

Leighton
House

Sambourne
House

The Friends

Appointment of Chair of The Friends

November 2025

PBBXEA

Saxton Bampfylde

Introduction from Daniel Robbins, Senior Curator

Thank you for your interest in the role of Chair of the Friends of Leighton House.

Leighton House and Sambourne House are two of London's most significant house museums set ten minutes apart on the north side of Kensington High Street. Leighton House is the extraordinary studio-house created over a 30-year period by the painter Frederic, Lord Leighton PRA (1830-96), while Sambourne House was the family home of the *Punch* cartoonist and illustrator Edward Linley Sambourne (1844-1910), retaining almost all its original contents. The two artists knew each other, and their homes provide a unique insight into the status, taste and celebrity of artists in Kensington in the late nineteenth century. Both are owned and operated by Kensington and Chelsea Council, with Leighton House celebrating 100 years as a public museum in 2026.

As Senior Curator I have been responsible for the two sites for the past 26 years, working with a small team of talented and committed colleagues. With the close involvement of the Friends, the houses have been transformed. Between 2019 and 2022, an award-winning £9.6M project refurbished the east end of Leighton House to create much-needed visitor spaces and facilities, with the museum becoming a finalist for the Art Fund Museum of the Year Prize in 2023. Since reopening, visitor numbers have doubled, with audiences drawn to the new wing, the large garden, and the rich programme of exhibitions, events and learning on offer. This has been accompanied by record levels of income generation with just over £1 million generated on site in 2024-25.

The centenary of Leighton House as a public museum coincides with the Council facing unprecedented budget challenges. £83 million of savings are required over the next four years, requiring the Council to review all its current commitments. For the museums, at present this translates into substantially increased income targets. The challenge ahead will be to maintain the momentum of recent years, building on the success of the capital project, continuing to raise its profile and engagement against this increasingly uncertain financial backdrop. Over the last decade, Leighton House has been the focus for activity. As a consequence, Sambourne House is now in need of significant investment of time and resources to bring it up to the same level of care and presentation.

The new Chair will play a central role in achieving a positive outcome, further developing the already close relationship between the museums and the Friends, galvanising new support and engaging with the Council over the future of these two exceptional historic house museums.

I am delighted that you are considering this important role, and we look forward to hearing from you.

Daniel Robbins, Senior Curator
November 2025

Leighton House

Leighton House, the former home and studio of Victorian artist Frederic Lord Leighton (1830-96), is one of London's most remarkable historic houses, combining Victorian, architecture, design, and art in a unique setting. The Friends of Leighton House (charity no. 1153591) is an independent charity established in 1969 that supports the Museums through fundraising, advocacy, and community engagement. The Friends played a critical role in supporting the award-winning refurbishment of Leighton House, completed in 2022.

