

Frequently Asked Questions about the reopening of Glasgow's museums

Updated Friday 7 August 2020

Why aren't you reopening all of Glasgow's museums?

Like every charity, Glasgow Life has been hit hard by Covid-19. The complete shutdown of Glasgow's museums, libraries, community facilities, arts and sports venues for more than four months, together with the cancellation of most of the city's events and festivals this year, means the millions of pounds of income which supports our services has been wiped out.

Reopening venues is a complex process and requires careful planning. Current physical distancing guidelines mean that a large proportion of our venues are unable to reopen safely, and we may need more staff than before to be working at the venues we are looking to reopen to ensure current restrictions are followed.

Even if physical distancing measures are relaxed in future phases of the government's route-map, it's not an exaggeration to say that Glasgow Life is now facing the toughest financial period in its history. Assessing the significant costs associated with adapting our venues to meet physical distancing requirements is something that we have to consider in the context of the future sustainability of some of our facilities.

However, the fundamental criteria that will inform which venues and services can restart will be the financial landscape that we will have to operate within for the foreseeable future without the level of income that we previously generated.

We are initially prioritising the most-visited museums in our care. Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum and the Riverside Museum welcomed more than three million visitors between them last year. Together they accounted for just over 75% of all Glasgow Museums visits in 2019, so it's vital we prepare to open these buildings first.

Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum and the Riverside Museum are the largest of our museums and can accommodate more people in a physically distanced environment. They are also accessible by all forms of transport, including walking. Both museums play a vital role in attracting people to Glasgow and prioritising their opening will support the city's recovery from the impact of coronavirus in the longer-term.

When will you be reopening other museums which aren't on your published list?

Our financial and staffing constraints are unlike anything we've ever faced and mean we are not able to operate all of our venues and services just now; it's simply not possible.

We will continue to work with Glasgow City Council to review and prioritise which venues and services we can restart or reopen and when, but it's highly unlikely that Glasgow Life will be able to return to anything like its normal service provision in the near future.

Although Glasgow City Council has agreed to support us financially during this difficult period, there are no easy solutions and we haven't got all the answers about what Glasgow Life's service provision will look like during or after this transitional period.

We'll continue to keep in touch with our members and customers as and when any decisions on future service provision are made.

Will I have to book to visit a museum?

Yes – when our museums reopen visitors will need to pre-book a date and time online. You will also need to present your e-ticket to enter the museum. Entry to our museums will remain free.

How do I book?

Tickets will be available to book soon at www.glasgowmuseums.com. Initially, tickets for Kelvingrove will be available every 30 minutes from 11am until 3pm and will be valid for a two hour timeslot, or until closing at 4pm. They will be released in two week blocks to ensure everyone has an opportunity to book.

How long will I be allowed in the museum?

We are working hard to provide an enjoyable visitor experience, even in these unusual times. Visitors to Kelvingrove will be asked to keep visits to a maximum of two hours to ensure we can offer entry to as many visitors as possible while maintaining physical distancing.

What cleaning procedures will you have in place when museums reopen?

Buildings are being cleaned prior to opening to the public and we will have regular cleaning procedures in place which are appropriate to each venue.

Will you provide customers with hand washing/sanitisation stations?

Yes – we will have several mitigating measures in place in our venues when they reopen to minimise the spread of Covid-19. These will include physical distancing restrictions; booking systems and reduced capacities; Perspex screens at reception areas; one-way walking routes; the promotion of rigorous hand washing and the provision of hand sanitiser.

Will toilet facilities be available in reopened venues?

Yes – although, as with all areas in our facilities, physical distancing measures will be in place.

Will I need to wear a face covering?

Yes – in line with the Scottish Government's guidance we are asking visitors to wear a face covering to keep themselves and others safe when visiting our museums. We recognise that some visitors have health conditions, disabilities or other factors that prevent them from wearing a face covering. The Scottish Government has published [guidance on the use of suitable face coverings and exemptions](#).

Will I need to provide my contact details?

Yes – public health and government guidance for reopening public venues requires Glasgow Life to participate in the [Test and Protect](#) scheme. We will request your contact details when you visit our museums and the information will be held securely for three weeks and then destroyed.

