**ICOM-DEMHIST Conference 2021**

**Historic House Museums for a Sustainable World:   
Challenges and Opportunities**

**Starting October 4 2021**

[**www.icom-demhist2021.com**](http://www.icom-demhist2021.com)

**CALL FOR PAPERS**

In addition to keynote speeches, expert sessions and virtual site visits, there will be presentation sessions, with papers selected from proposals received through this invitation. We are also inviting proposals for posters exploring visually effective examples of the conference themes. We invite you to submit papers and posters addressing the conference theme. Within this broader theme, we welcome proposals focusing on the following three sub-themes.

**1. Awareness**

This session invites contributions that examine the opportunities to make climate and sustainability subject of museum programmes and communication with visitors. Research from 2018 (Broek et al., 2018, 103) showed that 89 percent of Dutch people aged 6 or over visited a cultural organisation or event at least once, and often more than once. The researchers postulated: "It is likely that many of those visitors – given the nature of a cultural visit – will be open to learn and discover new things. So if cultural organizations in the Netherlands radiate to their visitors that they think sustainability is important, that message reaches a large part of the Dutch at a time when they may be more receptive to it than usual". How do other countries feel about this? How can we use creativity to put these topics on the agenda and to create awareness? How can we include environmental issues within public programmes that are not directly about these issues? How can we design public programmes (exhibitions, educational programs, and events) that directly address environmental issues? How can we make use of our media (website, newsletter or social media) to inform our visitors about sustainability? How can we demonstrate how we, as museums, operate sustainably ourselves, if indeed, we do? How can we ensure that sustainable practices are embedded within the visitor experience – for example recycling bins, energy or water saving technology, and stocking green products in shops and cafes? How can the museum's mission, the trustees, the staff, and the expectation of the visitors work together?

Focus points:

* Relevance to historical houses and historical house museums
* Practicality for and context of historical houses

**2. How to make our own activities more sustainable?**

This session invites contributions which examine the challenges and the opportunities we are facing when it comes to become more sustainable ourselves. And if we do so: are we driven by reducing energy costs, rather than the moral and ethical dimensions of climate change? What could be quick wins (like: choose sustainable partners / suppliers, recycle, print and copy less, turning off computers at the end of the work day)? How can we tackle bigger challenges such as sustainable housing, energy transition projects? How do we go from mitigation of climate change to adaptation? How can we utilize collections, craftsmanship, our stories, our memories to build sustainable relationships with our visitors and our community? How to value our collection when it comes to sustainability? How can we work together with other cultural, heritage or social institutions? What do we need from our management if we are not the managers ourselves? What good practices we can share? Where do we start?

Focus points:

* New solutions for integrating modern technologies/ management within the context of historical preservation.
* The reconsideration or rediscover of historical procedures that can be implemented or adapted for sustainable maintenance of historic houses.
* Critical evaluation of costs/benefits for historical houses versus a potential for wider applications.

**3. Museums and community resilience**

This session invites contributions that examine the challenges and opportunities that we are facing during the Covid-19 crisis. The contributions should be of help to other museums and museum professionals in supporting community resilience during and after this difficult times. Have you (re)discovered new strengths or developed new skills in your institution and among your staff during this period. Are there things that you would integrate in your way of ‘normal’ working? What new things did you try and develop to stay in contact with and serve your audiences and communities? How can documenting and exhibiting the crisis, its impact, and the various ways people are coping with trauma enrich your collections and give them a new meaning, while also preserving knowledge and memory for future generations? How can you join forces to stay relevant and provide a rapid response to current issues and needs? How can you listen to your community and determine how you can help?

Focus points:

* Best practice examples of post pandemic house museum organization: visitor engagement and education
* Challenges and solutions for House Museum professionals.
* Relations between house museums and their community during and after the pandemic.
* Strategic and operational planning to ensure a sustainable future of house museums after the lockdowns;

The selection panel reserves the right to suggest alternate formats or sessions for proposals. The selection panel’s decision is final.

We kindly ask you use the submission form available here to submit your proposal to: Remko Jansonius, [secretary@demhist.icom.museum](mailto:secretary@demhist.icom.museum)

Deadline for submission is **June 6 2021**

Acceptance of proposed papers will be confirmed by **June 30 2021**