

Executive Director

Candidate Pack
January 2023

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Introduction from the Board of Trustees



This is an exciting and important time for Dorset Museum and the Society that owns and runs it. Through the 'Tomorrow's Museum for Dorset' project (2017-21), the Museum and the way it operates has been totally transformed. This £16.4-million project delivered spectacular new galleries, a first-class space for touring exhibitions and vastly improved facilities for learning and education and community engagement. The Museum reopened to the public at the end of May 2021.

Covid has inevitably slowed down some of the Museum's plans. Whilst the staff and the Board of Trustees continue to ensure that the Museum is an inspiring, informative and fun place to visit, the need to generate income and ensure financial self-sufficiency has become more critical. Moving from the activities of planning, developing and delivering a major capital project to dealing with the running of a busy museum also means that the Board is faced with fresh challenges and needs different skills to meet them.

As a full board member of the Dorset Natural History and Archaeological Society which runs the Museum, the Executive Director is the organisation's most senior executive and is responsible and accountable for all CEO functions and its strategic and creative direction. The Director reports directly to the Chair of Trustees and works closely with the Board to ensure the effective governance and management of all aspects of the organisation. They will be an external ambassador for the Museum and its profile as well as the in-house leader.

The successful candidate will be pivotal to the Museum and the Society's future success. They will need the vision, skills and experience to ensure the long-term sustainability of the Museum. This is a rare opportunity for the right person to lead and nurture a cultural organisation of regional importance which has a fascinating history and an inspiring future.

Dorset Museum Background and History



Dorset Museum is an independent museum and registered charity and is one of the county's leading cultural and heritage organisations. It is owned and run by Dorset Natural History and Archaeological Society which has a membership of around 2000. The Museum is in High West Street in the centre of Dorchester and employs 18 full and part-time staff, supported by 170 dedicated volunteers. In the 2021-22 financial year, the Museum attracted around 40,000 visitors.

The Museum was founded in 1845 with the aim of rescuing and preserving local natural history and archaeology felt to be at risk from the effects of industrialisation. The formation of the Museum brought together a wide range of antiquarians, naturalists and amateur scientists who assembled an early collection of 'curios' as well as local artefacts. The Museum took on the more serious role of collecting anything to do with Dorset 'below, on or above the ground, in the past and often in the present' from the turn of the 20th century. Major acquisitions, such as the bequest of the Thomas Hardy Memorial

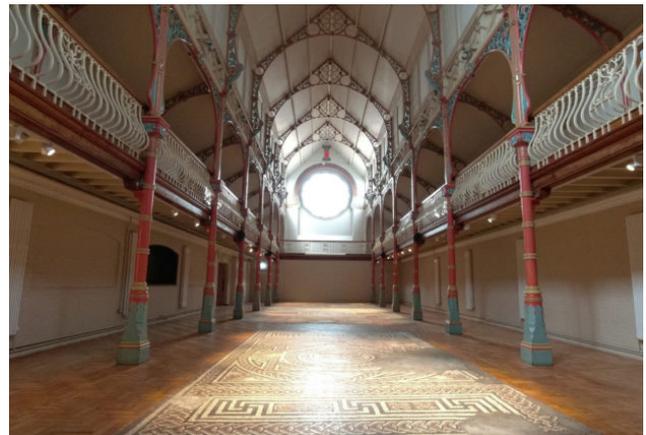
collection in 1937, began the process of widening the Museum's collections to include literary and cultural heritage. The transfer of over 300 items from the estate of sculptor Elisabeth Frink significantly transformed the Museum's collection of fine art in 2020. Today the Museum's collection totals around four million objects covering archaeology, natural history, geology, local history, literature, fine art, photography and library collections.

Dorset Museum formally became part of the Wessex Museums Partnership in 2017 when the consortium of partners (Dorset Museum, Salisbury Museum, Wiltshire Museum and Poole Museum) secured major funding from Arts Council England as a National Portfolio Organisation, which was reconfirmed in 2022. In 2017 the consortium formed a registered charity, the Wessex Museums Trust. The Trust exists to build the resilience and relevance of the partner museums and seeks every opportunity to connect, inspire and add value to peoples' lives through our collaborative programme.

