



CHAIR OF TRUSTEES CANDIDATE INFORMATION PACK

Background

Founded in 1985, Ware Museum is an independent, accredited museum which tells the story of life in the town from the Mesolithic period to the present day. The museum is located in the Priory Lodge, a Grade II listed building at the entrance to Ware Priory, which dates back to the 14th century. Ware itself is a small market town in East Hertfordshire with a population of approximately 19,000 people. Well served by public transport, including regular trains to London, there have been significant developments in the town and a new housing development planned for completion in 2025. The museum attracts approximately 6-7,000 visitors per year, although Covid restrictions and reduced opening hours have impacted on visitor numbers since early 2020.

Ware Museum's stated mission is 'to provide a museum service that encourages everyone who visits, lives or works in Ware to be engaged by its past, present and future. We do this by enabling people to access and share the collections and heritage of Ware and the surrounding area for inspiration, learning and enjoyment'.

The Museum receives a grant from Ware Town Council, with other income generated from corporate sponsors, fees and donations from the public. The Trustee committee is comprised of up to twelve Trustees, including representation from Ware Town Council and the Ware Society. The Museum was entirely volunteer-run until the appointment of a Museum Manager in 2022.

The collections include archaeology, geology, local industry and social history, with significant holdings relating to the malting industry in Ware, the firm of Allen and Hanburys (later GSK) and the pharmaceutical industry in the town, and the Wickham engineering firm. The town's most famous artefact, the Great Bed of Ware (now in the V&A museum) is the subject of a display which includes both the history of the bed and the story of its loan to Ware Museum in 2012-13. Information on the two world wars is displayed in the town's command bunker which was incorporated into the museum in 2001. A popular feature of the museum is the mediaeval well which is covered in glass to allow visitors to stand over it.

In addition to a regular programme of 3-4 exhibitions a year, the museum displays collections from the Iron Age, Ware's important role as a Roman and Anglo-Saxon town, and later expansion during Norman times. Illuminating artefacts from the local malting and brickmaking industries and Wickham railway vehicle engineering firms are all represented in the collections. A particular highlight for the Museum was the display of the Great Bed of Ware in 2012-3, on loan from the Victoria and Albert Museum. With funding from the then Heritage Lottery Fund, this display and associated activities attracted over 30,000 visitors during the twelve-month period of the loan.

The Museum is an institutional member of the Museums Association (MA), the Association of Independent Museums (AIM), and the Group for Education in Museums (GEM). Staff and trustees attend training and networking events run by SHARE East, the museum development service for the East of England, and the Hertfordshire Association of Museums (HAM). Ware Museum is a registered charity, no. 1181895.

The Museum is now seeking a Chair of Trustees to provide strategic leadership to the organisation. This is an exciting time to become involved with Ware Museum, which has ambitious plans to develop and redisplay the museum's collections in a way which responds to the needs and interests of a wider range of audiences. The Chair will play a key role in the governance and future strategic direction of the organisation.

Organisation, Governance and Finances:

Ware Museum is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) led by a Board of up to 12 trustees who bring a range of skills and experiences from different sectors. The Museum Manager is employed for three days per week and is supported by a team of volunteers.

Board meetings take place bi-monthly. There are four sub-committees (Finance, Audience Development, Collections and Volunteer Management) and various working groups as needed.

CHAIR OF TRUSTEES: ABOUT THE ROLE

The Chair:

- Provides strategic leadership to the Charity and the Board, ensuring that Ware Museum constantly strives to achieve its mission
- Works in partnership with the Museum Manager and volunteers to achieve our mission
- Leads the Board in ensuring that it fulfils its responsibilities for the governance of the organisation
- Plans and chairs Board meetings, with others as appropriate
- Conducts an annual appraisal and remuneration review for the Museum Manager in consultation with other Trustees
- Has line management responsibility for the Museum Manager; meets with the Manager every 2-3 months to review progress and targets and ensures that the Manager have the opportunity for professional development and appropriate external professional support
- Acts as a spokesperson and ambassador for Ware Museum

PERSON SPECIFICATION

We are looking for...

- A track record of chairing meetings with skill and authority, with prior experience of serving on a Charity Board, ideally as a Chair, but those with experience as a Trustee will also be considered.
- A passion for the heritage of Ware and its surrounding area.

- A keen sense of strategic purpose to drive the Museum forward over the next 5 years taking confident decisions to act as a figurehead.
- An understanding of museums and their role and also of how small businesses operate.
- Experience and understanding of the funding landscape in the UK and experience in fund-raising.
- An inclusive leadership style: able to inspire and support everyone to participate on an equal footing to ensure effective management of staff, volunteers and trustees.
- The ability to listen and engage effectively and be comfortable with challenge and debate whilst fostering a collaborative board environment.
- Ability and willingness to champion Ware Museum's work through personal networks, social media and other channels.
- A strong personal commitment to Equity, Diversity and Inclusion.
- Someone who is responsive and able to support the management team on a regular basis, preferably in person.

TERMS OF APPOINTMENT

This is a voluntary and unremunerated position. The Chair will be appointed for a three year period, renewable for a maximum of a further two terms.

It is expected that the time commitment will be 2-3 days per month.

HOW TO APPLY

To register your interest in this opportunity, you are asked to submit:

- A copy of your CV or biographical details;
- A statement of interest indicating why you are interested and what you are able to bring to the organisation bearing in mind the qualities sought as set out in the person specification;
- A completed EDI Form

Applications should be sent to Cathy De'Freitas, Museum Manager whose contact details are:

t: 01920 487848

e: manager@waremuseum.org.uk

Please submit your application electronically. The deadline for receipt of applications is **midnight on 29 February 2024.**

For an informal discussion on this opportunity, please contact:

John Wing (Trustee)

t: 07885 597014

e: john@warewings.net