

WEALD & DOWNLAND OPEN AIR MUSEUM

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Brief for Appointment of New Trustees

March 2016



The Museum

Founded in 1970, the award-winning Weald & Downland Open Air Museum is now the leading museum of historic buildings in England, covering 50 acres (20 ha) on the South Downs of Sussex and at the heart of England's newest National Park. It includes some 50 historic buildings dating from the 13th to the 19th centuries, re-erected from their original sites in South East England, together with woodlands, gardens, farm animals, walks and a mill pond.

The Museum was the vision of its founder Roy Armstrong who, inspired by the work at Skansen in Sweden, and appalled at the immense loss of vernacular architecture in the 1950s onwards because of New Towns, road schemes and other developments, set out to find a site to which buildings of historic significance could be moved to avoid destruction. In so doing he created a centre for understanding the cultural heritage of south east England and preserving ancient crafts and skills. Hence the Museum's long term aims are to:

1. run an open-air Museum that inspires and delights its users
2. provide lifelong learning based on the Museum's collections and other resources
3. ensure high standards of collections care
4. pursue research and scholarship

The exhibit buildings range from a 13th-century flint cottage to working buildings of the late 19th Century. They are complemented by a collection of building fixtures and fittings such as hinges, latches and doors, as well as larger structural elements and materials used in building construction and conservation. The Museum also holds excellent collections relating to rural life, including agriculture, domestic life, trades and industries and transport. A library of printed books,

maps and other published materials relevant to the collections is held by the Museum for study purposes. The collections are designated by the Arts Council as being of pre-eminence in England.



As well as bringing to life the homes, farmsteads and rural industries represented by its collections and exhibits, other themes are strongly represented at the Museum, including landscape, agriculture, animal husbandry, science and sustainability. Interpretation is achieved mainly through people, together with modest panel displays and publications.



The Museum has an extremely strong commitment to lifelong learning. In addition to 20–25,000 children visiting in school parties every year, the Museum operates as a private sector training provider, selling over 3,500 students days of adult teaching and training every year, with a broad spectrum of provision from workshop-based skills training to two Master of Science courses run in association with York University.



The Museum makes a major contribution to tourism in the Chichester area, and will be a key attraction in the South Downs National Park. It attracts between 100,000 and 150,000 visitors each year, mainly schools and families but with significant specialist interest as well.

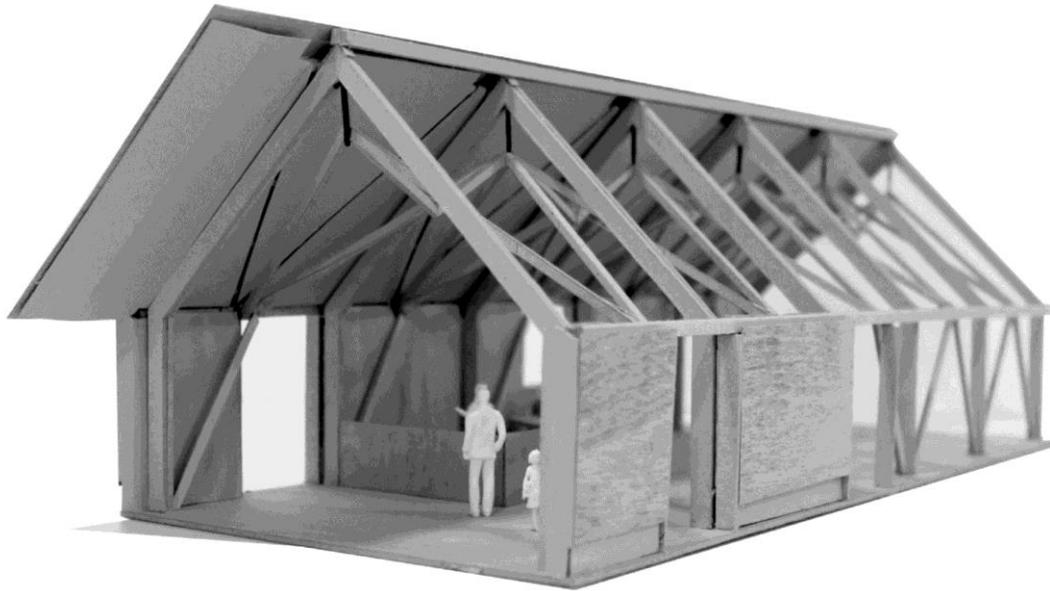
During its 45 year life the Museum has become acknowledged as one of the UK's leading independent museums. It receives no revenue subsidy from central or local government, but synergy between museum objectives and commercial realism is one of its most important features.

The Future

The Museum has reached an important stage in its development. It has for some years been developing, designing and fund raising for a major new visitor centre

and related facilities which will transform the attractiveness and sustainability of this already popular and important museum.

Known as the Gateway project, with £4m of Heritage Lottery Funding and some £1.5m of additional funds and a full planning permission in place, this project has reached the final phase. Work has commenced on site, with the major construction expected to get underway in March 2016 and completion set for early 2017.



