

DORSET NATURAL  
HISTORY AND  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
SOCIETY

**Dorset**  
Museum  
& Art Gallery



## **Application Pack Trustees**

May 2024



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May 2024

Dear Applicant

Thank you for your interest in Dorset Museum & Art Gallery (DMAG) and in becoming a Trustee for its parent Charity, the Dorset Natural History and Archaeological Society (DHNAS).

This is an extremely exciting and critical time for the organisation. The completion of a large capital works project to transform DMAG was hugely successful but a challenging economic climate means that our priority is building a sustainable future, largely driven by sufficient footfall to the Museum & Art Gallery.

Whilst the staff and volunteers continue to ensure that DMAG is an inspiring, informative and fun place to visit, the need to generate income and ensure financial self-sufficiency is critical. In addition, care for our historic buildings, alongside the growing importance of environmental sustainability due to the climate crisis means that the Board is faced with new challenges. To address these, we require a diverse team of Board members to provide strategic oversight, informed guidance and support to ensure a productive, successful and sustainable future.

This year the Charity needs to recruit a new Trustee. This application pack sets out both the general requirements for being a Trustee, and also the specific areas of expertise we are looking for at the moment.

Thank you again for your interest. I am sure if you do become involved with the Dorset Museum & Art Gallery and the Society you will find it a welcoming and rewarding organisation with many, often unexpected, attractions.

With kind regards

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jean Lang". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Jean Lang  
Chair of the Board of Trustees

## **Dorset Museum & Art Gallery background and history**

Dorset Museum & Art Gallery is independent and a 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 1,100 people. The Museum & Art Gallery is located in High West Street in the centre of Dorchester and employs approx. 30 staff, supported by 140 dedicated volunteers. In the 2023-4 financial year, the Museum & art Gallery attracted around 46,000 visitors.

DMAG 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 DMAG brought together a wide range of antiquarians, naturalists and amateur scientists who assembled an early collection of 'curios' as well as local artefacts. We 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 our collections to include literary and cultural heritage. The transfer of over 300 items from the estate of sculptor Elisabeth Frink significantly transformed the collection of Fine Art in 2020. Today the collection totals around four million objects covering archaeology, natural history, geology, local history, literature, fine art, photography and library collections.

We formally became part of the Wessex Museums Partnership in 2017 when the consortium of partners (Dorset Museum & Art Gallery, Salisbury Museum, Wiltshire Museum and Poole Museum) secured major funding from Arts Council England (ACE) as a National Portfolio Organisation (NPO). In the same year, 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.

In 2021 Dorset Museum & Art Gallery re-opened after a transformation that quadrupled the Museum's floor-space to provide:

- A suite of inspirational new galleries collectively tells the story of Dorset, displaying 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 for 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
- Up-to-date facilities for collections management, research and conservation
- Specially created, publicly visible spaces for volunteers and researchers to work on the collections and visitors to see the behind-the-scenes workings of a museum
- Improved visibility, accessibility and facilities including a new café and shop
- A 'cultural and tourism offer' that brings economic, educational and social benefits to the whole county

## **DNHAS TEAM STRUCTURE**

Led by the Executive Director, a full complement of paid staff and a team of over 140 volunteers support the Objects of the Society and its Museum.

## **DNHAS VISION, MISSION AND STRATEGIC AIMS**

### **Vision/Purpose**

Inspire and connect people with Dorset's natural and cultural heritage

### **Mission/Promise**

Showcasing our world-class collections, we inspire visitors to make personal connections and deepen their understanding of Dorset.

We do this through storytelling, high quality exhibitions, events, learning and research.

### **Strategic aims**

1. Be a nationally and internationally recognised destination, putting Dorset on the map
2. Care for and showcase our world-class collections
3. Enable learning and research
4. Be financially sustainable
5. Bring equity, diversity and inclusion into everything we do
6. Respond actively and responsibly to the climate emergency

## **TRUSTEE/BOARD MEMBER: ROLE DESCRIPTION AND PERSON SPECIFICATION**

### **THE OPPORTUNITY**

Dorset Natural History and Archaeological Society (DNHAS) is currently seeking a new Trustee and Board Member, to stand for election by the members at the AGM in December 2024. We set out below the skills we are looking for.

We are seeking a Board Members from a diverse range of backgrounds with the skills and abilities to complement those of the existing Board and to be able to contribute to DNHAS as it moves into a future of continuing change, ambition and development.

### **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 & Art Gallery 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.

### **THE COMMITMENT**

DNHAS Board Members serve a three-year term and can stand for re-election for one additional term. Their election is made by the Members at the Annual General Meeting of the Society, which takes place in December.

We hold a minimum of four Board meetings a year in person at Dorset Museum & Art Gallery. In addition, Trustees may be asked to serve on the Finance Committee. Outside of meetings Trustees are called upon for advice or assistance according to their skills and experience, and will be expected to attend events where possible and to represent the organisation at external meetings and events.