The Tomorrow's Museum for Dorset Project

The Tomorrow's Museum for Dorset project has transformed the Museum into a leading cultural and heritage centre. The Museum's historic Victorian Hall and other existing spaces have been re-imagined and refurbished, and an intriguing new building has quadrupled the Museum's floor-space.

- A suite of inspirational new galleries collectively tells the story of 250 million years of Dorset's history and displays collections of national and international significance for the first time.
- A new purpose-designed learning centre in the restored 16th-century John White's rectory accommodates school visits, family activities, adult learning and community group events.
- A new GIS-compliant exhibition gallery hosts major touring and temporary exhibitions.
- An accessible, state-of-the-art 'Collections Discovery Centre' provides optimal storage spaces for the collection.
- The Museum is equipped with up-to-date facilities for collections management, research and conservation.
- Specially created, publicly visible spaces allow volunteers and researchers to work on the collections, and visitors to see the behind-the-scenes workings of a museum.
- A transformed visitor experience provides improved visibility, accessibility and facilities and includes a new café and shop.
- Dorset Museum's impact on Dorchester's heritage quarter and Dorset's 'cultural and tourism offer' brings economic, educational and social benefits to the whole county.



DNHAS Team Structure

Presently led by the Interim Executive Director and a Commercial Director, with full and part-time paid staff and a team of over 170 volunteers who support the Society and its Museum.

Governance

Dorset Natural History and Archaeological Society (DNHAS) is both a limited company (Number 03362107) and a registered Charity (Charity Number 1062400). It is governed by its Articles of Association which sets out its objectives. Trustees of the DNHAS are also Directors of the company and have both legal and financial duties under company and charity law. Although the Museum is the public face of the DNHAS, it is also a learned society, publishing its Proceedings regularly.

DNHAS has up to 12 Board Members, one of whom is the Executive Director and one of whom is appointed by Dorset Council.

DNHAS Vision, Mission and Strategic Aims

Core Purpose

DNHAS's charitable objectives as stated in the constitution are:

The advancement of education for the general benefit of the public in the areas of archaeology, the natural sciences, natural history, literature, music, decorative and fine arts, antiquities and local history, relating more especially to the County of Dorset;

The acquisition, preservation, conservation, exhibition and development (as far as possible) of collections relating to archaeology, the natural sciences, natural history, literature, music, decorative and fine arts, antiquities and local history, relating more especially to the County of Dorset.

Vision

To be the museum that collects, reveals and inspires connections with the universal themes of Dorset's story.

Mission

To become the prime destination to discover and enjoy the richness of Dorset's natural, historical and cultural heritage, and appreciate the impact of the county and its people on our understanding of the wider world.

Strategic Aims

- To reach larger and broader audiences and encourage deeper engagement with our collections.
- To tell Dorset's stories in bigger and bolder ways.
- To care properly for all our collections, to enable us to collect for the future and for visitors to understand the work we do with our collections.
- To be a financially and operationally sustainable museum.



Main Duties and Responsibilities

The role of Executive Director includes high-level responsibility across a variety of areas. The Executive Director must ensure the long-term financial sustainability of the organisation through income generation whilst fostering its continued development as a nationally important heritage resource.

Museum and Society Operations

- To be the most senior staff member of the Museum and the Society and to manage the day-to-day running of both;
- To lead on and manage the Society's and Museum's budgets; including, but not limited to, the setting of financial targets and their achievement;
- To have ultimate responsibility for all aspects of collections management and care of the Museum, working closely with the Director of Collections and Public Engagement;
- To ensure that the Museum continues to meet the standards of the Arts Council England Accreditation scheme;
- To oversee the publication of the Proceedings and other learned papers;
- To ensure the welfare of staff and visitors through health and safety controls and access for all parts of the community;
- To ensure that all statutory and regulatory obligations are met as a registered charity and company, property manager and employer.

