



**NORTON
PRIORY**
MUSEUM & GARDENS

Candidate Information Pack

Chief Executive

August 2018

WELCOME FROM THE TRUST CHAIRMAN

Thank you for your interest in the post of Chief Executive at our award-winning museum. Norton Priory has a strong commitment to its local community and a significant academic research record. The museum has consistently performed beyond that expected of an organisation of its size and resources and the Trust has ambitious plans to develop even further in new directions to attract wider audiences in partnership with its stakeholders.

The staff team are highly skilled and strongly motivated, they work in a very flexible way and involve volunteers and partners in a most productive manner. It is vital that the new Chief Executive leads this team and develops their capabilities even further. The partners who are essential to the success of the Trust include Halton Borough Council, several universities, the HLF, Arts Council England, Historic England, community organisations, schools and special interest groups.

The museum has recently benefited from investment in a £4.5M redevelopment project that has transformed the museum, providing innovative interpretation and displays. In addition to the new galleries and exhibition spaces the new building has created attractive visitor facilities, including a spacious atrium suitable for a wide range of activities, modern education spaces, meeting rooms and café.

The Trust sees a strong need to match this investment in the museum by similarly developing the walled garden and woodlands and is in the early stages of developing the brief for such a project. This will be a major challenge for the new Chief Executive.

As with most cultural organisations, financial sustainability is a significant challenge and the new Chief Executive will need to lead on income generation both for revenue expenditure and capital project funding. The Trust is also looking for proven skills in advocacy and marketing. The role provides a challenging career development opportunity for anyone intending to progress in the sector. Previous holders of the post have gone onto directorial roles in much larger organisations e.g. Museums Victoria, Australia; Ironbridge Museum; Norfolk Museums.

I look forward to receiving your application and learning more about how you would contribute to Norton Priory's continuing success.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Paul Mathews', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Paul Mathews, Chair of Trustees

Norton Priory Museum and Garden

Brief history

The Norton Priory Museum Trust Limited is a charitable company that manages the whole site on behalf of the freeholder, Halton Borough Council. The Trust also manages the conservation of and access to Halton Castle.

Norton Priory is the most extensively excavated monastic site in Europe with a varied collection representing nearly 900 years of occupation, initially by the Augustinian Canons. Following the dissolution of the monasteries in 1536, the Brooke family acquired the estate in 1545 and converted the monastic buildings into their Tudor home and subsequently built their classical mansion in the mid 18th century. The mansion was demolished in 1928 after the family had moved away but the Brookes retained ownership of the estate until 1968 when the land was sold to Runcorn New Town Development Corporation (RNTDC) for housing and the monastic ruins and medieval undercroft were gifted to the town. The Development Corporation initiated archaeological excavations of the monastic site in the early 1970s to engage the local community. The Museum Trust was established in 1975 to care for the finds and to establish and manage the museum. The Development Corporation later transferred the care and management of the walled garden and further grounds to the Trust. The freehold of the site was subsequently transferred from the RNTDC to Cheshire County Council and following local government reorganisation to Halton Borough Council, who continue to provide a revenue support grant.

The site now managed by the Museum Trust consists of the scheduled monastic ruins, the Grade 1 listed medieval undercroft, 42 acres of historic grounds including, orchards, meadows, woodland, and a 2.5 acre 18th century walled garden with adjacent icehouse. In addition there is a range of other buildings and spaces used for events, education, craft courses, academic study, artistic experiences, weddings, corporate meetings and conferences. The site also hosts an artisan brewery, an ice cream parlour, café and tearooms operated by 'Country Gardens' which is an enterprise supporting adults with learning difficulties run by Halton Borough Council Adult Services.

Our purpose and activities

The principal activities of the Trust, as set out in the Articles of Association, are to preserve, restore and improve the buildings, features, objects and gardens on the historic site of Norton Priory in Runcorn and to operate a museum interpreting the site and its history and to support the preservation and management of other historic sites in the area for the benefit of the public.

