

River & Rowing
Museum
Henley on Thames



Director
Candidate Information Pack
November 2022

Welcome from our Chair

Dear Applicant

Thank you for responding to our search for a new Director for the River & Rowing Museum.

The re-opening of the Museum post Covid and its long-tailed aftermath is an opportunity waiting to be realised.

Twenty-five years ago, HM Queen Elizabeth opened a thoroughly modern museum; one that was widely recognised as far more interesting than its subject matter might initially have suggested. Today, however, the presentation of our story needs bringing up to date and we seek someone with drive and an eye for detail to reinvent our offer in a creative, but considered and well-planned way.

To help lay the ground for the new director, the trustee board and various teams of predominantly interim managers have spent two years planning the temporary closure of the Museum to implement a £2.5m programme of essential building works. Whilst being focused on 'fixing the building', the investment includes conversion of some parts of the buildings into offices for third party rental income. This together with a previous re-structuring programme have created the conditions for greater sustainability.

Whilst these actions mean our historic deficit will be much reduced, the real key to the future is finding a new director who will complete the plan as it exists and forge their own new vision for the museum and how it engages our communities.

Importantly, we recognise that this entrepreneurial role will require further investment on our part, in the building, its offer and your new ideas - the changes we have instigated thus far are merely the stage for a new performance.

