

Background & Founding Intent – Atwell Wilson Motor Museum

Background

- This document serves as a record of the background and founding intent of Michael Bennett.
- Michael Bennett is a founding member of the Charitable Company that now operates the Museum.
- Michael was a longstanding friend and confidant of Richard Atwell, who, with his wife Hasell, founded the Museum in 1981.
- The collection began in 1972 as a wedding car fleet.
- Michael is the sole Director at the time of writing with direct knowledge of the Museum's origins and development.
- Following Richard Atwell's passing in 2010, Michael played a key role in ensuring the Museum's survival.
- Whilst it is accepted that the Museum must adapt to changes in regulatory, environmental, commercial & public interest trends, amongst others with the passage of time the Museum's history, character and founding intentions should continue to inform its future direction.

Founding Intent

- Growth is inevitable, as personal transport evolves, so must the collection, however, with every decision, the museum should honour its history as a quirky, family & community oriented organisation.
- Where possible, this should involve utilising and incorporating the existing infrastructure. The Bungalow, as an example, was built by Hasell's father. The front to the museum is friendly and welcoming, rather than imposing, blending well with its surroundings. This should always be considered.
- The charity's ownership of The Brook, through rental income, enabled the Charity to cover costs and safeguarded its existence in challenging times. As a part of the Museum's history, The Brook should therefore never be underestimated. The charities ownership of The Brook, due to its location on the site, limits the impact the activity at the Museum has on its closest neighbours which is important in reference to the Museum's values.
- The origin of the collection as a Wedding fleet should always be recognised, it provided the foundation of the collection today. This history should be honoured by way of a 'Wedding Collection' which is protected and defined under the Museum's Collection policy.

- Whilst personal preference with regards to vehicles will always be subjective, decisions with regards to the collection must always have an objective base, fit with the Museum's values and be a board decision rather than that of an individual.
- Honouring the important role our public members and volunteers play, there should be a Members' Car of the month on display in the museum. This should be by nomination from any individual with the decision to display made by the board. The suitability of the Vehicle for display should be made by reference to the Collection Policy.

A summary of Founding Intent

- To maintain a welcoming, community-focused and non-commercial atmosphere.
- To preserve the unique character and heritage of the Museum.
- To ensure long-term sustainability without compromising values.
- To recognise the importance of volunteers, members, and local community.

Version Control

Version	Date	Author	Notes
1.0	23/3/2026	Michael Bennett	Initial version

Approval & Sign-off

Role	Name	Signature / Date
Chair of Trustees	Diana Covey	19/05/2026
Trustee Board	M Bennett, C Damon, P Ellis, R Tolfts	19/05/2026