Job description for Visitor Experience Manager

This is an opportunity to take the lead for visitor experience and associated income generation within a small, ambitious charity with a national and international profile. You will help deliver our new strategy by ensuring our offer is relevant to a 21st-century audience, growing and diversifying our visitors, and converting engagement into sustainable income (admissions, membership, secondary spend and group bookings). Working closely with all departments, you will act as the 'voice of the visitor'—providing insight, feedback and practical recommendations that improve access, relevance and repeat visitation.

You will have experience in the heritage, museum or visitor attraction sector and will join us to work on our new strategy launched for our 70th anniversary. You will be key in providing input to the museum, site, events and education team on how to appeal to and diversify our audience to promote a growth in visitor numbers.

Key Responsibilities

As a small independent museum, this role combines strategic leadership with hands-on delivery. You will take responsibility for key income streams and the end-to-end visitor journey, while working closely with colleagues across the charity to ensure a consistently high standard. The post includes regular on-site presence, Front of House cover when required, and acting as Duty Manager for visitor-facing issues.

Performance expectations (what success looks like)

- Deliver admissions, membership, groups and visitor-related income in line with the approved annual budget, and provide timely forecasts/updates to the General Manager.
- Maintain accurate reporting on key visitor metrics (e.g., visitor numbers, conversion, secondary spend, membership recruitment/renewals, group bookings) and use insight to drive improvements.
- Achieve high visitor satisfaction, evidenced through structured feedback and a clear action plan to address themes and issues.
- Ensure Front of House rotas, training and standards are in place so visitors receive a consistently welcoming, inclusive and professional experience.
- Deliver accessible, safe and compliant operations when acting as Duty Manager (including opening/closing, incident response and escalation).
- Maintain high-quality data management for visitors and members (CRM accuracy, consent/retention, GDPR compliance).

Income generation & commercial performance

- Be accountable for visitor-related income performance, delivering admissions, membership, group bookings and event-related targets in line with the approved budget; identify and implement actions to improve performance where needed.
- Work with Trading and Front of House to improve conversion and secondary spend (shop and other offers), using basic reporting and insight to test and refine approaches.

Membership

- Lead, develop and grow the membership programme (recruitment, retention and engagement), ensuring value for money and alignment with the charity's aims. Act as the main point of contact for members, maintain accurate CRM records, issue membership cards, manage renewals, and produce member communications with input from colleagues.

Group bookings

- Manage and expand the group bookings offer: respond to enquiries, convert bookings, coordinate the on-site offer (e.g., guided talks, garden tours, café and practical requirements), and take operational responsibility for groups while on site.

Marketing, communications & visitor growth

- Work with the Marketing & Communications Manager to position the site as a compelling visitor attraction and membership organisation, supporting campaigns for events, exhibitions and educational activity with the shared aim of increasing visitor numbers and income.

Front of House leadership

- Line manage the Front of House team and volunteers: create rotas, arrange cover, set service standards, and deliver training with a strong focus on customer care, accessibility and confident on-site selling (including shop performance and upselling where appropriate).

Visitor experience, quality & audience insight

- Lead the charity's approach to visitor experience, ensuring it is embedded in planning and delivery across all departments. Design and deliver audience feedback and survey activity, analyse themes, and translate insight into practical improvements and audience development actions.
- Ensure the visitor journey is excellent and joined-up—from first digital touchpoint (website, listings and social media) to arrival, wayfinding, interpretation, service standards and departure—encouraging repeat visits and membership.
- Ensure a welcoming, inclusive experience for diverse audiences (individuals, families, groups, schools, talks, exhibitions and event visitors), with particular attention to accessibility and sustainability.

- Manage a small delegated visitor experience budget with the General Manager: plan expenditure, monitor performance, and report on spend and outcomes, taking a proactive approach to resolving issues and continuous improvement.

Other Responsibilities

You will work closely with colleagues across site, collections, garden, trading, education and volunteering. As part of a small team, you will support wider operations as required, including:

- Coordinate with Trading and relevant partners to support a smooth visitor experience (including group bookings administration and liaison with contractors where visitor issues arise).
- Work with the General Manager to ensure the ticketing and purchase journey (admissions and events) is effective and visitor-friendly, identifying improvements where needed.
- Contribute to organisational planning by representing the visitor perspective and ensuring visitor experience is considered across Collections, Garden, Events, Education, Trading and Funding & Development.
- Act as Duty Manager on rota when on site, with responsibility for visitor-facing issues and (when required) wider site operations, including opening and closing the site and buildings, acting as emergency contact for fire, security and incidents, and escalating as required, and responding to incidents to help ensure the site remains clean, safe and welcoming for visitors.
- Attend and represent the charity at exhibitions and events (ours and others) to gather feedback, build supporter relationships, and network to keep the organisation relevant and informed.
- Engage with visitor experience networks to stay up to date with best practice and identify opportunities to improve.
- Manage GDPR and good practice for visitor and member data (consent/opt-ins, image consent, retention and secure handling).

