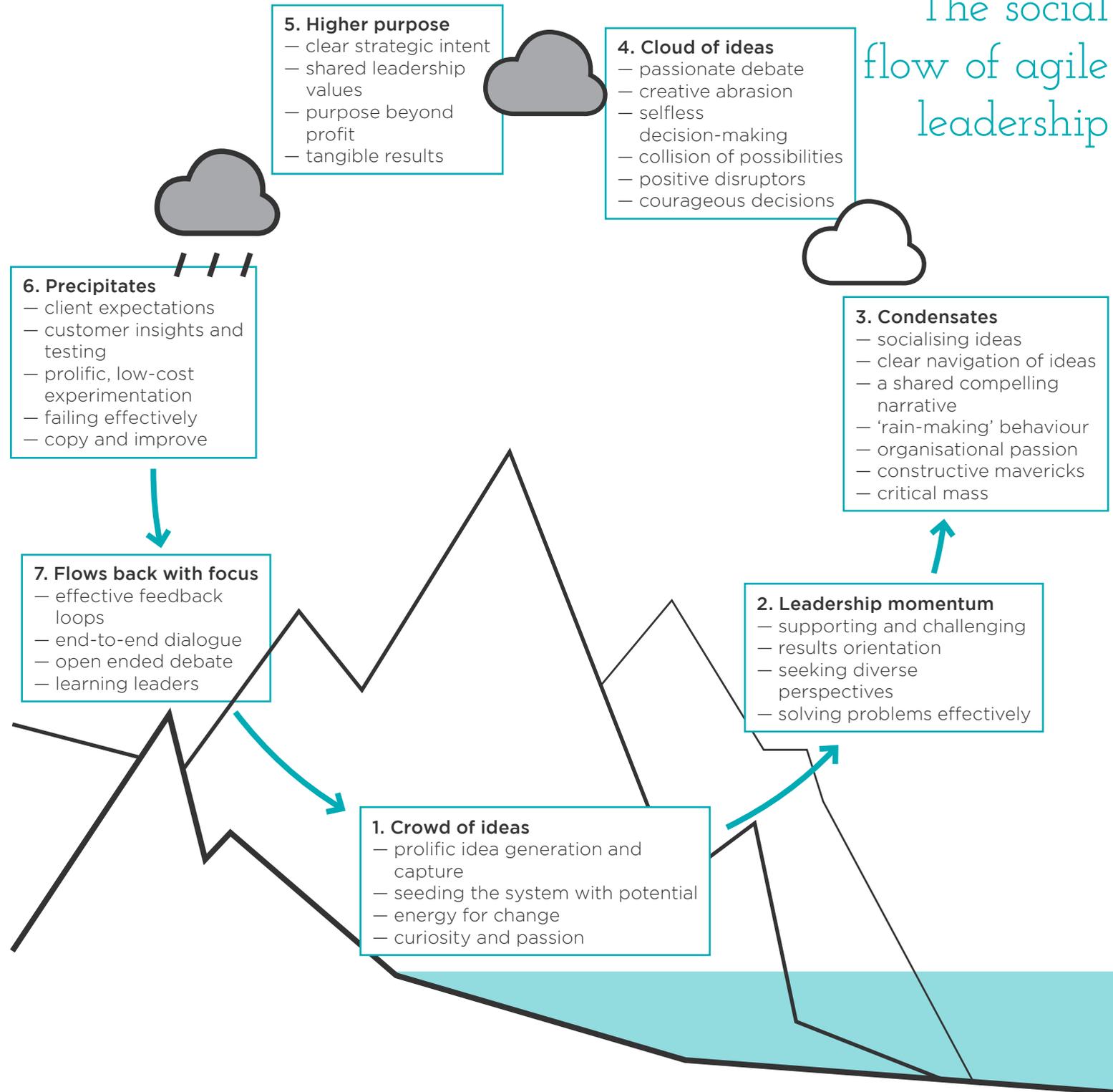
**Mark Wright**

Director

People Create Limited

