



**WEALD &
DOWNLAND**
LIVING MUSEUM



Appointment of Museum Director

April 2024

Saxton Bampfylde

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Welcome from the Chair

A warm thank you for your interest in our search for our new Museum Director. Much has been achieved at the Weald & Downland Living Museum in recent years and we are committed to finding an energetic leader to sustain and build upon this success in the years to come.

Our mission is to preserve the vernacular architecture and traditional rural trades and crafts of our region for future generations to learn from. Education and conservation are at the heart of our charitable objectives; our strategy is to conserve and activate our outstanding buildings and artefact collections on our intentionally curated site to inspire, educate and entertain our visitors. The Museum tells the stories of the lives of the rural working poor of our region and promotes interest in the preservation of the architecture and crafts through offering our audiences a high standard of visitor experience, and I am proud that we have just completed another year of success in achieving these goals. Our visitors come for a variety of reasons; some want to learn about the history of our region, others to see historic architecture, and some to learn new skills. Some visit to enjoy the gardens, blacksmithing, the Watermill, Bakehouse or Tudor Kitchen, and a variety of animals. Many attend our varied events, talks and courses, whilst others simply want to escape from the stress of everyday life by enjoying a peaceful walk around our special site or spending a day in the fresh air of the countryside.

We are an independent museum and a much-loved gem, held in high esteem and affection by many. As an open-air site, we reopened as a green space as early as was permitted by the Government after

the pandemic, a significant achievement which was hugely appreciated by our loyal staff, volunteers, members, and visitors. After the pandemic, we took a fresh look at enhancing the visitor experience whilst remaining true to our charitable objectives. We undertook formal reviews in key areas of activity, namely education, conservation, and interpretation, and recommendations have either been implemented or are underway. By the end of last year, despite wrestling with a challenging economic environment, the Museum had again performed well. Highlights include:

- Reopening Titchfield Market Hall, an iconic building in the Museum's collection, following a full programme of conservation;
- Bookings for school groups doubled, take-up rates on lifelong learning course places were at the highest point for the industry, and we are proud to continue to be the home of the University of York's MSC Degree Programmes in Building Conservation and Timber Building Conservation;
- Attracting more than 130,000 visitors last year, representing a return to pre-pandemic levels and close to a record high. Volunteer numbers and Museum membership also reached their highest levels;
- We are proud to have been recognised with the award of several accolades including the Sandford Award from the Heritage Education Trust, the Learning Outside the Classroom Award from LOtC, Trip Advisor Choice Award, and Sussex Family Attraction of the Year, amongst others.

The Museum is resilient, delighting visitors and delivering soundly against our charitable objectives. Nevertheless, making money still proves to be extremely challenging amidst an environment of rising costs. The Museum opened a new Gateway Visitor facility a few years ago encompassing an excellent café and shop and both are performing well; our event team does a great job in hiring out facilities for weddings, corporate events and filming. Furthermore, the Museum has been fortunate to be the recipient of several legacies in recent years and has doubtless benefited from increased profile from being the filming location of 'The Repair Shop', amongst other TV shows. As is the case throughout our industry, we are continually challenged in striking a balance between delivering against our charitable objectives and generating sufficient unrestricted income to meet costs and invest for future growth.

Our challenge for 2024 is to build on the success of the last few years and continue to deliver on the recommendations for enhancing visitor experience, whilst continuing to generate the income required to develop towards becoming a world class heritage attraction. Fundraising will be an important focus in the pursuit of both development and sustainability in the coming years. In addition, in 2024, the Museum aims to seek planning permission to erect an additional building to add to our collection on the site. The Weald & Downland Living Museum is resilient, ambitious, well-positioned for further success and treasured in the region. We seek an energetic, versatile, emotionally intelligent, and pragmatic strategist to lead the Museum in the coming years.

A sincere thank you for your interest in applying for the role.

Jo Pasricha

Chair, The Weald & Downland Living Museum



About the Museum

The Weald & Downland Living Museum is an award-winning, nationally and internationally recognised open-air museum run as an independent charitable trust. Originally founded in 1970, the Weald & Downland is one of the leading museums of historic buildings in this country, representing 900 years of the vernacular architecture of the South East of England. The Museum brings to life the working lives, homes, farmsteads and rural industries of the people who lived in the region. The collection of historic buildings comprises those which would otherwise have been lost to the nation through, for example, demolition resulting from site development. Each building has been carefully dismantled, conserved, and painstakingly rebuilt at the Museum's 40-acre site in the beautiful South Downs National Park. The Museum is fully accredited and the historical importance of its entire collection is recognised through designation by Arts Council England.

The Museum makes a major contribution to tourism in the Chichester area and is a key attraction in the South Downs National Park. It attracts around 130,000 visitors each year, including day visitors, schools and special interest groups, with a varied and exciting programme of events, activities, demonstrations and engagement opportunities. In addition, the Museum has over 5,400 members. Special events, usually held over a weekend, are particularly popular and include festivals devoted to traditional and local food; living history; working animals and livestock; vintage and steam, and rural and country-based interests. These include our annual Advent Market, a great local community event with over 100 stall holders selling their crafts to over 5500 visitors over two days.