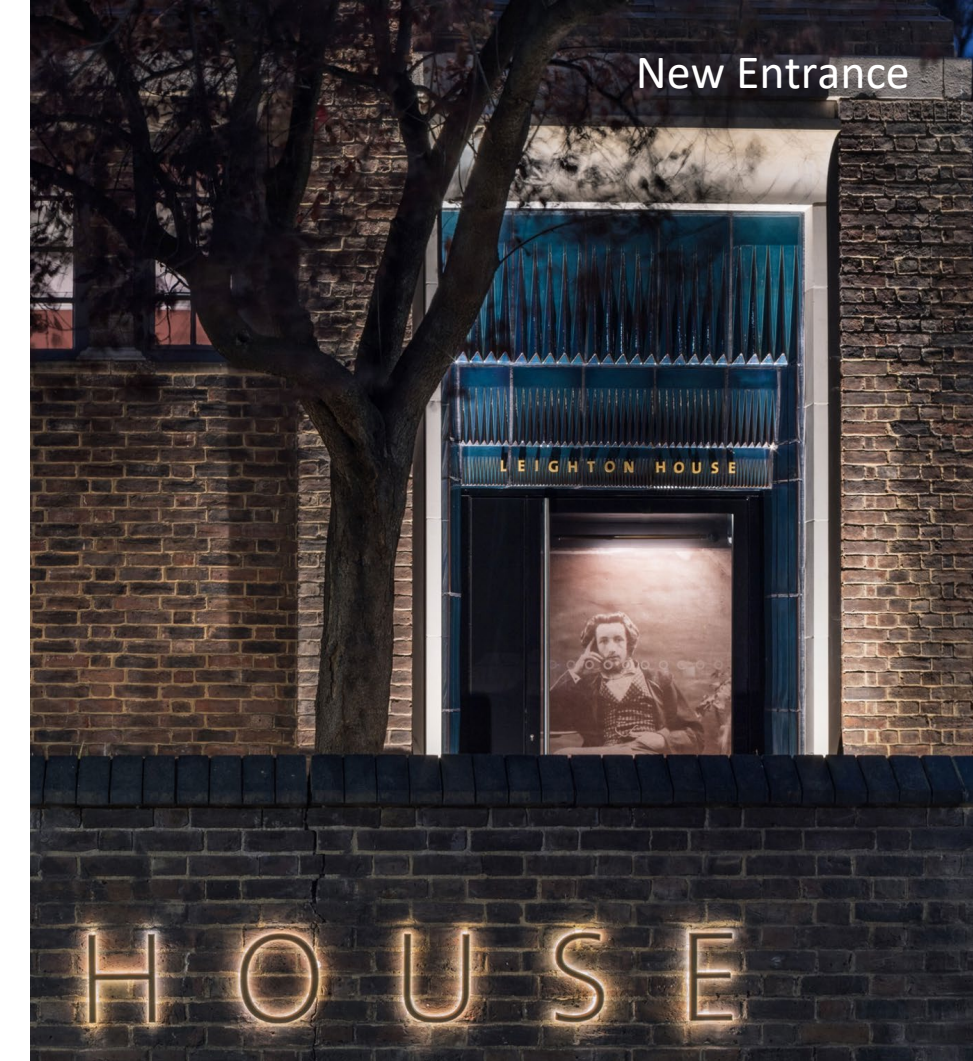
Leighton House and its sister museum, Sambourne House, are owned and operated by the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea. With renewed pressures on local authority funding, the Friends will play an increasingly important role in ensuring the Museums' financial resilience and long-term sustainability.

The current Chair and Vice Chair of the Friends, Sir David Verey CBE and Lady Emma Verey, are stepping down, and the charity is now seeking a new Chair to lead the Friends into its second century as a public museum.





Reception and Shop



New Entrance



Leighton's Athlete



De Morgan Café



New Staircase Rotunda and
Restored Winter Studio

Popped along to see the revived @LeightonHouse_ this week and it's truly marvellous - a glorious rejuvenation of a lovely artists house that's a must-see for any art lover

Unique
Unexpected
Incredible

It's difficult to out-wow Leighton House in Holland Park when its interior flourishes include a golden dome & Narcissus Hall. **Their helical stair is a stunning addition**, hand-painted with an 11m high mural by Iranian artist Shahzad Ghaffari

Great to return to the sublime spaces of @LeightonHouse_ today. **I like the gallery showing paintings from other Holland Park artists too.** Inspired me to take a walk to look at the neighbouring artists houses

A magical artist's house
that transports you to
another world

So pleased Leighton House opened up again, it's beautiful, **great asset to our neighbourhood**

Who We Are – Values

Our vision is to widen appreciation, understanding and enjoyment of Victorian art, architecture, and history; their contemporary relevance made apparent and meaningful.