From the above is derived the Trust's mission: "To delight, educate and inspire – for healthy living." The strategies employed to achieve the charity's aims and objectives are to:

- Provide a first-class museum with attractive, bio-diverse and well-maintained gardens and grounds to engage new and diverse audiences;
- Provide a creative and busy programme of events and changing displays to attract repeat visits and to broaden our appeal; and

- Provide an excellent education programme designed to engage as many schools and community groups as possible including a special focus on people from areas of high deprivation and those with disabilities.

Putting these strategies into action we have three major areas of activity: our archaeological collection; the historic site, gardens and grounds; and our educational and outreach programmes.

We aim to provide the broadest access to and engagement with our collections, gardens and archaeological site. All our charitable activities, including our events and activities programme and life-long learning and interpretation strategies are specifically aimed at ensuring that people from all backgrounds and abilities are able to enjoy and learn from Norton Priory's resources and facilities. We actively work to reach people from lower income, deprived backgrounds, providing free passes to those who live geographically closest to the site as well as opening for a number of free days. We also run a volunteer programme that provides volunteering opportunities at Norton Priory to a very wide range of, mainly, local people.

The new museum

The new museum opened in August 2016 following an 18 month £4.5 m capital redevelopment (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FEztUrJRYNU>) in partnership with Halton Borough Council and funded by a £3.9m grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund, together with grants from trusts and foundations namely: Arts Council England, Garfield Weston Foundation, Wellcome Trust, WREN, Foyle Foundation, Pilgrim Trust, Wolfson Foundation, Granada Foundation and Radcliffe Trust. In addition there were significant bequests and donations from individuals and organisations in the local community.



The positive public response to the new museum has been overwhelming, with over 85,000 visitors to the redeveloped site in the 18 months following its opening in August 2016. Equally important is the long-term legacy of the project ensuring the preservation of Norton's important collections and the medieval undercroft and safeguarding them for future generations.

The new facilities also represent a step change in the potential for the Trust to deliver conferences, weddings, events and exhibitions. National loans could be accepted for the first time from the British Library, V&A and National Archives. They have included a letter from Henry VIII to Piers Dutton demanding the execution of Norton's abbot which saw international press coverage on Sky News, Daily Mail, Guardian and Fox News in America. The portrait of Thomas Brooke by Thomas Gainsborough is also currently on long-term loan greatly supplementing a largely archaeological collection.

The collection and research

The collection is largely the result of the excavations led by Dr Patrick Greene in the early 1970s. These excavations were part of Runcorn New Town Development Corporation's social programme to develop a sense of community and place for the New Town residents who were being relocated from central Liverpool. The excavations engaged a large number of community volunteers, some of whom continue to be involved with the site. The excavations uncovered both human and animal skeletal remains, medieval artefacts and architectural stonework together with objects reflecting the life and craft activities of almost 900 years of site occupation.

The collection is the subject of an extraordinarily active research programme in partnership with around eight universities at any one time. Research projects have recently included a Wellcome Trust funded project that explored the DNA of six of the 130 skeletons curated at Norton and was conducted by Dr Turi King, the researcher from the University of Leicester who led the Richard III project (<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/uk-england-merseyside-34144186/dna-hope-over-medieval-norton-priory-skeletons>). Similar work includes research into the lives of some of the people who lived at Norton during the Middle Ages by the University of Lancaster, together with the production of facial reconstructions <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/uk-england-lancashire-24341285/medieval-cheshire-monk-reconstructed-by-lancaster-university-scholars>. The museum is also currently engaged in an Arts Council funded project in partnership with the University of Liverpool to develop a portable mass spectrometer capable of delivering onsite isotope analysis during archaeological excavations.

