

Chairperson

Voluntary role



Overview

The Trustees of Amersham Museum are looking for a new Chair.

Amersham Museum is an award-winning, accredited, independent museum, sharing the stories of local people and places. Amersham Museum opened in its current location in 1991 in a Grade II listed medieval hall house in the heart of the historic market town. We expanded into the neighbouring property in 2017, expanding our ability to run a wide range of exhibitions and activities for people of all ages based on our collections and local history, including reminiscence groups, singing, art and literature workshops and an accredited art club for children. The museum has a beautiful physic garden, next to the River Misbourne, and a vintage vehicle which we use as a mobile museum for outreach events in the community. At their highest, our visitor numbers reached 10,000 a year, and we are currently aiming to recover these pre-pandemic figures.

Our current Chair is retiring after 18 years on the Board. The Board comprises 10 people who have all been involved with the museum in various roles and enjoy working well together as a group, committed to the efficient running of this important local museum.

The role of Chair has been, and should continue to be, enormously rewarding and enjoyable. The Museum is highly regarded, very well supported and a fundamental part of what makes Amersham such a great place to live in and to visit. The Museum has a small staff team but is largely operated by a highly committed group of over 100 volunteers. We have three paid part-time staff: a Director, a Learning Officer and a Collections Manager. The museum is committed to an inclusive approach to all aspects of its work.

We welcome applications from anyone whose experience equips them for the role: you do not need to have a background in the museum sector.

Duties of the Chairperson

- Lead the trustees in the governance and overall management of the Museum
- To keep the organisation on track with its mission to be an outstanding local history museum for Amersham and the immediate area
- To ensure that the scheme of delegation to the Museum's staff is specified clearly, reviewed regularly and understood. To act as line manager to the Museum Director
- To act as the principal channel of communication between the board as a whole and the Museum's Director and staff

- To plan and prepare regular board meetings and the AGM with others as appropriate. This will include working with the Hon. Secretary to set the meeting agenda.
- Chair board meetings ensuring:
 - A balance is struck between time-keeping and space for discussions
 - Business is dealt with and decisions are made.
 - Decisions, actions and deliberations are adequately minuted (usually by reviewing draft minutes prepared by Hon. Secretary prior to circulation)
 - The implementation of decisions is clearly assigned and monitored
- To ensure that, where possible, lengthier deliberation takes place in working groups prior to board meetings
- To ensure that volunteers from the local community are involved at all levels within the Museum
- Ensure that trustees, staff and volunteers are deployed to keep the Museum at the heart of the local community
- Act as ambassador and principal spokesperson for the Museum, except as delegated to the Director
- Lead on the development of the trustee group and ensure its decisions are timely, appropriate and effective
- Monitor and ensure the financial health of the Museum and plan for changes in collaboration with the Treasurer, trustees and Director
- Take urgent action between trustee meetings when it is not possible or practical to hold a meeting, apprising the trustee group of developments as necessary
- Ensure that the board always acts with probity and due diligence
- To ensure that the staff and trustees develop and agree strategic and annual plans and monitor performance against agreed targets
- To lead the trustee group in ensuring that, as retirements occur, the composition of the board retains the right mix of skills for the present and future needs of the Museum. This includes balancing the need for income generation, organisational management and charitable expenditure skills.

General Trustee duties

Trustee Responsibilities as advised by the Charity Commission:

- Ensure that the Organisation complies with charity law, and with the requirements of the Charity Commission as regulator.
- Ensure that the Organisation does not breach any of the requirements or rules set out in its constitution and that it remains true to the charitable purpose and objects set out.
- Comply with the requirements of other legislation and other regulators such as the Equality Act, Health & Safety, employment law and Data Protection as a data controller.
- Act with integrity and avoid any personal conflicts of interest or misuse of Organisation funds or assets.

