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Gardens & Museums IT Contact Details

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If you require this document in an alternative format, please contact us via it@museums.ox.ac.uk

Welcome

Welcome to the Spring Edition of the Gardens & Museums IT Newsletter!

We're now in March (and almost in April), and it feels like such a long time ago that I last wrote, which likely indicates how much has gone on and how busy we've been since the start of 2025.

As a team we've faced a lot over the last 3 months - late nights, early mornings, weekends, illness, injury - so I'm so grateful for the continued efforts which have been put in across the team, and the hard work that goes in to do what we do.

Much of the busy-ness is directly related to various high-level initiatives, improvements and projects coming to fruition and moving forward at the same time (more on this throughout this newsletter). As some of these new initiatives have been afforded additional resource to realise, we've found ourselves in a bit of a chicken and egg situation as to whether we commence work and on the new services or wait until we can recruit.

Fundamentally the needs to start the work, with consideration to risk and service improvement, has meant we've ended up beginning work in parallel with recruitment activities. This has added to the overall demand on the team, but we're collectively working hard to fulfil new the responsibilities as best we can.

On a day to day note I need to say a big thank you to Adrian for his personal contribution. Adrian has been with us now for just over 7 months, and in that time, he has barely stopped moving! Adrian has brought so many positives, not just to workload, but his effervescence, and the positive energy that this brings to the team - his personality has certainly lifted my spirits at many points. So, thank you Adrian.

And on that positive note please read on for more on what's been happening in the world of Gardens & Museums IT!

Carl

What's been going on? And what's coming?

Digital Transformation - University Shared Services Project

We continue to work closely with Central IT Services, and other IT personnel from departments and divisions across the University on Digital Transformation initiatives, and in particular the Shared Services Project.

Both Calum and Alex are involved in the project to design and develop the future University of Oxford Windows Management Service, which will be based on our GMIT Windows Service utilising Microsoft Intune.

Similarly, I have been helping with discussions and developments on a unified approach to User Experience, Customer Service and the delivery of IT Support.

Network & Firewall Changes

Jona, Dan and Calum have been making improvements on the way our networks and firewalls work, through some architecture re-designs and re-implementations.

This ongoing work has afforded improvements in resilience and redundancy alongside offering opportunities for further service and system specific networks to go alongside those already in place, such as AV and Commercial Systems.

Apple MacOS Sequoia Upgrade

From November Amanda has been diligently working in the background updating the Apple Computers across the Gardens & Museums from macOS Sonoma to macOS Sequoia.

In previous years this has been a lengthy a labour-intensive task, but as a result of improvements in the deployment processes within our Jamf Management instance it's been a far more straightforward process. Well done to Amanda for managing and progressing this so well!



Recruitment

We've recently been recruiting for a new role in the team, being Senior Infrastructure Officer. This role was created to afford capacity to develop and implement new initiatives including Cyber Security and Single Point of Contact.

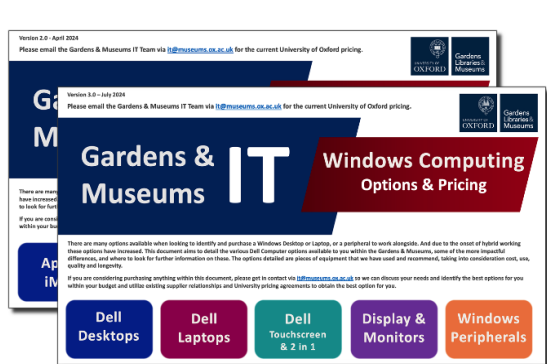
I'm happy to say that we successfully recruited, but as the successful candidate was an existing member of the team (more on this on Page 7) we've now commenced a follow up recruitment activity to fill their vacant role.

We hope to be at full capacity during the Summer months.

What's been going on? And what's coming?

Procurement...

