

South West Heritage Trust

Somerset Heritage Centre, Brunel Way
Norton Fitzwarren, Taunton, Somerset TA2 6SF

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Dear Applicant

Many thanks for your interest in applying for the position of Visitor Services Assistant with the South West Heritage Trust.

The South West Heritage Trust is an independent charity, which works across Somerset and Devon, providing a broad range of heritage services and experiences. Our turnover exceeds £3.5 million and we employ nearly 100 people, working across six sites.

Through our **Museums Service**, we run the iconic Museum of Somerset in Taunton, the Somerset Rural Life Museum in Glastonbury and the Brick and Tile Museum in Bridgwater to tell the story of the South West. We care for 3 million museum objects, including a significant fine art collection, an extensive array of costumes and textiles, a nationally notable prehistoric bone and fossil collection, a large number of coin hoards, and a growing photographic record spanning the last 100 years.

We care for the written evidence of Somerset and Devon history, operating the **Archives and Local Studies Services** for each county. At our Heritage Centres in Taunton and Exeter, you can discover millions of documents dating from the 8th century to the present day. If you want to research the history of families, towns, villages or events, there is no better place to start.

Our **Historic Environment and Estates Service** supports local authorities, partners and the public by offering planning-related advice on Somerset's archaeology and built heritage. We provide the on-line Historic Environment Record where you can find information about thousands of historic sites in Somerset. The service is also responsible for over 400 acres of historic landscape sites including Cothelstone Hill in the Quantock Hills and Deer Leap in the Mendip Hills.

Our **Learning Team** works across all services, providing a broad range of informal learning opportunities for children and families and formal lessons for schools for Key Stages 1 and 2. A Loans for Learning scheme makes authentic heritage objects available to schools to use in lessons.

This is an exciting time to be working in heritage and the South West Heritage Trust is at the heart of cultural activity in Somerset and Devon. Every person we employ has an important part to play in how we deliver our services and we are seeking enthusiastic, talented and engaged people to join our organisation. We look forward to receiving your application.

Tom Mayberry
Chief Executive Officer

We are a charity supported by Somerset and Devon County Councils and other generous funders

Our Vision

We will celebrate and protect our rich heritage, helping everyone to enjoy it now and in the future.

Our Mission

Access, Learning and Enjoyment

- We will help people from all backgrounds to learn from our heritage and be inspired by it.
- We will encourage individuals and communities to get involved in our heritage.
- We will make our heritage as accessible as we can and will promote research and understanding.
- We will provide rich heritage experiences for everyone.

Care, Conservation and Protection

- We will make sure our heritage is excellently cared for.

Resilience

- We will build partnerships with funders and stakeholders to increase sustainability.
- We will strive for excellent, ambitious and entrepreneurial services.
- We will foster links between heritage, the arts, tourism and economic prosperity for the benefit of all.

Staff and Volunteers

- We will ensure that our workforce is skilled, motivated and diverse.

Our Values

The South West Heritage Trust values:

- Heritage in all its forms
- Opportunities for discovery and lifelong learning
- People as the heart of heritage
- The spirit of enterprise and development
- Creativity and innovation

Equality and Diversity

The South West Heritage Trust is committed to providing a working environment where all staff and volunteers are treated, and treat others, with dignity, fairness and respect and which is free from harassment and bullying.

All those who work for or volunteer with the Trust are of equal importance and should be respected and valued for their contribution and commitment and for the role they fulfil.

Benefits of working for the South West Heritage Trust

1. Pay

The Trust aims to pay the Living Wage Foundation rate of pay as the lowest salary offered in the organisation.

Salaries for other staff in the organisation are in line with industry standards and regional comparisons.

2. Training and CPD

The Trust facilitates training and professional development opportunities in line with the needs of jobs and in the light of knowledge gaps.

When preparing for annual review meetings with line managers, employees are asked to review their training and professional developmental needs against the training available. Their line manager is then able to review courses and provide support as appropriate.

There are plenty of opportunities for training and CPD. The best ones are courses that contribute to professional accreditation or provide access to new information or techniques that will improve the ability of people to do their jobs and ultimately improve their CVs.

3. Generous Annual Leave

Our entry level annual leave entitlement is 23 days per year for full-time staff, compared with the national minimum rate of 20 days. The maximum annual leave entitlement is 32 days per year. All annual leave is offered on a pro rata basis to part-time employees.

This annual leave entitlement is in addition to the 8 UK public holidays per year.

4. Flexible Working Options

In most cases, the Trust can offer staff some flexibility in working arrangements. This includes a flexi-time policy and the opportunity to opt for start and end times of work which suit individuals where appropriate.

Term time only contracts and variable working hours are also supported where possible to ensure a family-friendly approach.

5. Accessible Facilities

Each of our five office bases is fully accessible including the 12th Century Taunton Castle which is home to The Museum of Somerset, and the Victorian Abbey Farm in Glastonbury which is home to the Somerset Rural Life Museum.

We proactively enable any workplace modifications to ensure we can recruit the best candidates for our vacancies based on merit.

6. Competitive Pension

The Trust offers the National Employment Savings Trust (NEST) pension scheme to all new employees. Monthly deductions of 3% are made from gross salary (before income tax and National Insurance deductions) with the Trust contributing a further 6% per month. There is no minimum earning requirement for enrolment.