Strategic, Development and Change Management

- To develop and implement a strategic vision for the Museum with the support of the Board;
- To prepare and implement a business plan with the aim to become financially stable, monitoring and reporting on progress on a regular basis;
- To contribute to the development and enhancement of the Museum and Society's governance, its structures, processes and capabilities;
- To build and maintain key cultural partnerships regionally and beyond, including that within the Wessex Museums Partnership.

Board Relations and Governance

- To support the Chair in ensuring Board meetings are properly conducted and reported and that such other governance as may be required is supported by the executive;

- To attend Board and committee meetings, working groups and any other governance meetings as required, producing papers and financial information.

People

- To ensure that the Museum and Society are managed effectively with the right roles and staff;
- To ensure that all staff are properly managed with clear job descriptions, targets and appraisals;
- To be responsible for HR at the Museum, ensuring good practice, including that HR policies and procedures are adhered to;
- To provide energised and motivated leadership to both staff and volunteers.

Advocacy

- To act as the primary representative and spokesperson for the Museum and Society in the community and with press and media;
- To promote the Museum through local, regional and national print, broadcast and social media;
- To increase the awareness of the Museum and its work and to enhance its influence, reputation and standing;
- To promote positive relations, support and goodwill from the communities the Museum serves;
- To work to increase the Museum's presence in Dorset and beyond, developing strategic partnerships and relationships with a wide range of external stakeholders.

Fundraising

- To play an active part in the development and implementation of the Museum's fundraising strategies;
- To lead on fundraising bids, working closely with the Director of Collections and Public Engagement, developing ideas and ensuring that successful bids are delivered;
- To build and maintain strong relationships with existing and potential funders and supporters.

Person Specification & Terms of Appointment

Person Specification

The DNHAS is looking for a candidate who has:

1. Proven experience at CEO, Director or senior management level in an arts, museum or cultural heritage sector, or other equivalent experience in visitor or audience-focused environments;
2. Experience of working at Board level with extensive experience of governance;
3. Demonstrable experience or sound understanding of collections and heritage management;
4. Strong financial acumen and business management skills with experience of success in developing, managing and growing an annual operating budget in challenging circumstances;
5. Demonstrable experience of both attracting new funders and working long-term with grant makers, foundations and individual donors;
6. Ability to think flexibly and strategically;
7. Outstanding written and oral communication skills including presenting confidently to audiences and networking at all levels;
8. Ability and experience in managing and motivating a team of staff and volunteers;
9. Understanding of audience development strategies and process which reflect the Society's objectives.

Terms of Appointment

Report to	Chair of Trustees and the Board of Trustees
Direct Reports	Director of Collections and Public Engagement (F/T) Commercial Director (F/T) PA to the Directors (P/T)
Hours	Full time. Normal working days are to include agreed weekend working and evening events.
Salary	£55,000pa – The successful candidate will be engaged as an employee and receive a pension contribution and holiday pay.
Review	Salary reviewed annually, although annual increases are not guaranteed.
Location	The Dorset Natural History and Archaeological Society, Dorset Museum, High West Street, Dorchester, DT1 1XA. Whilst some working from home may be possible it is important to the Board and the Staff that the Director is mainly on site.
Annual Leave	25 days, rising by 1 day after 3 years and then an additional 1 day per year to a maximum of 30 days. Whilst it may be necessary to work on statutory Bank Holidays time in lieu may be taken.
Notice	The position is subject to a three-month probationary period. The notice period is four weeks by either party during the probationary period. On successful completion of probation, the notice period is 6 months.

How to Apply

The closing date for all applications, which should be in the form of a CV and cover letter and addressed to dorsetmuseum@minervasearch.com, is **Friday 3rd March 2023**.

If you would like an exploratory call, please email dorsetmuseum@minervasearch.com.

We are committed to building an organisation that is as diverse as the communities we serve. However you identify, and whatever background you bring with you, we welcome your application for this role. Disabled, D/deaf and/or neurodivergent people, those from Black, Asian and Ethnically Diverse backgrounds are under-represented in our cultural sector, so we particularly encourage applications from people in these groups.

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