

The British Museum

Appointment of Director

January 2024

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The first national public museum of the world.

The British Museum was founded in 1753 and opened its doors in 1759. It was the first national museum to cover all fields of human knowledge, open to visitors from across the world.



Letter from the Chair

Dear Applicant,

On behalf of the Board of Trustees of the British Museum, I want to thank you for your interest in becoming its next director. Working in the British Museum is an enormous privilege. Founded just over 270 years ago by an Act of Parliament, it remains one of this country's key cultural institutions and one of the principal museums of its kind in the world. As a Board of Trustees, choosing the director is one of our most important jobs, and now more than ever it is vital that we choose someone exceptional.

The British Museum has had a tough year. We have been under intense scrutiny following the discovery of thefts from our collection, and we are also at the centre of global conversations about the validity of so called "universal museums". But as we turn into 2024 the Museum is also feeling remarkably strong and ready for change: in the wake of the thefts, under the leadership of Sir Mark Jones, we embarked on a project to complete the digitisation of the collection. This is something no other museum of our size has yet achieved, and will make our collection one of the most visited, most accessible and best researched in the world. We have also begun the next phase of the Masterplan – building a new energy centre and launching an architectural competition to redesign and redisplay a third of our gallery spaces. And we have taken steps to ensure we are engaging in, and in time perhaps leading, the big conversations of our time – not shying away from them. The job of the next Director of the British Museum is to take up this mantle and ensure it is a success.

We are looking for someone who has a vision for the future of the British Museum and its purpose as a national and a global museum in the 21st century. Developing and articulating that vision will require creativity, charisma and a passion for the British Museum. But that alone is not enough. The next Director must also have a track record of successfully running a complex organisation, and of commanding the respect of a large and diverse staff, which has a body of curatorial and collection care staff at its core but also

includes a wide array of other functions, from security and visitor services to HR and IT. The next Director must also be willing and able to communicate the purpose of the Museum to the media and to the public.

The Board of Trustees go into this recruitment campaign with an open mind. We are agnostic about the type of candidate we are looking for, whether that is someone from within or outside the museums sector. I would encourage anyone who thinks they have the knowledge, skills, energy, and temperament to run one of the world's greatest museums to apply. Show us how you can seize the opportunities available to the Museum and how you can help address the challenges it is facing.

On behalf of the Trustees, I wish you luck and I look forward to working with whichever one of you is chosen as the next Director of the British Museum.



The Rt Hon George Osborne CH
Chair of Trustees

The British Museum

Established by Act of Parliament in 1753, the British Museum is the oldest national public museum in the world. Its mission is to house, curate, conserve, research and exhibit a collection of world cultures. With a collection of around 8 million objects, the British Museum brings together under one roof the cultures of the world, allowing people to explore the extraordinary diversity of human culture, to discover the many forms and expressions human beings have given to every aspect of life, and to realise how closely they are interconnected.

The British Museum is one of the world's most visited museums. In 2022/23, its home in Bloomsbury received 4.5 million visitors, while a further 4 million people saw objects from the British Museum's collection elsewhere, 2.3 million of them outside the UK. That's because as well as the iconic site in London, the Museum has deep and wide-ranging partnerships with other national and international museums, schools and community groups with whom the Museum co-curates the display of loaned objects.