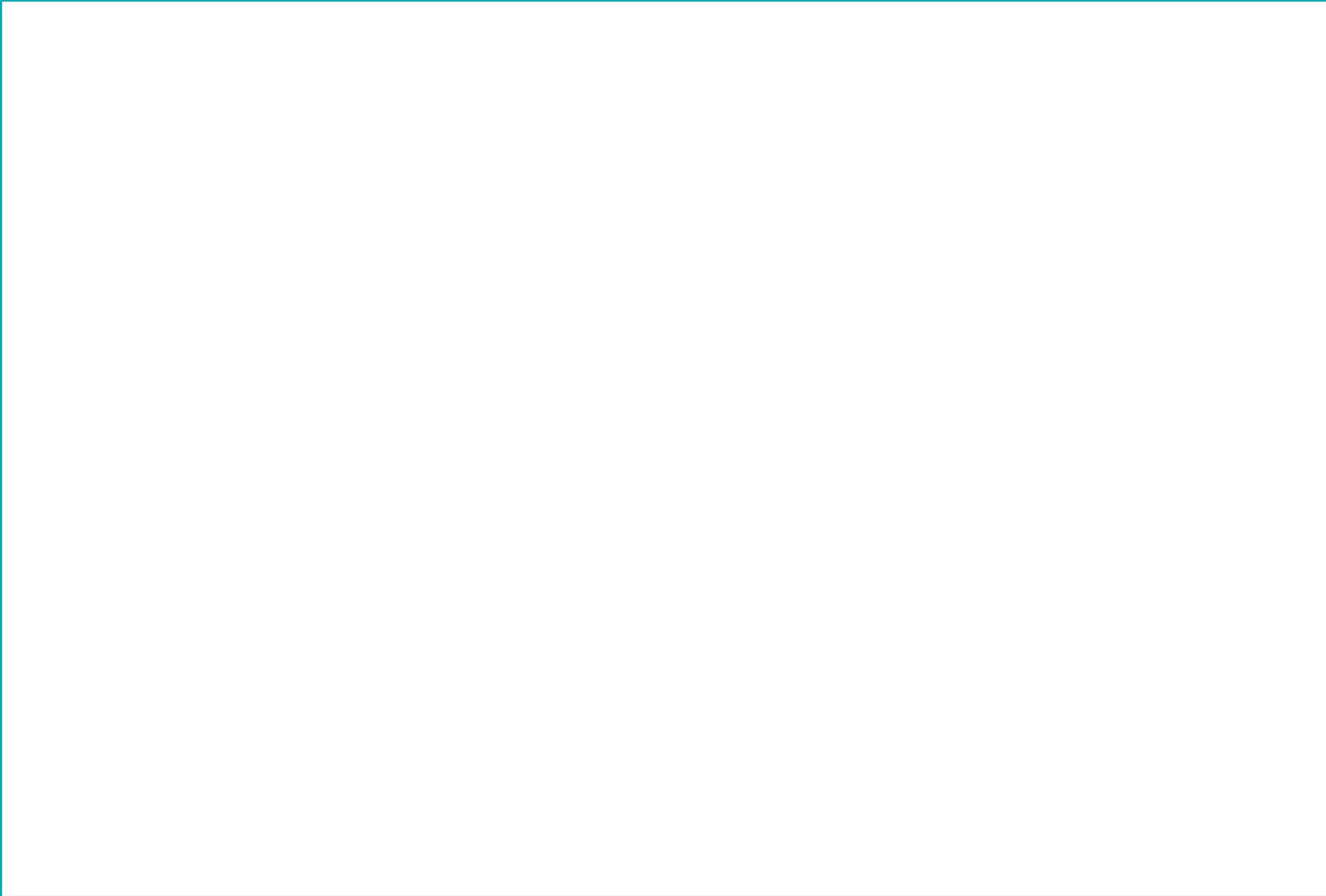
Trainer on the Future Proof Museums programme