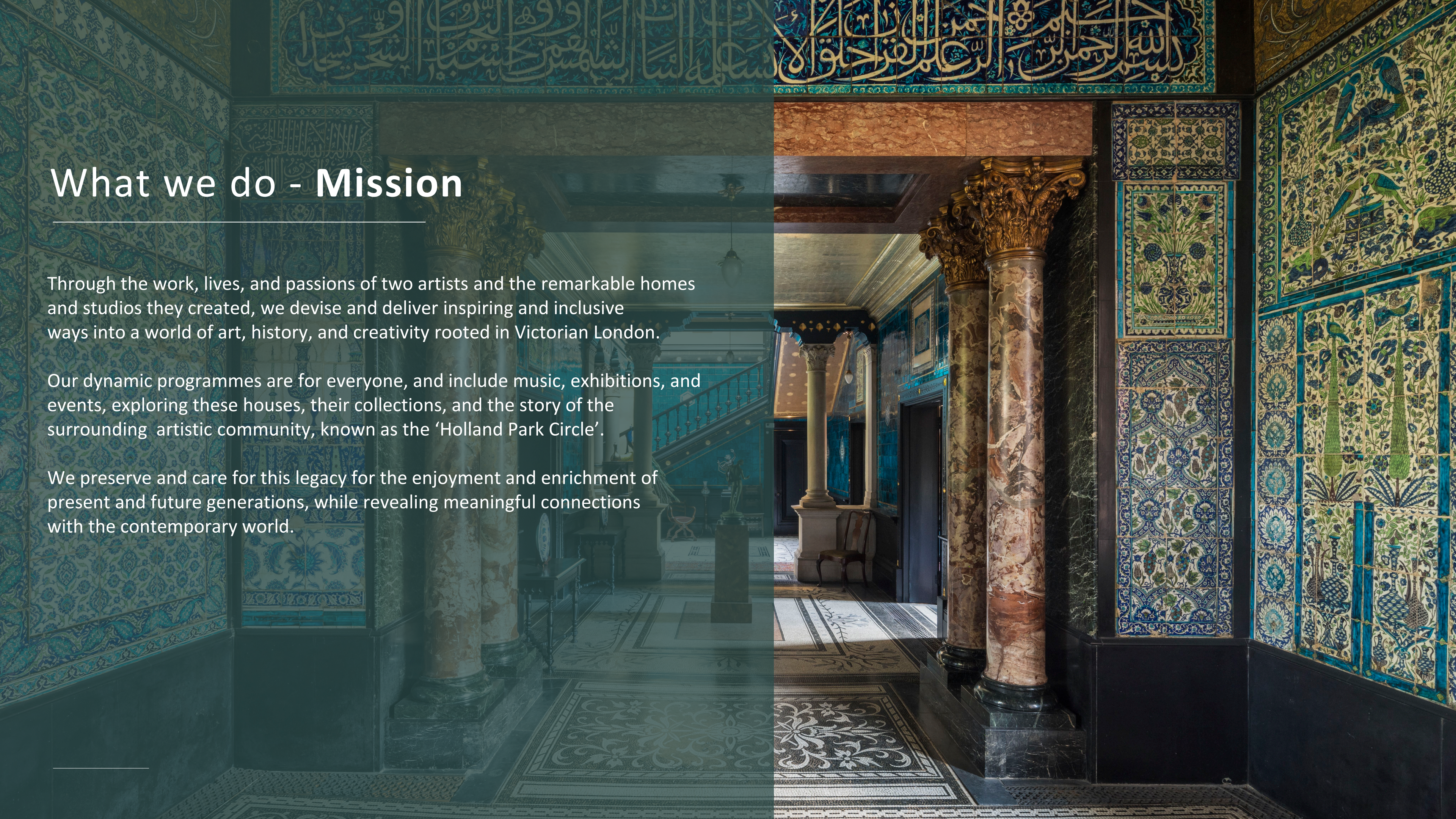
**Authentic
Connected
Creative
Inclusive**

What we do - Mission

Through the work, lives, and passions of two artists and the remarkable homes and studios they created, we devise and deliver inspiring and inclusive ways into a world of art, history, and creativity rooted in Victorian London.

Our dynamic programmes are for everyone, and include music, exhibitions, and events, exploring these houses, their collections, and the story of the surrounding artistic community, known as the 'Holland Park Circle'.

