

Personal Statement for Portia Tremlett

Born and raised in Brighton and a museum professional of over 12 years, I have a strong passion for the heritage of Sussex and the South Coast. I have fond memories of visiting properties managed by SAS throughout my life, including school trips to Fishbourne Roman Palace and Lewes Castle, heritage craft courses at Michelham Priory, and as a new family with my husband and young son. These early trips sparked my curiosity and enthusiasm for history, and have played a part in my career today. I have a deep-rooted interest in culture and community: the ability to understand people and their history through material culture. To disseminate that information through research, display and education, in order to anchor our past in our current community's narrative to create connection and relevance, is of paramount importance.

After 10 years as Public Programme Engagement Officer at The Novium Museum and within my current role as Curator of World Art at Brighton & Hove Museums, I have extensive experience in collections care, exhibition programming, project management and museum education, which makes me a good fit for the role of Trustee. I strongly believe Boards of Trustees should reflect the audiences they are there to provide for, and as both a visitor and professional within the sector, along with my passion for the heritage sites managed by SAS, I believe I fit this role. My current working knowledge of the sector and my understanding of how heritage sites function and are managed play a key part in ensuring care requirements of the Society's collections are met alongside strategic and financial restraints. I believe I have the experience and knowledge to be a champion for these collections through the difficult post-Covid recovery process.

I have worked with collections of all types, including archaeology, social history, world cultures, photography, geology and costume, and been responsible for both caring for these collections, and using them within community and public engagement programmes in order to develop audiences, increase visitor numbers and publicity, and promote research opportunities. I have over 10 years of experience working within learning and participation, developing and delivering a programme of formal and informal community outreach and engagement activities, with a good knowledge of the national curriculum. I also have fundraising experience of securing and project managing grants for large- and small-scale projects, from £10k to £50+k.

SAS has an incredible portfolio of sites and collections that could be a leading tourism destination along the South Coast. Investment is needed in the public programme of exhibitions and events through grants and partnership working, which alongside key marketing strategies and work with local communities, will provide the society with the means to be a major player for learning, research and heritage in the UK. The history and archaeology of the South Coast is of great importance, both nationally and internationally, and heritage sites that preserve and care for this should flourish. The work of SAS as a centre for the community, to promote tourism within Sussex, and enable research through access and management of their wide-ranging collections is crucial and should be supported.