

Gardens & Museums IT

Issue 23
Autumn 2025

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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 Autumn Edition of the Gardens & Museums IT Newsletter.

And wow! Summer flew by, and Autumn is disappearing incredibly quickly - I saw the Christmas decorations begin to appear on the high street recently and almost fell over in shock and dismay.

But the speed of which Summer has gone aligns with how fast 2025 has passed. The busyness has continued, and at points it's really felt like we were being swept up and away with the continued work (and slight chaos). We've been involved in various activities throughout the year (some commenced in 2023), where the implementations have all come at the same time in some kind of imperfect storm. And this is despite so much planning (and we really love a plan) but the way the University moves, and the twists and turns, and availability of funds and resources saw so many different things all come to fruition at the same time.

I remember looking at our schedule for the Summer, and seeing the various projects and timelines, and our respective holidays, and slightly shutting down at the thought of how we were going to cope and manage with it all. But somehow, we have - I'm not wholly sure how, but we have. It has taken so much hard-work, resilience, endeavour and long-hours to achieve. And I think we can take a lot of pride in what has been done, but I'm pretty sure I speak for everyone in the team in saying that we just need a little rest and to take the foot off the gas (even for just a moment) to truly take it all in and enjoy the success.

In this newsletter you'll see a glimpse of what we've faced (record support numbers, Audio-visual installations and improvements, Windows 11 and Computer Deployments) so please read on!

All the best Carl

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

Windows 11

Windows 10 reaches End-Of-Life on Tuesday the 14th of October. And work on the move from Windows 10 to Windows 11 has progressed throughout the Summer. The upgrade has been made available on machines which are compatible with Windows 11. And for those devices where it isn't (and have been identified as required) we have been actively replacing, or planning activities to replace them (further information on this on Page 4).

For those machines which are able to install Windows 11 there are a small number of machines which are yet to complete the update. If you have been contacted either by Central IT Services or Gardens & Museums IT and invited to update, please do follow the guidance and update as soon as possible, and before the 14th. And any concerns, questions, guidance or support with this please do reach out to it@museums.ox.ac.uk.



ChatGPT Edu

Hopefully, you've either seen the recent announcement, or received an email relating to the University of Oxford reaching an agreement to provide ChatGPT Edu licences for all staff and students.

This comes about after a successful project to explore the use of AI within the University and in identifying the appropriate applications to fulfil the Universities' varied needs.

If you're interested in using ChatGPT, want to know how to get started, or are keen to have a greater understanding of AI in general please visit the GenAI at Oxford webpages:

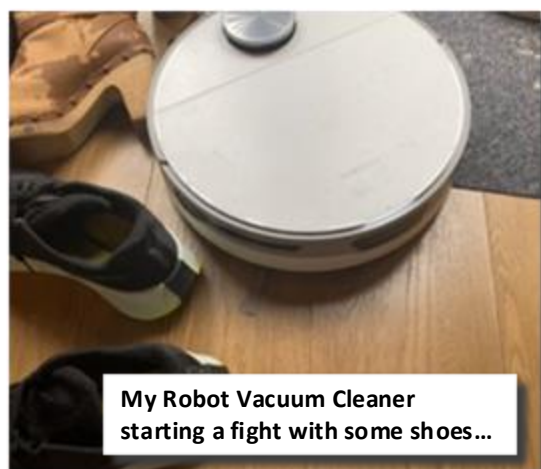
<https://www.ox.ac.uk/gen-ai>.

Information Security & Data Protection Training

The latest version of the University of Oxford Information Security & Data Protection Training has recently been released, and this version includes guidance on AI use at Oxford!

The training needs to be re-taken on an annual basis. So, if you're new to Oxford, haven't taken the course this year, want to see the latest changes, are interested in safe AI use, or want guidance on protecting ourselves against a robot uprising (this is a joke so please don't fret) then please visit these pages:

<https://www.infosec.ox.ac.uk/do-the-online-training>.



My Robot Vacuum Cleaner
starting a fight with some shoes...

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

Apple Updates

The latest Apple Operating Systems have recently been released for both MacOS and iOS devices. The application titles have skipped a few numbers along the way to align with the calendar year, so don't be concerned if you're suddenly notified to update from iOS 18 to iOS 26, or macOS 15 to macOS 26.