We preserve and care for this legacy for the enjoyment and enrichment of present and future generations, while revealing meaningful connections with the contemporary world.





Who we are not

We are not...

A hidden gem

The museums are accessible and meaningful to all, while working to preserve the intimacy of visitor experience.

For Victorian lovers only

The museums offer a multilayered appeal beyond constraints of time periods and specific art movements.

A one-off destination

Repeat visits are encouraged through a varied and innovative programme of exhibitions, events and expanding collections.

Free of charge

As public museums, our budgets are under continued scrutiny and self-generated income through admissions and events tickets enable us to remain financially viable.

An art gallery

The museums present a unique proposition of combined access to historic interiors, collections and temporary exhibitions.

A 'white cube'

Our work with contemporary creatives is always inspired and in response to the historic collections.

Community engagement

Going beyond the museum walls to connect and deliver locally based activity directly to and with local communities.

Bring art and ideas inspired by Leighton House to where people live, learn, and are supported.

In-house learning team and volunteers together with our established network of Leighton House Creative Ambassadors.

Potential Stops - established and new partnerships with schools, colleges, libraries, community centres, care home settings, cultural centres, youth groups and places of worship.

Aimed at encouraging creative expression, the chance to socialise and have fun, and enhance health and wellbeing.

Get closer to our non-visiting communities and those with the least access to arts and creativity.

Particular emphasis on young people, as the bedrock of the next 100 years.





Artist-led Embroidery Workshop



Exhibition Talk



Life Drawing in the Studio



Curator's Exhibition Tour

The Friends of Leighton House

The Friends of Leighton House was established in 1969 with the purpose of supporting the work of Leighton House and deepening the public's understanding of the life and work of Frederic, Lord Leighton. The Friends have now extended their reach to support Sambourne House, Leighton House's sister museum, in the same way. Coinciding with the reopening of Leighton House, a joint re-branding and ticketing offer was launched to bring the two museums closer together. The charity operates in the borough of Kensington and Chelsea, in London, and was constituted as a CIO in August 2013. The Friends financially assist the museums in the following key areas:

- **Conservation:** The preservation of the collections and interiors for the enjoyment of visitors, now and in the future.
- **Learning and Outreach:** Providing learning activities for a diverse audience, including those from areas of least advantage in the borough and beyond.
- **Exhibitions:** Supporting the museums' ambitious exhibition programme, now with two dedicated spaces at Leighton House hosting between 2 and 4 exhibitions per year, combining contemporary and nineteenth-century art.
- **Acquisitions:** Helping return objects to Leighton House that were sold following Leighton's death in 1896, and when this is not possible, finding similar examples or commissioning high-quality recreations, and working to acquire pieces by Leighton and his contemporaries to enhance the existing collection and interiors.
- **Capital Projects:** Such as Leighton House's recent redevelopment, *Hidden Gem to National Treasure*, made possible thanks to a collaborative partnership between the National Lottery Heritage Fund, the Royal Borough of Kensington, and Chelsea and The Friends, who secured a significant number of individual donations and grants from several trusts and foundations, including The Wolfson Foundation, The Garfield Weston Foundation, The Headley Trust, and The Foyle Foundation, among others.

The Friends - Finance & Funding

Charity income is generated from:

- Fundraising events and donor cultivation
- Project grants received on behalf of the museums from Trusts and Foundations
- Exhibition Circle patrons scheme
- Membership scheme
- On-site and online donations linked to museums' ticketing and admissions.

The Friends now self-generate an annual surplus in unrestricted funds of c. £28k thanks to their membership, events, and recurring small donations, independently from funds raised for projects and the exhibitions programme.

In 2023, The Friends were able to support the most ambitious acquisition ever made by Leighton House with over £400k, thanks to a special fundraising campaign run in collaboration with the museums.

To date, these contributions all supplement the core revenue budget provided by the Council, allowing the museums to be more ambitious and deliver higher quality programmes than would otherwise be the case. The museum's Development Officer works between the museum and the Friends, with responsibility for funding applications, cultivation events and the administration of the Friends.



