

BARNSELEY MUSEUMS

CLEOPATRA AND THE QUEENS OF EGYPT

Barnsley Museums Creative Commission/s for Barnsley Bright Nights 2026

Full Commission Document



SUMMARY CONTRACT/S DETAILS

Contract Description	Barnsley Museums Creative Commission for Barnsley Bright Nights 2026
Contact Point	Experience Barnsley Museum: experiencebarnsley@barnsley.gov.uk
Contract Budget	£23,000 (Total combined budget available inclusive of fee, planning, workshops, expenses, evaluation and exclusive of VAT)
Closing Date	Monday 7th September 2026 at 10am

1. INTRODUCTION

Context

Barnsley Museums Creative Commission for Barnsley Bright Nights 2026 forms part of Barnsley Museum's ambition to:

- Increase participation in arts and culture
- Reach new and underrepresented audiences
- Showcase collections and local stories in innovative, accessible ways

This commission is Barnsley Museums offer for this year's Barnsley Bright Nights light art festival and aims to illuminate and transform the Town Hall and Experience Barnsley to attract new audiences. It will create a cohesive visitor journey, connecting the outside public realm with the museum interior and encouraging audiences to explore both spaces as part of a linked experience.

The project will also contribute to the final promotional phase of the Cleopatra and the Queens of Egypt exhibition, linking global narratives to local stories.

Barnsley Museums

Barnsley Museums is part of Barnsley Council's Culture & Visitor Economy service, caring for and sharing the borough's rich heritage, collections and cultural spaces.

The service operates five distinct venues – Experience Barnsley, the Cooper Gallery, Cannon Hall Museum, Park and Gardens, Elsecar Heritage Centre, and Worsbrough Mill Museum and Country Park – alongside a nationally accredited Archives and Local Studies service. Together, these sites offer a diverse programme of exhibitions, learning, community engagement and public events, enabling visitors to explore Barnsley's social, industrial and artistic history while enjoying its landscapes and heritage environments.

Barnsley Bright Nights

Barnsley Bright Nights is the borough's flagship free light art festival, transforming the town centre into an immersive trail of large-scale illuminated artworks, performances, and community-led experiences that attract significant audiences and drive cultural engagement each November.

It is a two-night festival which runs early evening (5pm–8:30pm) on Friday 20th and Saturday 21st November 2026. The festival is family focused with an audience of over 20,000 visitors. Activity is located across Barnsley town centre's cultural venues, including Experience Barnsley. The festival is delivered by Barnsley Council's Arts & Events team.

Creative Commission

This commission is Barnsley Museum's offer for Barnsley Bright Nights and aims to illuminate and transform the Town Hall and Experience Barnsley Museum to attract new audiences. It will create a cohesive visitor journey, connecting the public realm with the museum interior and encouraging audiences to explore both spaces as part of a single experience.

The project will also contribute to the final promotional phase of the Cleopatra and the Queens of Egypt exhibition, linking global narratives to local stories. Inspired by the Cleopatra and the Queens of Egypt exhibition and Barnsley's powerful women, the creative output should explore identity, power and legacy, drawing connections between ancient and contemporary stories.

Links to further information

- Information about previous Barnsley Bright Nights festivals:
[Watch Bright Nights 2025 official film](#)
[Watch Bright Nights 2024 official video](#)
- Information about Experience Barnsley Museum:
<https://www.experience-barnsley.com/>
- 360degree Tour of Experience Barnsley:
[Experience Barnsley: Museum & Visitor Centre](#)
- Accessibility information for Experience Barnsley:
[Accessibility | Experience Barnsley](#)
- Information about Cleopatra and the Queens of Egypt exhibition:
<https://www.experience-barnsley.com/whats-on/cleopatra-and-the-queens-of-egypt-exhibition>

2. COMMISSION/S

Creative Theme

Inspired by the Cleopatra and the Queens of Egypt exhibition and Barnsley's powerful women, the work should explore identity, power and legacy, drawing connections between ancient and contemporary stories.

Key themes to explore include:

- Identity and representation
- Power, leadership and legacy
- Connections between ancient and contemporary women's stories
- Pride in place and local heritage

The work should celebrate both international narratives and local voices, drawing on collections, archives and community stories where appropriate.

Cleopatra & the Queens of Egypt brings one of history's most iconic figures into a new light, exploring Cleopatra's life, power and legacy alongside the remarkable women who came before her. Drawing on extraordinary objects from leading museum collections, the exhibition reveals the stories of Egypt's queens, female pharaohs and goddesses, placing Cleopatra within a wider narrative of female leadership and influence. From royal regalia and daily life to myth, identity and reputation across time, the exhibition invites visitors to discover how these women shaped history – and how their stories continue to resonate today, both globally and here in Barnsley.