In addition to the pension entitlement, the Trust offers a Death in Service benefit of two times annual salary.

7. Salary Sacrifice Schemes

We are pleased to be able to offer two salary sacrifice schemes to employees:

- The Childcare Vouchers scheme allows for the purchase of vouchers to pay for some of the costs of childcare. The purchase is deducted from salaries directly without paying tax on the relevant amount.
- The Cycle to Work Scheme enables eligible employees to purchase a new bike and related safety equipment up to the value of £1,000. The cost of purchasing the bike is deducted from salaries before tax is deducted, meaning a saving on the final cost.

8. Staff Discounts

All members of staff are entitled to the following:

- 10% discount on purchases made within the shops at any of our sites (excluding exhibition sales)
- 10% discount on any books published by the Trust
- Free staff entry to the Somerset Rural Life Museum
- Free staff entry to talks and events which are being organised and run by the Trust, subject to availability. For talks, up to six seats will be made available to staff who wish to attend. Booking in advance is required to secure spaces.
- A staff discount *may* be available in the cafés at the Museum of Somerset and the Somerset Rural Life Museum. You should contact the managers at each site in advance to find out more details.

Notes on the Application Process

All applications for employment should be submitted electronically using the application form provided. We do not accept CVs as a valid form of application. If you are unable to access the application form, please email recruitment@swheritage.org.uk. Completed applications should also be sent to recruitment@swheritage.org.uk unless otherwise specified.

The application form will provide us with the information we require about how your skills, experience and attributes are aligned with the requirements of the job. This is your chance to tell us how you fit the Person Specification provided in this pack. It is your responsibility to ensure the application submitted is complete and contains all information requested. It should be submitted electronically and in a readable file format – either Microsoft Word or Adobe PDF.

All completed applications received will then be short-listed using a scoring system. Our short-listing is undertaken by two or more people who are involved with the recruitment process and consideration is given to your work history, your educational and training achievements and the information you provide in your supporting statement. At the short-listing stage, the candidates who meet all of the essential criteria and have been attributed the highest scores will be invited to interview.

Completing the application form

You should read through all information provided about the job and pay close attention to the Job Description and the Person Specification. You might also find it useful to read more about the South West Heritage Trust and the services we provide on our website, www.swheritage.org.uk.

When assessing applications, a short-listing panel will be looking for evidence about how the essential and desirable criteria listed in the Person Specification are met. When stating how you meet these criteria, it is useful to provide information about a real-life situation to qualify your statement.

Candidates who are invited to interview are those who have been successful in demonstrating they meet all of the essential and desirable criteria. In many cases a decision will need to be based on the degree to which criteria are met.

Interviews

The interview process is intended to examine the suitability of each short-listed candidate in greater detail. Questions will be asked which may be specific to the technicalities of the job, may relate to the ethos of the organisation or may examine general personality or behavioural traits and compatibility.

The interview panel will be made up of two or more people who are relevant to the area of work or who represent the organisation. Questions to be asked at interview will be agreed by the panel in advance and all candidates will be asked the same questions in the same order.

Responses to each question will be given a score by each interviewer independently. The scores will then be compared during deliberations. The candidate with the highest combined score will be the preferred candidate.

If a successful candidate is identified at the interview stage, they will be contacted by phone. The job may be offered verbally **subject to references** and confirmed in writing. References will then be sought and followed up as appropriate. Unsuccessful candidates will be notified once the successful candidate has accepted the position.

Occasionally, an interview panel may decide that there was no clear successful candidate. Further deliberations will then take place referring to the application form. If you have indicated that one or more reference may be taken up prior to an offer of a job, this may take place to advise the final decision. If no clear candidate emerges, the panel may decide to halt the recruitment process and take further advice.

Please note that the interview process and assessment may involve all people you meet whilst on site. For example, if a tour is provided as a part of the process, the tour guide may be consulted on the final decision based on their interaction with you.

Contact and Feedback

We will acknowledge receipt of your application within ten working days.

If you have been short-listed for interview, you will receive a letter which contains all the relevant details including location, time, likely duration of the interview process and information about any tasks which are part of the process. The letter will be sent by email and also in the post, providing at least five days' notice of the interview date.

Feedback is provided on request to candidates who have been unsuccessful at the interview stage. Feedback may be provided verbally or by email. We do not provide feedback about applications or why an applicant has not been selected for interview.

If you have not been short-listed for interview, you will be notified by email **after** the interview process has been completed.

How we deal with your information

Your completed application will be retained securely on our system, in a folder which is only accessible by the Head of Business Services.

Applications received are sent to the short-listing panel as a printed copy. The Equal Opportunities Monitoring form is detached from the hard copy before being circulated.

Equal Opportunities Monitoring Data is compiled into a spreadsheet anonymously, i.e. without names or other identifying information being included.

Following completion of the recruitment process, all printed applications are returned to the Head of Business Services and are disposed of securely.

We do not share any information received with any third parties. We do not use any data received for the purposes of marketing or share any data with other internal departments.

The information you provide will be held and used by the South West Heritage Trust in accordance with the provisions of Data Protection legislation, for the purposes of fulfilling legal obligations. See www.swheritage.org.uk/privacy-policy for our full privacy notice.