



The Atkinson, Lord Street, Southport

Sefton's Arts & Cultural service is based from The Atkinson arts centre in Southport. Significant investment has been made in refurbishing the stunning 19th century buildings. Today, The Atkinson is home to an art gallery, museum, theatre, studio, library, shop and café.

The Atkinson has achieved significant recovery following the COVID-19 pandemic and visitor figures are in excess of 425,000 per annum. Visit England rates The Atkinson as a 'Very Good' visitor attraction and the venue is voted #1 of things to do in Southport on Tripadvisor. The Atkinson takes pride in the warm welcome it offers to customers and visiting companies, and this is reflected in the exceptional assessment of its customer care. The Atkinson's core audience travel within a 30 minute drive time of the venue. This encompasses North Sefton and West Lancashire, from Crosby to Skelmersdale and Preston.

Sefton Council has been awarded £37.5 million by the Town Deal Fund to support the development of Southport. In response, the Council has devised Southport's Town Investment Plan following extensive public consultation. Among the upcoming projects is the Enterprise Arcade, situated adjacent to The Atkinson on Eastbank Street. This initiative will establish Southport's first creative and digitally-focused hub, designed to support start-ups, entrepreneurs, and growing businesses. Additionally, construction is underway on the Promenade for the Marine Lake Events Centre (MLEC) and Water and Light Show. This £73 million state-of-the-art multipurpose venue will host entertainment shows, touring theatre productions, conferences, exhibitions, and other events. It will also feature a pioneering water and light display on the lake—the first of its kind in the United Kingdom.

Sefton Council and partners are currently developing a new cultural strategy for the Borough that will champion activities across the arts, heritage, sport, health and wellbeing, providing a shared vision and a clear plan for everyone engaged in the cultural life of Sefton.



Gordon Cheung: The Garden of Perfect Brightness, The Atkinson, 2023

The Atkinson houses a remarkable collection, including over 3,500 artworks and more than 25,000 pieces of social history, displayed on rotation across the museum and art gallery. Partnerships with Art UK and Bloomberg Connects are supporting The Atkinson to digitize their collections and make them more accessible.

The fine art collection features artwork from historic and contemporary artists including Henry Moore, Elizabeth Frink, Laura Ford and Alberta Whittle. Recent acquisitions represent a shift in direction, addressing issues such as the gender imbalance of artists represented and a lack of racial diversity.

In the Art Gallery, the regularly changing exhibitions showcase pieces from the collection alongside contemporary art, family-friendly displays, and thematic exhibitions delivered in partnership with cultural organisations. Recent highlights include:

**Pantheon: Roman Art Treasures from the Ince Blundell Collection (2017)** brought together highlights from National Museum Liverpool's remarkably intact collection.

**Viking: Rediscover the Legend (2018)** was delivered in partnership with Yorkshire Museum and The British Museum and presented the most significant Viking treasure hoards ever discovered in Britain.

**Robert Mapplethorpe (2019)** was The Atkinson's first partnership with ARTIST ROOMS - a collection of international modern and contemporary art jointly owned by Tate and National Galleries of Scotland.

**Brick Wonders (2020)** transported visitors around the world to ancient, modern & natural wonders, recreated from half a million LEGO® bricks by Warren Elsmore and his team.

**Courage & Devotion (2021)** remembered the lives of the Polish Airmen based at RAF Woodvale during WW2 and The Atkinson commissioned a model Spitfire from paper artist Suhail Shaikh.

I Grew Up 80's (2022) was curated by Matt Fox and drawn from his personal collection of 80s memorabilia, with over 200 iconic treasures on display, revisiting the innovation that defined the decade.

Gordon Cheung: The Garden of Perfect Brightness (2023) presented a series of works from the British-Chinese contemporary artist, exploring the relationship between nature, culture & power in the digital age.

Eternal Summer: Paintings by Philip Connard (2024) brought together examples of the Southport born artists work from Britain's national collections. The exhibition was accompanied by a new publication by Stephen Whittle.



