

The Sussex Archaeological Society

Trustee recruitment information pack

The Sussex Archaeological Society (a registered charity) was founded in 1846 and is one of the oldest county archaeological societies in England. It welcomes over 120,000 visitors each year to its portfolio of listed buildings, historic gardens, museums, and ancient monuments located across Sussex.

The Society encourages research through its libraries, archive collections and research grants, and offers a variety of talks and conferences on the archaeology and heritage of Sussex in addition to publishing the Sussex Archaeological Collections (SAC) annually.

The Society is a membership organisation with 1,300 members from across Sussex and beyond. Members range from academics undertaking internationally important research to families who want to learn more about our historical properties in their local area.

Current context

As a substantially self-funded charity, heavily reliant on admissions and trading income the Society was hit hard by the impact of the Covid pandemic and the closures arising from lockdown. To deliver the required post-Covid recovery, it is going through a period of significant and rapid change under the direction of a highly experienced Council of Trustees - putting in place a new and refreshed vision and purpose for the Society and supported by a robust and transformational business plan. It is an exciting time to become involved.

The role

New Trustees, in the form of dynamic, forward-thinking individuals are sought who will be able to bring a fresh, strategic approach to helping our wonderful Society play a central role in the richness of life in Sussex and more widely.

Previous Trustee experience is not essential but successful candidates will bring professional skills and senior level experience to the Society.



On this occasion, we are specifically seeking applications from candidates with significant senior level experience in:

- **Learning and Education** – Knowledge and experience of the requirements of the national curriculum and/or of delivering community outreach and engagement and adult education an advantage
- **Fundraising and Development** - Experience of securing grant funding and major donations and/or delivering successful fundraising strategies and appeals an advantage
- **Property Surveying and Maintenance** – Experience in heritage property management and regulations compliance an advantage

The Society is embracing an accelerated approach to equality, diversity, and inclusion, bringing together people with different experiences and backgrounds, and creating an environment where everyone feels welcomed and valued in everything we do.

We are very keen to ensure that our board of trustees represents and reflects the wide range of communities we serve, and therefore welcome applications from different genders, sexual identities, ages and ethnicities, socio-economic backgrounds, and those with a lived experience of disability.

Our Council meetings are held once a quarter and generally take place in the evenings, lasting no longer than 2.5 hours. Trustees are encouraged to participate additionally in at least one sub-committee or perhaps as part of a short-term project working group supporting the Executive Team.

Trustees are encouraged to actively engage with our wonderful properties and programme of events. There are communications via email to be worked through as and when necessary. The role is unpaid but reasonable out of pocket expenses will be reimbursed.

In-person meetings rotate across our principal locations in Chichester, Lewes and Hailsham, but we welcome applications from across the UK. Attendance at meetings via virtual link are encouraged and easily accommodated. New Trustees will be provided with a full induction process and regular Trustee development sessions are planned.



The process

Candidates are asked to submit a comprehensive CV together with a covering letter setting out how they would make an excellent Trustee for the Society. An Equalities Questionnaire will also be required to be completed. All 3 documents should be submitted by email to TrusteeRecruitment@sussexpast.co.uk by the closing date.

The closing date for applications is **6pm, Saturday 5th October** with shortlisting and interviews taking place during the week commencing Monday 7th October. Shortlisted candidates will be invited for interview to hear more about the Society and its ambitions. This will provide an opportunity to meet with Trustees, including the Chair plus one or more of the following: Deputy Chair, Chair of Governance and Chief Executive Officer.

Final appointment is subject to election by our membership at AGM. Under the requirements of the Society's Articles of Association successful candidates will need to be or become a member of the Society and details regarding each nominated candidate will be submitted for members' consideration. This year's AGM is scheduled to take place on Saturday 19th October.

If candidates would like to discuss their application in advance a conversation with the Chair and/or Chief Executive Officer can be arranged by emailing chair@sussexpast.co.uk.

“When I stood for election as a Trustee of the Society, little did I know how much I would fall in the love with its work, its people and the wonderful properties in its care. The Society has recently been through some troubled times, but I passionately believe in its potential to be a leading light in the social and economic life of our beautiful county.”
Amanda Jones, Trustee and Chair of Council

"Joining the Sussex Archaeological Society offers a unique opportunity to contribute to the preservation and understanding of the county's rich history. With a legacy spanning over 177 years, the Society is driven by ambition and determination to thrive for future generations. Your expertise can make a significant impact in our ongoing journey to highlight the local, national, and international significance of our extraordinary properties and research." Gavin Stewart, Acting Chief Executive Officer



Additional background information

The Sussex Archaeological Society cares for 12 listed buildings on five ancient scheduled monuments, along with nationally important collections (including Wealden Iron, Sharpe Watercolors, and early sheet music), which are housed in our six accredited museums. Specifically:

