

DPLR3\1033

Darwin Plus Local - Final Report (1)

Officer: Linzi Ogden

Section 1 - Darwin Plus Local Project Information (Essential)

Project Reference Number

DPL00068

Q1. Project Title

No Response

Overseas Territory(ies)

☒ South Georgia and The South Sandwich Islands (SGSSI)

Lead Organisation or Individual

South Georgia Heritage Trust

Partner Organisation(s)

South Georgia Museum, Government of South Georgia & the South Sandwich Islands, British Antarctic Survey, Friends of South Georgia Island, Culture Communications Collective

Value of Darwin Plus Local Grant Award

£30,222.00

Project Start Date

01 April 2024

Project End Date

31 March 2025

Project Leader Name

Jayne Pierce

Project Website/Twitter/Blog etc.

<https://sgmuseum.gs/chapter/we-are-all-whalers/>

Report Author(s)

Report Date

30 April 2025

Project Summary

No Response

Project Outcomes

Unchecked	Biodiversity: improving and conserving biodiversity, and slowing or reversing biodiversity loss and degradation;
Unchecked	Climate Change: responding to, mitigating and adapting to climate change and its effects on the natural environment and local communities;
Unchecked	Environmental quality: improving the condition and protection of the natural environment;
Checked	Capability and capacity building: enhancing the capacity within OTs, including through community engagement and awareness, to support the environment in the short- and long-term.

Section 2 - Project Outcomes (Essential)

On a scale of 1 (high – outcome substantially exceeded) to 5 (low – outcome substantially did not meet expectation), how successful do you think your project has been?

Ⓐ 2 - Outcome moderately exceeded

Project outcomes and justification for rating above

Funding from Darwin Plus Local enabled the South Georgia Museum to create a new exhibition about the whales that inhabit the waters of South Georgia.

Our project aimed to inform, educate and inspire visitors to Grytviken about South Georgia’s whale populations, giving them an understanding of why whales need continued protection and how visitors can help. The new gallery at the South Georgia Museum includes science, art, sounds, objects and archives to explain whale ecology, how industrial whaling pushed whale species close to extinction, and how scientists, government, industry and visitors are helping protect these wonderful animals as they return to the Southern Ocean.

Project Outcomes:
The South Georgia Museum now has a new focus on the present and future of whales in South Georgia, with a fresh focus on marine science and conservation which was previously absent. The new gallery is attractive, engaging and up-to-date.

Interpretation panels set the scene and engage the visitor.

The new sound station, through interactive Raven Exhibition software developed by Cornell University, provides visitors with an immersive experience. Visitors can now listen to the evocative sounds of whale song recorded by the British Antarctic Survey in Cumberland Bay (visible from the gallery window).

After their visits, visitors to the South Georgia Museum are better informed about

- whale biology and ecology
- the return of whales to the waters around South Georgia
- that migrating whales are still at risk from emerging threats
- how science, government policy and conservation collaborations are helping to mitigate some of these threats.
- what actions they can take personally to help whale conservation and conservation of the wider marine environment when they leave South Georgia.

Visiting South Georgia is, for the vast majority, not feasible. As part of the project, the new gallery was recreated in a digital format. An online exhibition was developed for our new South Georgia Museum website (see link below). The exhibition was launched online on 3 March 2025 with the aim that anyone can digitally explore the exhibition without the need to travel. We hope to educate and inspire a wider UK and reach a global audience.

To date, feedback about both the physical and the online exhibition has been very positive. Some example feedback from social media:

"Lovely to see an image of the inside of the Museum! I had a great time there many years ago!"

"Love it"

"Amazing"

"Looking forward to seeing it next season"

"Fantastic visit today to the museum, evidence of an interesting history all around".


In terms of general statistics for the South Georgia Museum website for March 2025 (compared to the previous month):


- Visitors: 2700 (up 107.7%)
- Unique visitors: 2600 (up 116.7%)
- Time spent on website: 2m22s (up 43.4%)
- Traffic source: organic


While it is not possible to conclusively link these increases to the online exhibition, it is highly likely that they are attributable to the publicity around its launch.


