



**Association of  
Independent  
Museums**

Helping Heritage  
Organisations Prosper

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**Search & Selection  
Director (Chief Executive)  
Information for Applicants**

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January 2021

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**Association of Independent Museums**  
**Office National Waterways Museum South Pier Ellesmere Port Cheshire CH65 4FW**  
**Company Registration No (England). 1350939 Registered Charity No. 1082215**  
**VAT No. 355372196 [www.aim-museums.co.uk](http://www.aim-museums.co.uk) @Aimuseums**

## **Welcome from the Chair, on behalf of Board of Trustees**

The UK boasts some of the pre-eminent museums and heritage experiences in the world. They share a rich range of stories, collections and historic sites with millions of people each year. Many of these organisations are independent. We define independent as taking responsibility for your own decisions, being accountable for them, and for not being subject to another's authority, nor dependent on another for your existence. They have well developed business acumen and discipline. AIM supports and champions independent museums, galleries and heritage organisations in the UK – helping them to achieve their purpose, and be valued by audiences, as well ensuring they are recognised and understood by policy makers, funders and other organisations working in the sector.

AIM helps heritage organisations prosper. We believe that museums must prosper, grow fit and strong to fulfil their purposes and demonstrate the relevance and importance of our heritage to everyone, so that it is preserved and inspires all our futures. AIM is a successful and increasingly influential organisation, with national reach, and now seeks a new Director (Chief Executive) to further develop the positive momentum of recent years. The challenges of COVID-19 are also still with us and the new Director will help shape recovery strategies for the sector.

We are looking for an experienced, real-world leader. You will have a sound grasp of the challenges facing independent museums, a strategic outlook, a vision for how to enhance member benefits, relevant contemporary networks and the skill to engage effectively with our membership and national stakeholders.

As AIM continues to grow its membership, embarks on a renewed relationship with Arts Council England as well as partners in other UK nations, and gains increased influence with national policymakers, it is a timely and exciting point to join AIM as its new Director. More information about AIM and its work can be found at [www.aim-museums.co.uk](http://www.aim-museums.co.uk) or by following us on Twitter @Aimuseums.

I hope you feel encouraged and confident to apply, and to give yourself a unique opportunity to make a significant contribution to the cultural life of the UK, and in particular, support its thriving independent museums. If you would like to apply, please do so by submitting your Curriculum Vitae together with a covering letter or you if prefer an initial confidential discussion please email Sukhi Baden, [sukhi.baden@bclm.com](mailto:sukhi.baden@bclm.com). Closing date Monday 8 February 2021.

Thank you for interest.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Andrew Lovett". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

**Andrew Lovett Chair**

**A Little of Our Story So Far**

The Association of Independent Museums is a membership organisation, established in 1977 to represent the interests of a booming independent museums sector. In the 1970s and 1980s new, thematic museums began to spring-up driven by the enthusiasm of individuals and communities fascinated by the history on their doorstep, who decided to take things into their own hands and save it, resulting in an extraordinary blossoming of a new type of Museum - the Independents.

Independent museums are long-standing, successful social enterprises, run in a business-like way and playing a valuable role in their communities, contributing to a sense of place and making up an important part of the tourism economy. Independent museums and galleries are more numerous than all other types of museum, making up more than half of all museums in the UK.

Forty years on, AIM is now widely recognised as a key, strategic heritage organisation, with a national profile across the four home nations of the UK. It has a growing membership of 1,200, including almost 1,000 museums. Whilst the majority of AIM membership are small museums (62%), often run with only a few staff and/ or volunteers and annual visitor attendance of less than 20,000, the diversity and scale of membership is remarkable, and also includes some of the largest and most visited museums in the UK, some of which hold designated collections. The range of collections and the associated stories these independent museums tell, is astonishing and represents our deep-seated interest in history and how it has shaped the lives we live today.

According to research undertaken by AIM in 2019, independent museums in the UK support 8,900 local jobs, provide volunteering opportunities for 34,000 people, attract 24 million visitors each year, and have an annual overall gross economic contribution of £730m.

AIM provides a wide-range of services for its members including delivering an annual two-day conference and trade show, distributing small grants, training and advice, a suite of Success Guides, bi-monthly bulletin and a rich resource through its web site. Increasingly, AIM is also at the forefront of influencing national policy decisions impacting on its members. AIM is supported by a number of external funders including Arts Council England, the Welsh Government, The Pilgrim Trust and Biffa Award.

### **Our Strategic Purpose & Governance Structure**

AIM exists to support its membership. This support helps independent museums to prosper and provide better services for their visitors – primarily the advancement of the public's understanding, relevance, appreciation and enjoyment of a safe-guarded history and heritage. This is the 'public benefit' which, as a registered charity, AIM seeks to achieve.

