

Trustee Recruitment Brief

Summer 2026





A message from our Chair of Trustees, Sir Stephen Hillier

Thank you for your interest in joining the Royal Air Force Museum Board of Trustees. The Board leads a committed team of employees, volunteers, stakeholders and partners who have an ambitious, shared vision for the Museum's next ten years.

Our aim is to welcome **every** visitor warmly for a great day out, deepening our immersive storytelling across our spaces and programmes. We are committed to engaging more people and, equally important, a more diverse range of people by ensuring that our governance, our teams, our collection and our content are better reflective of the changing population.

Our priorities include progressing the Master Plans for our two public sites in the Midlands and north London. Our RAF Museum Midlands transformation is due to open in 2028 (see page nine below), with a new research centre the next focus at our London site.

Meanwhile, we continue to build and sustain firm foundations in collections care and management, our estate, and our IT and digital infrastructure. Our team is vital to this, and our leadership and development programmes will help ensure our committed people are the best we can be to deliver our vision and purpose with and for our visitors.

Our Board is crucial to our success. If you are keen to contribute to a charity committed to our purpose that expects high performance achieved through hard work, kindness and a dose of fun, we'd very much like to hear from you.

All best wishes,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "S Hillier".

Sir Stephen Hillier
Chair of Trustees
Royal Air Force Museum

CONTENTS

Title	Page
Board Responsibilities	4
Seven Principles of Public Life	4
Role Description	4
Person Specification	5
Term of Appointment	5
Museum Background and History	6
Our Audiences	7
Our Estate and Collection	8
RAF Museum Midlands Development Programme	9
Our People and Finances	10
How to Apply	11

RAF MUSEUM BOARD

Our Board and its responsibilities

The Museum's governing document, our Royal Charter, recognises two types of Trustees with identical accountability and decision-making responsibilities. Nominated Trustees are appointed by the Secretary of State through the Public Appointments process and Co-opted Trustees are appointed by the Board. The only difference is that the Chair will be appointed from

the group of Nominated Trustees, though all Trustees have an equal vote.

The Museum is currently appointing to one co-opted Trustee vacancy. See our current Board at [Our Board of Trustees of the RAF Museum](#)

The Seven Principles of Public Life

Trustees are expected to uphold the Seven Principles of Public Life defined by the Committee on Standards in Public Life: [The Seven Principles of Public Life - GOV.UK](#). Trustees must be positive ambassadors for the Museum and always act in good faith in its best interests. They are responsible for:

- Determining the general policy of the Museum
 - Appointing the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) with the approval of the Secretary of State
 - Monitoring the CEO's management of the Museum as its senior officer and Accounting Officer for the Museum
- The care and management of Museum collections, buildings and financial assets
 - Approving the Museum's Strategic framework
 - Monitoring the process of Risk Management
 - Ensuring the Museum publishes an annual report and accounts, audited by the Comptroller and Auditor-General
 - Compliance with the Code of Conduct for Board Members of Public Bodies and with the rules relating to the use of public funds and to conflicts of interest.

ROLE DESCRIPTION

The RAF Museum is looking to appoint one co-opted Trustee. We are committed to building an inclusive workplace with a leadership and workforce reflects the communities we serve. Women and disabled people are currently under-represented on the Board, so we particularly encourage people from these groups to apply.

As well as the main Board commitment, Trustees are asked to support one or more of the following, which inform the work of the Board:

- Audit Risk and Resources Committee
- Major Projects and Programmes Committee
- People and Governance Committee
- The RAF Museum Enterprise Board (RAFMEL), the Museum's trading company and fully owned subsidiary.



PERSON SPECIFICATION

Essential for all applicants:

- An interest and affinity with the vision, purpose and values of the Museum
- The commitment to and ability to grasp a wide range of museum and cultural sector issues
- Ability to contribute to the strategic direction of the organisation
- Excellent listening, influencing and communication skills
- The ability to offer both support and constructive challenge to colleagues, both non-executive or executive
- An interest in the Royal Air Force
- A commitment to the principle of public service.

Desirable:

- Experience operating in a non-executive or Trustee capacity at Board level in the charity and / or public sector.
- Experience in IT / digital transformation
- An understanding and / or experience of working in fundraising
- Experience of working in / with Museums.

TERM OF APPOINTMENT

Length of appointment

Trustees will be appointed for a term of three years with the potential for a further three year term.