It's that time of year again when people start thinking about requirements for next year and how best to utilise current budgets. This often includes discussion regards technology and new computing equipment. As such we do receive a significant number of requests for guidance and costings for new pieces of equipment between March and June each year.



To help with this our Standard Windows and Apple Equipment Documents are available to view here: <https://it.museums.ox.ac.uk/article/documents>. If you're thinking of making a computer or IT equipment purchase, please do take a look.

And if you need prices, the same document with costs can be supplied on request to it@museums.ox.ac.uk.

Printing

Over the last few months, we've received a variety of requests from across GLAM related to printing. The range of requests have included needs for new printing options or to replace existing printers, either through the purchase of new, or the renewal of contracts, or new lease agreements.

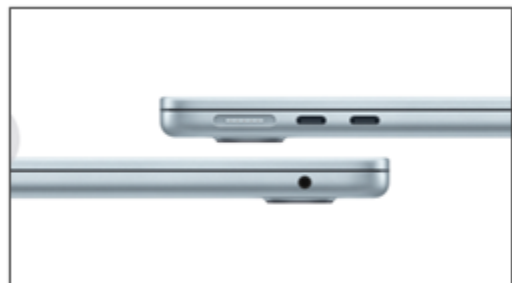
The relationships which we've established with a variety of vendors over the years have proved to be particularly helpful in all these instances through the identification of options alongside the negotiation of improved pricing arrangements.

If you do have an upcoming printing requirement either small or large, please do get in touch so that we can support in these conversations.

Apple Replacement Cycle

In January, each year we review the current Gardens & Museums Apple estate and identify those machines that would benefit from replacement, with consideration for age, specification and use.

This year has been no different and we've been holding direct conversations with those impacted to establish needs and requirements in view to identifying and purchasing the best solution. And as with previous years our colleagues have really enjoyed being able to select the colour of their new computer - Starlight and Midnight Blue have been particularly popular this year!



IT Support Simplification Single Point of Contact

At the beginning of March, we began the introduction of 'Single Point of Contact' to the Gardens & Museums, removing the dual support process which has been in place since the creation of the Gardens & Museums IT Team, and use of the Central IT Services CONNECT Managed Service.

This new initiative is something which we have been actively working on for a long-time, and one we're finally happy to be putting in place.

What is Single Point of Contact?

Single Point of Contact is something that has been considered as IT industry best practice for some time and sees an organization having a single service desk to contact in the event of IT issues, support needs and requests.

How did this come about?

The Gardens & Museums, have had a split IT support model in place since 2017 with CONNECT related queries needing to go to Central IT Services and all other requests to Gardens & Museums IT. This approach has sadly resulted in continued and considerable end-user confusion and has adversely impacted the general user experience leading to increased support anxiety.

Over the years a number of feedback gathering exercises have taken place to fully quantify and qualify this issue, with a need to simplify support channels being a required outcome on each occasion.

This need, alongside the acknowledged benefits of bringing first-line IT support closer to users, has resulted in work with Central IT Services Team Leaders to make the required operational changes, and realise this outcome.

What's the plan for implementation?

So that we can properly manage this adjustment, we will be implementing this change via a phased approach. Some locations have already been onboarded with others to follow during March and April.

Date	Location
Monday 3 rd March	History of Science Museum Oxford Botanic Garden & Arboretum GLAM Divisional Office
Monday 31 st March	Museum of Natural History Pitt Rivers Museum
Monday 28 th April	Ashmolean Museum

IT Support Simplification Single Point of Contact

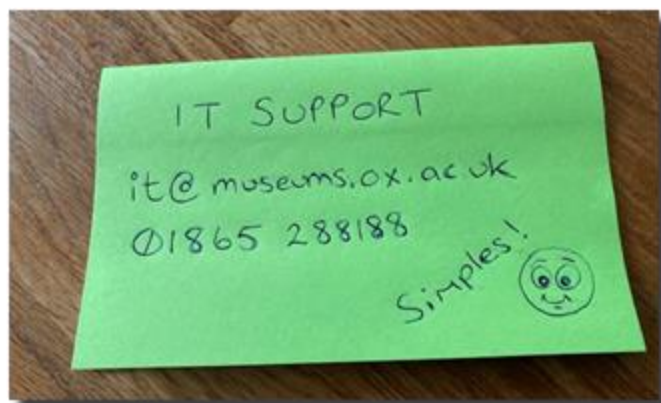
How will it work?

