

# Horniman Museum and Gardens reveals early look at Nature + Love project, launching in 125th anniversary year

## DATES FOR THE DIARY:

- **New Horniman Gardens attractions opening early summer 2026**
  - **Historic natural history gallery to reopen early 2027**

**London. 6 November 2025.** The Horniman Museum and Gardens in south east London has today revealed early details of what's to come as part of its ambitious Nature + Love project. Several exciting new experiences will open to the public during the Horniman's 125th anniversary year in 2026, with new opportunities for visitors to play, learn, and engage in nature.



*An early look at the Horniman Museum and Garden's new nature-themed play area and café, one of a number of new experiences opening at the much loved institution from early Summer 2026 © Feilden Fowles*

Nature + Love is the Horniman's major transformation project that has been supported by The National Lottery Heritage Fund and aims to inspire a greater understanding of and appreciation for the world we all share, while making the Horniman more accessible and inclusive to all visitors.

In **early summer 2026** a number of new attractions and opportunities to engage in nature will open in the Horniman's award-winning 16-acre Gardens, including:

- A new destination, Kusuma Nature Play, will offer an engaging space for families to encourage learning and wellbeing through nature and play. Kusuma Nature Play features a children's play area inspired by local wildlife and a new family-friendly cafe, as well as more direct access onto the Horniman's historic Nature Trail.
- The Horniman's Nature Trail will offer step-free access for the first time, as well as site-specific interpretation, ensuring more visitors and school groups are able to enjoy the 700m long trail.



- An innovative augmented reality trail will be launched across the Gardens. The free and fun AR trail, developed with digital visitor engagement experts Smartify, will feature a cast of animated animals for visitors to meet, with challenges and mini games to play along the way.
- A transformed Gardens Nursery area will feature new glasshouses, a public boardwalk route, and workshop space offering local communities and other visitors the chance to learn about sustainable gardening.

To celebrate the opening of these spaces, and to mark the Horniman's 125<sup>th</sup> birthday in 2026, the Horniman will be holding three days of special events from 27 to 29 June.

In **early 2027** the Horniman's popular natural history gallery will reopen to the public. The fully refurbished gallery space will be entirely redisplayed with both familiar favourites and new objects, to explore humankind's relationship with and impact on the natural world. More details will be announced in 2026.

**Museums Minister Baroness Twycross said:** *'I am delighted we have been able to provide increased support for the Horniman to help deliver their Nature + Love project. It is a great example of how our cultural institutions can connect communities with the world around them.'*

*'As the Horniman Museum celebrates its 125th anniversary, this new project will provide opportunities for families and young people to learn about the world we live in and engage with nature.'*

**Michael Salter-Church MBE, Chair of the Horniman, said:** *'Opening in the Horniman's 125th year, these new features in the Gardens will help visitors learn about the natural world and provide new welcoming spaces for everyone to enjoy for years to come. They embody the Horniman's ethos and purpose and will help us celebrate our birthday!'*

**Gordon Seabright, Chief Executive at the Horniman, said:** *'We are delighted to reveal a first glimpse of what's to come at the Horniman as part of our Nature + Love project. The Gardens are a beloved and integral part of the Horniman, and we hope the new attractions opening in 2026 will provide new and familiar visitors with fun and enriching encounters with the precious natural world we all share.'*

**Kirsten Walker MBE, Director of Collections Care & Estates at the Horniman, said:** *'Nature + Love has been an incredible project to work on and we are very excited to welcome visitors to the new attractions opening at the Horniman, starting in the Gardens. We have improved accessibility to the Gardens, as well as creating new features – a new play area, family-friendly cafe and AR trail which are set to offer all visitors, at any age, opportunities for interactive outdoor learning and play. More than ever before, the Horniman is the perfect environment for visitors to spend time in nature, while furthering their understanding of the natural world – and having fun!'*

**Stuart McLeod, Director of London and South at The National Lottery Heritage Fund, said:** *'It's fantastic to get the first glimpse of the next chapter for the Horniman Museum and Gardens. Nature + Love will create inclusive, engaging spaces that offer a deeper connection to our natural heritage. As the Horniman celebrates its 125th anniversary, we're delighted that National Lottery players are helping to make this transformation possible, ensuring the Horniman continues to inspire visitors of all ages for generations to come.'*

The Horniman's Nature + Love project has been made possible by the support of a number of funders, including The National Lottery Heritage Fund, thanks to money raised by National Lottery players. Kusuma Nature Play and the improved accessibility to the Nature Trail have been made possible by Kusuma Trust. The overall project has also been funded by the



Department of Culture, Media and Sport's Public Bodies Infrastructure Fund (PBIF), the Wolfson Foundation, Oak Foundation, Garfield Weston Foundation, and The Foyle Foundation.