Time Commitment

The overall time commitment is an estimated 10-12 days per annum. Attendance in person is encouraged, but online attendance is available.

The commitment is as follows:

- The main Board meets four times a year, with an annual Board strategy meeting over two days, usually in January
- Board sub-committees and the Trading Board meet between two and four times per annum
- Time is required to read Board papers in advance of meetings.

In addition, Trustees are encouraged to represent the Board at events across the year.

MUSEUM BACKGROUND AND HISTORY

The Royal Air Force (RAF) Museum is a National Museum, a Government Non Departmental Public Body (NDPB) and a registered charity. Our purpose is to share the story of the Royal Air Force, past, present and future – using the stories of its people and our collections to engage, inspire, entertain and encourage learning.

Conceived as a legacy of the RAF's fiftieth anniversary, the Royal Air Force Museum opened its London site in 1972. Our Midlands site began as the Aerospace Museum at RAF Cosford in the spring of 1974 and joined the family in 1979.

During the course of our last strategic plan, the Museum concentrated its efforts on being outward focused and people centred, exploring the history of the RAF over its hundred-year history through its incredible people and ensuring that our collection is relevant, shared and well cared for.

2018 marked the Centenary of the Royal Air Force and, in June 2018, we opened a major transformation at our London site. Across both sites the Museum had our most successful year since its formation, welcoming 989,600 people, a 39% increase.



We are a values-led organisation guided by clear strategic priorities. These are outlined in our Strategy 2030, which guides the Museum during this complex period of our history, with

an unstable international environment and climate change ever-present challenges.



The Museum's reach has broadened and diversified significantly, and the partnerships and friendships developed over recent years give us a firm and inspiring foundation to build on for this next chapter in the Museum's history.

See Strategy 2030 [About Us - RAF Museum](#)

OUR AUDIENCES

The Museum welcomed 800,000 visitors in 2025-26, including 74,600 children on school visits and complemented by almost half a million social media engagements (likes, shares and comments across our platforms).

Our Midlands site: 351,000 visits

Our London site: 436,000 visits

Over the past five years the Museum has focused on growing our family audiences, which now comprise over 70% of our visitors. As a National Museum we are delighted to offer a great day out free of charge, while continuing to develop new income streams critical to our present work and for our future.

Equally, the Museum remains committed to our audience of former and serving RAF personnel and maintains a strong following from visitors with an interest in military aviation and history in general. Around 20% of our audiences visit from all over the world to deepen their understanding of the RAF story and see the unique context in which we tell it.

Events and outreach programmes continue to attract new audiences and partnerships and engage with a broader and deeper range of communities on our doorstep.

Among other accolades, both sites were awarded coveted TripAdvisor Travellers' Choice Awards for the third year running in 2025, putting us in the top 10% of global listings. This was followed by the outstanding news that a Which? Guide survey voted our Midlands site the joint best museum in the UK, with our London site the joint best in the capital.

The Museum's active research programme continues with lectures, seminars and conferences designed to further our academic reach. These are supported through partnerships with a number of universities, the Royal Aeronautical Society, the RAF Centre for Air Power Studies and the British Commission for Military History. The Museum also participates in the Collaborative Doctoral Awards (CDA) programme and awards academic prizes at Doctoral, Masters and Undergraduate levels.



Which?



OUR ESTATE AND COLLECTION

The RAF Museum comprises two sister public sites, in London at our historic airfield site in Colindale, and in the West Midlands next to RAF Cosford. We also have storage facilities in Stafford and at RAF Cosford. This total estate comprises more than 40 acres with 55,000 m² of indoor space and forms an important part of the Museum's heritage.

The RAF Museum is one of the UK's National Museums with a Designated collection.

Among our 180 aircraft are the iconic Lancaster bomber and the fragile 1909 Bleriot monoplane at our London site, and the oldest surviving Spitfire, mighty Vulcan Cold War bomber, and legendary Bravo November Chinook helicopter at our Midlands site.

80,000 objects, ranging from Victoria Crosses and Distinguished Flying Crosses, to lucky mascots, to missile guidance computers, take up the equivalent of two football pitches of storage. Our archive of over half a million documents is complemented by 340,000 photographs and more than 7,000 works of art.