Once your location has reached its date you can simply send all your IT support requests, queries and problems to the Gardens & Museums IT Team and we'll look after the rest for you!

Email	it@museums.ox.ac.uk
Telephone	01865 288188

Once we've received your request we will triage any issues and look to resolve directly. If involvement from Central IT Services is needed, we will escalate on your behalf and coordinate as required.

And please do use this method as opposed to contacting members of the team directly – I know it can be convenient and preferable to message certain members, but it can add pressure to their respective schedules. And if you use either of these methods you will be contacting everyone, which ensures your request will be responded to quickly whilst also allowing the requests to be balanced across the Gardens & Museums IT Team.



Since implementing at History of Science Museum, Botanic Garden and Arboretum and the GLAM Divisional Office we have noticed an increase of demand on the team which is being closely monitored. As mentioned in the 'What's been going on? And what's coming?' section we are currently recruiting for an additional role, and once we've successfully filled the role fulfilling the additional requirements will be easier. But in the meantime we ask that you please be patient with us whilst we adjust to this extra support load. And hopefully those units who have already been onboarded are seeing the benefits of this new initiative.

And a massive thank you!

Finally, this is something that I've been working on, and campaigning for, for some time. And I would like to thank the other members of the Gardens & Museums IT Team for sharing my ambitions, and their part in delivering a user focused service which prioritises the support that we give you. Also, I'd like to thank those colleagues who have taken the time to give feedback, which has provided the data to support this need, and allowed this ambition to be realised. Thank you all – I am truly grateful to your respective contributions.

All things Cyber Security...

Over the last few months, we've been busy with a variety of Cyber Security initiatives - exploring new technologies, carrying out regular maintenance, implementing improvements and raising engagement.

The work has kept a number of us very busy. But the level of investment and commitment from within the team, alongside the interest and positive reception and support to what we're doing from our wider colleagues has been greatly appreciated.

Please find an update on the various initiatives which have been taking place and that we continue to work on. And crucially what you all can do to help support this.

What we've been up to....

A brief overview of some of the major initiatives that we've working on over the last few months.

Improvement Plan

One of the most significant things that we've been working on is our Cyber Security Improvement Plan. With the support of an external consultant and the results of a Cyber Security review during the summer of 2024 we've been able to put together an extensive and detailed Improvement Plan.

This Improvement Plan is focussed on 4 working areas (see below) with a variety of working practices and workstreams attached to each - some of which will be continued requirements and need continued maintenance, such as those found in the Technical & Security Controls area. Whilst some, such as those found in Policy, Process & Documentation, will need considerable work initially to compose and implement, but then periodic review, as opposed to constant and consistent maintenance.

Business Continuity - Redundancy, Resilience & Service Continuation

- Data Recovery
- Systems Monitoring
- Change Management
- Asset Management & Inventory
- Incident Management

Information Security Training & Knowledge Sharing

- CISMP & ISMS Training - further members of GMIT team to take
- Awareness Training
- Cyber Security Scenario Testing (IT; Senior Leadership; Business Operations & Continuity)
- Presentations
- Communications
- Open Sessions and Workshops

Policy, Process & Documentation

- Information Assurance and Cyber Security Policy
- Incident Management (Major; Information Security etc) - process
- Third Party Security Assessment
- University of Oxford Information Security Baseline
- Asset Management & Inventory

Technical & Security Controls - Managed Systems

- Device Management
- Firewall & Network Segregation
- Systems Management & Administration
- Vulnerability Detection & Management
- Systems Monitoring

Tanium

The University of Oxford Information Security Team have recently made a new endpoint device security tool available, which monitors the security status of each device attached. We've been testing the application to see how it works with the management systems we directly provide (Jamf & Intune) and to establish additional value that it offers. After a successful trial, with valuable information gained from the advanced monitoring Tanium offered, this was deployed across the GMIT Apple (Jamf) and GMIT Windows (Intune) services before the end of 2024 - a massive thanks to Alex and Calum for their work on this.