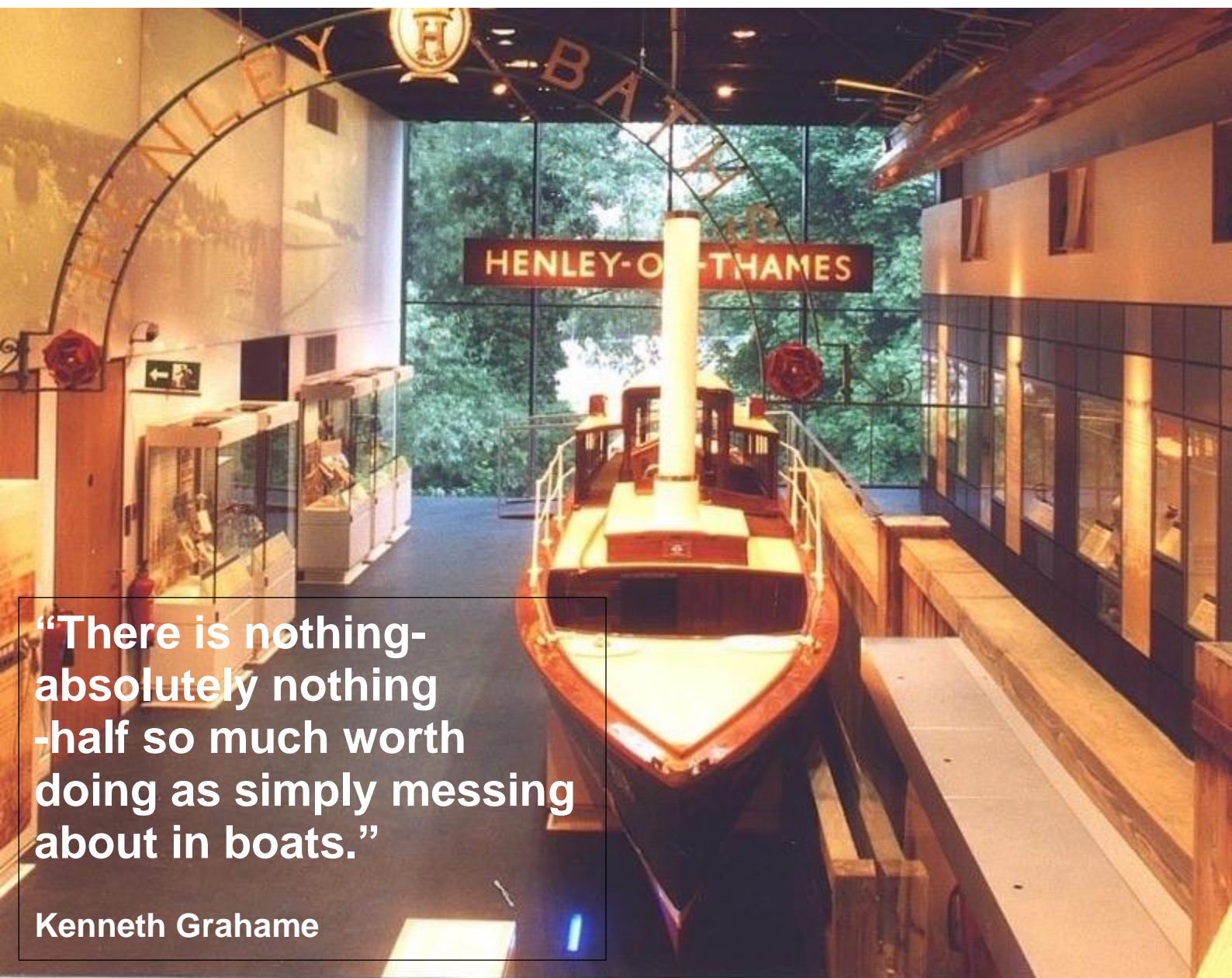
David Worthington
Chair of Trustees



About us

The River & Rowing Museum (RRM), one of the country's leading independent museums, punches well above its weight. Since 1998, over two million visitors have enjoyed our unique offer and more than two hundred thousand school children have benefited from our education programmes. We are proud of what has been achieved and are committed to providing a first-class cultural experience for many years to come.

Our award-winning building - a take on the boathouses of Oxfordshire - first opened its doors in 1998. Designed by renowned architect David Chipperfield, this was his first museum design, and won Royal Fine Art Commission Building of the Year 1999. Since then, its inspirational spaces have enabled the Museum's communities to immerse themselves in the art and stories of the river Thames through learning events, exhibitions, and hands-on holiday activities. The Museum's collection includes some 35,000 items.



**“There is nothing-
absolutely nothing
-half so much worth
doing as simply messing
about in boats.”**

Kenneth Grahame

Our Galleries

The Museum opened with three permanent galleries, covering the core themes of the river Thames, the international sport of rowing, and the history of Henley on Thames. From 2004 a fourth permanent gallery, the enormously popular Wind in the Willows exhibition, was added. In 2017, following a successful crowdfunding campaign in partnership with the Art Fund, the John Piper gallery was opened, celebrating the life and work of this internationally renowned artist. Working closely with organisations in the local area, the Museum also regularly updates displays in our Community Gallery which showcases a wide variety of local projects.

Our Collections

Our collections are at the heart of all we do. We hold the national collection of rowing and over 35,000 items ranging from an Anglo-Saxon log boat to Olympic medals, John Piper's mixed media artwork 'String Solo' (1934) to Iron Age gold coins – and much more besides. It is through our collections that we can share the rich and varied stories in our galleries, but these are the tip of the iceberg, and our stores hold many other treasures that cannot all be displayed.

Henley on Thames

Henley on Thames is a historical town on the borders of Berkshire and Oxfordshire with excellent links to London and the surrounding towns and countryside. The River Thames was the driving force in the original town settlement and still provides a significant contribution to the work, community, and local economy. Henley Royal Regatta, The Henley Festival and Literary Festival bring many visitors from across the world to the town. The riverside is the flowing heart of the town, and the River and Rowing Museum is centrally placed on the riverside Mill Meadow.



Building for the future

The new Director will be joining at an exciting time with the foundational blocks for future success, such as a building in good repair, all but in place. Their primary task will be to build upon those blocks and to develop the opportunities in both the physical and the digital spaces which this work provides.