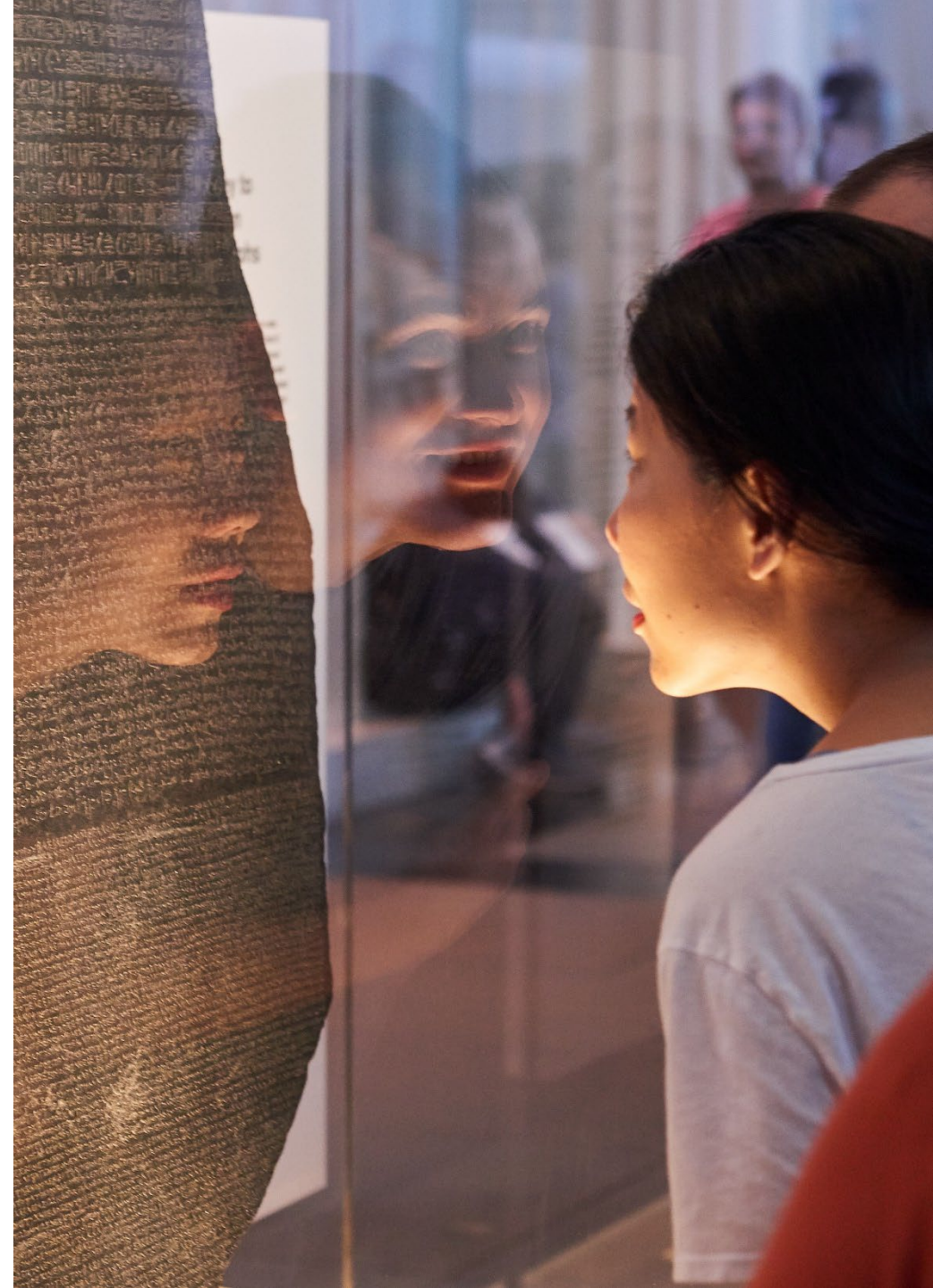
The Museum is entering an exciting new era. Interim Director Sir Mark Jones has announced a plan to complete the documentation and digitisation of the collection, so that for the first time the entire collection will be accessible to anyone who wants to explore it. The Museum is also progressing its

long-term masterplan to revitalise the estate and tell the story of our common humanity. This will improve how visitors experience the collection – physically and virtually – in London, across the UK, and around the world.

The first phase of their masterplan is complete, with the construction of an impressive new Archaeological Research Collection near Reading. The centre, known as BM_ARC, will open to the public next year and revolutionise how they store and study the collection. It will also be the first completely independent building created for the British Museum since Sir Robert Smirke's neo-classical design was completed in Bloomsbury in 1852.

The next phase will see the construction of a new energy centre that will dramatically reduce their carbon footprint. And on top of that the Museum will launch an international architectural competition in the spring – choosing from amongst the world's most talented architects to redesign around a third of the Museum's gallery space.

But the British Museum is far more than its building in London. It is a museum in the world, for the world, and of the world: a museum that speaks to our common humanity.