Commission/s

To create an outdoor light art/projection piece and an indoor interactive experience for local people as part of the Barnsley Bright Nights festival.

1) Outdoor light-based Artwork/Projection (Barnsley Town Hall)

- A 5–7 minute long (to be looped) light-based artwork/digital projection on the side of Barnsley Town Hall
- Designed for high visibility and impact within a busy festival environment
- Suitable for large public audiences in an outdoor winter setting

This artwork/projection should:

- Present a clear and engaging narrative
- Capture attention and act as a gateway into the museum
- Be visually strong, accessible and family-friendly

This artwork will be shown on the side of Barnsley Town Hall, Church Street, Barnsley S70 2TA in Barnsley Pals Centenary Square.



2) Indoor Interactive Experience (Experience Barnsley)

- An immersive installation or series of interactive elements inside the museum
- Designed as a journey, trail or 'Night at the Museum' experience, travelling from the entrance of Town Hall, through Experience Barnsley Museum and back outside again

Possible approaches (indicative only):

- Light and digital installations
- Interactive media or sound
- Storytelling environment
- Participatory or hands-on elements

The experience should:

- Encourage deeper engagement with the themes
- Highlight museum collections
- Be engaging and accessible to a wide audience, including families

Audience

Families, young people, and local communities, particularly those less engaged with heritage and cultural activity. The work must be inclusive, accessible and family-friendly.

Community Engagement

The successful creative will work with community groups and young people to co-create elements of the project, supporting participation, wellbeing and local pride. Barnsley Museum's community team will identify, connect and support engagement with community groups to develop content for the final piece.

It is expected that this will include existing museum groups such as:

- Feels Like Home (community programme supporting refugees, asylum seekers and people new to Barnsley to feel welcome, connected and confident through creative activity and shared cultural experiences)
- Cultural Companions (programme supporting older people experiencing social isolation to connect, improve wellbeing and engage with heritage through creative and cultural activities)
- A school or young people's group selected and supported through Fusion (Barnsley Cultural Educational Partnership).

3. DELIVERABLES

Projection artwork, indoor experience, technical files, participation in engagement activity, and documentation for marketing and evaluation.

What you are expected to do as part of the final commission:

- Participation in community engagement activity as part of development phase
- Provide a clear technical plan and proposal for the outdoor light artwork/projection and the indoor experience for approval
- Test and complete activity for Barnsley Bright Nights
- Supply lights or other technical equipment to make the project happen – including any external power needs. Please note that Barnsley Bright Nights is a generator-free festival.
- Provide all technical files ready for installation
- Production and delivery of light artwork/final projection (5–7 minute loop)
- Production and delivery of an Indoor interactive experience
- Provide relevant event plans and safety documentation to deliver the commission, including Public Liability Insurance, Risk Assessments etc

What we will do as part of this commission:

- Support the commission with logistics and any building/technical requirements, access and installation in all spaces

- Support with testing and development
- Liaise and support work with community groups and schools with engagement surrounding your project.
- Identify and provide key stories and access to archives, museums and historical documents relevant to the themes of the commission
- Support with event planning, risk assessments and stewarding
- Support the delivery of the event at Barnsley Bright Nights festival
- Provide promotion/marketing before and after the event
- Collaborate in the evaluation process

4. BUDGET

This project is being quoted on a fixed fee basis.

The maximum budget available is **£23,000** (inclusive of fee, planning, workshops, expenses, evaluation and **exclusive** of VAT)

We expect the full budget to be utilized, and we are seeking a total and inclusive price for the project. No other costs, except the quoted price, will be payable.

The payment schedule will be as follows: 50% paid on sign of contract 25% paid at mid-way point, 25% paid on completion of project

The budget for each commission elements are as follows:

- A. Both external Town Hall projection **and** an internal installation experience with a total commission budget of £23,000
- B. External Town Hall projection **only** with a commission budget of £15,000
- C. Internal immersive experience in Experience Barnsley **only**, with a commission budget of £8000

5. SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE REQUIRED

It is expected that the contractor will have the following skills and experience that are deemed necessary to deliver the relevant parts of the project:

- A. Experience of public art and light installations, ideally connected with a heritage setting
- B. Experience of design and installation of artistic creations in a setting with various restrictions – eg. listed/public buildings, limited power supply, outdoor setting
- C. Experience of working collaboratively with museum staff, volunteers and communities