The social flow of agile leadership



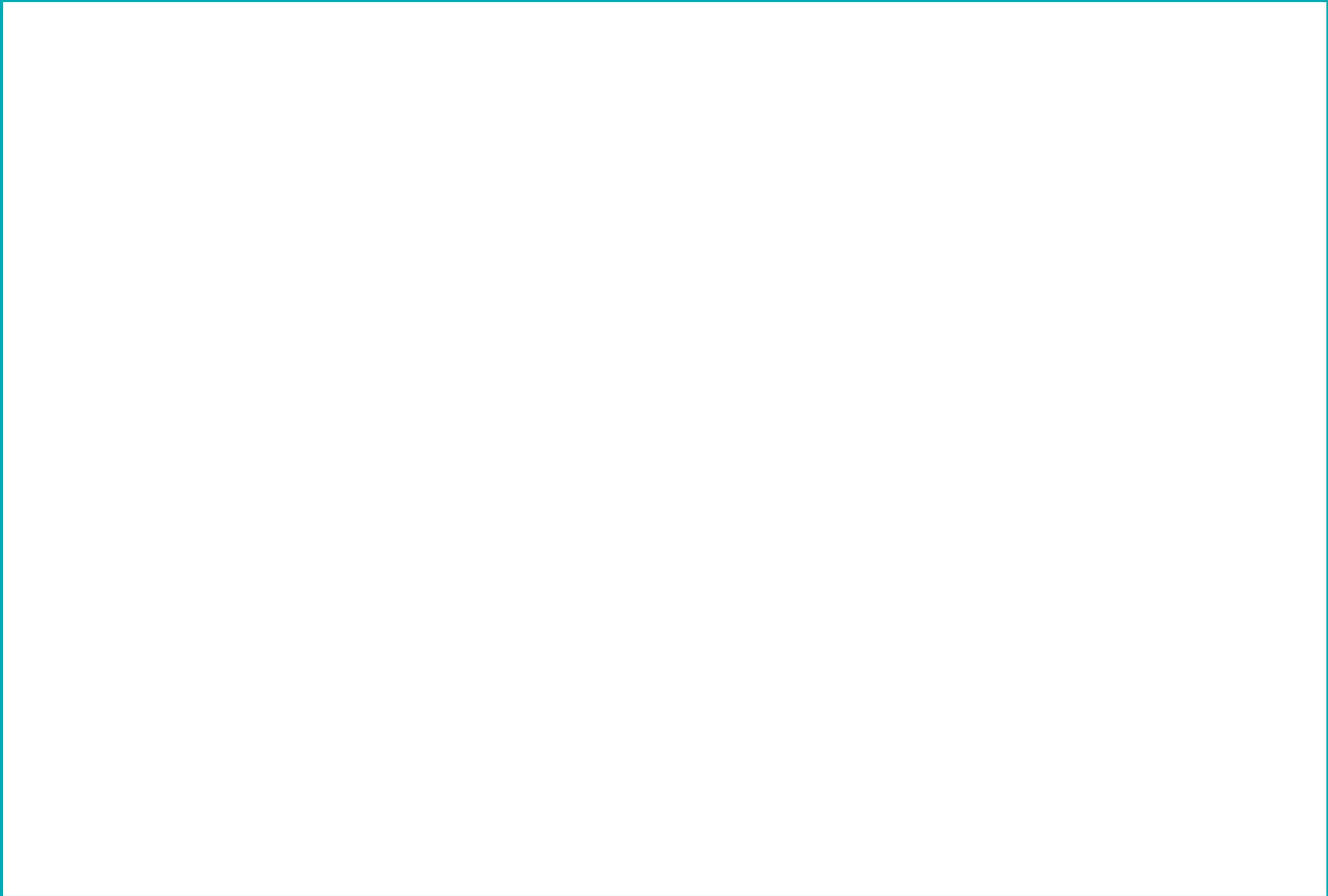
















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The content of this publication is available in large print electronic format and online: [futureproofmuseums.co.uk](https://futureproofmuseums.co.uk)

Alternatively please contact the AMA on **01223 578078**

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