

# the cantie museum



a community of practice for Happiness  
in Scottish museums and galleries

The Cantie Museum is a Scottish take on the Happy Museum, the project, begun in England in 2011 to develop a resilient, holistic approach to sustainability and wellbeing for museums in the face of global financial and environmental change. Its manifesto lists six principles:

**Create conditions for wellbeing**

**Pursue mutual relationships**

**Value the environment and be a steward of the future as well as the past**

**Be an active citizen**

**Learn for resilience**

**Measure what matters**

'Cantie Museum' comes from Burns's 1794 song, 'Contented wi' little and cantie wi' mair'. 'Mair' of what though? Money? Stuff? Collections? Visitors? Lumps o' puddin'? Take a look at the New Economics Foundation's five ways to wellbeing, and you'll gather that happiness is not about growth of material wealth and unsustainable self-indulgence. It's about people doing more connecting, being active, taking notice, learning and giving.

The Cantie Museum believes that museums exist to give people opportunities to do all of these. Through these we create the conditions for wellbeing.

No doubt you can give examples of how your museum is already giving opportunities to achieve happiness and helping to create a better community life. The Cantie Museum aims to draw together activities like these within a sustainable framework.

Our aim is to make the Cantie Museum community of practice a base to share ideas, resources, skills and expertise and collaboratively support initiatives to show that museums can change lives in Scotland, without costing the Earth.

There is no bigger challenge to human society than the challenge of creating a sustainable future. This challenge demands new economic paradigms; new understanding of what constitutes prosperity and success - an understanding based on different cultural assumptions. Museums have a key role to play because they are places where culture can and should be negotiated, not least the culture of inheritance.



A new Cantie Museum community of practice has started in Scotland, adopting the Happy Museum manifesto. We hope you can join this community.

There are lots of ways that you and your museum can get involved - to suit the resources available to you and local circumstances. Here are just a few examples:

**Start a conversation!** Speak to your colleagues, manager, volunteers, visitors and Friends about Cantie Museum. Gather opinions and ideas about the philosophy and what a Cantie Museum would look like for each of you.

**Think about each of the six principles.** Do they already appear in some form in your museum's policy or plans? Consider using them to review how your organisation plans and evaluates its work.

**Develop a Cantie Museum project.** Would you like to explore one or more of the principles in practice - test the water and see what impact there may be? You could use the opportunity to work in partnership with another museum, with local people or groups in your community.

**Spread the word.** Use your website and social media and generally let people know what you are doing and why. Most of all, it is your imagination and drive that will reveal to you, and everyone else, what you can do.

The Cantie Museum is coordinated by an informal steering group of colleagues from National Museums Scotland, Edinburgh Museums, Glasgow Museums, Falkirk Community Trust, Museums Galleries Scotland and the National Trust for Scotland. For more information, or to join the Cantie Museum community of practice, contact Peter Stott [peter@stott.wanadoo.co.uk](mailto:peter@stott.wanadoo.co.uk)

For more about the Happy Museum, visit [www.happymuseumproject.org](http://www.happymuseumproject.org)

For information on Museums Change Lives visit [www.museumsassociation.org/museums-change-lives](http://www.museumsassociation.org/museums-change-lives)

For more information on New Economics Foundation and Five Ways to Wellbeing, visit [www.neweconomics.org](http://www.neweconomics.org), and [www.fivewaystowellbeing.org](http://www.fivewaystowellbeing.org).

the happy  
museum