For those devices which are maintained within our Apple service, we've made the iOS update available to all the iPads which we support and have actively installed this. For macOS devices (iMacs, MacBooks etc) we're currently reviewing and testing the update, and will look to deploy once we know it's fully ok to use in our environments (anticipated for late 2025 and early 2026).

CONNECT and Single Sign On

The Central IT Services Desktop Services Team are currently working on Single Sign On Integration to their Managed Desktop Service (CONNECT). This is a significant improvement, and would mean that the separate CONNECT Username would be retired and access to CONNECT Services (CONNECT Computers and File Shares) would be via your Single Sign On Login.

We had hoped to implement this at the same time as replacing computers, but the way user profiles work makes moving back and forth between CONNECT log in and SSO challenging. We will soon be looking to identify suitable early adopters though. So if you're interested, please do send me an email.

Colleague Feedback Survey

A little later than hoped and planned we'll soon be sending out an invite to our Annual Colleague Feedback Survey. The aim of this activity is to capture the thoughts, opinions and satisfaction level of the IT provision across the Gardens & Museum and the service which is offered.

The survey will be available to complete from the 3rd to the 24th of November. And we would greatly appreciate you taking the time to respond, as it will really help us to establish what we do well, what needs improving and any changes we should be considering to the IT offering.



The responses and information received from last year's survey helped to provide evidence to support conversations, negotiations and changes in our service, including the introduction of Single Point of Contact and the replacement of the older computers. And if you're interested in the discoveries from last year the report is available to view on our website: <https://it.museums.ox.ac.uk/article/service-reports>.

CONNECT Aged Computer Replacement

One of the main reasons why this Newsletter has been sent a little later than normal is how busy we've been with the CONNECT Aged Computer Replacement Project. And I had hoped to start this article with the title CONNECT Aged Computer Replacement - It's done! But despite hours and hours of work, and considerable blood, sweat and tears (I'm being slightly dramatic, but just slightly) it's not quite done. But it is nearly done, and the end is in sight! So, here's an update on what's been done and where we are with this project, and also a massive thank you a number of people for their invaluable contribution.

So, where are we?

Nearly there is the answer. But to add some more detail, work has been completed at the Pitt Rivers Museum, Botanic Garden & Arboretum and almost at the History of Science Museum. And over the last four weeks considerable work has taken place at the Museum of Natural History Museum and the Ashmolean Museum. And to put this into context well over 100 computers have been installed during this period (of the 180 which needed replacing). And to say that we're tired is quite the understatement!

For those who have witnessed the vast number of desktops, laptops and screens coming into the Ashmolean Museum Reception would have got a glimpse into the enormity of the challenge. We have managed to complete the all-day installation events, but as with any project of this scale there is always some outstanding work at the end - and that's where we are right now.

We have a small number of outstanding installations to carry out, alongside some desk side set ups with colleagues, and some outstanding support with application installations. In an ideal world we would have liked to coordinate individual appointments, but the number of computers being replaced alongside the other activities we're involved in, and the continual support demand made this impossible.

It's important to understand that although a computer installation is in most cases a relatively straightforward activity, but what one sees when installing the computer and helping you get re-set up is the end of a long list of configuration activities. From a Gardens & Museums IT perspective each computer takes around 1 hour to setup, which includes asset management, network assignment and activation and then the install itself (and this doesn't include the work which Central IT Services would have done beforehand in the initial imaging of the computer). So, when you take that hour and times it by 180 (which is the number of computers which would have been replaced) you quite quickly see the scale of this endeavour and the amount of time just the implementation has taken (which doesn't include the initial consolidation work, planning meetings, requirements gathering and procurement). And those who have been openly discussing the project with me would know that previous similar projects (initial Connect Implementation and Windows 10) had assigned and dedicated resource (Project Managers, Business Analysts, and Installation Engineers) whereas for this project we (both Gardens & Museums IT and Central IT Services Desktop Services Team) have needed to fulfil with existing resource and alongside other workstreams and business as usual activities.

In the next Newsletter in December (how is it nearly December) I'll write an article on the completion of this long-overdue, ever-changing, and at many points physically and emotionally exhausting project.

CONNECT Aged Computer Replacement

Thank Yous...

So, firstly a thank you to everyone who helped to complete Inventories, and coordinate installations - particularly Alex at the Museum of Natural History (who is now gracing the Ashmolean) who did an incredible amount of coordination and organisation for the replacement activities at MNH. Also, a thank you to those who have already had their computers replaced, and for showing flexibility and patience whilst this was done.