AIM is established as an independent charitable trust (No. 1082215) and a limited company (No. 1350939). It is governed by a Board of Trustees, drawn from and appointed by the voting membership of the Association. The post of Director is accountable to the Board, with liaison with the Board normally maintained through the Chair. The current Chair is Andrew Lovett, who is also the Chief Executive of the Black Country Living Museum and a member of the Executive Committee of the National Museums Directors' Council – the latter represents an important strategic link for AIM. Specifically, as a charity, the Board

works to ensure compliance with its legal duties to: (i) act in the interests of the charity and its beneficiaries; (ii) protect and safeguard the assets of the charity; (iii) act with reasonable care and skill and (iv) ensure the charity is accountable.

Our latest Annual Report & Accounts is a good place to check out recent successes, developments and our response to COVID-19.

### **Our People**

AIM is a relatively small organisation with six paid staff. The job titles are included in the job profile of the Director. AIM has an office base at the National Waterways Museum, Ellesmere Port. During the pandemic, all staff have worked from home, with two working from home as standard. Post-COVID-19, the Director will be expected to spend at least three days each week at Ellesmere Port, subject to other commitments elsewhere in the UK.

Staff are engaged with a range of duties in support of the membership, including communications, marketing, grant administration, conference organisation, membership services, training and development, web management, advocacy and assisting the Director.

### **Our Finances**

For the financial year ending 31 December 2019, AIM had income of £901k (including membership fees of c£110k), of which £381k was restricted external grants. In April 2018 AIM secured a four-year investment programme from Arts Council England of £300k pa, as one of its Sector Support Organisations. This enables AIM to maintain a high level of activity in support of its membership, substantially above the level which could be funded from membership fees alone.

The main areas of cost for AIM are staffing, grant payments, the Bulletin magazine, annual conference and administration.

More details on our current financial position are contained in our latest Annual Report & Accounts. <https://www.aim-museums.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/AIM-Annual-Report-and-Accounts-31-December-2019.pdf>

### **Our Grants Programme**

AIM has an active and very popular grant programme, funded from external funders including Biffa Award, The Pilgrim Trust, Arts Council England, and the Welsh Government. During 2019 AIM made 96 grant awards with a total value of £540k. AIM sees its grant programme as an important part of its work for members and wants to increase its scale, reach and impact.

### **The Future**

Working with Board, the new Director will play a leading role in the future of AIM and how it continues to evolve to benefit its members, and ultimately those that visit and use their services. In this context, there will be a focus on: (i) increasing the impact of our advocacy, (ii) being more proactive about shaping policy impacting our members, (iii) using the AIM brand, reputation and the values it stands for to engage directly with the public alongside the museums sector, (iv) increasing our resources, (v) marking AIM out from other

membership and / or sector support organisations, (vi) increasing the impact of our grants programmes, and (vii) ensuring our members increase their relevance to a broad and diverse audience.

Our goal is to position AIM membership as indispensable - astute, strategic business decision. We have strength in numbers.

## **Job Profile for Post of Director**

**Responsible to:** The Board of AIM

**Accountability:** Chief Executive

**Direct Reports:** Programme Manager, Head of Communications

**Other Staff:** Marketing Officer; Programmes & Finance Officer;  
Membership Administrator

### **Job Purpose**

To provide strategy leadership and development to achieve the Association's purpose and its short, medium and long-term objectives, ensuring the positive, impactful and co-ordinated contribution of trustees, staff and the stewardship of all resources and assets.

### **What we want you to achieve (Success Criteria)**

- Develop and deliver AIM's strategic plan to achieve its charitable purpose.
- Ensure AIM members are sustainable, relevant and valued by a diverse range of audiences.
- Ensure that membership continues to grow; diversify that membership, through positive promotion of the importance of diversity and inclusion.
- Further develop AIM's business plan, strengthening its financial position and ensuring it is sustainable.
- Continue to grow AIM's membership; ensuring it remains highly valued.
- Further develop AIM's influential reputation with partners, stakeholders, and public policy and decision-makers.

### **Summary of the Role:**

- Strategy development and stewardship of AIM's physical, financial and people resources.
- Ownership of AIMs operational and financial performance.
- Provide leadership and guidance for AIM members.
- Lead direct reports, including objective setting.
- Provide outward-facing advocacy in support of AIM members.
- Ensure management, stewardship and delivery of AIM's values and ethics.

- Manage AIM’s organisational structure, and lead succession and talent management.
- Ownership of budget allocations and any capital expenditure priorities.
- Stakeholder management.
- Liaison and relationship management with the AIM Board of Trustees.
- Perform the statutory role of Company Secretary.