Board Members should expect to commit at least 12 days a year. Involvement on special projects and committees increases the commitment.

Members of the Board have duties as both Trustee and Director under the various Charities and Companies Acts. Board Members also have responsibilities under the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974.

Board Members have ultimate responsibility for the running of the DNHAS. The Board deals with all major strategic decisions and governance oversight, and is responsible for the approval of the annual budget and accounts, ensuring the financial health and sustainability of the DNHAS and the safety of its assets.

All Board Members sign a declaration of their eligibility to stand and to be a Charity Trustee, and must complete a conflict of interest register which is updated annually.



As a Board Member you will provide knowledge, support and guidance to the leadership team and work with the Board Chair to ensure excellent governance. As a Board Member you will:

- Ensure that the Charity carries out its charitable purposes and that it complies with its governing document
- Provide strategic vision and leadership to DNHAS
- Act as an ambassador for DNHAS locally and regionally
- Work to ensure good governance and to achieve financial stability, resilience and statutory compliance, managing resources responsibly and acting in the Charity's best interest
- Contribute to the recruitment and appointment of Directorial staff
- Contribute to the appointment of the Chair at the first meeting following each AGM
- Review and sign off policies
- Behave with integrity and in the best interest of DNHAS
- Be a member of DNHAS

## **SKILLS**

All Board members should be able to:

- Work effectively as part of a team
- Communicate effectively
- Think creatively and exercise independent judgement
- Commit to the mission and values of the DNHAS
- Demonstrate a commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion
- Work with a diverse group of stakeholders and partners
- Have a good understanding of corporate governance
- Commit to Nolan's seven principles of public life: selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership

## **KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE**

Taken as a whole, the Board seeks Trustees with knowledge or experience of the following:

- People management
- Local knowledge
- Business or commercial knowledge
- Financial management/accountancy
- Legal knowledge (including charity and company law)
- Fundraising
- Building conservation
- HR/Personnel
- Environmental conservation
- Equity, diversity and inclusion
- Museum skills (including recent legislation & broader issues)
- Skills in the Cultural Domain (including Libraries and Archives)
- Local government
- Ambassadorial
- Life-long learning and education
- Sustainability
- Running visitor attractions with more than 40,000 visitors a year
- Charity or cultural sector management and governance

**For the Trustee being appointed, the Board has carried out a skills audit and is looking for expertise in the following areas:**

**Fundraising:**

- The development of fundraising strategies and their implementation
- An understanding of different fundraising channels, from individual and corporate giving to developing proposals for UK trusts and foundations
- The role fundraising plays in the financial strategy of a charitable organisation
- Risk assessment of potential new fundraising directions
- Charity law

**Building Conservation:**

- Experience of working within historic buildings at senior level
- A strong background in one or more of the following areas: architecture; building conservation; building and facilities management
- Knowledge of the standards required for the care and maintenance of listed buildings
- An understanding of contemporary issues and conversations affecting the sector

**Environmental Conservation:**

- Experience of working within environmental conservation at senior level
- A strong background in one or more of the following areas: conservation; environment; ecology; energy; environmental research
- Knowledge of the standards required for effective environmental conservation
- An understanding of contemporary issues and conversations affecting the sector

We are committed to building a Board 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 Trustee 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.





## **FURTHER INFORMATION**

A copy of 'The Essential Trustee: What you need to know' can be read or downloaded at the following address:

[The essential trustee: what you need to know, what you need to do \(CC3\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

The Association of Independent Museums' 'Successful Governance for Museums: A Guide for Trustees' (2020) can be found here:

<https://www.aim-museums.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Successful-Governance-for-Museums-2020-1.pdf>

Further detail about the responsibilities of Directors may be found at the following websites:

<http://www.companieshouse.gov.uk/>

[Charity trustee: what's involved \(CC3a\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

## HOW TO APPLY

To make an informal enquiry about the role of Trustee prior to submitting an application, please contact [enquiries@dorsetmuseum.org](mailto:enquiries@dorsetmuseum.org) to arrange a conversation with either the Chair or Executive Director.

To apply you will need to submit your CV, together with a supporting statement (no more than two pages of A4) explaining how you believe you match the requirements of the role, directly addressing the skills, knowledge and experience sections of the role description.

Your application should be sent by email to [enquiries@dorsetmuseum.org](mailto:enquiries@dorsetmuseum.org) by the closing date of 9am on **Monday 24 June 2024**.

**Applications received after the deadline will not be considered.**

The email should be clearly marked 'Application for role of DNHAS Trustee' in the subject heading of your message.

We expect that interviews for shortlisted candidates will take place on Wednesday 24 July 2024.

The application of the final selected candidates will be ratified by the Board of Trustees and then will be submitted to the Members at the Society's AGM on Thursday 5th December 2024.