Governance Arrangements

The Friends

There are currently 13 trustees, with the trustees meeting on a quarterly basis. Museum staff provide a quarterly update and attend the trustees' meetings to agree priorities for support and forthcoming events and initiatives.

The Council

Until earlier this year, Leighton House and Sambourne House were part of the *Environment and Neighbourhoods* business group within Kensington and Chelsea Council. After a restructure, they now are part of *Communities & Culture*. As Senior Curator, Daniel Robbins reports to Moira Ugoji, Director for Communities and Culture, who reports to Callum Wilson, Director of Grenfell Partnerships and Community Transformation. The Lead Member, with the museums as part of their portfolio, is Kim Taylor Smith, Deputy Leader and Lead Member for Employment, Culture, and the Economy.

Formal briefings with the Lead Member, also attended by Senior Management, are held on a fortnightly basis where the museums' performance and current issues and options are discussed and a way forward agreed. Criteria for formal Key Decisions are established across the Council and relate to financial implications, impact on residents, significant

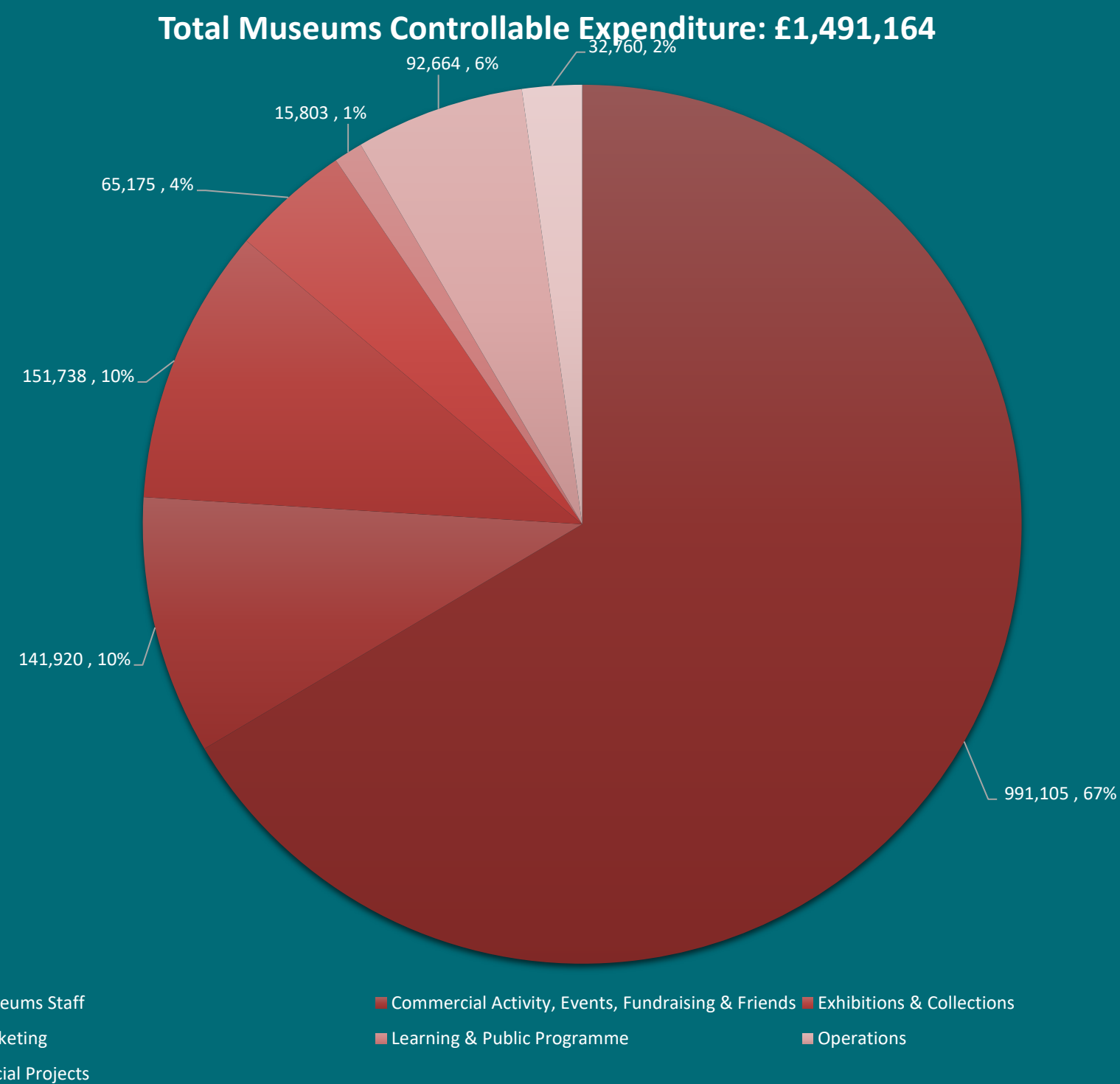
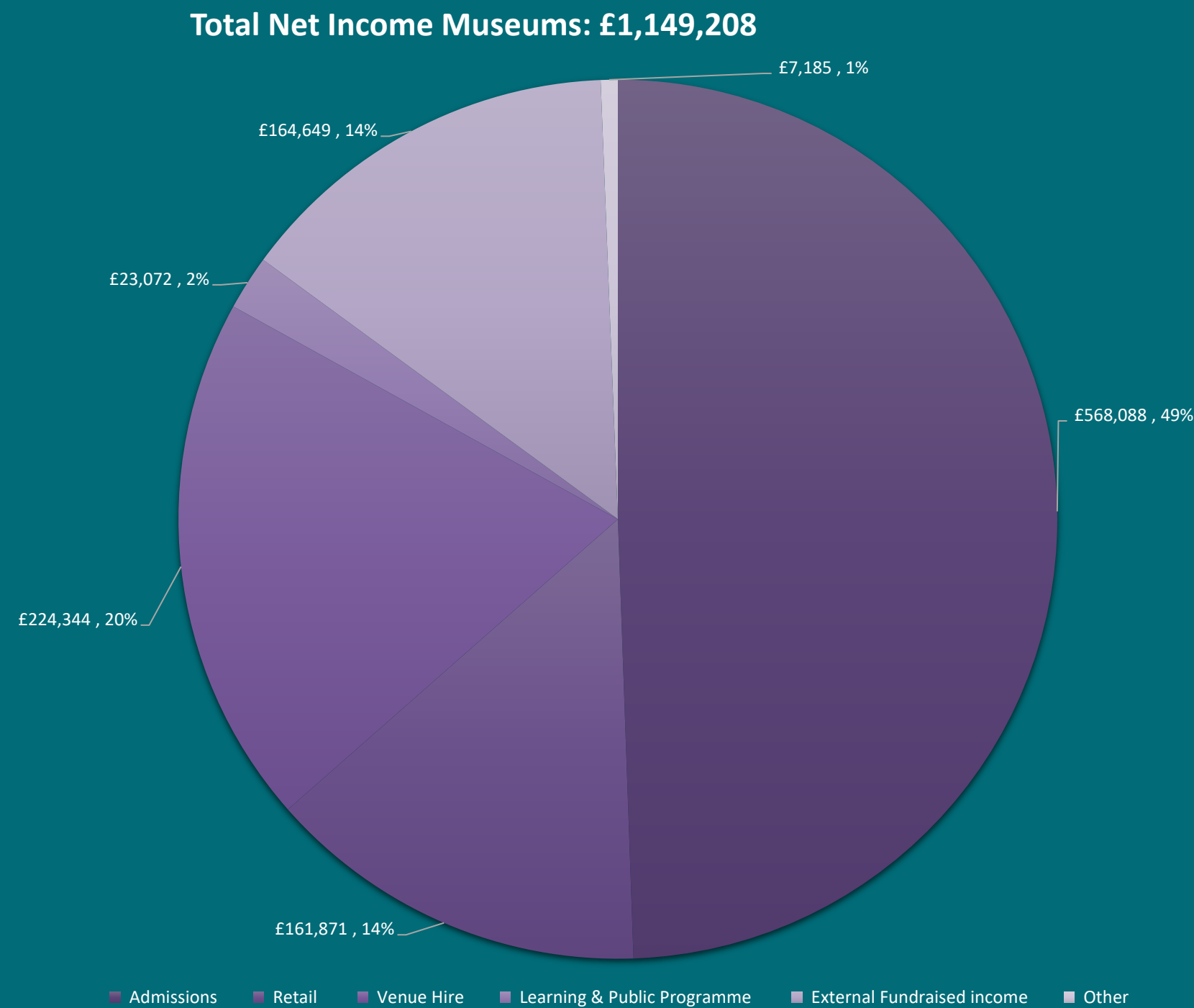
changes to service provision, and political sensitivity. Forthcoming Key Decisions are entered on a publicly accessible Forward Plan and depending on the above criteria are taken either by the Leadership Team, the Lead Member, or the Director via delegated authority. All fees and charges across the Council are subject to annual review and agreed each autumn for implementation the following financial year.