A massive thank you to those who have assisted in taking receipt of goods, helping to move them and the disposal of the cardboard - if anyone has seen 180 computers and around 70 screens, it is a lot of boxes! And although the numbers are spread across a variety of locations that's a massive amount of equipment and many have been involved in the taking in, and its safe transportation.

Our work and collaboration with the Central IT Services Team has been pivotal to this deployment, so I need to thank them for their contribution in making this happen, and in particular the following people - Sadiq (planning, negotiation, consultation, procurement), Mark, Taylor and Subhan (imaging and installations), Tim (for support) and especially Ehinem for his work on coordination, imaging and installation - to think he's being doing this across the University and has managed to remain so incredibly calm and composed is astounding.

Another thank you to those who have put up with me being stressed, tired and a little grumpy at points - my stress container (one for the Mental Health First Aiders) has been truly tested and challenged with this project. Keeping it moving has been testing, as has trying to manage the other parts of my role and the associated pressures and demands and the additional time and energy that it has taken to truly keep it all in check. Ilaria, Ruth A and Christina noticed the pressure which I was under and not only were they flexible and supportive with organisation, but they were also incredibly supportive to me. I cannot thank them enough for their concern and kindness - you've made a massive difference and really helped keep me going.

Finally, a thank you to my team for supporting and covering work whilst Adrian and I have been working on this. I know it hasn't been easy, and your support is truly appreciated. A special mention to Aidan who has only recently joined us but has quickly got stuck in and actively assisted with installs and helped to support the work which Adrian and I have been doing. His curiosity, initiative and endeavour has been hugely beneficial and is greatly appreciated.

And finally finally, to Adrian! Mr King has been simply phenomenal. Put simply he's a machine! And a machine who is able to replace computers at quite amazing speeds, to an incredible standard and with a smile on his face at all times. In all honesty I don't think any of this would have happened without his massive contribution. His continued energy and endeavour has been vital to this, and the manner of which he's carried out this mammoth task is truly extraordinary. What an asset to the team he is and also an amazing guy with it! Thank you, AK - you are massively appreciated!

Printing....

More and more, printing is becoming an area which is under review with people looking to refresh technology, reduce costs, improve environmental impacts or improve service. And over the summer, and now into autumn, we've been involved in a variety of printing activities.

Pitt Rivers Museum MFD Replacement

The Pitt Rivers Museum were experiencing some frustrations with their current Multi-Function Devices in respect to their performance and the customer service they were receiving.

After a conversation between myself and Antigone it was established that the Museum would like to explore alternative options and through our work and relationship with a local print provider (Redcorner) we were able to offer a recommendation and in turn set up a meeting to discuss options. The conversations went well, and the Museum decided that they would like to move to Redcorner, and the new Canon Multi-Function Devices were successfully installed in September.

Ashmolean Shop Stockroom - Heat-free Printing!

Tom got in touch with us to discuss the current printers being used in the Ashmolean Shop Stockroom. They were using a quite old inkjet printer for label printing, and an equally old laser printing for their other printing needs. After a conversation they were keen to improve performance and reduce costs with a hope to move to a single printing device.

Having had previous experience in printing labels I understood that this could be problematic with laser printers, but also knew that Inkjet printers struggle with high-volume and regular printing. Fortunately, I knew of, and had recently tested a relatively new technology from Epson which had garnered significant popularity for it's low energy use. With environmental sustainability being on everyone's minds these printers are being frequently deployed across the University. But as their initial and rental price-point is higher than a conventional laser printer I'd been looking for the perfect opportunity to deploy and test in an active environment, and this was just that!

The printer was deployed towards the end of September, and the results and feedback has already been amazing. We're continuing to monitor the use and performance, in view to identifying other opportunities for heat-free printing across the Gardens & Museums.

Any other updates?

Alongside the work at Pitt Rivers and with the Ashmolean Stockroom, early discussions have begun with the History of Science Museum about their printers. They find themselves in a similar situation to the Pitt Rivers Museum with poor service and frequently failing printers, so we're currently helping to explore options.

And alongside this we're also helping to review the current Ashmolean Printing estate in view to identifying opportunities for consolidation, or environmental and financial savings.



GMIT Open Sessions – Autumn 2025

The Gardens & Museums IT Open Sessions have been organised for October, November and December with the dates available to view below.