- Ensure that the Organisation is and will remain solvent.
- Use Organisation funds and assets reasonably, and only in furtherance of the Organisation's charitable objects.
- Take special care when investing the funds of the charity or borrowing funds.
- Use reasonable care and skill in their work as Trustees, using their personal skills and experience as needed to ensure that the charity is well-run and efficient.
- Consider soliciting external professional advice on all matters where there may be material risk to the charity, or where the trustees may possibly be in breach of their duties.

In addition:

- Identify risks and put in place mitigation measures.
- Ensure clear vision and strategic direction through the Forward Plan.
- Set aims, objectives and plans to implement the strategy.
- Set and agree all policies.
- Receive reports from the paid staff and monitor and review performance against agreed objectives.
- Approve the annual budget, monitor performance against the annual budget and ensure financial sustainability.
- Ensure that the Museum meets and maintains the standards set out in the Museum Accreditation Scheme.
- Appoint paid staff.
- Safeguard the good name of the Museum, acting as an enthusiastic and well-informed ambassador.
- Campaign, lobby and generally advocate on behalf of the Museum, to enhance its profile.
- Use any specific skills, knowledge and professional expertise to help trustees reach sound decisions.

Commitment

- Trustees can serve for a maximum of three terms of three years.
- The trustee board meets a minimum of six times a year either at the Museum, or via Zoom. Trustees are also expected to take on specific tasks and activities.
- Trustees are expected to undertake training and to develop relevant skills and knowledge as required.
- Trustees need to commit the necessary time to be effective.
- Trustees must adhere to the Museums Association Code of Ethics and all the Museum's policies.
- Trustees are expected to act reasonably and prudently in the best interests of the Museum, never in pursuit of personal interests or the interests of another organisation and to meet the legal obligations common to all charity trustees (i.e. comply with charity law, duty of prudence and duty of care).

- Trustees are expected to adhere to the Nolan's Principles of Public Life.

Person specification

Candidates will need to demonstrate:

- A track record in chairing meetings, ideally chairing board meetings.
- A sound understanding of the role and legal responsibilities of charity trustees
- Leadership experience in a relevant context
- Financial management skills and experience
- An ability to demonstrate an understanding of and commitment to Amersham Museum, its volunteer ethos and its strategic objectives
- Demonstrable ambassadorial skills, gravitas and interpersonal skills suitable to the role
- Ability to commit time to the role of chair including attending events
- The ability to think strategically and creatively, demonstrate objectivity, good judgement and analytical ability.
- A willingness to learn.
- Good communication and team-working skills.
- Tactful, diplomatic and able to build good working relationships.
- Fair minded with a commitment to impartiality and actively seeking the views of all before decisions are made.
- Open to new ideas.

Desirable:

- Candidates with a track record of team building and achieving growth in current or previous roles will be preferred.
- Candidates will ideally have trustee experience in more than one charity.

RECRUITMENT PROCESS

To apply please email your CV and a covering letter explaining how you meet the requirements for the role, and your interest in it, to briony.hudson@amershammuseum.org. Please also include contact details for two referees. The closing date is midnight on **Sunday 19th November 2023**.

Suitable applicants will be invited for interview with two existing trustees and the Museum Director at the Museum. Interviews will be held on Monday 27th November 2023.

If you would like to have an informal discussion about the role before applying, please let Briony know and she will arrange for one of the Trustees to contact you. If you would like to receive a copy of the Museum's organisational chart and current forward plan, Briony can also organise that.

Please note: Prior to being formally appointed the new Chair will need to confirm in writing that they are not disbarred by any of the following and are therefore eligible to be a trustee:

- Not disqualified from acting as a charity trustee or company director, not been removed from serving as a charity trustee, or been stopped from acting in a management position within a charity.
- Not been convicted of an offence involving deception or dishonesty (or any such conviction that is legally regarded as spent) and have not been involved in tax fraud.
- Not an undischarged bankrupt or have not made compositions or arrangements with creditors from which they have not been discharged.