Supporting Evidence - file(s) upload


 [WAAW Visitors with Curator Jayne Pierce 1](#)


 18/04/2025


 15:13:13

 jpg 2.62 MB


 [WAAW Visitors with Curator Jayne Pierce 2](#)


 18/04/2025


 15:12:50

 jpg 2.15 MB


 [AFTER We Are All Whalers 3](#)


 18/04/2025


 15:07:27


 jpg 2.28 MB


 [Jarvis Room BEFORE 3](#)


 18/04/2025


 15:06:01


 jpg 1.04 MB


 [Jarvis Room BEFORE 1](#)


 18/04/2025


 15:05:45

 jpg 1.02 MB


 [WAAW Visitors 3 - view from whale gallery window](#)


 18/04/2025


 15:12:54


 jpg 4.07 MB


 [AFTER We Are all Whalers 1](#)


 18/04/2025


 15:07:30

 jpg 2.25 MB


 [AFTER We Are All Whalers 2 - Sound Station](#)


 18/04/2025


 15:07:00

 jpg 2.2 MB

 [Jarvis Room BEFORE 2](#)

 18/04/2025

 15:05:59

 jpg 1.04 MB

Supporting Evidence - links to published document/online materials

Three uploaded supporting photographs (labelled Jarvis Room BEFORE) show the museum space before the new exhibition was installed. The space was over 20 years old and looked cluttered and in need of an upgrade.

The new space has been painted to create a different feeling from the rest of the museum. The addition of the whale sounds gives an immersive experience. The space has a view of the sea of Cumberland Bay, bringing the outside inside. Please see three uploaded images of the new exhibition and three of visitors to the newly opened space.

A time lapse film of the installation is available to view on our Facebook page here:

<https://sght.slack.com/archives/D07FSCS8VBj/p1745485439165519>

The physical exhibition is complemented by an online exhibition on the South Georgia Museum web site, opening the story to a wider audience. The online exhibition uses drone footage and whale sounds collected from South Georgia waters to highlight current science.

The link is here: <https://sgmuseum.gs/chapter/we-are-all-whalers/>

Project Challenges

The project went very well. Due to the remote nature of South Georgia, the cargo and materials had to be planned, ordered and shipped very soon after the launch of the project. While the cargo made its slow passage to the Falkland Islands and then onto South Georgia, the team worked on the website development.

The cargo arrived in South Georgia in January 2025 as planned, with no damage or items lost. The team was then able to get to work very quickly on clearing the space of the old displays, painting and refurbishing the space and installing the new exhibition.

The main issues with the project involved getting the team to the island. Limited ship berths on the Government vessel and MOD flights meant that the team had to make new travel plans to South Georgia via a commercial airline and the kind offer of a cruise ship transport. The change of travel plans involved extra unforeseen costs due to several extra nights' accommodation and food needs.

Lessons Learned

- i) What worked well and why? Advance planning was essential to ensure everything arrived at South Georgia for installation before the end of the summer season. All went well and nothing was damaged during transit. Partnership working with both British Antarctic Survey (BAS) and the Government build team was very successful. These are long-term partnerships built on trust and personal relationships. It was particularly useful that the BAS WildWater Whales team coincided with our Museum staff on island. Working alongside one another strengthened the tie between the two organisations. BAS whale scientists are now coming to talk at SGHT's Whale of a Weekend event in Dundee in June 2025.
- ii) What did not work well and why? The only real issue was around staff travel to South Georgia, which is always somewhat unpredictable. Also, because of the short time frame, we weren't able to properly evaluate the enhanced visitor experience before tourist season ended. This will have to wait until the 2025/6 season.
- iii) If we had to do it again, we would make some tweaks to the budget, such as contingency for travel arrangements (we had allowed a time contingency, but not a budget contingency). We probably underestimated how much of the South Georgia Museum Curator's time would be involved and could have made that more explicit as in-kind match funding.
- iv) Recommendations to others doing similar projects? The main thing is to allow extra time as everything always takes longer than you expect, particularly in a remote environment.

Section 3 - Project Finance (Essential)

Project Expenditure

Project Spend (indicative) since last Annual Report	2023/24 Grant (£)	2023/24 Total actual Darwin Plus Costs (£)	Variance %	Comments (please explain significant variances)
Staff Costs				
Consultancy Costs				
Overhead Costs				

Travel and Subsistence				
Operating Costs				
Capital Items				
Others				
Total	30,222.00	30,359.31	0.5	

Please provide a short narrative summary on project finances.

i) As indicated above, consultancy costs were 20% higher than budgeted as VAT was mistakenly not accounted for in our original application budget.

Limited flight and ship transfer options for outbound travel meant Museum staff having to fly with commercial airlines at a higher price than those offered by the MOD, plus extra accommodation costs. Also, due to limited ship routes, the length of stay on South Georgia was longer than anticipated. Flight and ship delays also incurred an extra two days of hotel and food costs.

Conversely, materials were cheaper than anticipated and we managed to repurpose an old display case, making a saving of [REDACTED]. Similarly, cargo crates were smaller than expected (priced per metre square).