This research attracts widespread media interest and the Trust ensures that it is made accessible and relevant to our visitors. An active excavation programme includes local people wherever possible with community excavations in 2013, 2015 and 2017 at Norton and at Halton Castle revealing more exciting discoveries. Two skeletons found during the 2015 excavation have led to numerous publications and a BBC One NW production on InsideOut. A university excavation programme began in 2018 and the Trust aims to grow this undergraduate training scheme to include community excavations each season over the next five years.

As well as providing access to the collections and archaeological site, the Trust pursues an active research agenda in partnership with a number of leading universities nationwide. Research projects typically engage around eight universities a year and there are particularly close and ongoing collaborations with the universities of Liverpool John Moores, Liverpool, Nottingham and Lancaster. Recently, exciting results emerged from the recent Wellcome Trust funded molecular analyses of six of Norton's skeletons; and progress is being made by the department of Electronic Engineering at the University of Liverpool on the development of a portable radiocarbon dating unit funded by Arts Council England.

The education and outreach programmes

The education programme delivers a diverse range of sessions and activities to a variety of formal and informal groups and organisations in the North West. The core of the work revolves around delivering a range of historical, artistic, environmental, scientific and literary sessions to local schools. The sessions complement and extend national curriculum requirements and cater for a broad range of learner types and special educational needs individuals and groups. The Trust also works with many informal learning groups, charities and individuals from early years to adult and specialist care providers. The team works both on and off site delivering sessions and events inspired by Norton's collections, the site, natural resources and traditional skills practised by staff members and local artists.



The gardens and grounds

The Trust manages 42 acres of historic bio-diverse grounds including; medieval ruins, orchards, meadows woodland and the walled garden, offering a safe and pleasant environment for our visitors. Much of the area around the museum is scheduled monument, bringing its own challenges, while also noteworthy is the National Collection of Tree Quince that feature throughout the walled garden and orchards. The Trust is an active member of the Cheshire Gardens of Distinction and regularly participates in joint activities such as exhibiting at the annual Royal Horticultural Society show at Tatton Park.

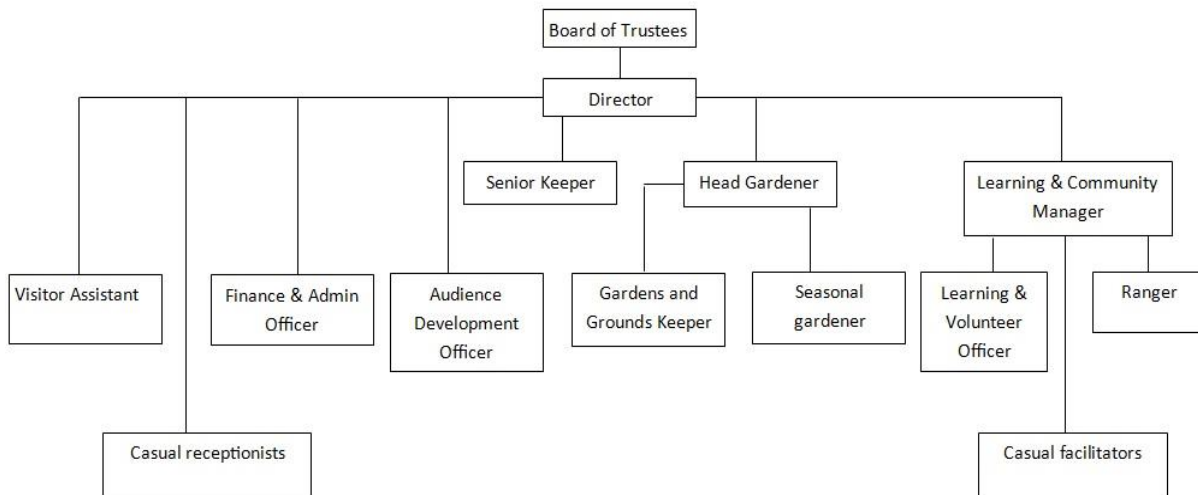
In addition to the Gardens and Grounds team, our Ranger advises on providing the best habitats for the diverse fauna that inhabits the area, with a special focus on pollinating insects and protected species. He also educates members of the public in environmental and wildlife issues through outreach and onsite formal and informal learning sessions.