For the December session we'll be focussing upon Multi-Factor Authentication and helping people move away from text and phone-based methods, and to a more secure authentication method as per new recommendations from the University of Oxford Information Security Team. The new ideal scenario is people using either the Microsoft Authenticator Application or a USB Authentication key. And as an extra incentive to join us, and as a means to improve your security we'll be providing USB Authentication keys for those who need them on a first come, first served basis at the session.

But please do feel free to also visit with any other query which you may have. And as always reminders will be sent closer to the time.

Date	Location	Time
Wednesday 15 th October	Seminar Room History of Science Museum	2.30PM - 4.00PM
Monday 17 th November	Lecture Theatre Pitt Rivers Museum	10.30AM – 12.00PM
Wednesday 17 th December	Annex Museum of Natural History	2.00PM - 3.30PM

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.

A Summer of AV!

Over the Summer and into Autumn there has been a significant amount of Audio-Visual related work going on across the Gardens & Museums, and this in continuation to the work which I spoke about in the Summer Newsletter.

The varied nature of the requirement and the variety of locations has been a nice introduction to the Gardens & Museum for Aidan. He's been able to be a part of some considerable work streams and seen what we do and how we work. Thank you for your work on this Aidan, and to Calum and Jona for their respective parts aswell.

Ashmolean Welcome Desk Videowall

Many of you who have visited the Ashmolean Museum recently will have seen the beautiful new video wall in the Ashmolean Welcome Desk Area.

This has been some time coming, and has taken a lot of energy, effort, and endeavour at various levels throughout the Ashmolean and GLAM to realise. It's been delivered in a truly collaborative manner, with many personal and teams working together throughout the project, utilising the many and varied skills that our hard-working and talented colleagues offer.

This really is a massive success, and what a result - it looks amazing!



Oxford Botanic Garden Library & History of Science Museum Seminar Room - Teams Room

We're always looking for ways, means, and opportunities to improve our meeting spaces and we've been afforded such moments with both the Botanic Garden Library and History of Science Museum Seminar Room.

In both spaces we've recently installed a new fixed presentation laptop alongside a Teams Room to improve the provision and delivery of virtual meetings.

Feedback thus far has been positive and we're now looking to identify other spaces which may benefit from this model.

A Summer of AV!

Ashmolean Learning & Broadcast Studios Improvements

Over the summer we've been supporting the Ashmolean Audience & Engagement Teams with improvements to the equipment in both the Broadcast and Learning Studios.

We'd been talking for some time about what changes could be made to enhance the spaces, and the availability of some funds towards the end of the financial year enabled some new equipment to be purchased and implemented alongside some existing technology that we already had in place.

New laptops and large displays have been added to both spaces which have really enhanced the offering. And a thank you to the Ashmolean Facilities Team for their work in mounting the screen in the Learning Studio.



Pitt Rivers Museum Lecture Theatre & Seminar Room Improvements

As I'm writing this Newsletter in real-time (boop, boop, boop - 24 reference there!) there are projects which are currently progressing as I type, and the Lecture Theatre and Seminar Room Improvements Project is one such instance (which may be complete by the time you read this newsletter).