Subsequently, Tanium has now also been deployed to all CONNECT computers - meaning that all managed computers across the Gardens & Museum have this extra layer of protection.

All things Cyber Security...

Presentations

Jona and I have given a number of presentations on Cyber Security over the last few months, and to a variety of different audiences, including All Staff, Senior Leadership, and Board of Visitors. The experience has been excellent, but even better was the engagement in what we said on the risks of Cyber Security, and the positive reception towards us, and our plans.

Recruitment

To ensure that the various requirements and nuances to Cyber Security and Information Assurance are fulfilled and maintained correctly it was identified that additional capacity was required in the GMIT Team

After careful consideration and the identification that a number of the skills needed to lead and improve the Cyber Security posture of the Gardens & Museums were already present within the Team, and balanced against the risks of trying to recruit someone to fill all requirements, it was determined that a new role (Senior IT Infrastructure Officer) would be required to support initiatives, and add capacity to the team to afford the required time to make and drive improvements.

I'm happy to report that we have successfully recruited and am even happier to report that Calum was successful in his application to become Senior Infrastructure Officer. Massive congratulations to Calum!

How you can help....

Cyber Security and Information Assurance is everyone's responsibility, and although we can put processes, practices and systems in place it does need everyone's engagement, awareness and support to truly protect us all. Here are a few things which you can do to help us.

Infosec Training

Please everyone carry out the University of Oxford Information Security Awareness Course. I'm aware that this is mentioned a lot, but it is incredibly important.

It has been recently re-launched and is significantly improved with more relatable information and better context. The training can be accessed here: <https://www.infosec.ox.ac.uk/do-the-online-training>.

And if you ever want to gain some further knowledge or insight into Cyber Security and Information Assurance please do reach out, as we'll happily provide other useful online resources.

Software & Security Updates

Most devices in use across the Gardens & Museums are managed so that software and security updates are downloaded and made available, with prompts and reminders to install. We're aware the frequency and timings can be inconvenient, but please do allow these updates to occur as soon as is reasonably possible.

Spam & Phishing

We've seen a recent surge in phishing emails, and messages that are a little more sophisticated than what we've been used to. Thank you to everyone who have reported these - please continue to do so. And as always if in doubt to the authenticity or legitimacy of any message received, please do reach out for guidance.

GMIT Open Sessions – Spring 2025

The Gardens & Museums IT Open Sessions have been organised for the coming months and can be found below.

And as with most of the Open Sessions we run, there is no agenda - we are simply making ourselves available to you to assist in any way we can, in an informal and relaxed manner. Many have found it to be the perfect opportunity to discuss those niggly little issues, such as finally getting themselves connected to Eduroam - or to talk about upcoming projects in their respective departments.

So, if you have something IT related that you wish to discuss, or an exciting new project on the horizon which has computing or AV elements, concerns over Information Security, or are new to the Gardens & Museums and would like to meet us, please do come along.

Date	Location	Time
Wednesday 16 th April	Seminar Room History of Science Museum	11.00AM - 12.30PM
Tuesday 13 th May	Westwood Room Museum of Natural History	11.00AM – 12.30PM
Friday 20 th June	Headley Lecture Theatre Ashmolean Museum	9.30AM - 11.00AM

The sessions will offer an opportunity....