Full details of the project are available on the Museum's website, but in brief it comprises an Orientation and Interpretation Gallery which will transform visitors' understanding of the site, collections and the landscape from which our buildings have originated. There will be new ticketing, retail and catering facilities, including a community space for use as a classroom, venue for functions and as additional cafe space on high days. Updated interpretation will be installed throughout the site. An HLF funded activities plan is already under way. Finally there will be safer and improved car parking.



Trustees have recently adopted a new vision for the Museum, consistent with its four overall aims, and recognising the opportunity presented not only as a Gateway to the new National Park but also in the huge community interest in heritage:

“A centre of excellence for the enjoyment, learning and understanding of the built environment, landscape, rural life and communities of South East England and the South Downs.”

The overriding objectives for the next 12-24 months are to:

1. deliver a successful Gateway project
2. introduce a new management/staffing structure and adapt to a new culture and business pattern, and
3. maintain or boost income and business as usual as much as is practically possible during the construction period

These priorities are intended to provide a strong foundation for the Museum’s development over the next decade. In anticipation of the forthcoming retirement of the present Director (Richard Pailthorpe), a new Director is currently being appointed and this statement of the Museum’s aims and objectives will provide him or her with the opportunity to build on its past success and take the vision forward in exciting and innovative ways, overseen by the body of Trustees.



The Role of Trustees

The duties of a Trustee of a charity such as the Weald & Downland Museum are:

- to ensure that the organisation complies with its governing document, organisation law, and any other relevant legislation or regulations.
- to ensure that the organisation pursues its objectives as defined in its governing document
- to ensure the organisation applies its resources exclusively in pursuance of its objectives, i.e. the organisation must not spend money on activities which are not included in its own objectives, no matter how worthwhile or charitable those activities are
- to contribute actively to the board of trustees' role in giving firm strategic direction to the organisation, setting overall policy, defining goals, setting targets and evaluating performance against agreed targets
- to safeguard the good name and values of the organisation
- to represent the company at functions and meetings as appropriate
- to declare any conflict of interest while carrying out the duties of a trustee
- to be collectively responsible for the actions of the organisation and other trustees
- to ensure the effective and efficient administration of the organisation
- to abide by the equal opportunities policy
- to ensure the financial stability of the organisation
- to protect and manage the property of the organisation and to ensure the proper investment of the organisation's funds
- to make sure the organisation is properly insured against all reasonable liabilities
- to appoint and support the employees and monitor their performance
- in addition to the above statutory duties of all trustees, each trustee should use any specific knowledge or experience they have to help the board of trustees reach sound decisions. This will involve scrutinizing board papers, leading discussions, focusing on key issues, and providing advice and guidance requested by the board on new initiatives, or other issues relevant to the area of, the organisation's work in which the trustee has special expertise
- to attend meetings, and to read papers in advance of meetings
- to attend sub-committee meetings as appropriate
- to participate in other tasks as arise from time to time, such as interviewing new staff, helping with fundraising
- to keep informed about the activities of the organisation and wider issues which affect its work.

Each Trustee should have:

- integrity
- a commitment to the organisation and its objectives
- an understanding and acceptance of the legal duties, responsibilities and liabilities of trusteeship
- a willingness to devote the necessary time and effort to their duties as a trustee
- strategic vision
- good, independent judgment
- an ability to think creatively
- willingness to speak their mind

- an ability to work effectively as a member of a team

The Museum's AGM takes place at the end of April when at least three of our present Trustees will be retiring. Applications are therefore sought from people interested in becoming a Museum Trustee. We are particularly interested in hearing from candidates with expertise in at least one of the following areas, but will also consider other applicants who can bring a different perspective to the Trustee body:

- Professional museum experience to assist with museum development
- Academic (Further or Higher education or research) to help develop the very successful and sustainable learning programmes
- Fundraising to assist with priority revenue/capital fundraising
- Historic buildings, including architects and surveyors, to assist with project and site management
- Accountancy/finance to assist with financial and risk management
- Legal to assist with governance and risk
- Organisational Change or a Personnel Management background to help with the restructuring
- Commercial to assist with income generation, particularly retail and catering but also events
- Marketing to help publicise the museum and to reach new audiences

There are currently 17 Trustees of whom seven serve on the Executive Board. All Trustees meet about three times a year, including the AGM and an 'Away Day'. The Executive Board meets every two months. Trustees are appointed for a three year term, with the number of renewals normally limited so that no Trustee serves for more than nine years in total. Trustees appoint the Executive Board, the Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer at the AGM. Trustees may from time to time also be asked to serve on working groups dealing with various issues, to attend events and represent the Museum locally.

The Application Process

People interested in being appointed a Trustee of the Weald & Downland Museum should email a CV and a covering letter explaining how they feel they meet the requirements set out in this brief to Dr John Godfrey DL, the Vice-Chairman of the Trustees, at maltraversjohn@btinternet.com by noon on **Friday, 1st April 2016**. Shortlisting will take place on 13th April and shortlisted candidates will be invited to meet the Chairman, Vice-Chairman and two other Trustees on Tuesday, 19th or Thursday, 21st April. Dr Godfrey will be pleased to discuss the positions with intending applicants on 01903 882474/07585 225367.

**Weald & Downland Open Air Museum
March 2016.**