The organisational Structure

The Board of Trustees, specified by the Articles of Association as between 10 and 20 members, oversees the Charity. The Board meets at least quarterly and there are sub-committees covering personnel, finance and governance. Additional committees are established as required for the life of particular projects.

The Senior Management Team have authority, within terms of a delegation approved by the Trustees, for operational matters including finance, employment and professional activities related to the scheduled sites. The senior team are led by the Museum Chief Executive (formerly the Director) and include the Head Gardener, a Learning & Community Manager and a Senior Keeper. The permanent staff currently number 11 committed and talented individuals and a team of motivated receptionists and learning facilitators.



The Trust also has the support of a dedicated team of volunteers of whom around 70 are regularly active. They assist with the presentation of the grounds and gardens, deliver talks, provide costumed interpretation and help deliver learning sessions. A team of 12 volunteers have been specially trained to assist in the enormous task of caring for, cataloguing and photographing the entire collection.

Plans for future periods

The new museum has proven to be very successful. However, it is not the end of the story for Norton and of equal potential is the wonderful Walled Garden, the condition of which has been thrown into sharp relief by the sudden improvement to the museum and undercroft. The Head Gardener and his team are battling numerous infrastructure issues and underinvestment to develop and deliver interesting, attractive and well-maintained grounds. It is a battle they are currently winning but to realise its potential, like the museum a few years ago, investment is needed. The long term goal of the Trust is therefore to bring the infrastructure there up to the level of the museum and to develop the surrounding environs to create a holistic, excellent visitor experience across the site. This will seal Norton Priory's place as a regional visitor attraction with a national reputation.



The role of Chief Executive

Reporting to: Chair of Trustees

Job Purpose: To manage the strategic development and operation of the Trust and its future sustainability by maximising its potential, raising its profile, marketing to a wide audience and engaging with a wide range of working partners and stakeholders.

Principal Responsibilities:

1. Maximise income generation and the development of new revenues to ensure future sustainability. Secure external funding from Trusts, Foundations, donors and sponsors.
2. Report to the Trustees on all matters relating to the management of Trust resources and take guidance from the Board.
3. Lead on the development of the business plan for Norton Priory, in consultation with staff and Trustees, and manage its subsequent delivery.
4. Responsible for the effective operation and management of the overall site, buildings, plant and machinery, ensuring regular maintenance and on-going security. The Chief Executive is the designated manager of the security systems.
5. Increase the profile of the museum, gardens and grounds through advocacy, marketing, publicity and organisation of suitable events.
6. Formulate and manage the Trust's capital and revenue budgets to ensure the sound management of Trust resources, including the Trust's revenue budget (turnover c.£500,000 p.a.) and capital development budgets, under the strategic direction of the Trustees of the Norton Priory Museum Trust. The Chief Executive is a cheque signatory (in conjunction with another member of staff) with a limit of £5,000.
7. Responsible for the overall health and safety of Trust resources to safeguard sites, buildings, collections, staff, volunteers and visitors. The Chief Executive is expected to provide First Aid cover as required.
8. Responsible for the management and personal development of the staff of the Trust (approximately 14 FTEs) and for productive relationships with a wide variety of partners.
9. Ensure that audiences are representative of the diverse local and regional communities through innovative engagement programmes. Ensure that the Trust contributes to the education, health and wellbeing of local communities through formal and informal learning, volunteering and focused community activities.
10. Ensure that legal obligations are met – notably with the Health & Safety Executive, Companies House and the Charity Commission. Ensure that the scheduled monument and listed buildings on the site meet the requirements of Historic England and that the Trust maintains Museum Accreditation.