### **What you’ll need (Experience, Knowledge & Personal Qualities)**

- In-depth knowledge and experience of the museum and / or heritage sector.
- Integrity and personal confidence.
- Strong business discipline.
- A successful and substantial track record of high-level leadership and organisational performance in an organisation of at least similar size and complexity.
- Experience of dealing with a politically complex environment, with a number of diverse, high-level stakeholders, demonstrating well established and extensive relevant personal and professional national networks and advocacy skills.
- A track record of continuous improvement in raising organisational and individual performance.
- Experience of initiating external partnerships with strategic value.
- Evidence of astute public relations skills.
- Experience of working directly with a Board of Trustees.

### **Main Terms & Conditions**

The post of Director is full-time, with an annual salary in region of £65,000.

AIM has an office base at Ellesmere Port (National Waterways Museum), Cheshire, CH65 4FW, at which the Director will be required to work for circa three days per week, subject to other UK-wide commitments.

Notwithstanding current restrictions because of COVID-19, regular and extensive UK travel, especially to London, is an essential requirement of the job, for which reasonable expenses will be paid.

There is an annual holiday allowance of 25 days, plus 8 statutory public holidays. AIM operates an auto-enrolment pension scheme.

A six-month probationary period will apply, supervised by the Chair and Vice Chairs, on behalf of the Board.

If applicable and subject to certain terms and condition, a relocation package will be made available.

### **Application & Selection Process**

We welcome job applications from all sections of the community and will only consider applicants on the basis of their relevant experience, qualifications, skills and abilities.

You are invited to apply in confidence by submitting your Curriculum Vitae together with a covering letter to Sukhi Baden, [sukhi.baden@bclmc.om](mailto:sukhi.baden@bclmc.om). If you prefer an initial confidential discussion, please email Sukhi on the same address with your contact details.

Closing date: 17 February 2021. We will acknowledge receipt of your application.

Final Interviews are expected to take place in March 2021.

Please complete the separate Selection Monitoring Questionnaire to enable us to monitor the effectiveness of our recruitment policy and processes, so that we can ensure selection is carried out fairly. The information you provide will also help us identify any barriers to selection. Your answers will be treated in confidence and used for statistical monitoring purposes only. Your completed questionnaire will not be seen by those responsible for short-listing and will not, therefore, form part of the selection process.

The information you provide in the Selection Monitoring Questionnaire is purely for statistical monitoring purposes and will be treated in the strictest confidence. Your completed form will not be seen by those responsible for short-listing and will not, therefore, form part of the selection process.

If you have a disability and require any adjustment to be made to either the application or interview process, in order for you to participate, please contact Sukhi Baden, Head of People & Culture, [sukhi.baden@bclm.com](mailto:sukhi.baden@bclm.com).

### **AIM's Equal Opportunities Statement**

This policy statement sets out the AIM's commitment to being an equal opportunities employer and is an integral part of every aspect of our activities. It is based on the most recent legislation and represents the AIM's commitment to tackling inequality, discrimination and disadvantage.

Our goal is equality of opportunity for everyone who uses, visits, works in and works for the independent museum sector, and we will provide services and develop employment practices accordingly. We are committed to making sure that prospective and present employees are afforded equal and fair treatment in relation to recruitment, selection, terms and conditions of employment, training and promotion.

AIM works to actively combat discrimination and make sure that prospective or present employees are not treated less favourably on the grounds of: Gender, Marital Status,



Employment Status, Responsibility for Children or Dependents, Race, Colour, Religion, Ethnic or National Origin, Age, Disability, Class, Sexual Orientation, Gender Reassignment or by association with anyone with a protected characteristic or are disadvantaged by the application of any other conditions or requirements, which cannot be shown to be justified.

The Guiding Principle of AIM's Tackling Inequalities Hallmark is that our work must be informed by a wider range of voices and perspectives from diverse backgrounds at Board level, in the staff team, and through the grant panels and contractors we work with. New voices will provide us with strategic challenge, informed advice, and a change in how we work and how we view the world that we work in.

### **Data Protection Act 1998 and Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act 2006**

The information that you provide as part of your application will be used in the selection process. All information about you will be securely held, with access restricted to only those involved in dealing with your application. Unless you are appointed, your data will be kept for 12 months and then destroyed.

By submitting your application and Selection Monitoring Questionnaire, you are giving your consent to your data being stored and processed for the purposes of the selection process.

In order to comply with the Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act 2006 it may be necessary to see proof of your right to live and work in the United Kingdom. If proof is required, we will request it once an offer of employment has been made but before you take up employment.

**Please email your application with cover letter, in confidence, to:**

**Sukhi Baden**  
**Head of People & Culture**  
**Email: [sukhi.baden@bclm.com](mailto:sukhi.baden@bclm.com)**

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