



ROLE PROFILE: Chair – Wessex Museums Trust

Remuneration: This position is not remunerated but reasonable out of pocket expenses incurred fulfilling the duties of the role, including travel to meetings, are reimbursed.

Location: The partner museums in Dorset and Wiltshire.

Time commitment: Approximately 3 days per month. Trustees are expected to attend six Board meetings per year. Additionally, trustees are invited to attend and represent the charity at partnership events, meetings and functions. It is important that the Chair is able to visit/be available to the Partnership Manager on a regular basis. The term for trustees is three years with the option for reappointment.

Background

The Wessex Museums Partnership comprises the four museums which best tell the stories of Dorset and Wiltshire from prehistoric times to the present day – Dorset County Museum, Poole Museums, The Salisbury Museum and Wiltshire Museum.

The partnership's ambition is to inspire more people to explore and enjoy the outstanding art and heritage of the region and to understand its significance to their lives. The partnership will share the amazing story of the region in new and exciting ways and make a major contribution to the cultural, social and tourism economies of Dorset and Wiltshire.

The partnership formed the Wessex Museums Trust, a Charitable Incorporated Organisation, in January 2017 to support for the benefit and education of the public the accredited museums in Dorset and Wiltshire.

The Wessex Museums Partnership (and its constituent museums) is an Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation 2018-22, and as such has an ambitious programme of work to deliver over the next three and a half years.

To be a Trustee of an organisation is an engaging and fulfilling role. The role of a Trustee is to ensure that the Wessex Museums Trust fulfils its duty to its beneficiaries and delivers on our ambition and values. The most effective boards are ones which benefit from individuals from a diverse range of backgrounds, experiences and skill sets. The Wessex Museums Trust therefore welcomes interested applicants from all parts of the community and with a strong regional connection.

Who are the charity's trustees?

For the Wessex Museums Trust the charity trustees are comprised of:

- Four nominated trustees, one from each of the four partner museums, currently the museum directors.
- Three appointed trustees, including the Chair, Treasurer and one further trustee

The role of the board of trustees

At its simplest, the role of the trustee board is to receive assets from donors, safeguard them and apply them to the charitable purposes of the Wessex Museums Trust. The trustee board must always act in the best interests of the Wessex Museums Trust. The trustee board must act as a group and not as individuals.

The statutory duties of a trustee are:

- To ensure the organisation complies with its governing document - sometimes known as a trust deed, constitution, or articles of association.
- To ensure that the organisation pursues its objectives as defined in its governing document.
- To ensure the organisation applies its resources exclusively in pursuance of its objectives - the charity must not spend money on activities which are not included in its own objectives, no matter how 'charitable' and 'worthwhile' those activities are.
- To contribute actively to the Board of Trustees' role in giving firm strategic direction to the organisation, setting overall policy, defining goals and setting targets and evaluating performance against agreed targets.
- To safeguard the good name and values of the organisation.
- To ensure the effective and efficient administration of the organisation.
- To ensure the financial stability of the organisation.
- To protect and manage the property of the organisation and to ensure the proper investment of the organisation's funds.
- If the organisation employs staff, to appoint the Chief Executive Officer and monitor his or her performance.

In addition with other trustees to hold the charity "in trust" for current and future beneficiaries by:

- Ensuring that the charity has a clear vision, mission and strategic direction and is focused on achieving these.
- Being responsible for the performance of the charity and for ensuring that the charity complies with all legal and regulatory requirements.
- Acting as guardians of the charity's assets, both tangible and intangible, taking all due care over their security, deployment and proper application.
- Ensuring that the charity's governance is of the highest possible standard.

As well as the various statutory duties, any trustee should make full use of any specific skills, knowledge or experience to help the Board make good decisions.

The role of the Chair

The role of the Chair is to provide leadership and direction to the board of Trustees. The Chair's aim is to enable the board to fulfil their responsibilities for the overall governance and strategic direction of the organisation.

The Chair will ensure that the organisation complies with its governing document, charity law, company law and any other relevant legislation or regulations and to make sure that the organisation pursues its objects as defined in its governing document.

The Chair's role is also to work in partnership with the Partnership Manager and support staff, helping them achieve the aims of the organisation; and to optimise the relationship between the board of Trustees and the staff.

In addition to the general responsibilities of a Trustee, the Chair has a number of tasks specific to their role.

Main Responsibilities of the Chair:

- Providing leadership for the board of trustees in their role of setting the strategy and policy of the organisation.
- Chairing and facilitating the board meetings.
- Liaise regularly with the Treasurer to maintain a clear grasp of the charity's financial position and to ensure full and timely financial transparency and information disclosure to the Board.
- Representing the organisation at appropriate events, meetings or functions.
- Acting as a spokesperson for the organisation where appropriate.
- Lead the Board in fostering relations with potential clients and potential funders/donors.
- Consult with the Partnership Manager on matters of strategy, governance, finance and HR.
- Oversee the Partnership Manager's activities in the context of the implementation of the Board's strategy and policies.
- Maintain careful oversight of any risk to reputation and/or financial standing of the organisation.
- Receive regular informal progress reports of the organisation's work and financial performance through the Partnership Manager.
- Attending and being a member of other committees or working groups when appropriate in role as Chair

Person specification - Chair – Wessex Museums Trust

Each trustee must have:

- A commitment to the purpose and ambition of the Wessex Museums Trust
- A willingness to meet the time requirement for being a trustee
- A commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion
- Integrity
- Strategic vision
- Good, independent judgement
- An ability to think creatively
- A willingness to speak their mind
- An ability to work effectively as a member of a team and to take decisions for the good of the Wessex Museums Trust
- Willingness to be available to staff for advice and enquiries on an ad hoc basis

Qualities of a Chair

- Strong leadership ability
- Good communication skills
- Tact and diplomacy
- Understanding of the legal responsibilities and liabilities of a trustee

Experience:

Individuals are sought who have a range of experience, skills, and expertise, an interest in cultural heritage/museums/arts, and a connection to the Wessex region.

The board of trustees collectively needs skills and experience in the following areas:

- Collaborative partnerships
- Marketing and PR
- Legal
- Financial management, income generation and enterprise
- Human resource management
- Volunteering management
- Fundraising
- Equality, diversity and inclusion
- Digital strategy

In particular for the role of Chair, the following experience would be advantageous:

- Prior experience of committee/trustee work.
- Knowledge of the type of work undertaken by the organisation.
- A wider involvement with the voluntary sector.