

Bruton Museum
Report to the Town Council
May 2026

The last year has proved a positive one for the museum in several ways. Financially, as we are stable and maintaining our momentum in our drive towards sustainability. Once again Hauser & Wirth have supported us financially and in other ways, we also received a one-off donation from The Newt towards the costs of our history and heritage festival, and the Town Council has reinstated its annual grant to us for the forthcoming year. To all three institutions we are very grateful. Membership figures and visitor numbers are healthy, and it has been pleasing, once again, to welcome, among so many others, visiting groups of children from local schools.

Despite budgetary constraints, we have been able to organize a series of excellent temporary exhibitions, including Mark Pickthall's terrific photographs of starling murmurations on the Somerset Levels.

The Bruton Museum Festival of History and Heritage, which ran through October and November, once again was a great success. Multiple talks on multiple subjects were heard by large audiences. The flagship event was a John Steinbeck day held at Hauser & Wirth, in the museum, and at Discove Cottage. This accompanied a special exhibition of Steinbeck in Bruton memorabilia, still on display, and the launch of an exhibition catalogue.

Plans are well underway for this year's festival which will run in the autumn in conjunction with other community events including The Packhorse Fair.

We are delighted to have been joined on the committee by Jack and Louise Owen who have taken on design and IT roles, and Karen Dunn who has been elected as the Society's Secretary. We now have three members of the Town Council on the museum committee (Karen, Ewan and Jocelyn). We are eager to develop, perhaps formalizing, this bond between council and museum. It is hoped the Town Council will be eager to develop its role in the preservation of this hugely important community asset in a town that thrives in large part because of its rich cultural heritage.