

Trustee Development Case Study

Museum: Weald & Downland Living Museum, Singleton, West Sussex

The main outcome the Museum hoped to achieve:

The Museum was looking to refresh the present Trustee body, to fill existing and future gaps in the skill base of Trustees, to recruit individuals capable of taking on leadership roles in due course and to broaden the gender and ethnic diversity of the Trustee body. ***We wanted to end up with a body of Trustees well-equipped to take the Museum forward.***

Board development activities undertaken in 2015/16:

- **Audit/review**
 - Skills audit/review: Identified need for commercial experience
 - Diversity audit/review: Identified male/female imbalance on Trustees, no ethnic minorities

- **Recruitment**
 - Recruitment of new trustees to fill board or skills gaps: Museum was keen to find financial, legal, commercial and heritage management experience
 - Strategic recruitment of new trustees to support organisational change in parallel with appointment of a new CEO to deliver organisational change.

- **Succession planning.**

A governance review had recommended, and Trustees had agreed, to changes in the governance of the Museum. The implementation of these changes coincided with the appointment of a new CEO and the delivery of a £5.5m development project, which will provide the Museum with new visitor facilities. Many Trustees (including the Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Company Secretary and Treasurer) had served for a number of years and it was decided to restrict the term of office of Trustees to a maximum of three terms of three years. Some Trustees agreed to resign and others accepted that their period of service would be limited. A consequence was that the four office holders mentioned above would all cease to be Trustees by 2019. The search for new Trustees conducted in the first half of 2016 was designed to recruit Trustees to fill the gaps created by these changes, to broaden the range of skills available and to increase diversity, particularly in relation to gender equality, the existing body being largely male.

- **Training:**
 - Induction training for new trustees
 - Training for whole board as a group – annual Away Days are held
 - Training for individual trustees - relevant material is sent to Trustees

Recruitment methods:

- **Advertisement:**
 - Museum's own website
 - Museum's own newsletter sent to Friends Group/Users, etc.
 - AIM Trustee Portal (free to AIM members)
 - NCVO Charity Job website (free to all)
 - Local newspapers/magazines

- **Targeted approaches:**
 - To people known to the Chair
 - To people known to the Trustees
 - To people known to the Museum Director
 - To people known to the staff/volunteers

What went well/less well?

The Museum was generally pleased with the outcome of the recruitment process. We received a total of 24 applications, more than we expected, and most of them were of very high quality.

- A number of the skills areas we were looking for were picked up, particularly in relation to the financial, audit, risk management, business development and commercial areas. We were less successful in attracting applications from the legal, catering, retail, historic buildings and museums management areas. Next time round, we will focus more specifically on these areas and try to find the best ways to reach potential candidates in these fields.
- We were able to recruit a new Trustee with a particularly strong financial, audit and risk management background, and he has been appointed to the Board and chairs the new Finance & Audit Committee.
- Among the new Trustees appointed as the result of this process, there may be suitable candidates for consideration for the roles of Chair and Vice-Chair of Trustees in due course, although we do need to recruit a legally qualified Trustee to take on the role of Company Secretary in due course.
- The majority of the 24 applications were from men, but the nominations committee adopted a positive approach to the need to appoint more women as Trustees: we shortlisted six people (three men and three women) for interview and appointed two men and two women. In addition, an existing female Trustee was appointed to the Executive Board and one of the new, financially qualified female Trustees was appointed to the Finance & Audit Committee.
- We received very few applications from ethnic minority candidates and we shall need to consider next time how we can do better to reach these audiences.

Did the recruitment process result in a more diverse trustee board?

- **Age** Yes
- **Ethnicity** No
- **Gender** Yes
- **Skills** Yes

Top 3 Tips for other museums contemplating trustee development

- Be specific in the skills which you are looking for in new Trustees and focus your advertising and search methods accordingly
- In making any personal approaches to potential Trustees, be cautious about raising expectations that their appointment is a foregone conclusion
- Devise an appointment process which is fair and transparent, but avoids becoming a mere tick box exercise, and remember that you need to sell the organisation to potential Trustees as much as they need to persuade you to appoint them.

Signed (on behalf of the Museum): John Godfrey

Print Name: Dr John Godfrey DL MA FRGS FSA

Position (trustee/director/etc.): Vice-Chairman of Trustees, Chair of Nominations Committee

By signing this document:

- you are agreeing that you are happy for the information to be shared with other museums and other interested parties (inc on the regional website). If Q1B has been ticked the case study will be anonymised.

An electronic email stating your agreement is acceptable.