Purpose and aims

The purpose of the Weald & Downland Living Museum is to stimulate public interest in, and to promote and encourage the preservation of, buildings of architectural or historical interest, and to stimulate public interest in ancient crafts, trades and manufactures.

The Museum aims to:

- run an open-air living museum that inspires and delights its users;
- provide lifelong learning based on the Museum's collections and other resources;
- ensure high standards of collection care;
- pursue research and scholarship;
- build on the Museum's legacy and inspire future generations.

At the core of the Museum's work is the collection of more than 50 rescued vernacular buildings reflecting the working lives of ordinary people in South East England over the past 900 years. The historic building exhibits, dating from the Anglo-Saxon period to the 19th century, have been carefully dismantled and re-erected from their original sites (or replicated from archaeological evidence for the early period) and, together with

traditionally managed woodland, period gardens, farm livestock and nature walks, form the heart of the Museum site. The Museum promotes the retention of buildings on their original sites, unless there is no alternative, and encourages an informed and sympathetic approach to their conservation and continued use. Only a small number of representative buildings can be brought to the Museum for inclusion in the collection.

As well as illustrating the history of original building styles and types, the Museum has an extensive artefact collection representing rural crafts and industries, building trades, skills and agriculture. Objects from the collection are displayed in buildings on the site, and in the open-access store in the basement of the Downland Gridshell building, where workshops and events also take place. There is also an important library and archive relating to vernacular architecture and rural life. As well as bringing to life the homes, farmsteads and rural crafts and industries represented by its collections and exhibits, other themes are strongly represented at the Museum, including landscape, agriculture, animal husbandry, science and environmental sustainability.



Education

The Museum has had a strong commitment to lifelong learning from its beginnings. In addition to over 6,000 children visiting in school parties every year, the Museum operates as a private sector training provider, selling days of adult teaching and training to

over 900 students every year, with a broad spectrum of provision from workshop-based skills training to two Master of Science courses (on timber building and building conservation) run in association with the University of York.

Finances

The Museum maintains a strong financial position, with sufficient cash and other investment holdings to support its on-going activities and capital and maintenance programmes. From time to time, the Museum also raises money through fundraising activities to support certain specific projects.

In 2022, the underlying surplus on unrestricted funds was £50,459. This surplus excludes a legacy of £431,400 receivable and payments made to the Weald and Downland Open Air Museum Endowment Trust of £500,000.

Unrestricted income was £3,451,510, an increase of 18% on the prior year.

Approximately one-third of income arose from admissions, one third from trading activities and one-third from other sources, including courses and legacies.

Total expenditure on unrestricted funds was £3,469,651 including payroll costs of £1,345,574 and the grants of £500,000 mentioned above.

On 31 December 2022, assets held in unrestricted funds were £1,563,686. Total net

assets were £11,576,938.

The Museum prepares annual budgets in respect of its operations and capital programmes. These are monitored on an on-going basis, and reforecasts are made during the year when there are material changes in circumstances. Any surplus funds may, at the discretion of the Trustees, be transferred to The Weald and Downland Open Air Museum Endowment Trust, a separate organisation which exists to support the activities of the Museum; the Endowment Trust may also make grants or loans to the Museum to support its activities.

As a result, the Museum does not have a fixed level of reserves which it seeks to maintain at any one time but aims to ensure that it has more than sufficient headroom, in particular, to manage seasonal variations, with allowance for unexpected events. On 31 December 2022 the Museum held cash of £695,930.

At the same date, the Endowment Trust had net assets of approximately £2.4 million.

You can view the Museum's accounts [here](#).





The role

The Museum Director, as Chief Executive, will work with Trustees to ensure that the Museum develops its role as a leader in its field and its national and international profile, maintains collections that continue to be nationally accredited and designated, and continues to engage with new audiences through learning, social and tourism programmes. The Museum Director will provide strategic leadership to deliver the vision which has been co-developed by the Board of Trustees and staff, and the highest level of executive leadership of the Museum in order to develop the vision in the future and achieve the charity's short, medium and long-term objectives; ensuring the effective and coordinated contribution of

Trustees, staff and volunteers to all resources and assets.

The Museum Director is accountable for:

- The totality of the Museum's staffing, resources, assets, administration, management, operations and performance;
- Compliance with Health and Safety legislation and compliance with Charity and Company legislation;
- The continued professional accreditation of the Museum by Arts Council England;
- Demonstrating the charity's Public Benefit.

The Museum Director reports to the Board of Trustees via the Chair as their main reporting line, and directly manages a Senior Leadership Team which comprises of four direct reports; Head of Finance, Head of Collection & Site Operations, Head of Learning, and Head of Commercial Operations.