- To meet us face-to-face in an open forum to discuss any matter.
- To discuss or get advice on any IT issues or problems which you may have, whether big or small.
- To discuss any upcoming projects or innovations within your respective departments and location.
- For new members of staff to meet with us and receive an overview of IT within the University and the Gardens & Museums.

CONNECT - Replacement of older machines...

Many of the CONNECT Computers in use throughout the Gardens & Museums are now over 6 years old and are therefore reaching the end to their expected lives.

As you're likely aware, and I've been writing about for some time now, conversations and activities have been taking place between ourselves and Central IT Services to identify these aged CONNECT Computers and establish which need replacing. I am happy to say that we are now moving into the discussions on implementation and the next pages outline in detail where we are with changing these machines.

First Off...

I'm very aware that the replacement of the older CONNECT computers has been discussed for a fair amount of time now, and I'm equally aware that very little visible progress has been made on this, and therefore I wanted to apologise for this. It hasn't been for want of trying, and considerable efforts, endeavour and time has been put into what has been a tricky and time-consuming project which has faced its fair share of complexities and challenges along the way.

Equally the initial CONNECT implementation, and following Windows 10 update were previously carried out with dedicated and project funded additional resources - sadly that has not been the case this time, and both ourselves and IT Services have needed to manage and balance this against other conflicting demands.

So, I am truly sorry for how long this is taking, but hopefully the updates below will offer some reassurance that we are slowly, but surely, getting there!

What the project is looking to achieve...

The project has two key aims....

- 1. To replace the older (over 6 years) CONNECT computers in use across the Gardens & Museums with modern and new equipment.**
- 2. To rationalise the number of computers. And where possible and appropriate move those with hybrid working requirements to the use of a laptop with hybrid working equipment.**

This approach is focussed on members of the Gardens & Museums being provided with a single fit-for-purpose device which is funded by the University, and to reduce the number of machines currently in use, and in turn the annual CONNECT charges.



CONNECT - Replacement of older machines...

The Plan (and where we are...)

The plan is to approach each location in turn, with variety of overlapping activities occurring as and when possible. The activities are listed below

1. **Asset Data Analysis and Review**
2. **Comparison of Assets against those machines within scope to be replaced**
3. **Determining New Computing Requirements - with understanding of current computer specification; requirements of role; hybrid working needs.**
4. **Procurement of New Equipment**
5. **Deployment of New Equipment**

I am currently working with Laura and Alex at the Museum of Natural History, and Heidi at the Botanic Garden and Arboretum (thank you all for your support on this) on steps 1 to 3, with the hope to pass information to Central IT Services for steps 4 and 5 soon. Alongside this, Alex has carried out Step 1 at the History of Science Museum, and I have begun Step 2. Alex is also planning Step 1 at the Pitt Rivers Museum.

Once the requirements are with Central IT Services, and suitable progress is being made we will commence activities at the Ashmolean Museum, with an ideal start date of early May.

Models on offer....

There are 2 standard computers on offer, 1 laptop and 1 desktop with a standard pre-determined specification of Intel Core i5 Processor; 16GB Ram; 256GB SSD Hard Drive.

- **Laptop: Dell Latitude 5350** (<https://www.dell.com/en-uk/shop/laptops-2-in-1-pcs/latitude-5350-laptop-or-2-in-1/spd/latitude-13-5350-2-in-1-laptop>)
- **Desktop: Dell Optiplex 7020** (<https://www.dell.com/en-uk/shop/desktop-computers/optiplex-small-form-factor/spd/optiplex-7010-plus-small-ff>)

Other options and specifications are available, with any additional costs discussed as part of step 3.

What happens if I have an issue with my machine before the replacement

If you encounter an issue before the active replacement work commences at your location, and this issue isn't easily solved, we can look to expedite the replacement for you. Please reach out to it@museums.ox.ac.uk to report the issue and we can investigate options for you.

What's next?

We will continue to progress through steps 1 to 5 of the plan at the respective sites and send out communications as and when reportable progress is made. If you any questions or concerns in the meantime, then please do reach out to discuss.