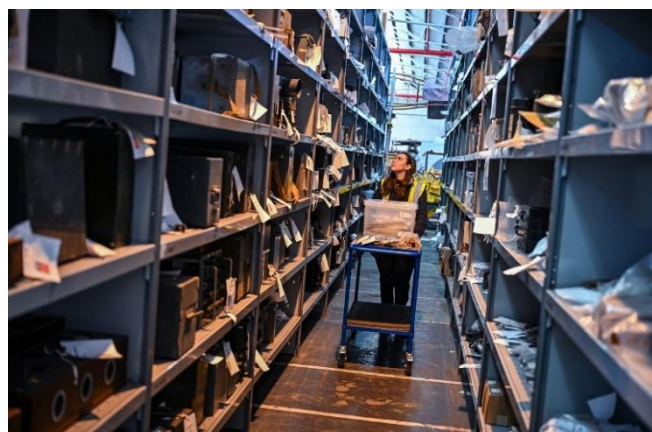
As part of our Collections Development Strategy, the Museum is focused on contemporary collecting to address gaps, and a transfer programme to ensure it is relevant and fit for purpose.

Our London site, owned by the Museum, benefited from the move of the historic First World War Watch Office onto the site in partnership with English Heritage and developer St George. This was the catalyst for our First World War in the Air Gallery which formed the first phase of the Museum's 2018 RAF Centenary Programme. New permanent displays exploring the Battle of Britain and Bomber Command have since opened at both sites, along with Interwar displays in London.

This year, an RAF-themed indoor soft play area opened in London to complement the Museum's family offering and support our commercial plan.

Iconic at our Midlands site, leased from the MOD, is the National Cold War Exhibition. This landmark building powerfully shares the Cold War story illustrated by the Museum's fabulous collection including examples of the three V-Force strategic bombers: the Valiant, Victor and Vulcan.

The Museum's Midlands Development Programme will renovate and decarbonise a 1937 hangar to house the new exhibitions. In addition, it will move our stored collections onsite, enabling us to share them with visitors for the first time.



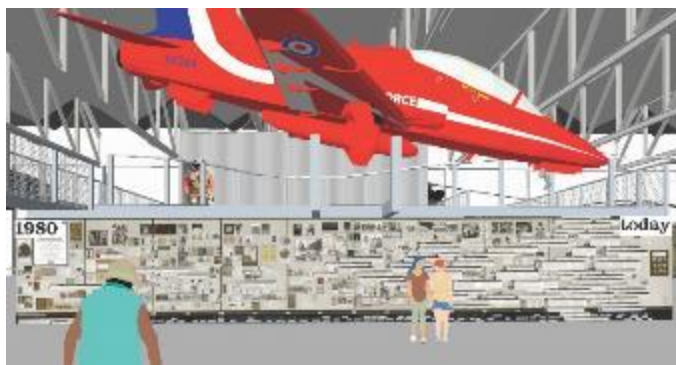
THE RAF MUSEUM MIDLANDS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

The Royal Air Force Museum is in the midst of an extensive £30M development programme to transform our Midlands site.

Developed hand-in-hand with our communities and wider partners, it comprises:

- Immersive exhibitions focusing on the critical role of the RAF over the past 45 years, and looking into the future
- A state-of-the-art learning centre enabling us to deepen and extend both our formal and informal learning programmes
- A new-build Collections Hub sharing our stored collections with the public, both onsite and as a springboard into our communities
- Beautiful outdoor spaces for discovery, socialising and contemplation.

Enabling works are progressing onsite as we plan the procurement for the delivery stage of the programme. £29.2M has been successfully raised to date with support from the National Lottery Heritage Fund, trusts and foundations, companies and individual supporters.