Will café, retail and cloakroom facilities be available in venues which reopen?

No – there will be no catering, retail (gift shop) or cloakroom facilities available in our venues when they reopen. We are also unable to provide space for packed lunches.

How many people can I book for?

There will be a maximum of six tickets per transaction. All members of the party must arrive at the same time to gain entry. Please only book tickets for yourself and your household to help us comply with Test and Protect.

Can I walk up to Kelvingrove and gain entry?

No – to gain entry to the museum you must pre-book a ticket using the online booking system. This is to help us maintain physical distancing and manage visitor numbers. You will need to present your e-ticket to enter the museum.

Will there be a one way in / one way out system in place?

Kelvingrove

Yes – to help manage the flow of visitors there will be one clearly signposted entrance into and one exit from the museum. On arrival visitors must enter via the doors at the car park side of the building. The accessible entrance with access to lifts is located at the ground level, also facing the car park.

Is there a one way system or can I move around the museum freely?

Kelvingrove

There will be parts of the museum that operate as a one-way system and there will be a clearly defined way to move through the venue. Visitors will move in one direction and are asked not to return to galleries they have visited.

What galleries will be open?

Kelvingrove

Most of our permanent galleries and rooms will be open, except for a limited number of smaller galleries and hands-on displays, such as the Mini-museum, the Environmental Discovery Centre and the Rainforest Object Cinema.

What is happening with exhibitions that were due to open, such as Eric Watt?

The restrictions imposed during lockdown necessitated a break in preparations for some exhibitions due to open this summer, for example the Eric Watt photography exhibition due to open at Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum in June 2020.

At this time we are prioritising the re-opening of the main galleries within Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum, Riverside Museum and the Gallery of Modern Art (GoMA). This may need more staff than before to work at these venues to ensure current restrictions are followed. Many other staff remain working from home in accordance with Scottish Government guidance.

We remain committed to a varied exhibitions programme within our museums when resource and staffing allow. We will continue to review and prioritise which exhibitions can open and when and will share further details on this as decisions are made.

What times are museums open?

It is anticipated museums will initially operate with slightly reduced opening hours. In line with Scottish Government advice this will enable employees and visitors to travel at off-peak times. At present Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum, Riverside Museum and GoMA are scheduled to open every day, Monday to Sunday, from 11am – 4pm.

Will disabled access be affected?

No – there is wheelchair and pram access to all public areas within the building via lifts. To comply with physical distancing measures only one person/visiting group will be able to enter the lifts at any one time.

Will the car park be open?

Kelvingrove

The car park will be open to visitors and normal charges will apply.

Will the organ be played at Kelvingrove?

No – at this time we are not able to accommodate organ recitals.

Can I bring a group to the museum?

No – unfortunately we are unable to accommodate school or group bookings of any kind at this time due to restricted visitor capacity.

This is to allow physical distancing measures to be followed safely. The maximum number of tickets you can book online is six. Please only book tickets for yourself and your household to help us comply with the Test and Protect scheme.

Are the free guided tours being reinstated?

No – at this time we are not able to offer our free guided tours due to physical distancing measures.

Are workshops / talks / events such as Curator Talks, Toddler Time etc being reinstated?

No – at this time we are not able to offer our usual programme of talks and events. Many of these activities, such as Curator Talks and Toddler Time, can be found online in digital form, through our social media channels.

How long will these measures be in place?

The current measures are in line with Scottish Government guidelines and will enable us to accommodate and protect our staff and visitors. These measures may change as advice from the Scottish Government is updated.

Where can I find out more information?

We will provide regular updates through Glasgow Museums' social media channels as well as on the Glasgow Life website.

How can I make a donation to help support Glasgow Life?

As a charity, Glasgow Life is hugely grateful for the support it has received during the coronavirus pandemic, which has helped us to continue vital work in communities across the city during the most challenging of times. When our museums reopen you will be able to use our in-venue donation boxes or you can make a donation online at <https://forms.glasgowlife.org.uk/Pages/donate.aspx>.

Ends