Windows 11 - preparing & upgrading...

Windows 11 is the latest major release of Microsoft Windows, with its first iteration introduced in October 2021. As Windows 10 will become End-Of-Life in October 2025, Windows 11 will be the only supported and secure Windows variant from the Autumn.

As Windows 11 has been around for some time many will already have some familiarisation of its layout and general use. But I am writing to provide some guidance before upgrading your machine, important factors during the update process, what to expect afterwards, alongside some post update guidance and support materials.



Before upgrading your machine:

1. Please select a convenient time to do the upgrade which won't adversely impact your work, and please afford yourself enough time to carry out the update. And then allow yourself a bit more for contingency! The update itself can take anywhere between 1.5 and 3 hours, and I would suggest giving an extra hour for set up and familiarisation of Windows 11.
2. Please consider the compatibility of any older pieces of software and peripherals that you use. And if you need help in determining whether they will work please write to it@museums.ox.ac.uk with as much information on the peripheral or application as possible.
3. Do you feel comfortable upgrading yourself? It is a relatively straightforward process, but we do not want anyone feeling anxious about it. So, if you would appreciate some help with this please write to us via (it@museums.ox.ac.uk) to discuss your needs.

Important factors during the update process:

1. As with any update your computer will need a stable internet connection, alongside continued power. If planning to carry out overnight, please consider whether the above will be in place throughout the process – this is particularly apparent in those locations where power is turned off over certain hours. Additionally, if planning to do at home please think about whether your internet connection (which will likely be via Wi-Fi) is stable.
2. Once more allow enough time - the process can take up to 3 hours (and in certain instances longer than this) – please do allow the time needed to complete the upgrade.
3. Please do not restart or shutdown the computer during the upgrade process unless explicitly asked to. If you feel that the machine has stalled during upgrade, please reach out via it@museums.ox.ac.uk or call the office on 01865 288188 and we can advise next steps.

Windows 11 - preparing & upgrading...

And what to expect afterwards:

1. Once you have successfully upgraded, please log in – the first log in can take some time (longer than 30 minutes) so please be patient and allow this to complete. And after the initial login process has completed, please carry out a further restart and then log in once again to ensure your CONNECT account and file shares have synchronised properly.
2. The layout of Windows 11 is different to Windows 10, and it does take some getting used to. If you already use Windows 11 at home, then this should be a natural change for you. But to assist with the transition Microsoft have prepared some useful videos and webpages to assist with this in a section called 'Meet Windows 11': <https://support.microsoft.com/en-gb/meetwindows11> . Please do have a look, as some of the pages may be particularly helpful in the first stages of getting used to Windows 11.
3. And crucially if you get stuck, if something doesn't work post upgrade, or you need help with anything Windows 11 (problem, errors, questions etc), please do not hesitate to get in touch via it@museums.ox.ac.uk or through calling the office on 01865 288188.



Those Windows Computers not on CONNECT:

For those of you who don't use a CONNECT Computer and are using the Gardens & Museums IT Intune Service, around 50% of the devices are already using Windows 11. For those other devices we'll be making Windows 11 available for installation from Summer 2025.



For those devices, which are business function focused (AV and Commercial Point Of Sale) we will reach out to the person who oversees that particular service or business area to organise the upgrade. And for those machines which are personally used, we will be in direct contact with the user to individually establish the level of support that that person needs - whether they are happy to carry out themselves, or whether they would prefer for us to carry out.

Please look out for communications from us regards this. And if you are eager to upgrade as soon as possible please do email us to discuss this requirement.