Budget Arrangements

Leighton House and Sambourne House share a single expenditure and income budget. The expenditure budget is limited to controllable expenditure and covers Operations, Exhibitions, Learning, Public Programme, Marketing, Events, and Collections. Not included are costs contained within other Council departmental budgets (e.g. building maintenance) and Council internal recharges (e.g. insurance, HR, finance).

A breakdown of the museums' income and expenditure is given in the following slide.

Museums Finances



The council, RBKC, allocates an annual budget to cover the shortfall between income and controllable expenditure, supporting the running of the museums. In 24/25 the budget allocation was circa £400k, but the shortfall was only £367k*, as the museums overachieved the income targets. This budget allocation is expected to be reduced year on year. Additionally, the council covers all non-controllable expenditure for the museums (overheads).

*The small discrepancy with figures in charts is due to council yearly budget adjustments.

The role of Chair of The Friends

The Chair will provide leadership and vision for The Friends of Leighton House, working closely with the Senior Curator, trustees, and the Leighton House team to build on the Friends' history of advocacy and support. The Chair will be central in shaping and driving forward the upcoming fundraising campaign.



Key Responsibilities

- Provide strategic leadership to the Friends, ensuring the charity fulfils its mission to support Leighton House and Sambourne House.
- Act as an ambassador for the museums, representing the Friends to donors, partners, and the wider community.
- Chair trustee meetings effectively, ensuring good governance and clear decision-making.
- Build strong and collaborative relationships with the museums' leadership team and RBKC representatives.
- Inspire, engage, and expand the Friends' membership, cultivating a culture of philanthropy and support.
- Support and mentor trustees, ensuring the board operates effectively and with accountability.



Person Specification

- A genuine passion for art, heritage, and the mission of Leighton House and Sambourne House.
- Demonstrated leadership experience, ideally at board or senior executive level, within the charity, cultural, or business sectors.
- Strong fundraising experience, with the ability to inspire donors and leverage personal networks.
- Excellent communication and ambassadorial skills, comfortable representing the Museums at all levels.
- An understanding of charity governance and commitment to upholding the highest standards of transparency and accountability.
- The ability to devote sufficient time, energy, and expertise to the role.

Time Commitment

- Chairing quarterly trustee meetings and attending additional sub-committee meetings as required.
- Regular contact with the Senior Curator and key stakeholders.
- Attendance at fundraising and supporter events, private views and previews.



Terms of Appointment & How to Apply

Term: An initial term of three years, renewable subject to board approval.

Remuneration: This is an unremunerated role; reasonable expenses will be reimbursed.

Saxton Bampfylde Ltd is acting as an employment agency advisor to Friends of Leighton House on this appointment.

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

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 **Monday 15 December**.

* 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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