

# Vacancy : Trustee

## Voluntary role

Founded in 1837, Sir John Soane's Museum is the third oldest museum in London, and is widely regarded as the best house museum in the world, welcoming over 130,000 visitors through its doors each year. It is one of the 15 National Museums sponsored by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS).

The Sir John Soane's Museum Board comprises a maximum of 14 Trustees. We are looking to recruit up to two new Trustees to join the Board in or after July 2024.

The Trustees are looking to appoint as Trustees:

- (i) a curator with national museum and management experience in a senior role who may also be a contemporary visual arts specialist
- (ii) a distinguished art historian specialising in the Renaissance or Enlightenment period.

The role will require a commitment of one day a month spent on Museum business, attendance at four board meetings a year and some additional committee meetings. The role is voluntary and unpaid but reasonable expenses will be reimbursed.

Trustees serve up to two terms of five years each.

To apply please download the attached role profile and send:

- A CV of no more than two sides of A4; this should provide details of your education and qualifications, employment history, directorships, membership of professional bodies and details of any publications or awards; and
- A supporting statement of not more than one side of A4, setting out how you meet the criteria
- The names and email addresses of two referees

Sir John Soane's Museum aspires to diversify the composition of its Board through its public appointments and operates an equal opportunities policy. Appointments are made on merit.

Please submit your CV and supporting statement to [recruitment@soane.org.uk](mailto:recruitment@soane.org.uk) by 12 noon Monday 11 March 2024.

## Role Profile

This role description should be read in conjunction with the *Code of Best Practice for Board members of Sir John Soane's Museum*, in particular pp. 3-4, which sets out the key responsibilities of the Board.

## Corporate responsibilities

The Trustees have corporate responsibility for ensuring that Sir John Soane's Museum complies with all statutory or administrative requirements for the use of public funds.

Other important corporate responsibilities of Board members include:

- ensuring that high standards of corporate governance are observed at all times;
- establishing the overall strategic direction of the organisation within the policy and resources framework agreed with DCMS;
- ensuring that the Board operates within the limits of its statutory authority and any delegated authority agreed with DCMS, and in accordance with any other conditions relating to the use of public funds;
- ensuring that, in reaching decisions, the Board takes into account statutory requirements and any guidance issued by the DCMS or the Charity Commission;
- formulating a strategy for implementing the *Code of Practice on Access to Government Information*, including prompt responses to public requests for information, and meeting other requirements for openness and responsiveness as set out in part J of *Non Departmental Public Bodies: A Guide for Departments*;
- ensuring that the Board manages the Museum's buildings sustainably in line with the Government's Framework for Sustainable Development.

In addition, a key responsibility of the Board is to have oversight of the production of the Strategic Plan within which the Museum operates.

## Board appointments, terms of office and structure

The Soane Museum Board comprises a maximum of 14 Trustees ( 5 Representative Trustees and a further nine Ordinary Trustees) as defined by the *Sir John Soane's Museum Order*, its governing document.

Representative Trustees represent five learned societies/outside bodies, as defined by Sir John Soane in his original 1833 Act of Parliament, these being: The Royal Academy of Arts; The Royal Society; The Royal Society of Arts; The Society of Antiquaries and the Court of Aldermen of the City of London.

Trusteeships may be renewed either by vote of the Board or of the nominating body; renewal is not automatic. Trustees will normally serve a maximum of two five year terms (i.e. 10 years).

All Trustees are volunteers.

## **Aims and Objectives**

The aims of the Trustees today embody Soane's general aims as defined in the 1833 Act and in the 1969 *Order* which superseded it.

The principal aim of the Trustees is to maintain the integrity of Soane's vision for the Museum while extending this vision, where appropriate, so that the Museum can play an increasing role in educational and recreational life in this country and beyond.

