# Head of Visitor Experience and Operations

# Permanent, full-time contract from June 2022

35 hours a week including 1 weekend day

£33,500 p.a.

Reports to the Director of Commercial and Operations

**Background**

Sir John Soane’s Museum is the home of the great Regency architect Sir John Soane (1753 – 1837), and it displays his collection of antiquities, furniture, models, and paintings arranged as they were at the time of his death. In addition, it preserves his collection of over 30,000 architectural drawings and a fine library of over 7,000 volumes. It has been described as the ‘supreme example of the house-museum in the world’ and remains an iconic inspiration for architects, artists, and designers.

As a national museum, we are committed to being a source of knowledge and inspiration. Through our unique context of being the former home of a great architect, collector, and educator, we aim to stimulate the world’s highest standards of creativity, research and learning.

The front of house team of around 50 staff and a similar number of volunteers, led by the Head of Visitor Experience and Operations, is responsible for welcoming visitors to the Museum and to a range of events. They ensure the security of the collection and work collaboratively across the Museum with all the teams but especially with the Conservation, House and Facilities and Commercial Teams.

**Role Profile**

We are looking for an exceptional and inspiring operational leader to oversee our team of Visitor Assistants, Casual Visitor Assistants, and a committed team of volunteers. As we rebuild and renew after the pandemic having reopened in May 2022 after significant periods of closure, it is an exciting time to join Sir John Soane’s Museum. As the post holder will be joining in a time of learning from the experience of the pandemic and a time of recovery, they will have the opportunity to drive operational changes, work on new ventures including an updated Audience Development Plan, and potential partnerships and

collaborations, playing a crucial role in ensuring that the Museum is financially resilient for the coming financial years.

We are currently implementing our new strategic 3-year plan for the Museum. That plan depends for its success on a strong Front of House operation, so that our visitor services and volunteer teams are deployed effectively and motivated to deliver an outstanding experience to our visitors, whilst maximising our commercial revenue opportunities appropriately.

**Key Responsibilities**

**Visitor Experience**

* Lead and develop the team to ensure we continue to deliver a world class visitor experience and play a leadership role in continuing to embed a strong culture of customer service across our visitor services and volunteer team.
* Lead the development and implementation of the operational strategy working with the Visitor Services Managers to support all our activities across departments from daily opening to commercial operations, cultivation events, exhibitions, and the learning programme.
* Continually review and optimise our resourcing strategies to support our daily opening and out of hours events, and ensure we have the right tools in place to manage this effectively, efficiently and to budget.
* Work with the Visitor Services Managers and House and Facilities Manager to ensure the presentable appearance of the exterior and interior of the museum, the visitor route, circulation flow, signage, and wayfinding.
* Continue to establish a culture of gentle upselling across the visitor contact points working closely with the Buying and Retail Manager. Our objectives are to continue to grow our guidebook sales, ticketed events, daily tours, and donations.
* Regularly benchmark our service levels against relevant, existing offers. Ensure best practice learnings are captured and implemented.
* Manage visitor feedback, including customer complaints.
* Responsibility for ensuring visitor feedback is captured and analysed with the Director of Commercial & Operations. Maintain and analyse visitor data and ensure GDPR and data protection compliance.
* Support the Commercial Events Manager in reviewing and managing our third-party suppliers, ensuring they are fully compliant with our protocols e.g., approved, and accredited caterers, florists etc.
* Develop knowledge of the collection and Museum to be able to deliver an excellent visitor experience including leading and training colleagues to deliver daily tours.
* Act as Duty Manager when required, occasionally in the evenings and one day per weekend.

**Volunteer programme**

* Working with the Volunteer Manager to continue to develop our volunteer programme to deliver against both our visitor service objectives and our ambition to reach out to new audiences and support skills development in the wider community.
* Ensure the work of the visitor services and office-based volunteers is supported, recognised, and rewarded. Help embed a culture of close working with volunteers and ensure their contributions are seen and valued by the organisation.
* Measure, monitor and report on impact of volunteer programme.

**Working with Conservation, Exhibitions, Facilities & Security**

* Work closely with the Visitor Services Managers and the Conservation team to support the conservation maintenance cleaning of the collection.
* Work closely with the House and Facilities Manager to ensure the visitor services and volunteer teams are fully trained in our health & safety and vitally our security procedures and protocols.
* Deputise for the House and Facilities Manager where needed.
* Support exhibition installation, daily gallery management, and de-installation under the guidance of the exhibitions team.

**Operations and IT and systems**

* Manage the third-party IT Support Service organisation to:
  + Support the organisation with the agreed service level agreements
  + Manage any IT incidents
  + Implement new systems and updates to existing systems in a managed and responsible manner based on SJSM priorities
  + Run Service Review meeting regularly to measure and agree actions for continuous improvement
* Develop, implement, and monitor policies and procedures that will continue to reduce any information technology risks, existing or newly identified
* Ensure security and integrity of data, network access and backup systems
* Manage an annual review of the IT infrastructure and applications with the Senior Management Team and Application Owners. Ensure the strategy is still fit for service and meets the Museum’s overarching objectives. Support the Application Owners where necessary.
* Define, review, and manage the annual IT budget and ensure cost effectiveness of procurement in conjunction with the third-party IT Support Service organisation.
* Undertake any tasks that support a smooth daily operation of the Soane.

**Reporting lines & team structure**

* Reports to the Director of Commercial and Operations

Direct Reports:

* 2 x Visitor Services Managers and 1 x Volunteer Manager

Responsible for:

* A team of 7 x FTE Visitor Assistants and 7 x PT Visitor Assistants, 20 casual staff and a team of 40 to 50 active volunteers.

**Person Specification**

Essential Skills and Experience

* Experience of working in a customer facing environment at a senior manager level. Historic house and/or Museum experience would be beneficial
* Evidenced track record of improving customer service levels and ensuring a high delivery standard
* Experienced leader and operational manager with line management responsibilities
* Ability to write and present coherent strategic reports
* Solutions focused approach to problems
* Familiarity with event platforms and ticketing systems
* Excellent financial management and IT skills
* Excellent communication and people management skills
* Experience of supporting a team of volunteers and an understanding of volunteering best practice

Desirable Experience

* Experience of managing a third-party IT provider
* Experience of event development and management
* Some familiarity with conservation cleaning and facilities management
* Some commercial experience

**Terms and conditions**

35 hours over 5 days, working days will include evenings and one weekend day

Our hybrid working policy allows for working at home 1 day a week

Membership of the Civil Service Pension Scheme

26.5 days annual leave plus Christmas Eve

The Museum is an Equal Opportunities Employer, committed to equality, diversity and inclusion and welcomes applicants from all backgrounds.

**Applications**

Applications in the form of a curriculum vitae and supporting letter, together with the names and addresses of two referees, should be sent to recruitment@soane.org.uk

**The closing date for applications is** 5.00pm Monday 25 April 2022

**Interview date:** Friday 6 May 2022

Sir John Soane’s Museum is a Non-Departmental Public Body (NDPB) whose prime sponsor is the Department for Digital, Culture, Media, and Sport.

Website: www.soane.org