The Museum is driven by an insatiable curiosity for the world, a deep belief in objects as reliable witnesses and documents of human history, sound research, as well as the desire to expand and share knowledge.



Governance & Funding

The British Museum was established by an Act of Parliament in 1753. Its aim is to hold for the benefit and education of humanity a collection representative of world cultures, and ensure that the collection is housed in safety, conserved, curated, researched and exhibited.

The Museum is governed in accordance with the British Museum Act (1963) and Museums and Galleries Act (1992). It has a 25-person Board of Trustees, who are appointed in various ways: 15 by the UK Prime Minister, 5 by the Board itself; 4 by the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) on the nomination of the British Academy, the Society of Antiquaries, the Royal Academy and the Royal Society; and 1 by the Sovereign. The Chair of Trustees of the British Museum is appointed by the Board, the current Chair is the Rt Hon George Osborne CH, who was appointed in 2021.

The British Museum Act (1963) also sets out the role of the Director of the Museum, who is responsible for the care and administration of the Museum and is, in effect, the Museum's Chief Executive. The Director is also the Museum's Accounting Officer, appointed by the Permanent Secretary of DCMS to be personally responsible for the effective and efficient running of the Museum and accountable to her and to Parliament for the use of public funds and the stewardship of public assets, including the Museum's collection. The Museum is an exempt charity, which means that its principal regulator is the Secretary of State for DCMS. It is also a Public Body, classified as an executive Non-Departmental Public Body.

The Museum is funded by a combination of government funding (grant-in-aid) from DCMS and income from commercial activities, fundraising, sponsorship and visitor revenue such as entry to paid exhibitions.

The main retailing, off-site trading and publishing activities of the BM are carried out by the British Museum Company Limited, a company wholly owned by the Trustees, together with its subsidiary, British Museum Ventures Limited. Commercial hire, education and other income generating activities are carried out by the British Museum Great Court Limited, which is also wholly owned by the Trustees.





The Opportunity

The Board of Trustees of the British Museum are looking to appoint its next Director. The Board are seeking someone who can provide long-term leadership and an inspirational vision for the Museum. The role of Director is one of the best jobs of its kind, offering the opportunity to lead one of the world's oldest and largest national public museums through a period of historic rejuvenation and redevelopment.

With a collection of over 8 million objects, the British Museum is almost unique in being able to tell the history of humanity. It is also one of the UK's most popular visitor attractions, a centre of outreach and expertise for museums and experts across the UK and around the world, and a centre for cutting-edge research. The recent announcement that items in the Museum have been found to be damaged, lost or stolen has been difficult for the organisation but this unusual breach of trust has not diminished the tremendous amount that the Museum staff do, day in, day out. It has also reinforced the importance of transforming the Museum through its Masterplan, which will address historic problems with the fabric of the Bloomsbury site, make it more accessible and sustainable and allow for a significantly enhanced redisplay of the collection fit for the 21st century.

Given the immense potential of the Museum and the significant challenges it faces, the successful candidate will need to be a confident and ambitious leader, able to run a large and complex organisation, to oversee significant capital projects, and to motivate and inspire a diverse team of curatorial and non-curatorial staff.

The successful candidate will be passionate about, have a deep understanding of and be personally committed to the Museum's defining mission to care for, conserve, and make accessible a collection that tells the history of humanity. They will have the experience and the intellectual distinction needed to lead a large museum, which depends on a deep well of curatorial and scientific expertise, but their professional experience can come from within or outside the museums sector.

The Director must be able to lead from the front, and to inspire and motivate teams and partners. That means working with a wide range of internal and external stakeholders to balance the need to redevelop the Museum while maintaining business as usual; ensuring that the Museum is materially and visibly fulfilling its purpose as a UK national museum, serving the entire country; supporting and spearheading a large network of international outreach, engagement and exchange; ensuring that the Museum continues to maximise commercial opportunities; managing relations with the UK government, which provides vital funding for the Museum and acts as its principal regulator; and accounting to Parliament for the use of public money, as the Museum's designated Accounting Officer.

This is a moment of huge potential, with the opportunity to develop new working models which will bring the British Museum to the forefront of world museological practice in terms of its narratives, permanent displays, research, digital strategy, and its engagement with numerous, and diverse, communities.