There are around 40 full-time equivalent and 18 part-time paid staff, and the Museum is reliant on over 300 volunteers, who contribute over 40,000 hours each year to bringing the Museum to life.

Key responsibilities

- To lead the development of the Museum's Strategic Plan and supporting Annual Business Plan and, in doing so, establish a sustainable shared vision for the Museum's future as an educational charity, encompassing the Board of Trustees, staff, volunteers and all external stakeholders;
- To lead, manage and develop the Museum's Senior Leadership Team, and to provide clear leadership, inspiration and motivation to staff at all levels, creating an environment where people feel included, supported and can fulfil their potential; and to continue to attract volunteers;
- To lead and/or oversee as appropriate, all the Museum's major developments, including its capital programmes;
- To act as a compelling ambassador, representing the Museum locally, nationally and internationally, and developing positively the Museum's regional, national and international profile and reputation, through networking, influencing and developing effective relations with cultural and other organisations and government agencies;
- Develop the interpretation of the Museum's collections, ensure they are safeguarded and documented and support academic use of them;
- Identify, develop and deliver creative and commercially focused initiatives and programmes that combine public purpose and profitability;
- To play a leading and high-profile role in the charity's fundraising activities
- To prepare the annual revenue budget and capital development plan to ensure the financial viability of the Museum through the optimum use of its assets, resources and staff;
- To lead the relationship with the Board of Trustees, including advising on appropriate corporate governance and management models, as well as ensuring the Board's effective strategic governance through providing clear and timely advice, briefings, policy, development proposals and induction, and, along with the Chair, identifying the skills and experience required on the Board and assisting with the recruitment of new Trustees;
- To ensure that the totality of the Museum's financial, risk, asset, operational, collections, health & safety and staff management systems and controls are effective, appropriate, proportionate and compliant with legislative and sector regulation.



Person specification

The Trustees are looking for an inspiring Museum Director who will be able to align the entire organisation behind a passion for maintaining success in pursuit of the Museum's key aims. The Museum Director must be empathetic, innovative, and be excited by the chance to bring their own ideas into shaping the future of this wonderful Museum. They will need to apply commercial experience to increase visitor numbers and revenue goals, create highly effective systems for internal and external communication, and drive a culture of continuous improvement and shared values whilst maintaining the Museum's values, heritage and legacy.

The ideal candidate will bring all or most of the following attributes:

Experience, knowledge & track record

- A successful and substantial track record of high-level leadership in an organisation of similar size and complexity, either leading the organisation or a significant part of it, preferably with experience of running a major heritage/arts/cultural organisation;
- Experience of dealing with a politically complex environment, with a number of diverse stakeholders;
- A substantial track record of successful commercial management and performance delivery;
- A track record of continuous improvement in raising organisational and individual performance, and effective change management abilities and experience;
- Experience of overseeing marketing and promotion tactics to increase the profile of an organisation;
- Well-established and extensive personal and professional national networks.

Experience of co-operative work with both the public and private sectors; experience of reporting directly to a Board of Trustees; knowledge of marketing and public relations; experience of fundraising and philanthropic activities in the charitable and/or not-for-profit sector would be desirable in addition.

Personal attributes

- An inspiring leader with the confidence and experience to deal with people at all levels and to lead the team and volunteers, engaging positively to deliver the Board's vision;
- An outstanding people manager with excellent communication skills, empathy and sensitivity, diplomacy and resilience, and exceptional interpersonal abilities;
- Strong financial and commercial acumen, with a track record of raising earned income and seeking creative opportunities for income development;
- A willingness to play a key role in fundraising;
- The capability to build and sustain regional, national and international relationships;
- A strong personal affinity and appreciation of the role and needs of both the heritage and charity sectors;
- An appreciation of the importance of the preservation of vernacular architecture;
- The approach necessary to be a compelling spokesperson for the Museum and to champion its importance to a wide range of stakeholders.





Terms of appointment

This is a full-time role based at The Weald & Downland Living Museum, Town Lane, Singleton, Chichester, West Sussex, PO18 0EU. Due to the nature of the Museum, the role does involve some weekend working.

The salary range for the role is £75,000 - £80,000 pa.

The Weald & Downland Living Museum offers an employer contribution of 3% if the employee contributes 5% into a workplace pension scheme. Employees will automatically be enrolled after 3 months unless they opt-out.

26 days annual leave plus 8 Bank Holidays. The holiday year runs from the 1st Jan - 31st December.

The successful candidate will be entitled to some relocation assistance if applicable.

How to apply

Saxton Bampfylde Ltd is acting as an employment agency advisor to the Weald & Downland Living Museum on this appointment.

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

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 **Wednesday 8th May 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.*

Key dates

Preliminary interviews with Saxton Bampfylde – w/c 20th and 27th May, and 3rd June 2024

Final interviews and 1:1 conversations with Weald & Downland Living Museum – w/c 10th & 17th June 2024

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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