The Candidate

We are seeking someone with proven experience in visitor attractions (ideally heritage/museums) and a strong commitment to excellent customer service, commercial performance and inclusive audience development.

Essential experience

- Delivering visitor-related income (e.g., admissions, membership, groups, events or retail), with evidence of meeting targets and improving performance.
- Commercial awareness: understanding and delivering on budgets, using KPIs/visitor metrics, and taking action to increase conversion and/or secondary spend.

- Experience working in the not-for-profit sector and/or within environment, conservation, heritage or culture.
- Working in a visitor-facing environment, ideally within heritage, museums, culture or visitor attractions. Handling visitor issues professionally and calmly, including responding to incidents and acting as a senior point of contact when on site.
- Experience of audience development planning or supporting marketing campaigns to grow and diversify visitors.
- Developing and/or managing a membership scheme (recruitment, retention and member communications such as newsletters).
- Managing group visits end-to-end, including administration, logistics and on-site delivery.
- Line managing staff and/or volunteers, including rotas, training and performance support.

Essential skills & behaviours

- Strong audience focus: able to gather and use feedback/insight to improve the visitor journey and broaden appeal for different audiences.
- Confident communicator with excellent interpersonal skills, able to work effectively with colleagues, volunteers, partners, suppliers and external stakeholders.
- Highly organised with strong attention to detail; able to manage competing priorities and maintain accurate records (including CRM).
- Problem-solving approach with resilience, creativity and a practical 'hands-on' mindset.
- Good IT capability (Microsoft Office) and willingness to learn/operate systems such as CRM databases, email platforms (e.g., Mailchimp) and design tools (e.g., Canva or equivalent).
- Commitment to inclusive practice, accessibility and a welcoming environment for all visitors.

Whilst a full driving licence is not essential, public transport to our location is very limited. Given the nature of the role (including partner liaison and representing the charity), the ability to travel locally for meetings is an advantage.

Working Hours and Salary

As a key role in delivering the visitor experience this role is full-time on site with the requirement to work some weekends on rota. Occasional evening work required.

£30-32,000 (FTE 37.5 hrs per week) per year based on experience.

You will work within the values which lead our practice:

- Being inclusive and welcoming to all,
- Connecting with those that journey in the natural world,

- Educational in what we share with others,
- Seeking a sustainable way of doing our work.

The position is permanent and will be based in Selborne, East Hampshire.

About Us

Gilbert Whites House & Gardens offers a window into the origins of the science that underpins the study of natural history through the lives of three explorers whose curiosity led to a deeper understanding of the world we live in.

- Our vision is to: *To inspire journeys of discovery in the natural world to make better lives for people and the planet*.
- Our mission to *create a place where everyone can connect with nature and learn from explorers of the natural world, showing the way to a sustainable future, collaborating widely and, following in the footsteps of Gilbert White, sharing our passion to observe and record nature*.

The 'Natural History of Selborne' has been continuously in print since its first publication in 1789 and is reputedly the fourth most published work in the English language. Written by Gilbert White it has contributed to the fields of ecology (the natural science of the relationships among living organisms and their environment) and phenology (the timing of biological events in relation to climate) ever since. He undertook his scientific observations in the small rural village of Selborne and this work has since inspired others to observe, enquire and record nature to understand the relationships that exist within our environment.

> *Charles Darwin wrote that he 'stood on the shoulders' of White when he came on 'a pilgrimage to Selborne' as a young man in June 1857*
>
> *David Attenborough wrote that Gilbert White was 'A man in total harmony with his world.' Introduction to Selborne, 1977*

This unique historical manuscript is today housed in the home where Gilbert was born in 1720 and later lived for 66 years. The curation of this heritage home and its grounds was made possible by a generous donation from the Oates family, supporting a trust which purchased the property to establish a library and museum dedicated to natural history that opened in 1955.

The museum is now in its 70th year celebrating the lives of all three explorers of the natural world: Gilbert's studies in Selborne in the 1700's, Frank's work in Africa and Central America in the mid-1800s and Lawrence's famed contribution to the Scott expedition to the South Pole in 1912. Together they are celebrated through their original drawings, writings, specimens and artefacts housed in our galleries. They provide an insight over three centuries to the curiosity that contributed to our understanding of nature, our environment and the climate change we are currently witnessing.

Today the UK is recognised as one of the least nature connected and most nature depleted countries in the world. Our renewed strategy is to ensure that the legacy that we curate is accessible, relevant, educational and inspirational for future generations. Our aim over the coming five years is to update the interpretation of our collections and heritage assets, expanding the 'story' of our explorers to the 21st century, showing the importance of all of our relationships to the natural world in order to inspire thought and change. The goal being to create a new narrative as a Museum of Natural World at the home of Gilbert White & The Oates Collections.