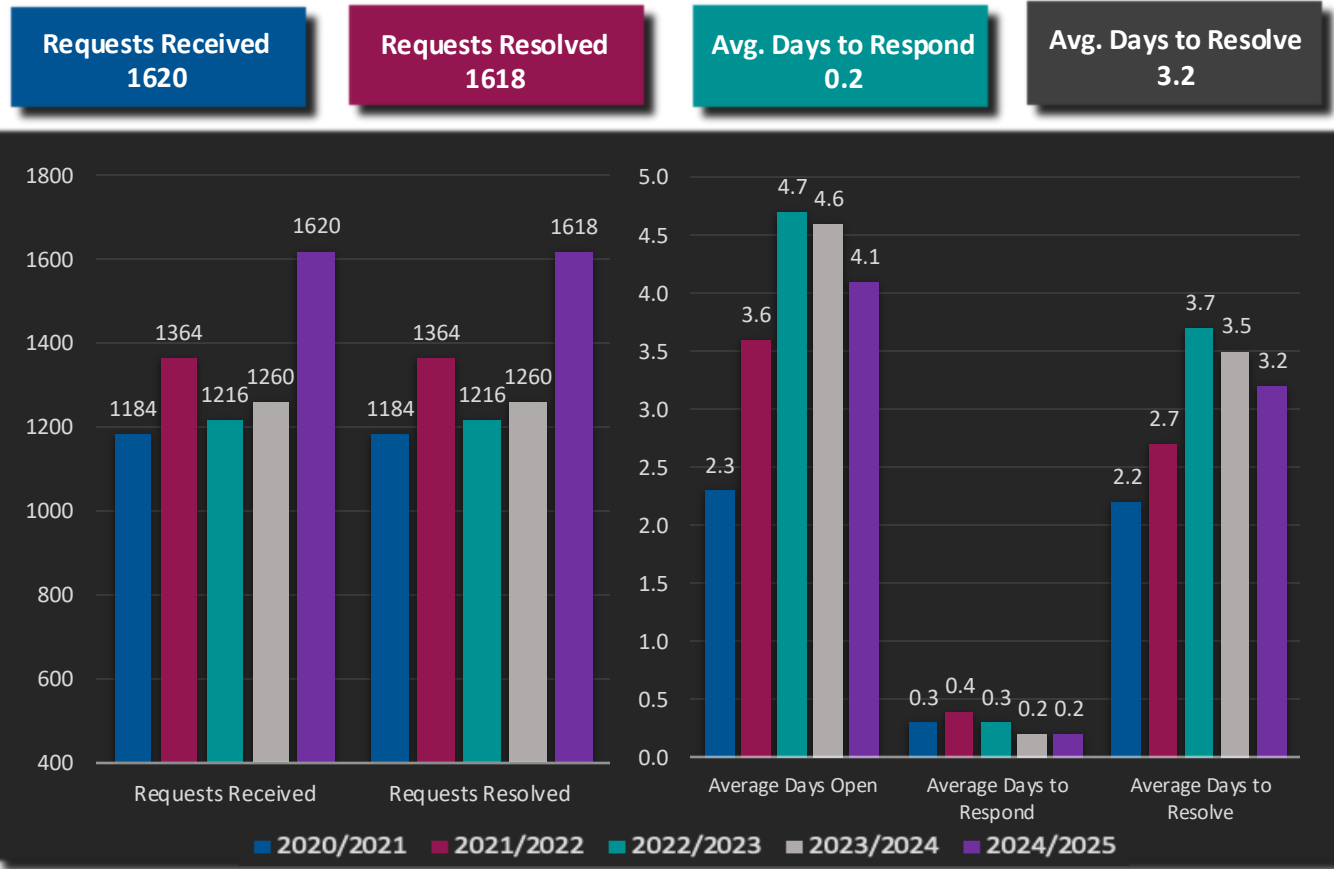
The work on the space hasn't just been AV focussed as it's included aesthetic improvements to the spaces themselves, alongside changes in room layout and enhanced wiring. And as it stands the majority of this work has been completed, but there are a few final checks and a little bit of snagging actively taking place.

We've been involved in every step of this project, providing guidance, arranging quotations, supporting funding proposals, and Jona has done an incredible job of overseeing the AV installation and integration aspects - with frequent daily checks and visits to the Pitt Rivers Museum over the last few weeks.

We're collectively very excited, as are many others, to start using the revitalised spaces.