More details about the new attractions, as well as plans for its 125th anniversary celebrations, will be announced in the coming months.

- Ends -

Press pack, including images, available here: [Press Pack](#)

For more information about the Horniman's Nature + Love transformation project, please contact:

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### **Notes to Editors**

#### **About the Horniman Museum and Gardens**

The Horniman Museum and Gardens is a welcoming, inspiring, family-friendly, free attraction in south east London's Forest Hill. Marking its 125th anniversary in 2026, the Horniman connects visitors with global cultures and the natural environment.

Set among 16 acres of beautiful, award-winning Gardens, the Horniman has a collection of 350,000 objects, specimens and artefacts from around the world. The Horniman was Art Fund Museum of the Year 2022, the world's largest museum prize.

In 2019 the Horniman declared an ecological and climate emergency, pledging to place carbon reduction and environmental issues at the heart of its work.

The Horniman Museum and Gardens is governed by an independent charitable trust; it is core-funded by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) and also relies on income from ticket sales, memberships, the shop and the cafe to help care for the Gardens, animals and Aquarium residents, to run events and to look after the collections.

The Horniman Museum and Gardens first opened in 1901 as a gift to the people in perpetuity from tea trader and philanthropist Frederick John Horniman, to 'bring the world to Forest Hill'.

The Horniman's 125th anniversary in 2026 is centred around the completion of the Nature + Love project while looking forward to the next 125 years.

[horniman.ac.uk](http://horniman.ac.uk)

#### **About The National Lottery Heritage Fund**

Our vision is for heritage to be valued, cared for and sustained for everyone, now and in the future. That's why as the largest funder for the UK's heritage we are dedicated to supporting projects that connect people and communities to heritage, as set out in our strategic plan, Heritage 2033. Heritage can be anything from the past that people value and want to pass on to future generations. We believe in the power of heritage to ignite the imagination, offer joy and inspiration, and to build pride in place and connection to the past.

Over the next 10 years, we aim to invest £3.6 billion raised for good causes by National Lottery players to make a decisive difference for people, places and communities.

[heritagefund.org.uk](http://heritagefund.org.uk)



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### **About Kusuma Trust**

Kusuma Trust UK is a family led philanthropic trust established in 2010. The Trust gives grants to organisations based on shared values and mutual interests in the UK, Gibraltar and India. Since inception, Kusuma Trust has made significant contributions in the areas of health, education and culture through capital, programme and research grants.

[kusumatrust.org](http://kusumatrust.org)

### **About the Department of Culture, Media and Sport's Public Bodies Infrastructure Fund (PBIF)**

DCMS's Public Bodies Infrastructure Fund supports the Department's arts and cultural public bodies in addressing urgent and critical estates maintenance challenges.

### **About the Wolfson Foundation**

The Wolfson Foundation is an independent grant-making charity with a focus on research and education. Its aim is to contribute to civil society by supporting high-quality projects in science, health, heritage, humanities and the arts.

Since it was established in 1955, the Wolfson Foundation has awarded over £1 billion (£2 billion in real terms) to around 14,000 projects throughout the UK, all on the basis of expert review.

[wolfson.org.uk](http://wolfson.org.uk)

### **About Oak Foundation**

Through its grant-making, Oak Foundation contributes to a safer, fairer, and more sustainable world.

[oakfnd.org](http://oakfnd.org)

### **About Garfield Weston Foundation**

The Garfield Weston Foundation is a family founded grant-maker that gives money to support charities across the UK. The Foundation supports charities operating in a wide variety of sectors that make a positive difference within their communities. The Foundation was established by W. Garfield Weston in 1958, through an endowment of shares in Wittington Investments – which holds a majority stake in Associated British Foods. This successful business model exists to this day. Each year the sum the Foundation has given away has grown: in the most recent financial year 2024-2025 the Foundation gave away almost £130 million to 2,967 charities. Since its establishment, the Foundation has generated funds of nearly £1.7 billion, which have been donated to UK charities.

[garfieldweston.org](http://garfieldweston.org)

### **About The Foyle Foundation**

The Foyle Foundation was established in 2000 as an independent grant making trust to distribute grants to UK based charities (primarily arts and learning) and schools. The Foundation's long planned spend down and closure takes place in December 2025 by when it will have distributed over £180M in total, including a number of legacy projects with long term benefit.