The Role

Purpose of the role

The role of Director of the British Museum is set out in statute in the British Museum Act (1963). The Director is the operational leader of the Museum, to whom authority is delegated by the Board of Trustees for the running of the Museum, the stewardship of its collection and, as Accounting Officer, the safeguarding of public funds.

Reporting to

The Director is appointed by the Board of Trustees of the British Museum.

The Director will be accountable to the Board, from whom they will receive delegated authority. They must exercise their authority within any limitations and reservations set by the Board. The Director's performance will be subject to appraisal by the Board.

Key areas of responsibility

1. Strategic leadership

- Design, resource and deliver a multi-year visionary and innovative strategy for the Museum, in consultation with the Trustees;
- Ensure that the British Museum is fulfilling its core purpose, as set out in its founding legislation; and
- Deliver of any specific objectives set by the Board of Trustees.

2. Organisational leadership

- Leadership of British Museum staff – currently nearly 1,000 people;
- Inspirational and visible leadership across all teams, with a clear understanding of the breadth of roles within the organisation and the depth and range of experience and expertise within it;
- Provide excellent, empathetic team leadership at a time of continual change and transformation;
- Oversee a positive culture change within the Museum and lead a dynamic executive team;
- Engage colleagues to ensure they are motivated, valued and nurtured, and that they have the appropriate training and skills to thrive in their jobs;
- Provide dynamic, caring, open and collaborative leadership with a clear commitment to achieving increased diversity across all areas of organisation;
- Ensure the Museum's staff understand and abide by the behaviours expected of employees a Public Body in the UK, as set out in the Museum's Code of Conduct. This includes adherence to relevant rules, regulations and guidance governing Public Bodies, including the *Seven Principles of Public Life*; and
- Ensure the Equality and Diversity Policy of 2020 is observed by all staff, volunteers and contractors in the course of their activities.

3. Buildings and capital projects

- Resource and deliver the Museum's Masterplan for the renovation and rejuvenation of the Museum's Bloomsbury site, as set out by the Board of Trustees; and
- Oversee the upkeep of the Museum's buildings, including any capital projects.

4. Stewardship and Collection Care

- Ensure that the Museum's collections are safe and accessible to the public;
- Ensure that the Museum has a pipeline of world class programming, including research, exhibitions, displays and other means of public engagement with the collection; and
- Lead, support, inspire and – where necessary – challenge those in the museum with deep technical expertise in the curation, care, display and conservation of collections.

5. Governance and compliance

- As the liaison between the Board of Trustees and the Museum's staff, ensure adherence to the policies and procedures established by the Trustees; and
- Establish a robust system to promote effective, efficient, and compliant decision-making within the Museum

5. Financial & Risk Management

- Oversight of the Museum's income – principally derived from government funding, commercial income and fundraising – and for its expenditure;
- Ensure that a budget is presented to the Trustees, which sets out the resources available to the Museum and how they will be allocated;
- As the Accounting Officer, hold personal responsibility for the efficient and effective management of the Museum. The Director is accountable to both the Permanent Secretary of DCMS and Parliament for safeguarding public funds. This encompasses the responsibility to ensure that all expenditures made by the Museum comply with the requirements set for the management of public money; and
- Manage risk appropriately within the Museum including ensuring risk is reported in the manner required by the Museum's Audit Committee and the Board of Trustees.

6. Government liaison

- As an exempt charity, the British Museum's principal regulator is DCMS. The Director has a responsibility for understanding the requirements placed on the Museum by its regulator, both under its founding legislation and other legislation to which it is bound, including charity law;
- Maintain a strong working relationship with DCMS, and ensure that it has the access and the information it needs to fulfil its responsibilities as regulator and sponsor department.

7. Representing the Museum

- Act as the visible face for the Museum. Represent the Museum externally, including in the media;
- Ability to clearly articulate the Museum's purpose and vision, and to defend the Museum publicly;
- Support the Museum's fundraising activities and engage the Museum's donors and supporters, nationally and internationally;
- Engage with a wide range of stakeholders across the UK, including local and national government and Parliament;
- Ensure that the British Museum is a museum for the whole of the UK, including through its partnerships with other national museums and with local and regional partners across the country; and
- Representing a global collection, lead and support the Museum's extensive international engagement, to make and maintain connections internationally and to represent the Museum overseas, including engagement with international partners.