Service & Support Statistics – 1st May to 31st July 2025

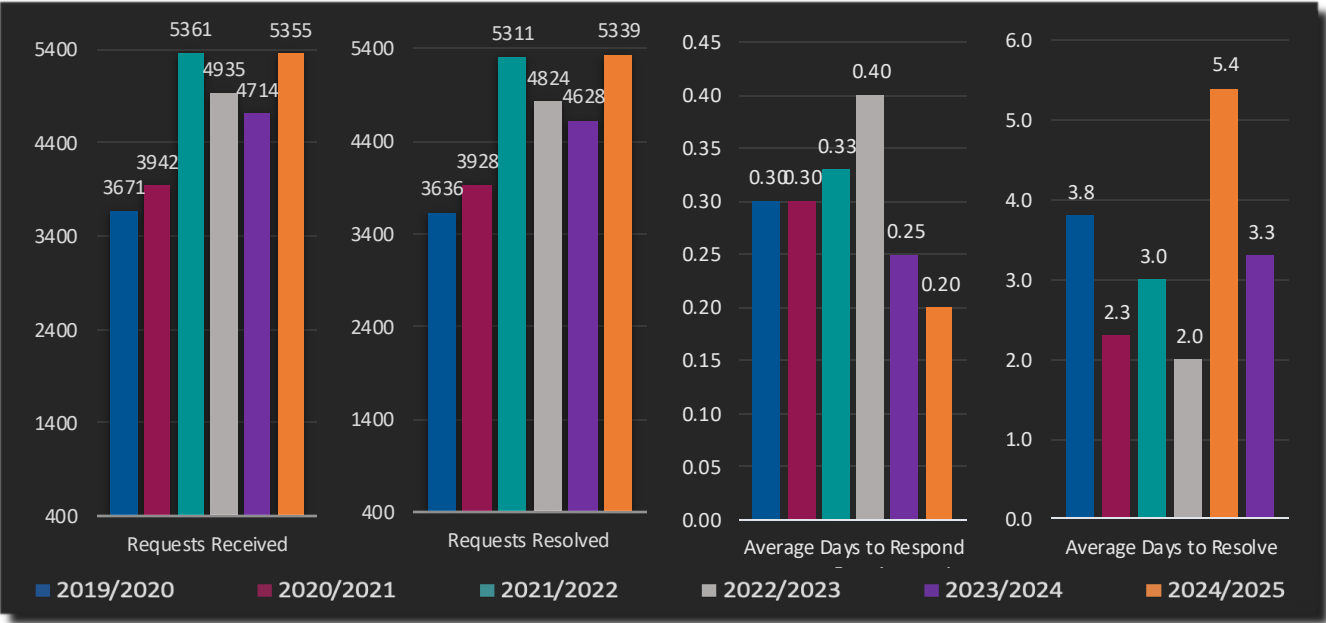
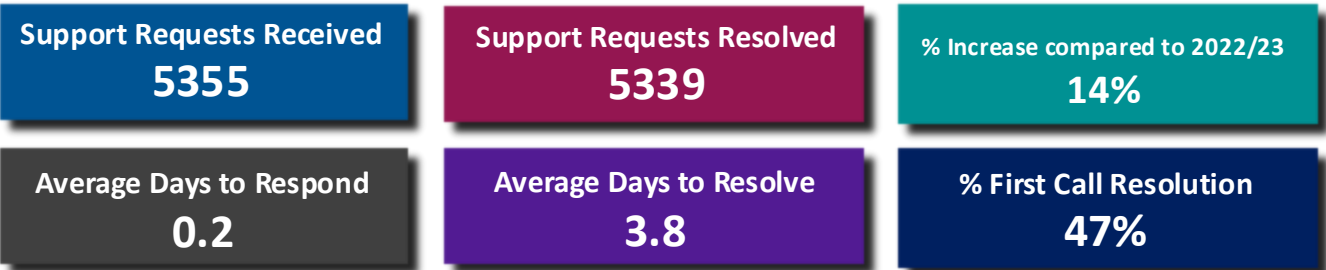
Quarter 4 of the University Academic Year, as with Quarter 3, has been an incredibly busy period. We have once again seen a considerable and noticeable increase in demand and have now experienced over 500 requests per month for 5 straight months. The implementation of Single Point of Contact in Quarter 3 is a contributory factor to this increase in demand, alongside our involvement in a variety of major and time sensitive projects throughout the Gardens & Museums.



Location	Requests	Percentage
Ashmolean Museum	611	38%
Museum of Natural History	157	10%
Pitt Rivers Museum	163	10%
History of Science Museum	109	7%
Botanic Gardens & Arboretum	84	5%
GLAM Divisional Office	108	6%
Bodleian Libraries	29	2%
GLAM Stores	14	1%
All sites - requests and activities which benefit or impact all locations	345	21%

Annual Service & Support Statistics –
1st August 2024 to 31st July 2025

The 2024/2025 Academic Year has once again been a busy time for the Gardens & Museums IT Team. Throughout the year we have faced a variety of challenges and changes, including a re-structure of the team. We have also experienced an increase in the the demand for IT, AV and Information Security Support. Q3 and Q4 of the Academic Year have been particularly busy due to the progression and implementation of a number of projects, including Single Point of Contact, Computer Replacements, and AV Improvements.



Location	2024/25
Ashmolean Museum	1896
Museum of Natural History	564
Pitt Rivers Museum	521
History of Science Museum	315
Botanic Garden & Arboretum	265
GLAM Divisional Office	324
Bodleian Libraries	104
GLAM Stores	56
All Sites (items which impact all such as Monitoring, GMIT & GMIT Project)	1310

2025/2026 Gardens & Museums IT Roadmap

