

CASE STUDY | MUSEUM

# Black Country Living Museum

iplicit



Sector  
Museums



Previous Finance System  
Pegasus Opera



Number of iplicit users  
7 full users



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## Black Country Living Museum enjoyed a ‘massive efficiency boost’ from iplicit

Black Country Living Museum needed a finance system that would release staff from resource-heavy manual work and allow them to add more value to the business.

More than a year on, iplicit has delivered a “massive” efficiency boost and is enabling the organisation to grow without increasing the size of the finance team.

### About the museum

Even if you’ve never been to Dudley to visit the Black Country Living Museum, you may well have seen it. It’s been used as a location for television and film productions such as Peaky Blinders and Stan & Ollie.

“We’re a 26-acre open air living museum, which is a mix of reconstructed or translocated shops, houses and industrial areas that represent the Black Country,” says Sam Davies, Assistant Accountant, who presided over the implementation of iplicit.

“Visitors are encouraged to engage with our historic characters, who tell stories of what it was really like to live and work during the periods depicted.”



Bank reconciliation has been a big win for our finance team. Now the whole team can see on a day to day basis what’s in the bank and work with that. There’s so much more we can automate. We haven’t even scratched the surface yet and there are so many functions still to look at.”

BLACK COUNTRY  
LIVING  
MUSEUM

Sam Davies  
Assistant  
Accountant



## Demands on the system

Running the finance system for the museum means contending with a fair amount of complexity.

There are two legal entities – a registered charity and a wholly-owned limited company that runs the food and drink outlets and shops. That brings with it the complications of partial VAT.

“We’ve got a small finance team processing sales and purchase ledger invoices and then we’ve got bank reconciliation, journals, month-end management accounts – but we’re also trying to get the wider staff used to doing more of their own admin, so it becomes a bit more self-serve,” says Sam.

Diane Harvey, Head of Finance, adds: “We had Pegasus Opera, which was an old system that relied on us processing everything manually.

“We had to have manual copies of invoices and it was a very time-consuming system to use. It had been updated over the years but it was still far behind what current systems were able to do.”

Sam adds: “We’re growing as a museum and the system wasn’t fit for purpose.

“We wanted a system that would automate some of the more manual processes and free up some of our team’s time to add more value.”



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“If we’d kept with our old system, we might have had to expand the team, because we’re a bigger organisation now, there are more transactions and there is more business going on in our trading units. But we’re able to keep going with the same team.”

**Diane Harvey**  
Head of Finance

## Why the museum chose iplicit

“We needed more than Xero but we didn’t need something like SAP,” says Sam of the hunt for a new finance system.

“We needed something that could handle the charity accounting – and there weren’t many that could meet those criteria within our budget.”

Diane explains: “We chose six companies that we wanted to send the tender document to. We had some key criteria, which included the purchase ordering system and how the software handled partial exemption for VAT.

“We analysed the results and arranged to meet with three or four of those who responded to the tender. We narrowed it down fairly quickly to two – iplicit and XLedger.

“We don’t have any external funding for the day-to-day running of the museum – we have to support ourselves – so we had a limited amount of money to spend.

“We judged it on the facts. What it could do, how much it was going to cost us and how it felt to use. We got the finance team involved because they would be the main users of the system. It was a very structured process that came out with the right result

The museum has seen a **“massive efficiency boost”** from the move to iplicit.

## iplicit's customer care and support

“The iplicit support team are great,” says Sam.

“They’re very responsive and quick to come back. I’m loving the monthly webinars with Guy Burton (Technical Solutions Consultant) and Andy Clarke (Customer Success Executive). They’re very well thought out and presented and they let you know what’s coming in the next release.”

Diane adds: “All the users from the wider museum, who go in and raise orders or put in expenses, they all seem to feel it’s much more user-friendly and intuitive than the old system.

“A lot of us had used the old system for such a long time that you get blind to the possibilities of a new one. But there are newer people on the team who’ve worked in lots of other places and used many different systems and the general consensus is it’s a good system and easy to use.”

Sam adds: “I tell my non-finance users during the training that with the access I’ve given them, they can’t break the system. They can’t do anything that I can’t undo, so it gives them that confidence to have a go and click around. With some systems, you’re not confident about that.

“I’ve worked in places that use the big ERP systems. Those organisations were vast and needed a system like that. This one is a really good fit for us – it’s just what we need.”



## Return on investment in iplicit

The museum has seen a “massive efficiency boost” from the move to iplicit.

“We’re growing as a museum but we haven’t changed our team structure,” says Diane.

“If we’d kept with our old system, we might have had to expand the team, because we’re a bigger organisation now, there are more transactions and there is more business going on in our trading units. But we’re able to keep going with the same team and when one of our team retires, we might not have to replace them because we can do things more quickly and efficiently with iplicit.

“I think the biggest functionality change is the approval and workflow process at the point of order. In the old system, it was the invoices that were approved. Now it’s the order that’s approved and then it’s over to the finance team to process and make sure we pay the invoices.

“People have adapted and that’s created efficiencies for them and us. The process can run seamlessly from the initial order to the payment of the invoice.

“The importing of journals is a massive efficiency boost, particularly when the task is so repetitive each month. Previously, I had to manually type in journals, some of which were quite long and complex.

“We’re currently being audited. It’s our first audit with iplicit. The auditors have read-only access to iplicit and can see the things they need without us having to show them everything else. They hadn’t seen iplicit before but they picked it up quickly and they have all the information they need, which is a testament to how intuitive the system is.”

Sam adds: “Bank reconciliation has been a big win for our finance team. Now the whole team can see on a day to day basis what’s in the bank and work with that.

“There’s so much more we can automate. We haven’t even scratched the surface yet and there are so many functions still to look at.



## Favourite features in iplicit

I think for the team, the favourite feature in iplicit is the ability to just copy things – copy invoices, copy orders, copy journals,” says Diane.

“We have monthly invoices that all look the same. All you need to do is change the invoice number, date and ID and you’re there, without having to type everything in again and again. You can do it in seconds.

“For me personally, my favourite feature is that importing and exporting of journals. We couldn’t do the importing at all on our old system.”

Sam adds: “I love the feedback from the people I train, who say how easy the system is to use.”

## Advice on implementing finance software

Implementing new accounting software is easier with good communication, says Diane.

“I’d say do your research, plan the implementation very carefully and allow time to get it right because it is a two-way, interactive process,” she says.

“You know what your business does and the way you like to do things – but you have to see whether there are alternative ways to do things and not be blinded by your past experience.

“On the other side, the people implementing it know the system but don’t necessarily know your business, so we found by trying to teach each other, we could work out the best system to fit in with our business, keeping an open mind.”

## Accounting software for museums

iplicit is empowering nonprofit organisations around the world to take control of their finance operations and focus on what really matters. iplicit can help you upgrade with a number of solutions to support with accounting software for charities

True-cloud accounting software without the sky-high pricing. iplicit is the award-winning accounting solution that pays for itself.

With iplicit's automation tools you can close month end fast and with unlimited reporting dimensions, get critical insights quickly.

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