Service & Support Statistics – 1st November 2024 to 31st January 2025

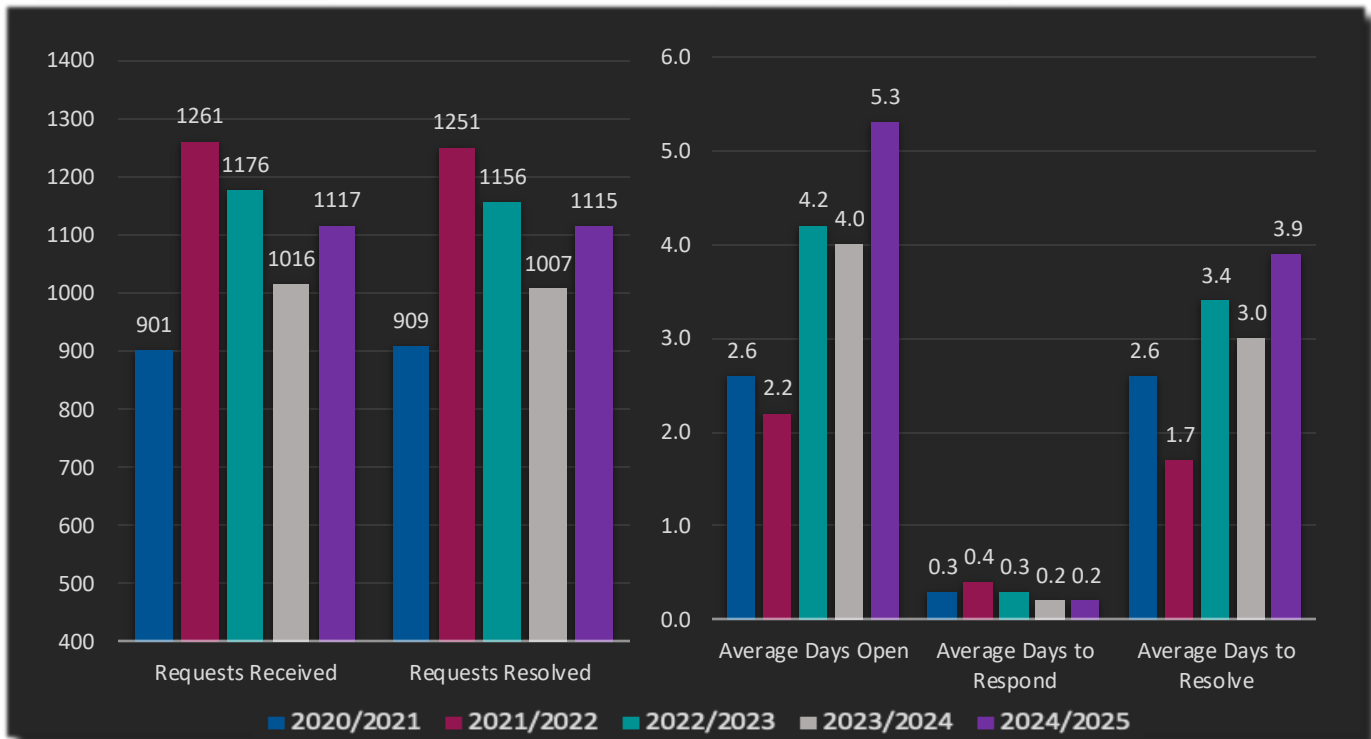
Quarter 2 has continued in the same manner as Q1 in being very busy. The most notable area of growth from a request or activity perspective was Information Security. This fortunately wasn't related to an increase in Information or Cyber Security incidents, but activities related to improving the Cyber Security posture of the Gardens & Museums.

Requests Received
1117

Requests Resolved
1115

Avg. Days to Respond
0.2

Avg. Days to Resolve
3.9



Location	Requests	Percentage
Ashmolean Museum	376	34%
Museum of Natural History	139	12%
Pitt Rivers Museum	106	10%
History of Science Museum	75	7%
Botanic Gardens & Arboretum	72	6%
GLAM Divisional Office	66	6%
Bodleian Libraries	14	1%
GLAM Stores	15	1%
All sites - requests and activities which benefit or impact all locations	254	23%

