

PROJECT KAIDA UPDATE FROM THE GURKHA MUSEUM **(dated 6 September 2024)**

Introduction

2024 is our 50th anniversary year, and thus far it has been an exceptionally busy but also a very rewarding one. Our golden anniversary has provided an opportunity to reflect upon and celebrate what the Brigade and the Museum have achieved over the past five decades. We have also, as you know, been reflecting on and re-evaluating how we deliver on our responsibility to preserve, to protect and to promote Gurkha heritage for current and future generations.

With your support, advice and guidance your Museum has a detailed, fully costed, and ambitious vision. The project will deliver a world-class visitor experience and position us as the global reference centre for Gurkha heritage.

While the full update is below, it would be remiss if your donation and support were not acknowledged upfront. Your donation is not only financially vital to this small charity's appeal fund, but also provide a strong message of support when approaching other potential donors. Please share widely, our message of gratitude. A short film (6 minutes) outlining the redevelopment, known by its Nepali name *Project Kaida*, was produced earlier this year. The film can be watched [here](#) and a booklet outlining the need for *Project Kaida* can be read [here](#). Monthly updates on the redevelopment are published in the [Friends'](#) e-newsletters.

Redesigning our public galleries

Using the Royal Institute of British Architect's (RIBA) terminology, we have now reached RIBA Stage 3. The designs for the museum's galleries can be seen in section 5 [here](#) – the designs are detailed and costed. We are grateful to everyone who has given their time and expertise during our extensive consultation phase.

Remodelling our library

The old library has already been transformed into three separate areas: a research area, an archive room, and a library that is now a flexible space that can be used for lectures, educational workshops, hybrid meetings as well as commercial hire.

Digitising our archives

With the hiring of a project-funded Archives and Digitisation Officer, the detailed cataloguing of records has commenced in preparation for the digitisation of our extensive archive. This will also involve recording oral histories in Nepal and the UK of officers and soldiers (serving and retired) and their families. There is scope to include your Association's work; please do contact us as soon as possible to discuss any requirements.

Delivering an activities and outreach programme

With the hiring of a project-funded p/t Community Engagement and Partnerships Officer, a three-year activity and outreach programme has been designed to engage more audiences with Gurkha heritage at the Museum and across the country.

Funding *Project Kaida*, the redevelopment of The Gurkha Museum

The financial cost of transforming The Gurkha Museum is £5.2 million. All costings have been scrutinised as part of the National Lottery Heritage Fund bid. We have already received a National Lottery development grant of £300k which has allowed us to develop our detailed architectural, interpretation, activity and business plans to take the project forward and fund additional staff support.

Last month, we applied to the National Lottery for the full 'delivery phase' funding (a further £2.6m). This is no small matter – the application included 19 supporting documents running to more than 770 pages!

A pre-requisite for being awarded the full National Lottery grant is for us to fundraise £2m of the total. The Museum has committed £300k of its reserves. The serving Brigade is leading the fundraising through £500k commitment from 2022 to 2026, via the Service Day's Pay Giving Scheme on top of individual units' fundraising support. Donations and pledges from the other antecedent regiments are another vital and much appreciated commitment to Gurkha heritage. Applications to major grant giving organisations is ongoing, but a commitment of a further £700k is required.

Other events and achievements

Earlier this year, we were re-certified as an Arts Council England Accredited Museum (the benchmark of a trusted Museum), and we were awarded 'Cultural and Creative Business of the Year' in the Winchester Business Excellence Awards.

As well as events marking our 50th anniversary, this year we have held events marking 80 years since the seminal battles of Imphal-Kohima, 75 years since the formation of the Queens' Gurkha Signals, 30 years since Royal Gurkha Rifles was formed from 2nd, 6th, 7th and 10th Gurkha Rifles, and 25 years since the Brigade's deployments to Kosovo and East Timor. Gurkha heritage continues to be preserved and promoted.

Your support?

The delivery of *Project Kaida* will be hugely significant for the global Gurkha community (serving and retired) as well as for our nation's heritage. Your assistance in promoting *Project Kaida* and helping to find organisations and/or individuals that might assist funding this [once-in-a-generation project](#) is needed. Your and your members' support plays a vital role in allowing The Gurkha Museum Trust to continue its work of honouring Gurkha service to Britain. If you have any further questions and/or offers of support, please do not hesitate to contact a member of the Museum team today.