- **Fishbourne Roman Palace:** Of international significance, the Palace is the largest Roman residence in Northern Europe, with the earliest gardens found anywhere in the country and the largest collection of mosaics in situ in the UK.
- **Michelham Priory:** A Tudor house set on a picturesque, moated island, complete with extensive gardens, medieval gatehouse, watermill and encircled by England's longest moat.
- **Lewes Castle:** With extraordinary panoramic views across the Sussex countryside, this Norman double motte and bailey castle in the centre of Lewes was built after the Battle of Hastings by supporters of William the Conqueror.
- **Barbican House Museum:** A late 16th Century building and extensive research library adjacent to Lewes Castle. Barbican House houses the Museum of Sussex Archaeology displaying artefacts from prehistoric to medieval Sussex.
- **Bull House:** A medieval house in Lewes, home of revolutionary writer Tom Paine, the intellectual inspiration behind the American revolution.
- **Anne of Cleves House:** A medieval house and gardens formerly gifted to Anne of Cleves as part of her divorce from Henry VIII. Anne of Cleves House contains a collection of historic furniture and domestic artefacts.
- **Marlipins Museum:** A 12th Century building with a striking chequerboard facade, it is probably the oldest secular building in Britain. Marlipins Museums contains local maritime history and archaeology.
- **The Priest House:** A beautiful medieval house and cottage garden once owned by Henry VIII. The Priest House is furnished with 17th and 18th Century country furniture and domestic objects.
- **Wilmington Priory:** A mid-11th Century building and ruins.
- **Long Man of Wilmington:** The iconic hill figure on the South Downs and Europe's largest portrayal of the human form.



With a 177-year-long reputation for archaeology and Sussex heritage, the Society has been making a major contribution for many generations both nationally and to the local area. All of our properties provide a popular focal point for local communities as well as being well-known, VisitEngland accredited tourist destinations. Three are within the South Downs National Park (SDNP) and are an important part of the tourism development plans for the SDNP Authority. The iconic Long Man of Wilmington hill figure is particularly popular with visitors to the area.

We actively build relationships with our local communities through partnerships, projects and outreach with local businesses, local authorities, and community groups. Recent projects have included working with food banks, refugee support groups, and local housing associations. We actively support and feed into local business regeneration plans and are an established local employer offering seasonal jobs in catering, events, and front of house. We also host a diverse range of placements from entry-level museum work, school- work experience and internships to museum conservation and degree placements. We work with local colleges and employment agencies to support young people to gain relevant and valuable experiences.

Volunteer teams are vital to our Library, gardens, activities, and museum work bringing expertise and enthusiasm both to our public activities and behind the scenes. All six of our museums are supported by outstanding teams of enthusiastic volunteers and the local community. They are a meeting point for local U3As, history groups and specialist tours, enriching our community and improving the quality of life for all involved.



Our heritage properties attract schools and colleges from across the South East and beyond, giving children aged 4 to 18 hands-on access to our collections. Our engaging workshops bring the heritage and archaeology of Sussex to life.

The Society collections span a number of periods and material types. Of particular importance is what is known as the visual resources collections, these include watercolors, prints, drawings, easel paintings, photographs, and negatives. The Society initiated its own Photographic Record and Survey of the county in 1903, known as the Sussex Survey and this collection contains many unique views of the county, a considerable number of which dates to the earliest years of photography.

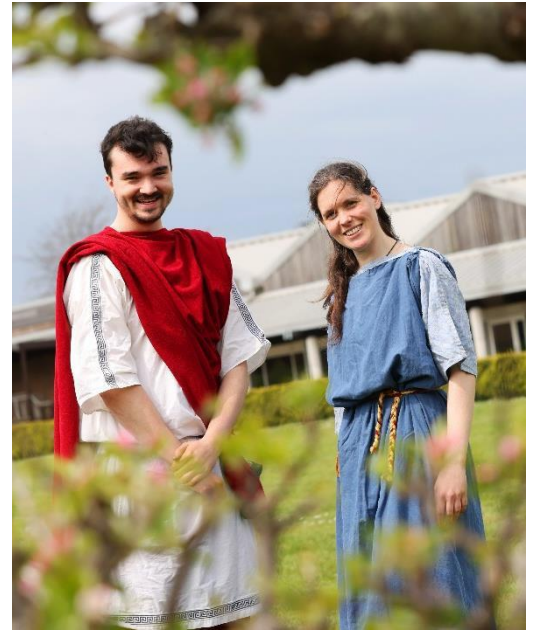


The archaeology collections include material from the pre-historic to medieval period, and many

sites are the subject of specialist reports published in the Society's annual volume, the Sussex Archaeological Collections. Of particular importance is the recently acquired 'near Lewes' Middle Bronze Age hoard.

The Library holds one of the pre-eminent collections of resources on the archaeology, history, and culture of Sussex. Run by a team of dedicated and knowledgeable volunteers, the Library maintains its tradition of supporting scholarly excellence, while looking to be ever more active in promoting the Society's work and engaging both the membership and wider public.

With a diverse portfolio of properties, we appeal to a wide audience and are also focal points for the community. We host activities such as outdoor theatre, weddings, picnics, art exhibitions, car rallies, outdoor yoga, wild camping, and sculpture trails – all of which provide people with passions beyond heritage to connect with and enjoy our sites.



Our archaeological roots mean that we have a direct connection with the environment around us. We strive to provide beautiful and peaceful environments across Sussex ensuring we contribute to our local area being a better place to live, work and visit. We work with nature groups, sustainability experts and key partners (such as South Downs National Park, Sussex Wildlife Trust and CPRE Sussex) to monitor the biodiversity in our places, such as supporting water vole surveys and providing spaces for hives which encourage local bee populations. We are also taking steps to look at how we can be more sustainable as an organisation, reducing our carbon footprint and helping visitors make more sustainable transport choices.

For further information on our work, visit our website (www.sussexpast.co.uk) or follow our social media channels (Facebook - @SussexPast.co.uk; X - @SussexPastUK; LinkedIn – Sussex Archaeological Society).