

This Council notes that:

Bury has a rich military history, with the Lancashire Fusiliers at its heart. To commemorate this, Bury is home to vital cultural assets including the Fusilier Museum, made up of two main galleries (The Lancashire Fusiliers (LF) and The Royal Regiment of Fusiliers (RRF)) and Bury Castle Armoury.

Bury Castle Armoury is a Grade II Listed building which is situated on top of the original Bury Castle site and which was built in the 1800s. It represents a fundamental part of what it means to be from Bury and is a strong part of Bury's cultural identity.

For generations, Bury Castle Armoury has stood as a reminder of Bury's proud connection to the Lancashire Fusiliers and sacrifices made by local people in service to their country. It stands as a window into the story which our community and our town can tell, and make sure that future generations are privy to that history.

We express profound sadness at the decline and mismanagement of the asset over many years, which has resulted in the present circumstances and believe that the people of Bury are owed an explanation for how this came about.

As a town, we all benefit richly from cultural assets such as Bury Castle Armoury. It was and can be once again a valuable educational resource for schools, colleges and community groups who can engage directly with history, military heritage and the concept of civic responsibility, helping to strengthen community pride amongst all ages. By committing to re-open the armoury as a cultural asset, the Trustees can help to give it prominence and see it flourish and it is therefore important that the site is re-opened to the public and remains operational as a cultural asset.

Since 2022, the Council has taken a range of actions to support the repair and reopening of Castle Armoury, including:

- While still open, after a visit to a Veterans breakfast where concerns were raised about the lack of maintenance and repairs, the Council Leader, the Armed Forces Champion and Christian Wakeford MP wrote to the Armed Forces Minister, highlighting concerns regarding the lack of maintenance at Castle Armoury and the risk this posed to its continued use.
- Passing an unanimously approved motion at Full Council calling for Castle Armoury to be repaired and reopened.
- Arranging for a letter signed by several hundred residents to be sent to the Armed Forces Minister, urging that the building be made safe and that the necessary repairs be carried out without delay.
- Organising a public online meeting with the Chair of the Trustees and Head of the RFCANW, providing local residents and interested parties with the opportunity to hear directly from those responsible and to express their views.

- Convening a range of meetings between the Chair of the Trustees, Council officers, the Armed Forces Champion and the Head of the RFCA to press for urgent repairs to enable the building to reopen.
- Working with the VFCA to support the Chair of the Trustees and provide information on potential grant funding opportunities that could assist in financing the required works.
- Requesting enforcement action to be taken by the Trust against the RFCA to secure the necessary repairs where appropriate.

This Council further notes that:

According to Historic England, historic attractions in England reported a 3.1% increase in total visits from 2023 to 2024 – slightly more than the 1.4% increase reported by the wider England attractions market. England's historic attractions benefitted from the continued recovery in inbound tourism in 2024, reporting a 15% increase in Overseas visits compared with 2023.

Overall, again according to Historic England, there was a 10% increase in the number of school visits to historic attractions. This is higher than observed in the wider attractions sector and is a continued increase.

Other garrison towns have succeeded in converting former military facilities into educational and tourism hubs. By doing this, the Trustees can reopen Castle Armoury as a community museum or cultural centre, an approach which would honour our past while creating new opportunities for education and inspiring pride among residents.

The reopening of Bury Castle Armoury under present ownership could also provide a valuable source of income to ensure the sustainable running and upkeep of the building for future generations.

This Council resolves to:

Reaffirm its cross-party, long-standing commitment to Bury's culture and history, long-standing cultural assets and its rich military history.

Request that all Group Leaders write a joint letter to Bury and Heywood Drill Halls Trust to demand that Bury Castle Armoury is taken off the market immediately and request that the Trustees bring forward a comprehensive paper detailing a full range of available options for both preventing any repurposing of Bury Castle Armoury and its re-opening, to include but not be limited to full repair and reopening, cost appraisals, details of possible avenues of investment to achieve the same, identification of key local and national stakeholders with whom the Trustees can work and outline a process for engagement of interested parties who may be able to assist in rectifying the current situation.

Request that all Group Leaders write a joint letter to Bury's two Members of Parliament, James Frith MP (Bury North) and Christian Wakeford MP (Bury South)

expressing the Council's support for this motion, seeking their backing to request allocation of part of the Government's £1.5bn fund to repair and reopen the Armoury and requesting that they support and actively seek the implementation of the other resolutions detailed herein.