Discover Ancient Egypt, Museum, The Atkinson

In the museum, visitors can explore life in ancient Egypt through the Goodison Egyptology Collection, brought to life in an interactive gallery funded by the Heritage Lottery. The Goodison collection contains objects that relate to both everyday life and death in ancient Egypt and many rare artefacts are on permanent display.

In the 'Between Land and Sea' gallery, visitors can discover the rich history of Sefton's coast, from prehistoric times to the present day. Much of the material on display is from The Botanic Garden Museum and The Atkinson are continuing to conserve items and return them to the displays as funds allow.

The Art Gallery and Museum is accompanied by a public engagement programme supported by a range of partners including The Atkinson Development Trust, The Arts Society Southport, and local cultural champions. There is a regular programme of talks, classes and workshops for all ages and abilities.

Outside of The Atkinson, outreach programmes are delivered in partnership with Sefton Council to extend their impact across the borough.

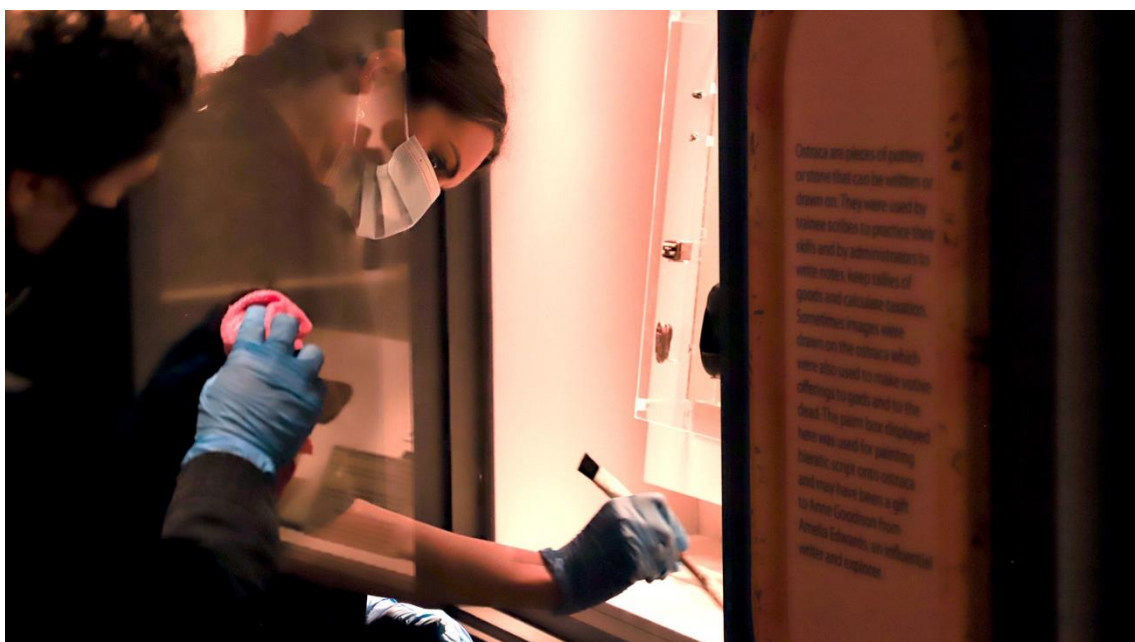




Group visit to The Atkinson's Art Gallery

The Atkinson's collections are the heart of their Learning Programme for schools, higher and further education, providing unique opportunities for unlocking curiosity through creative experiences. They offer a range of practical workshops, engaging museum and gallery tours and interactive drama sessions. In addition, there are subject specialist teacher activity packs and educational materials that can be hired and used in the classroom. The Atkinson also works with teachers to develop bespoke workshops, learning sessions and behind the scenes tours to suit the needs of their students.

Recent partnerships with Curious Minds have allowed The Atkinson to expand their learning programmes for young people, and to support their professional development.



Volunteers cleaning in the museum

Volunteers are a vital part of The Atkinson's team, delivering excellent customer service and caring for their incredible collections, programme of events and exhibitions, workshops and more. The Atkinson also works with local schools, colleges and universities to deliver high quality work experience and placements.