So although travel and accommodation costs proved to be unexpectedly high, we were able to make savings in other areas. Overall, the project expenditure was almost exactly the amount budgeted. Total spend was just [REDACTED] over budget.

ii) n/a

Section 4 - Contribution of Project to Darwin Plus Programme Objectives

Please select up to **one** indicator that applies within **each group/indicator list (A, B, C, D)** and report your results for that indicator in the text box underneath. If you do not have relevant results to report for any of the indicators in a particular group, you can leave them blank.

Please also submit some form of evidence (above) to demonstrate any results you list below, where possible.

Group A: Capability and Capacity - Core Darwin Plus Standard Indicators (select one)

Unchecked	DPLUS-A01: Number of people from key national and local stakeholder groups completing structured and relevant training.
Unchecked	DPLUS-A02: Number of secondments or placements completed by individuals of key local and national stakeholders.
Unchecked	DPLUS-A03: Number of local/national organisations with improved capability and capacity as a result of project.
Unchecked	DPLUS-A04: Number of people reporting that they are applying new capabilities (skills and knowledge) 6 (or more) months after training.
Unchecked	DPLUS-A05: Number of trainers trained reporting to have delivered further training by the end of the project.

Group A Indicator Results

n/a

Group B: Policies, Practices and Management- Core Darwin Plus Standard Indicators (select one)

Unchecked	DPLUS-B01: Number of new/improved habitat management plans available and endorsed.
Unchecked	DPLUS-B02: Number of new/improved species management plans available and endorsed.
Unchecked	DPLUS-B03: Number of new/improved community management plans available and endorsed.
Unchecked	DPLUS-B04: Number of new/improved sustainable enterprises/ community benefits management plans available and endorsed.

Unchecked	DPLUS-B05: Number of people with increased participation in local communities / local management organisations (i.e., participation in Governance/citizen engagement).
Unchecked	DPLUS-B06: Number of Local Stakeholders and Local Communities (people) with strengthened (recognised/clarified) tenure and/or rights.

Group B Indicator Results

n/a

Group C: Evidence and Best Practices - Core Darwin Plus Standard Indicators (select one)

Unchecked	DPLUS-C01: Number of best practice guides and knowledge products published and endorsed.
Unchecked	DPLUS-C02: Number of new conservation or species stock assessments published.
Unchecked	DPLUS-C03: New assessments of habitat conservation action needs published.
Unchecked	DPLUS-C04: New assessments of community use of biodiversity resources published.
Unchecked	DPLUS-C05: Number of projects contributing data, insights, and case studies to national Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) related reporting processes and calls for evidence.

Group C Indicator Results

n/a

Group D: Sustainable Benefits to People, Biodiversity and Climate - Core Darwin Plus Standard Indicators (select one)

Unchecked	DPLUS-D01 Hectares of habitat under sustainable management practices.
Unchecked	DPLUS-D02: Number of people whose disaster/climate resilience has been improved.
Unchecked	DPLUS-D03: Number of policies with biodiversity provisions that have been enacted or amended.

Group D Indicator Results

n/a

Section 5 - Project Partnerships, Wider Impacts and Contributions

Project Partnerships

- i) Partner roles. Friends of South Georgia Island (FOSGI) funded the Sound Station. CCC created the online exhibition, having first worked with us to build and develop the South Georgia Museum website. British Antarctic Survey (BAS) advised on content creation for the exhibition and played a key part in the online exhibition by supplying drone footage from 2025 whale tagging field work (funded by FOSGI). The whale team also built content for the sound station. Henry Slessor (SGHT-funded PhD student) created content on the software which was then shipped on the Sir David Attenborough to be installed into the sound station ready for the exhibition launch.
- ii) Government involvement. GSGSSI supported the project from the outset. The GSGSSI build team worked to refurbish the space and help with the installation. They also completed carpentry work to repurpose Discovery Investigation lab benches which were cleaned and repaired to be used as display cases. GSGSSI assisted with the cargo shipment on the Pharos and getting Museum staff home again.
- iii) Major challenge of the project was the logistics. The Project Leader worked hard to keep the timeframe for logistics moving forward and to stay within budget. Alongside planning the exhibition, object selection and ensuring that the cargo arrived in time for installation, there were the additional challenges of planning staff travel to and from the island and finding accommodation, in what was a busy museum and science season. The island was at maximum capacity this year.
- iv) No other stakeholders were involved.