STRUCTURE AND FINANCES

The Museum employs 245 people supported by 400 volunteers

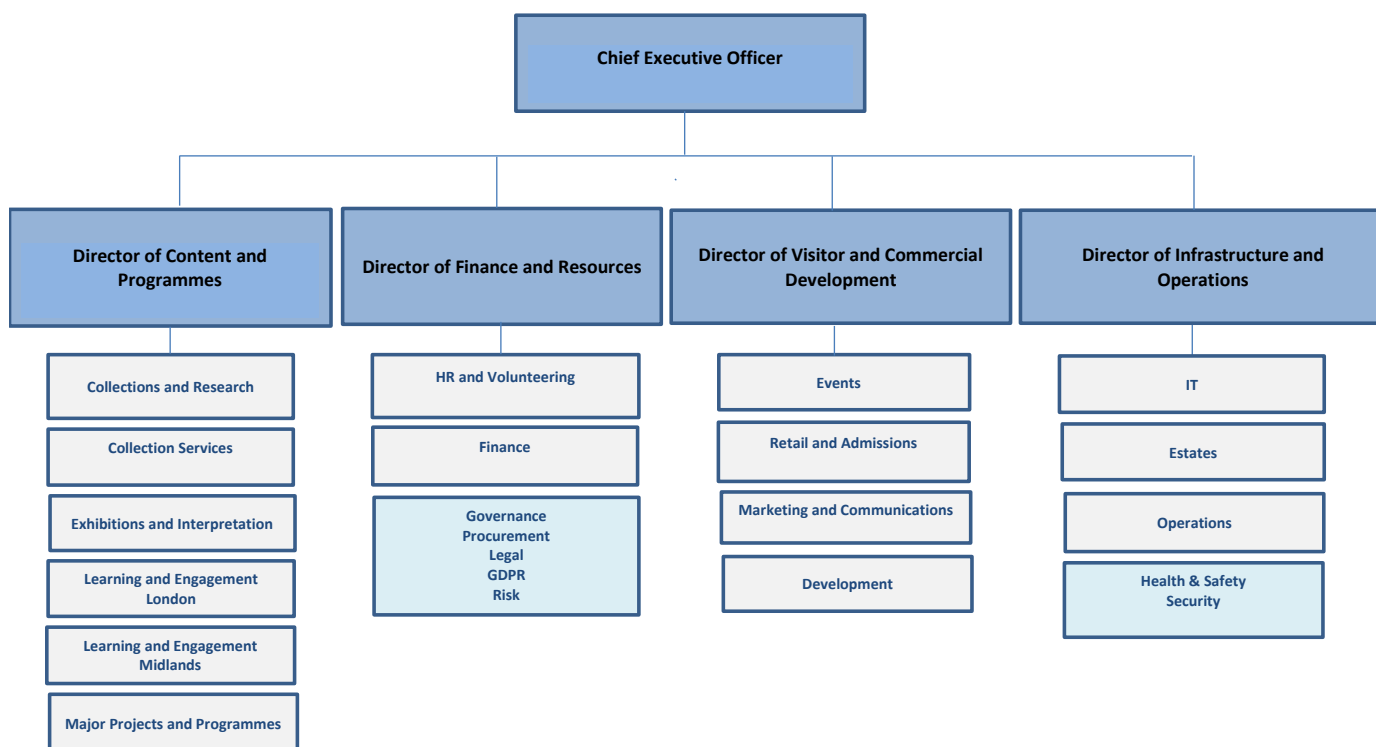
In 2025-26, the Museum received £16.5M of Grant in Aid via the Ministry of Defence. RAF Museum Enterprises Ltd generated £4M, with c£1.6M profit before recharges from retail, corporate hire, catering, experiences, talks and events. Other income included funds generated through the charity, notably through our learning service, and our fundraising activity.

The Museum's Financial Statements are audited by the National Audit Office and laid before Parliament. A full copy can be downloaded at: <https://assets.rafmuseum.org.uk/app/uploads/2026/07/16135757/RAFM-Annual-Report-and-Financial-Statement-2025-2026.pdf>

Our last annual review can be found at: https://assets.rafmuseum.org.uk/app/uploads/2026/07/23144947/Annual-Review-24-25_v4.0.pdf

SENIOR LEADERSHIP TEAM STRUCTURE

The Museum has a one-team philosophy. It is organised within four Groups under our Directors, with a team of specialist Heads, our Senior Management Group, leading each area within their remit. *(The pale blue boxes indicate additional compliance responsibilities.)*



Our fabulous volunteers support a range of activities across all areas of the Museum, including welcoming visitors and leading guided tours, caring for our collection and raising funds.

HOW TO APPLY



Timetable	
Closing date for application	Wednesday 19 August 2026
Selection and interview day (in person) at the Museum's London site	Friday 18 September 2026
Diversity and Equal Opportunities Recruitment decisions are based on an applicant's relevant experience, qualifications, skills and abilities. We are keen that our governance reflects our population and particularly welcome applications from women, disabled people and those from diverse backgrounds. If you have a disability and require any adjustment to either the application or interview process to enable you to participate fully, please contact the Royal Air Force Museum details opposite).	Further questions If you would like to arrange an informal and confidential conversation before submitting your application, please contact: vanessa.white@rafmuseum.org or telephone 07941 843437.