



Press Release

For Immediate Release

Museum beats the odds to reopen in 2025.

February 14th, 2025: Hard-hit independent museum, Stow Maries Great War Aerodrome, has managed to re-open to the public for another year, despite having suffered a devastating loss of income in 2024.

Last summer, the cherished museum was distraught when unannounced road closures stopped visitors reaching them in the height of their busy season. The road was finally opened, but the damage done was heavy – with loss of footfall and major events being cancelled hitting the finances hard.

Despite the outlook being very dark indeed, in September 2024 the Board of Trustees took the brave decision to battle on.

“Saving the museum is our number one priority,” says Charity CEO, Ian Flint. “We need our supporters to visit us – or, if they can’t, they can always make a donation. We welcome either or both!”

The supporters of the museum answered the call and the visitors started to return in late Summer and early Autumn. On top of that, an online funding campaign raised an impressive £12, 250 to help cover the rising costs of keeping the museum open – money that was added to a large confidential donation from a concerned benefactor.

“We were overjoyed at the response that we received.”, continues Ian. “Not just the donations – which were amazing – but also offers of support for future events.”

All this means that the clouds over the future of the charity have cleared – for now. The museum needs to increase its visitor numbers in 2025 to have a chance at a future. To help toward this, they are installing two new exhibitions and hosting a bumper calendar of events. Not to forget that the popular café, located in the original 1917 Airmen’s Mess, can be used without admission fees.

“Every visit is vital. Come in for just a coffee, if you like!” says Ian. “We welcome everyone and we know that even just buying a slice of cake is helping us survive.”

The museum opens to visitors every Friday, Saturday and Sunday. To plan your visit on a regular opening day, go to www.stowmaries.org.uk . For details of the events taking place at the museum in 2025, check <https://www.stowmaries.org.uk/events>.

All proceeds from opening to the public and all events directly funds the ongoing work to preserve and protect Stow Maries Great War Aerodrome and support its battle for survival.

The aerodrome, situated between Chelmsford and Maldon in the Essex countryside, features the largest collection of Royal Flying Corps buildings in the world. It was the base of 37 (Home Defence) Squadron Royal Flying Corps, which was tasked to protect London from raids by German Zeppelin airships and Gotha heavy bombers.

Stow Maries Great War Aerodrome, Hackman's Lane, Purleigh, CM3 6RN is open from 14th February 2025, 10am until 4pm, on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays. www.stowmaries.org.uk

Ends

Further information from Ian Flint on info@stowmaries.org.uk

Notes for editors:

- Essex County and Maldon District Councils led the acquisition of the site for the nation in 2013, following a generous grant from the Heritage Memorial Fund. It was placed in the care of Stow Maries Great War Aerodrome, a registered charity.
- Today the museum, still an operational airfield, is supported and maintained by over 100 volunteers. It is open each Friday, Saturday and Sunday from 10am until 4pm
- More information about Stow Maries Great War Aerodrome can be found at www.stowmaries.org.uk