As context, we are a semi-specialist, regional museum with no significant public funding. When first opened in 1998, it was assumed that sufficient income could be generated from operational activities, through sales, fundraising activity and generous donations from benefactors. These founding assumptions proved incorrect and despite best efforts to increase income, the Museum has struggled with a systemic deficit from the first day it opened, averaging £250k per year and now in excess of £400k post pandemic. Covering these losses for many years by the growth in our endowment has meant the endowment itself has remained static; had we continued in this way, we would have been unable to address the essential ongoing maintenance and repair of the building.

In response to these challenges, in December 2020 the Board of Trustees embarked upon Project Sustainable Future, a plan to ensure the sustainability of the Museum by moving towards a model with greater volunteer involvement, reduced salary costs and new income from parts of the real estate. It is the progress made under this plan which enables us now to appoint a new Director with the skills required to navigate the changed and still changing environment in which the Museum operates. However, the plan is a work in progress, especially as regards the best configuration of the executive team: the world has not stood still since the plan's approval. This will be an early priority for the Director as part of leading a committed team of 16 full time equivalents and an ever-increasing team of volunteers.



'Delighted to be involved in this project as I am excited to learn new skills and to gain an insight into how the museum works behind the scenes. I am looking forward to delving deeper into the museum's collection and maybe discovering some otherwise unseen hidden gems!'
Collections Project Volunteer 2021

Job Specification

Job title:	Director
Location:	Henley on Thames, Hybrid working (3 days in the office) is possible. Occasional travel may be required.
Salary:	Circa £75,000 pa
Reports to:	Chair of Board of Trustees
Direct Reports:	Senior Management Team (Interim Head of Finance, Interim Head of Commercial & Operations and Head of Public Engagement (Vacant, to be reviewed)

Purpose

The Director leads the development and implementation of the Museum's strategy and oversees the organisation's operations to deliver the key objectives of its charitable purpose. The initial phase of role (1-3 years) will be to

- develop relationships, partnerships for cultural and community activation of the ground floor in a commercially appropriate way
- develop a vision and strategy for the galleries and overall physical and digital engagement experience

Key Accountabilities

Strategy and Governance

- Work with the Board to develop the long-term strategic direction of the Museum. Implement, develop and review this strategy in conjunction with the Chair, Board, staff and external stakeholders.
- Ensure the Museum's financial success and sustainability, including maximising income, controlling expenditure, fundraising and effective budget management.
- Ensure that in all its activities, the Museum satisfies best modern corporate governance practice, particularly in relation to finance, human resources, organisation and the accountability and transparency of its activities.
- Ensure effective dialogue with the Board and its committees regarding key strategic matters.

Service Delivery and Impact

- Drive an imaginative and innovative programme, both on site and online, for a variety of local, national, and international audiences in order to improve impact and reach.
- Ensure that the collections and building are developed, cared for and presented to the highest professional standards, including the UK Accreditation Standard for Museums.
- Ensure educational programmes and partnerships are of the highest standards.
- Ensure the changing needs of visitors, guests and user experience are identified to deliver an outstanding service.
- Guide and support innovation, capacity building and professional development of the Museum's team.

Leadership and Operational Delivery

- Motivate, inspire, and manage our team of highly skilled and committed people both staff and volunteers, to achieve the Museum's potential.
- Assess, manage, and mitigate risk, manage safeguarding, and ensure staff safety.
- Review the interim SMT team structure to help deliver the strategic objectives of the museum.
- Inspire and encourage the SMT in the conception, development, and implementation of integrated, imaginative, and inclusive public programmes.
- Develop and oversee the implementation of a realistic fundraising strategy to underpin a sustainable forward financial plan.
- Ensure that a commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion runs through all Museum activity.
- Manage the operations and direction of the Museum and its resources including staff, finances, its venue, and collections.
- Supervise the commercial activities of the Museum's trading company including the shop, café, events, and venue hire to increase income contribution.