The Trustees' main objectives are as follows:

1. To maintain and improve the conservation and maintenance of our Grade I listed buildings and works of art so that they will be accessible to present and future generations. Soane's 1833 Act required that his house and museum (No. 13 Lincoln's Inn Fields) should be kept 'as nearly as circumstances will admit' as it was at the time of his death in January 1837. This requirement is also in the *Order*. The Trustees' strategy is to maintain the historic fabric of the three Grade I Soane houses, Nos 12, 13 and 14 Lincoln's Inn Fields, and, when possible, to restore objects and interiors in No. 13 to their Soane arrangement and appearance.
2. To allow the public free access to the Museum;
3. To encourage the public to appreciate and explore all aspects of the Museum and its manifold collections, and of Sir John Soane, his life and works, whether as visitors or at a distance;
4. To inspire curiosity and creativity by means of an imaginative programme of events so that the Soane remains a 'living' museum;
5. To provide opportunities for education in its broadest sense in all aspects of architecture and the history of art, doing honour to Soane's intention to develop his House and Museum as 'an Academy for the Study of Architecture';
6. To ensure that the Museum's staff, administration and finances are effectively managed.

In addition to their statutory duties, the Trustees' play a central role in shaping corporate strategies and priorities.

The Museum's Director is also its Accounting Officer and, along with the Senior Management Team (SMT), is responsible for the day to day running of the Museum.

## **Person Specification**

### **General**

Board Members should have a proven track record of leadership, change management and personal achievement in a complex operating environment whether in the private, public or not for profit/charity sectors.

### **Time Commitment**

Trustees are expected to spend an average of one day per month on Soane Museum business. This will vary according to the Trustees annual work plan or in response to any urgent issues that may arise.

Trustees are expected to attend a minimum of four full Board meetings per year as well as subcommittees as required. They must also devote additional time to study papers and attend events at the Museum.

### **Remuneration**

The post is not salaried but reasonable expenses are paid.

### **Skills**

Trustees are required to bring their own experience and skills to support the work of the Museum and key areas of expertise on the Board are:

- curatorial experience / expert scholarship in a relevant area
- experience of Museum leadership
- significant business experience (in private or public sectors)
- finance
- fundraising and high-level access to potential financial supporters
- strategic planning
- working with government

It is a key consideration that Board Members will commit sufficient time to attend formal meetings, to have an involvement in the work of Sir John Soane's Museum by attendance at Soane's and other external events, and to take part in induction, briefing workshops and other training and development activities.

In addition to their broad experience Board Members are expected to bring some areas of particular expertise, together with networks of contacts that may be of benefit to Soane's.

## Experience

Recent and relevant experience, at a senior level, in one of the following areas:

- **National museum curatorial and management experience, with contemporary visual arts expertise**
- **Art history, specialising in the Renaissance or Enlightenment period, with a national or international reputation and preferably, experience of working with paintings or works of art conservation issues**

In addition, Trustees must demonstrate:

- An understanding of and commitment to the objectives and work of the Museum
- The ability to work constructively with other Trustees and senior management of the Museum
- Excellent communication and representational skills and a willingness to act as ambassadors and advocates for the Museum
- A willingness to support the fundraising/development initiatives of the Museum
- A willingness to participate in the life of the Museum by attending patrons and other events from time to time
- Politically astute with the ability to grasp relevant issues.
- Experience of culture change and transformation in a complex organisation
- An understanding of the arts and heritage sector, and the ability to grasp the environment quickly and effectively within which Soane's operates

### • Skills & Personal Qualities

- An enquiring mind, with the confidence to challenge constructively
- Strong communication and listening skills
- Board level numeracy skills
- Ability to network effectively
- An ability to think strategically and to see the bigger picture whilst understanding practical constraints.
- An ability to think creatively and apply strong analytical and problem-solving skills
- Strong personal commitment to the values, aims and objectives of Sir John Soane's Museum
- Commitment to working as part of a team
- Strong commitment to the values of accountability, openness, probity, diversity and equality of opportunity.
- Ability to assimilate and analyse information quickly to enable robust decision making
- Ability to maintain confidentiality

February 2024