



SHERBORNE MUSEUM

CHAIR RECRUITMENT PACK

WHO WE ARE

We are a thriving community museum located in the town centre, close to historic buildings such as Sherborne Abbey, SS John's Almshouse, the Conduit, Sherborne School and The Julian. We are within walking distance of Sherborne Old and New Castles, Sherborne House and Sherborne Steam and Waterwheel Museum. The museum occupies the Gatehouse and Almonry formerly belonging to the Abbey, now a Grade II listed building, in a lane connecting the main shopping area with the Abbey precinct.

A registered CIO (no. 1176535), the museum was the first volunteer-run museum in Dorset to receive full Accreditation. It is supported by its Members' Association, Dorset County Council, Sherborne Town Council and by Arts Council England. Opening in 1968, the museum evolved from the Sherborne Historical Society, when benefactor Frederick Marsden first purchased the Abbey Gatehouse and presented it to the Museum Association, together with an Honorarium fund. In 1994 the museum was enlarged by expanding into the adjoining shoe shop, with support from the Heritage Lottery Fund and West Dorset District Council.

In 2019, on the 50th anniversary of our opening, we made the transition from an unincorporated charity to a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) in order to reduce trustee liability and to create a smaller yet dynamic and flexible board that is resilient and fit for purpose. This coincided with a complete rebranding of our image and creation of new membership benefits.

Today the museum is governed by the Sherborne Museum Board of Trustees, and managed by the Curator. Its activities are supported by a dedicated team of volunteers and a thriving membership.

Our Annual Report can be found on the Charity Commission website under 'Find a charity' (Sherborne Museum no. 1176535).

WHAT WE DO

Sherborne Museum seeks to represent the rich heritage of the town and the key events that shaped its history and development over the years. It plays an important role in the local community, with a lively programme of events and a developing education service.

Our mission is to increase public awareness, appreciation and understanding of Sherborne's natural, historic and cultural heritage through the acquisition, preservation and display of a unique collection of items that are particularly relevant to the area. We provide a wide range of services for the local community, supported by an active team of around 50 volunteers. Prior to our temporary closure due to Covid-19 we were attracting around 10,000 users a year and contributed significantly to the tourist economy in Sherborne.

For further information about the museum, including our outreach, research and education services, our environmental commitments and access, please see our website: www.sherbornemuseum.co.uk

We have acquired our Visit England Quality Assurance Badge, the Learning Outside the Classroom Quality Badge and a Certificate of Excellence from TripAdvisor. We receive advice, support and training from the North Dorset Museums Group, the Dorset Museums Association, the South West Federation of Museums and Art Galleries and the Association of Independent Museums, in all of which we are active members.

OUR FUTURE PLANS

Sherborne Museum has reached an exciting stage in its development. A recent bequest was agreed by the Board of Trustees to be used as match-funding for a National Lottery Heritage Fund bid. It will enable the professional reconfiguring of the museum and reinterpretation of the town's history. We plan to narrate the people's story of the town in a more imaginative and inclusive way, to inspire, delight and engage the whole community, and provide creative opportunities for everyone to engage with and learn about the heritage of the town and surrounding area.

An action plan and timeline have been developed, with the aim of submitting an Expression of Interest in Summer 2022.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

The Museum is run by a voluntary Board of Trustees, who appoint Officers on an annual basis and a Curator on a permanent basis, and other members as and when required.

The Trustees have collective overall responsibility for the Museum and act as its governing body, ensuring it is solvent, well run, and delivering its charitable objectives.

The CIO Board has a minimum of 5 and a maximum of 12 trustees, 2-4 of whom hold ex-officio posts (currently identified are Treasurer and Secretary).

Six skills-based roles have been identified that will ensure our board can govern effectively and contribute to the smooth running of the museum:

- Volunteer Coordination and Visitor Experience
- Fundraising
- Museum Learning
- Building Management
- Digital Engagement
- County and Cultural Network

The role of the trustees is to be responsible for the effective governance of the museum and ensure it fulfils its mission and delivers its vision.

Trustees will also perform an ambassadorial role for the museum and represent a visible and strong public face.

For more details of the specific legal obligations of Trustees visit the Charity Commission website www.charity-commission.gov.uk and follow links to their publications *CC3a The Essential Trustee: An Introduction*, and *CC3 The Essential Trustee: What you need to know*.

CHAIRPERSON ROLE DESCRIPTION

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

- Providing leadership for the Board of Trustees; setting the strategy and policy of the museum
- Chairing and facilitating Board meetings
- Ensuring that the museum complies with its governing document, charity law and any other relevant legislation or regulations, and to make sure that the museum pursues its objects as defined in its governing document
- Ensuring an effective relationship between the Board and the staff/volunteers, and the Board and external stakeholders/community
- Representing the museum at events, local council meetings or functions
- Acting as a spokesperson for the museum where appropriate
- Maintaining careful oversight of any risk to reputation and/or financial standing of the organisation
- Attending and being a member of other committees or working groups when appropriate
- Supporting the Curator/Project Manager

CHAIRPERSON SPECIFICATION

To help shape our future and raise our profile in the community we are seeking to appoint a Chair for the Sherborne Museum Board to support the work of the Project Manager and liaise with the Board and external consultants engaged to prepare our funding bid and carry out the subsequent redevelopment. The ideal candidate will have:

- An understanding of the charitable and cultural sector
- A willingness to lead, people management skills and the ability to chair meetings effectively
- A commitment to the vision of Sherborne Museum, in promoting it in the best interests of its many visitors, volunteers and staff
- Good, independent judgment
- An understanding of the responsibilities and liabilities of trusteeship, and an understanding of the financial aspects of running a charity
- An ability to work effectively as part of a team, while contributing an independent perspective
- Strong local networks and standing to champion the work of the Museum in the local community and beyond

ELIGIBILITY

The applicant must be legally eligible to stand as a Charity Trustee.

The law places certain restrictions on becoming a Charity Trustee. For example, you cannot be under the age of 18, previously have been removed from trusteeship of a charity by a Court or the Charity Commission, disqualified under the *Company Director's Disqualification Act 1986*, or been convicted of an offence involving deception or dishonesty (unless the conviction is spent).

CHAIR'S TIME COMMITMENT

The Chair will need to commit on average two days a month to the role and be available to carry out informal discussions and communications with the Curator and Trustees in accordance with their responsibilities.

The Board of Trustees normally meets once every two months, with additional meetings if circumstances require and an annual AGM. It is essential that as Chair you are able to attend meetings, and before making an application, you should think carefully about your availability now and in the future.

In line with our constitution, all Trustees are asked to commit to a three-year term, with the option of serving for a further term, following a vote by members at an AGM.

HOW TO APPLY

The role of Chair is non-executive, providing a rewarding opportunity to use your expertise and experience to help us develop Sherborne Museum.

You are invited to apply by submitting your CV, together with the names of two referees and a covering letter containing information to support your application.

For further information or to arrange a visit prior to making an application, please contact the Honorary Curator, Elisabeth Bletsoe at: info@sherbornemuseum.co.uk.

Please return your application by: 28th February 2022. Interviews will be held during March.