Wider Impacts and Decision Making

n/a

Sustainability and Legacy

The exhibition is a permanent display, so will be in place for at least 5-10 years. This season we had 15,520 visitors to the museum (109 ship visits). The exhibition was launched towards the end of this season but with the Museum opening again in October 2025 for a new season, we hope to welcome over 15,000 more visitors. The legacy of the funding will continue - engaging visitors and spreading the message about current science and the biodiversity of South Georgia and educating people about the work of GSGSSI, BAS and SGHT. Conservation work never ends.

Helen Balfour, formerly Curatorial Intern, has now been taken on full-time as Assistant Curator of the Museum and will be working with Curator Jayne Pierce for the next three years. This exhibition was the first of many exhibitions they hope to create together and they will certainly continue to work with GSGSSI.

Section 6 - Communications & Publicity

Exceptional Outcomes and Achievements

We are thrilled to announce the launch of our new online exhibition, "We Are All Whalers," a poignant exploration of the complex relationship between humanity and the magnificent whales of the Southern Oceans to coincide with our on-island exhibition.


Inspired by Michael J. Moore's book, this exhibition confronts the historical legacy of whaling, the devastating impact of industrial exploitation, and the ongoing challenges faced by these incredible creatures. For millennia, humans have hunted whales, but it was the relentless pursuit of profit in the 20th century that pushed them to the brink of extinction.


Today, as whale populations slowly begin to recover, they face new threats: commercial fishing nets, the noise pollution of shipping lanes, vessel strikes, and the accelerating impact of climate change.


We believe that by understanding the past and acknowledging our shared responsibility, we can work towards a future where South Georgia's whales, and all marine life, thrive. The exhibition can be visited here:
<https://sgmuseum.gs/chapter/we-are-all-whalers/>


Photo, video or graphic to be used for publicity and communications.


Please upload at least one relevant and engaging image, video or graphic that you consent to be used alongside the above text in Defra, JNCC or NIRAS communications material.


 [DPL00068 WAAW 4](#)


 28/04/2025


 15:51:03


 jpg 2.62 MB


 [DPL00068 WAAW 3](#)


 25/04/2025


 12:17:35


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 [DPL00068 WAAW 2](#)


 25/04/2025


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 [DPL00068 WAAW 1](#)

 25/04/2025

 12:09:36

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Photo, video, and/or graphic captions and credits.

DPL00068 WAAW 1 – The newly-installed Whale Gallery - South Georgia Museum, Grytviken, South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands – Credit: South Georgia Museum

DPL00068 WAAW 2 – The new sound station at which visitors can hear underwater recordings of whale species visiting South Georgia's waters. South Georgia Museum, Grytviken, South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands – Credit: South Georgia Museum

DPL00068 WAAW 3 – Sound station and other exhibits in situ. - South Georgia Museum, Grytviken, South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands – Credit: South Georgia Museum

DPL00068 WAAW 4 - Curator Jayne Pierce talks to visitors about the newly installed sound station - South Georgia Museum, Grytviken, South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands – Credit: South Georgia Museum

In addition, we have a time lapse video depicting the installation of the We are All Whalers exhibition at the South Georgia Museum. Unfortunately we are unable to upload the MP4 file here, despite having reduced the file size to less than 20MB (an error message reads "Invalid File Type. Please check your file type (extension) and try again"). If you would like us to supply this via a different means, such as WeTransfer, please let us know.

I agree for the Biodiversity Challenge Funds Secretariat, Administrator, and/or JNCC to publish the content of this section.

☒ Yes, I agree for the BCFs Secretariat and/or JNCC to publish the content of this section.

Please list any accounts that you would like tagged in online posts here. This can include project pages, partners' pages or individuals' accounts for any of the following platforms: LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram.

- South Georgia Museum (SGM)

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/southgeorgiamuseum/>

- South Georgia Heritage Trust (SGHT)

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/SouthGeorgiaHeritageTrust/>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/southgeorgiaheritagetrust/>

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/5886098>

- Government of South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands (GSGSSI):

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/govsgssi/posts/?feedView=all>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/GovSGSSI>

- British Antarctic Survey (BAS)

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/wildwaterwhales/>

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/wild-water-whales-of-south-georgia-3b216b336/>

Section 7 - Darwin Plus Contacts

Please tick here to confirm that you have read and acknowledge the BCF's Privacy Notice on how contact details will be used and stored and that you have sought agreement from anyone that you are sharing personal details with us on their behalf.

☒ I confirm I have read the Privacy Notice and have consent to share the following contact details

Project Contact Details

Project Contact Name	Jayne Pierce
Role within Darwin Plus Project	Project Leader
Email	[REDACTED]
Phone	[REDACTED]
Do you need further sections to provide additional contact details?	<input checked="" type="radio"/> No