- D. Ability to communicate work and ideas to a variety of stakeholders
- E. Experience of project and time management

6. HOW TO APPLY

Project proposals can be sent in any format, such as:

- A PDF presentation deck (maximum 10 pages/slides)
- A written proposal with supporting images (maximum 1,500 words, excluding image captions)
- A video application (maximum 5 minutes in length)

Please email your proposal to experiencebarnsley@barnsley.gov.uk
by Monday 7 September at 10am

7. AWARD CRITERIA AND PROPOSAL EVALUATION

All proposals received will be assessed using the evaluation criteria and weighting shown below:

7.1 Artistic Quality of Idea (35%)

Tell us about your creative proposal and artistic vision.

Please include:

- Your chosen option (A, B, C) with overview of your proposed light and sound work for the Barnsley Museums Bright Nights Commission.
- How your proposal takes inspiration from Cleopatra and the Queens of Egypt exhibition and Barnsley's powerful women
- Any visual references or renders that help communicate your idea.

7.2 Community Engagement (20%)

Describe how audiences will connect with and participate in the project.

Please include:

- Opportunities for community involvement in development or delivery
- How local community groups may contribute to or influence the work
- The intended impact on audiences and the wider community

7.3 Previous Work & Project Delivery (15%)

Demonstrate your experience and ability to deliver this project.

Please include:

- Images, videos or examples of relevant previous work
- Information about similar commissions or public art projects you have delivered

- Evidence of your ability to manage budgets, production and installation

7.4 Technical Expertise & Feasibility (10%)

Show us how the project will be realised technically.

Please include:

- How you will use lighting and audio
- How your proposal will illuminate and transform the Town Hall and Experience Barnsley Museum to attract new audiences
- Key technical requirements, equipment and expertise needed

7.5 Accessibility & Inclusivity (10%)

Explain how your project will be welcoming and accessible to a broad audience.

Please include:

- How accessibility has been considered in the design of the artwork
- How the work will be inclusive and representative of diverse audiences

7.6 Budget (10%)

Provide a realistic and transparent project budget. The available budget options are:

- Both external Town Hall projection **and** an internal installation experience with a total commission budget of £23,000
- External Town Hall light artwork/projection **only** with a commission budget of £15,000
- Internal immersive experience in Experience Barnsley **only**, with a commission budget of £8,000

Price will be assessed in terms of value for money, demonstrated in the budget breakdown submitted.

Your budget should include: Artist fees, Production costs, Equipment hire, Licensing , Travel and accommodation, Installation and de-rg costs, Contingency

Please also include evidence of:

- Proof you hold public liability insurance with a minimum level of cover of £5m
- Proof of a current DBS if you intend to work with young or vulnerable groups
- How you will work with us to evaluate the project
- One referee's contact details

All criteria listed above will be scored out of a maximum of 5, and the following guidelines will be applied when allocating scoring:

Scoring Matrix for Quality Criteria		
Score	Judgement	Interpretation
5	Excellent	Exceptional demonstration of the relevant ability, understanding, experience, skills and resource and/or quality measures required to provide the services. Full evidence provided where required to support the response.
4	Good	Competent demonstration of the relevant ability, understanding, experience, skills, resource and/or quality measures required to provide the services. Majority evidence provided to support the response.
3	Acceptable	Demonstration of the relevant ability, understanding, experience, skills, resource, and / or quality measures required to provide the services, with some evidence to support the response.
2	Minor Reservations	Some minor reservations of the relevant ability, understanding, experience, skills, resource, and / or quality measures required to provide the services, with little or no evidence to support the response.
1	Serious Reservations	Considerable reservations of the relevant ability, understanding, experience, skills, resource, and/or quality measures required to provide the services, with little or no evidence to support the response.
0	Unacceptable	Does not comply and/or insufficient information provided to demonstrate that there is the ability, understanding, experience, skills, resource and/or quality measures required to provide the services, with little or no evidence to support the response.

The highest scoring submissions overall will be shortlisted and invited to attend an interview to talk through their submissions, following which the commission will be awarded. Following award notice BMBC will issue a contract (if applicable) and a purchase order to use to invoice against.

If you are not set up on the BMBC system as a supplier, you will be requested to submit details of your bank account and company to be added.

If you have any questions or require any clarification, please do not hesitate to contact Experience Barnsley Museum via: experiencebarnsley@barnsley.gov.uk

We look forward to receiving your submission.