



## **Job Description**

### **Head of Historic Properties**

#### **Introduction**

The Sussex Archaeological Society is a registered charity that opens historic properties and gardens to the public, curates six fully accredited museums and undertakes research through our libraries, archive collections and small research grants. We care for 10 Listed Buildings, six Scheduled Monuments and a Registered park and garden.

We also host a finds identification service and offer a variety of walks, talks and conferences on the archaeology and history of Sussex. We hold archaeological collections for the counties of East and West Sussex, including the award-winning Collections Discovery Centre at Fishbourne Palace.

Our property portfolio is extensive, stretching from the Fishbourne Roman Palace near Chichester, Lewes Castle and Barbican House Museum, Anne of Cleves House and Bull House in Lewes, Marlipins Museum in Shoreham, Michelham Priory, The Priest House in West Hoathly and the iconic Long Man of Wilmington.

As a key member of the newly formed leadership team, you will have managerial responsibility across all the Society's historic sites, in addition to playing a key role in the strategic development of the wider Society. The post-holder will also deputise for the Chief Executive.

You will have a strategic overview of all our sites and deliver a variety of projects across the business both in respect of heritage restoration and wider diverse projects in support of the visitor economy. Whilst a track record in the heritage environment is beneficial, it is more important to be able to demonstrate a passion for the sector and a successful and strong project management background in working with multiple stakeholders. The successful application must be a self-starter, keen to make a difference, have substantial management skills and be able to make decisions through balancing competing needs of often complicated projects with multiple stakeholders with different needs. Applicants will be required to demonstrate strong skills in budget and project management skills.

You will work with our property management teams to ensure that the on-site visitor experience strategy is delivered to a high standard. By focusing on putting the visitor at the heart of everything we do, you will ensure that the Sussex Archaeological Society delivers exceptional visitor experiences that leave our visitors feeling enthusiastic and motivated.

#### **Key Responsibilities**

- To manage and coordinate the heritage restoration, maintenance and health and safety budgets and functions across the property portfolio.

- To prioritise and programme the heritage restoration expenditure from a cost, quality and health and safety perspective.
- To periodically carry out and review the conditions surveys of the properties. To ensure appropriate levels of care, presentation and protection of all of our properties and to ensure ongoing monitoring of our conservation performance.
- To ensure that projects are delivered and coordinated around our busy event calendar with minimal negative impact on the visitor business but with maximum engagement and interpretation to add value to the visitor experience.
- To ensure the effective delivery of the on-site visitor experience strategy across all paid-entry sites, through sound leadership and management particularly the influencing of internal stakeholders.
- To maintain high standards of financial management and lead on the delivery of the annual budgets which underpins the overall on-site visitor experience.
- To closely monitor external visitor trends and share insights with the leadership team and use benchmarking opportunities across the sector to recommend and initiate visitor driven improvements.
- Working with the Head of Learning & Interpretation, develop a family friendly visitor environment across all sites, focusing particularly on ensuring our sites are welcoming and fun for our younger visitors, as well as the development of our on-site education facilities and the maintenance of existing and new interpretation schemes.
- Support the development and delivery of investment projects at properties by ensuring visitor experience is at the heart of the development. Also identifying investment priorities for visitor facility improvements.
- To work with the property managers on the development of a new gardens strategy that complements and enhances the various historic settings, to also include the development and management of a “gardens visits” programme. This will include guided tours and high value 'special' visits that the Head Gardener will host.
- You will evaluate the overarching visitor journey regularly with the property management teams, aiming to deliver a seamless and easy experience and ensuring the Society exploits all opportunities to improve our visitor experience alongside our operational and financial objectives.
- As a key part of the overall visitor journey to ensure that the visitor welcome is exemplary, delivering a consistent quality welcome for all our visitors, incorporating an effective Membership sale and an enhanced Member experience in support of membership retention.
- To lead on the implementation of effective signage and orientation (both on and off site) ensuring that it responds to organisational brand standards, including “tone of voice” that it is effective and champions the needs of our visitors. This will involve working closely with interpretation consultants, site teams and the fundraising and membership teams to explain on-site our Charity status and the value of supporting us.

## **Essential Selection Criteria**

### **Education/Knowledge**

- Successful track record of inspirational leadership and management in a multi-site environment.
- Demonstrable experience of working within the visitor attraction/tourism industry with a reputation for delivering excellent customer experience and service.

- Substantial leadership and development of high performing, geographically dispersed teams.
- Demonstrable experience of commissioning conditions surveys of a wide range of historic buildings/assets in terms of type, age, material and construction, together with analysing this information and preparing strategies for implementation of necessary works.
- Financial planning, management and control of significant budgets and resources, aligning them appropriately to achieve the organisation's objectives.
- Demonstrable experience in putting into place successful commercial and enterprising businesses within a visitor/heritage environment.
- Demonstrable experience and track record of working in an environment where the ethos of continuous improvement and innovation are key.
- Demonstrable experience of developing strategies that respond to customer research, including visitor segmentation.

### **Skills**

- Demonstrable ability to implement a culture of customer service excellence in a visitor facing environment.
- Excellent commercial awareness with understanding of the importance of P&Ls
- Exceptional communication and interpersonal skills
- Strong influencing and negotiation skills
- Strong strategic planning and organisational skills
- An ability to work collaboratively as part of a leadership team and wider functional teams

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