Profile, Partnerships and Impact

- Nurture and extend the Museum's relationships with its communities including online and visiting audiences, supporters, funding bodies, artists and exhibitors, the rowing community, related or neighbouring charities and wider public.
- Develop current and new partnerships and collaborations with other local, national and international organisations that can contribute to delivering the charity's objectives.
- Represent the Museum and the stories of rowing to enhance the charity's reputation and profile in the UK and internationally.
- Create and develop a media strategy and be principal spokesperson across a variety of communication channels.
- Influence and network to develop and grow existing supporter relationships to secure income.
- Inspire people to support the work of the Museum (whether volunteers, staff or potential donors).

Person Specification

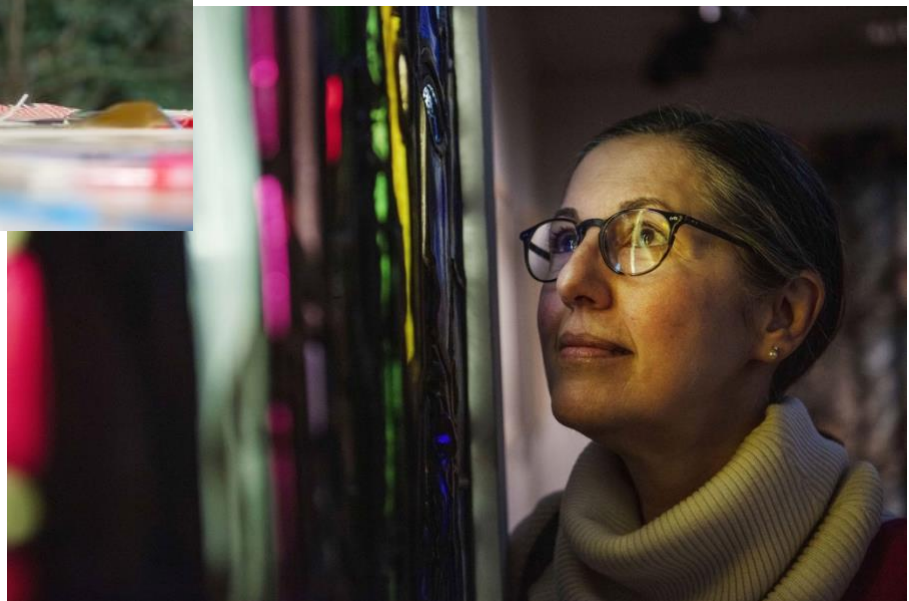
Experience, skills and knowledge

Essential

- Experience of developing and implementing strategic objectives at a senior management level with an entrepreneurial approach.
- Enthusiasm to develop the Museum's unrealised potential by creating the stories – such as of place, culture, wellbeing and the natural environment – which derive from its location.
- Creative with ability to develop a compelling and coherent vision for the Museum in collaboration with relevant stakeholders, including the Board.
- Understanding of the principles of visitor management and visitor experience.
- Experience in talent management including the ability to recruit, inspire, motivate, and develop staff and volunteers.
- Effective communication skills including digital communications.
- Experience of financial and risk management.
- Experience of developing new and maintaining existing partnerships to generate income.
- Demonstrable experience in governance effectiveness and compliance.

Desirable

- Museum and/or cultural institution experience at a senior management level.



How to Apply

Eastside Primetimers is supporting RRM in recruiting of this role. Application is by CV and a covering letter, which should indicate why you are interested in applying for the role and how you meet the role essential requirements. Please send this to Renu Gundala, recruitment@ep-uk.org. If you would like a call to discuss the role in more detail, please email Renu to arrange a convenient time.

The closing date for applications is **16 December 2022** and shortlisting interviews will take place from **w/c 19 December** allowing flexibility over the holiday period. Shortlisted candidates will attend first and second interviews with RRM on **17** and **26 January 2023** respectively in London.

We want you to have every opportunity to demonstrate your skills, ability and potential; please contact us if you require any assistance or adjustment so that we can help with making the application process work for you.

RRM is fully committed to equality of opportunity and diversity to ensure that we reflect the full breadth of the people for whom we exist. We warmly welcome applications from all suitably qualified candidates.

