

## **Personal Statement – Paul Griffiths**

I am honoured to have been nominated to join the Council of Trustees of the Sussex Archaeological Society. Having come to know the Society well through the recent COO recruitment process, I have great admiration for its remarkable heritage, its dedicated people, and its ambition to move from fragility towards sustainable growth.

I currently serve as Chief Executive of the Association for Cultural Enterprises – the UK’s membership organisation for museums, heritage, and the cultural sector. In this role, I have the privilege of working nationally with more than 400 organisations – from major national museums to small independent trusts – supporting them to achieve financial sustainability and public value through innovation, enterprise, and collaboration.

Prior to this, I was Director of Painshill Park Trust in Surrey, leading the organisation through a period of significant growth and transformation. Under my leadership, Painshill became financially stable for the first time in its modern history, achieving record visitor numbers, diversifying income streams, and securing major investment for landscape conservation and capital projects. Earlier in my career, I held senior roles with the Mary Rose Trust and English Heritage, gaining extensive experience across operations, commercial development, audience engagement, and major capital delivery.

Alongside my executive roles, I have always sought to contribute to the wider sector through trustee and non-executive appointments. I previously served as Vice Chair of the Roald Dahl Museum and Story Centre, helping to strengthen governance, financial planning, and stakeholder relations, and have advised numerous heritage charities and cultural organisations on partnerships, fundraising, and audience development.

What draws me to Sussex Past is its dual identity: as both a scholarly society and a portfolio of historic sites that connect people to Sussex’s rich past. I believe my experience in cultural enterprise, visitor engagement, and strategic leadership could help the Board to balance these two strengths – sustaining academic and curatorial excellence while growing public relevance and financial resilience.

I am particularly interested in how the Society can build a sustainable future through enterprise – developing income from its sites and activities to underpin research, conservation, and education. Equally, I see real opportunity for Sussex Past to continue strengthening its governance, partnerships, and visibility: exploring collaborations with universities, funders, and local authorities; broadening audiences through targeted engagement; and ensuring that conservation and research are matched by an exceptional visitor experience.

It would be a privilege to contribute to the Society’s next chapter as a Trustee – working with colleagues to build on recent progress and ensure Sussex Past remains resilient, relevant, and recognised: safeguarding its heritage while inspiring new generations to discover it.

Paul Griffiths