Person Specification

The core skills and expertise sought in a new Director include:

- **Leadership skills:** Candidates should have a strong track record of senior leadership, change management and transformation in a large, complex organisation. The Director will, with the Board of Trustees, set the overall strategic direction of the Museum and be responsible for inspiring and leading the institution's staff, and working with them to achieve the Museum's goals. They should have experience of building teams, with in-built succession planning.
- **Communication skills:** The Director will have a clear understanding of the purpose of the British Museum, and the ability to communicate this to diverse audiences. She/he will be the face of the Museum and will be confident and comfortable representing the Museum nationally and internationally at the highest level. She/he will use their position and profile to make the argument for the Museum in the 21st century. This includes appearing on broadcast media and in print and through social media and digital channels.
- **Management skills:** The Director is accountable for establishing a team and processes that ensure the effective management of the Museum's budget, operations and staff of nearly 1,000. The Director will have an interest in every aspect of the workings of the Museum and the ability to forge a multi-disciplinary team for integrated operations. She/he will be a team player, who

understands how to motivate a public service institution in a period of constrained public finances. Candidates should have strong people management skills, an empathetic leadership style and a record of attracting and retaining high quality individuals and teams.

- **Fundraising expertise:** The British Museum has ambitious plans and it will be an important part of the Director's role to support these through participating in and leading high-level development activities. The Director will have the ability to inspire confidence in funders, and to generate the ideas and intellectual energy that are necessary to attract financial support.
- **Intellectual leadership:** The Director must lead the intellectual work of the Museum and, working with the Museum's Keepers, curatorial and collection care staff, establish a clear rationale for the role of the British Museum in the coming decade. The Director will have a clear respect for scholarship and a deep understanding of and/or passion for the Museum's collections. They will have a track record of inspiring a dynamic, collaborative and positive working culture.
- **Commitment to Equity, Diversity and Inclusion:** The British Museum values and respects the diversity of its audiences and its staff and the Director must embody these values.

The British Museum is one of the UK's leading national museums and a Non-Departmental Public Body, regulated as an Exempt Charity by DCMS.

Understanding the roles and responsibilities of the Museum as a Public Body are an important part of the Director's role and she/he should be familiar with or have a good understanding of how public sector institutions in the UK operate.

As the leader of a Public Body, the Director is appointed as Accounting Officer by the Departmental Accounting Officer of the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS). As Accounting Officer, she/he is responsible for accounting to Parliament, DCMS, the Board of Trustees of the British Museum and other stakeholders.

The Director as Accounting Officer is responsible for safeguarding the public funds for which she/he has charge, including grant in aid and any other funds within the stewardship of the Museum; for ensuring propriety, regularity, value for money and feasibility and regularity in the handling of those public funds; and for reporting to the Board of Trustees on the day to day operations and management of the Museum and the achievement of its strategic aims.



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Terms of Appointment How to Apply

Location: London

Salary: £215,841

Holiday entitlement: 25 days

Pension: Civil Service alpha pension scheme, with the standard employer contribution rate (currently 30.3%)

Saxton Bampfylde Ltd is acting as an employment agency advisor to British Museum on this appointment.

Candidates should apply for this role through our website at www.saxbam.com/appointments using code EBMD

Click on the 'apply' button and follow the instructions to upload a CV and cover letter and complete the online equal opportunities monitoring* form.

The closing date for applications is noon on Friday 26th January 2024.

* The equal opportunities monitoring online form will not be shared with anyone involved in assessing your application. Please complete as part of the application process.

GDPR personal data notice

According to GDPR guidelines, we are only able to process your Sensitive Personal Data (racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs, trade union membership, genetic data, biometric data, health, sex life, or sexual orientation) with your express consent. You will be asked to complete a consent form when you apply and please do not include any Sensitive Personal Data within your CV (although this can be included in your covering letter if you wish to do so), remembering also not to include contact details for referees without their prior agreement.

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