The Chief Executive will undertake such work as may be determined by the Trust Chairman from time to time, up to or on a level consistent with the principal responsibilities of the job.

All staff are required to actively take part in activities which involve public engagement. This may include front of house work, events, etc. Whilst staff are employed on a 37.5 hour per week basis, regular weekend, public holiday and evening work are required as part of this contract. As a general rule, all staff work 12 weekends per year and most public holidays.

Qualifications, Skills and Experience

Knowledge and Experience

Essential

- Strong operational management experience (preferably site management responsibility of a successful visitor attraction in the Charity and/or Cultural sectors).
- Proven experience of income generation, both revenue and capital, including a successful track record of writing successful grant applications to secure significant funding.
- Experience of budget preparation and expenditure control in a challenging financial environment.
- Prior experience leading, managing and motivating a multi-disciplinary team of people.
- Confident user of IT systems and programs (preferably including Microsoft Office).
- A good general level of education, including a degree or equivalent qualification (preferably in a relevant subject i.e. history, archaeology, horticulture).

Desirable

- Experience of developing an organisation strategy and turning strategy into effective policy and action.
- A background of successful advocacy and marketing in the Cultural sector, cultivating a loyal and sustainable group of supporters and visitors for the organisation.
- Prior experience of reporting to a Board or Committee.
- Experience of managing complex projects, with multiple stakeholders and significant (£000's) budgets.
- A track record of successfully managing organisational change.
- Previous experience in environmental, horticultural and/or woodland management.

Skills and personal attributes sought

- Strong communication skills, with ability to articulate ideas and information effectively both verbally and in writing.
- Able to build relationships and work collegiately with people at all levels, both inside and outside the organisation.
- Excellent influencing and negotiation skills applied both within and outside an organisation, including experience of developing strong networks across a wide range of stakeholders (e.g. Trustees, Partners and Local Authorities).
- Capacity and intellect to accurately analyse complex situations and apply sound judgement to decision making.
- Ability to take a strategic view, taking account of external as well as internal opportunities and threats, and develop appropriate policy as a result.
- Ability to turn policy into effective action.
- Strong organisational skills, with the ability to meet deadlines and manage competing demands.
- Focused on delivery, with the capacity to manage a broad workload, and the ability to determine priorities in the face of changing needs.
- A self-starter who is willing to roll their sleeves up, take on diverse roles, and do what it takes to get the job done, but is also able to effectively delegate.
- Able to work flexibly (including regular evenings and weekends within the management team rota).
- Ability to drive and with own transport available for use on company business.

Remuneration

In return for the above, the successful applicant will be entitled to:

- Annual salary up to £37,000 depending on experience
- Initially 31 days annual holiday entitlement (including public holidays)
- Contributory pension scheme

Appointment Process

To apply, please download an application form and equal opportunities monitoring from www.nortonpriory.org, or email recruitment@nortonpriory.org to have a copy emailed to you.

Please complete the application fully, especially the section explaining why you are interested in this role at the organisation and how you believe you meet the skills, knowledge, experience and personal attributes required. CVs will not be accepted.

Applications should be emailed to recruitment@nortonpriory.org and must be received by 5.00pm on Friday 21st September. Applicants are asked to provide daytime and evening telephone contact details.

The Trust values diversity and welcomes applications from all sections of the community. It strives to promote equal opportunities in all its employment practices and aims to ensure that no applicant or member of staff is disadvantaged or discriminated against either directly or indirectly.

Shortlisted candidates will be invited to formal interview with a sub-group of Trustees on Wednesday 3 October.



Administrative details

The Norton Priory Museum Trust Limited is a company limited by guarantee formed in 1975 and governed by its updated Articles of Association dated 25th April 2017.

Charity Number: 504870

Company Registration Number: 1232182

Principal & Registered Office: Tudor Road, Manor Park, Runcorn, Cheshire, WA7 1SX

Website address: www.nortonpriory.org