

South West Fed Role description – Chair

About the South West Fed

Formed in 1931, the South West Fed is the oldest regional museums federation in the UK. An independent membership organisation, the South West Fed provides a supportive and stimulating network for museums, art galleries and the wider heritage sector in the South West of England.

The South West Fed has evolved in its ambition and activity over the past few years in direct response to the changing needs of the sector.

In a rapidly changing landscape, museums and heritage organisations, and our members continue to look to the South West Fed for support, advice and continuity. We deliver this through an inspiring and affordable programme of events, skills sharing and networking opportunities for professionals working, volunteering or studying in the sector. We promote the value and benefits of the South West's heritage sector and provide a mechanism for sharing best practice, knowledge and skills across the sector more widely.

Vision

A flourishing and confident museums and heritage community in the South West

Mission

Creating opportunities to connect and inspire the museums and heritage community across the South West, for the benefit of organisations and their audiences.

Governance

The South West Fed is a voluntary subscription-based organisation. It is a company limited by guarantee (No 05536131) with charitable status (charity No 1113399).

The Board has up to 11 roles and consists of Trustees of the Charity, elected at the AGM. All Trustees are Company Directors (each elected from the Board at the first meeting following AGM). There are also approved signatories for the Charitable Company. Others can be co-opted to fill other roles/needs (and can vote). All Trustees support the delivery of Board and operational activities for the charity through their roles.

Each Trustee can hold a Trustee role for a maximum of nine years and at each AGM at least one third of Trustees must retire or stand for re-election, usually based on those who have served for the longest or those who wish to step down.

Further information is available in the Memorandum and Articles of Association and Standing Orders, Rules and Regulations (available on request or on www.swfed.org).

The role of the South West Fed Board

- To ensure that the South West Fed complies with its governing document, charity law and any other relevant legislation or regulations.
- To ensure that the South West Fed pursues its objects as defined by the governing document.
- To ensure the South West Fed uses its resources exclusively in pursuance of its objectives.
- To safeguard the good name and reputation of the South West Fed and behave in a professional manner, keeping matters confidential where appropriate.
- To ensure the efficient and effective administration of the South West Fed's business.
- To ensure the financial stability of the South West Fed.
- To ensure that any fundraising activity carried out by, or on behalf of, the South West Fed is properly undertaken, and that all funds collected are properly accounted for and spent according to the charitable objectives
- To take a considered, proportionate and balanced approach to risk management It is the responsibility of the Board to ensure that these requirements are effectively delivered.

Main roles and responsibilities of the Chair

The Chair leads the South West Fed Board and ensures that the organisation delivers against its mission and vision, taking the lead on strategy, governance and finances and is an active advocate for the South West Fed and the sector.

The main responsibilities and tasks of the Chair are:

Strategic Leadership

- Provide leadership and advocacy, ensuring that the South West Fed has maximum impact for its membership and the broader sector.
- Provide Board leadership, ensuring the Board is fully engaged and that decisions are taken in the best long-term interests of the South West Fed and the sector.
- Take the lead on strategic planning including overseeing production of the South West Fed's Forward Plan.

- Act as an ambassador and spokesperson for the South West Fed and the sector where appropriate.
- Maintaining relationships with key sector organisations at local, regional and national level, including convening a quarterly meeting of the Sector Peers.
- Maintain awareness of current issues, the economic landscape and areas of policy development (regionally and nationally) which may impact on the South West Fed and the sector.

Governance

- Chair the South West Fed Board meetings professionally, effectively and efficiently, bringing impartiality and objectivity to the decision-making process.
- Work closely with appropriate Board members to ensure meetings are well planned and efficiently delivered against the governance and management requirements of the South West Fed.
- Ensure the South West Fed complies with its governing document, company law and other relevant legislation/regulations.
- Ensure the Board regularly reviews major risks and opportunities for the South West Fed's growth and development.
- Review governance performance and facilitating positive change where appropriate.
- Review membership of the Board to ensure it incorporates the right balance of skills, knowledge and experience required to deliver its role.
- Act impartially, with integrity and in the best interests of the South West Fed and the sector.

Management

- With the Board, ensure that the South West Fed's organisational structure and capability are appropriate for implementing the Forward Plan.
- With the Board, ensuring appropriate resources (financial and human) are available and a robust risk management framework is in place which identifies, assesses and manages strategic risks and that it is monitored and reviewed regularly for continuous improvement.
- Co-ordinating the Board to ensure responsibilities for particular aspects of management (e.g. financial control) are met and specialist expertise is employed as required.

Skills, experience and outlook

- A good communicator with excellent leadership and interpersonal skills, able to both empower and challenge supportively, build relationships internally and externally, and be a lead ambassador for the organisation and its initiatives.
- Demonstrates a high standard of behaviour, honesty and integrity in conduct.
- Strategic leadership, ability to see the big picture, to identify emerging external factors that may impact on strategy, implementation of plans, or reputation with key stakeholders.
- Takes responsibility for decision making – independently and collaboratively - able to organise, coordinate and follow through on key decisions; to manage competing or differing views, and positively challenge to achieve the desired outcome.
- Knowledge of the museums and heritage sector including the changing landscape in which organisations are operating in.
- Ability to effectively manage resources and develop sustainable organisational business plans.
- Financial acumen with experience of budget planning and management.
- Able to identify, monitor and manage risk.
- Networked in the sector.

Other

- Demonstrate a strong passion and commitment to the vision and objectives of the South West Fed and an interest in/enthusiasm for the heritage sector.
- A commitment to Nolan's seven principles of public life: selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership.
- Able and willing to devote the necessary time to the role.
- To be an individual member of the South West Fed.

Time commitment

The Board meets a minimum of 4 times per year (3 online and 1 in person). Currently meetings take place on weekday evenings and last approximately two hours. From time to time, additional meetings will be called to address specific areas of the organisation's work (e.g. programme, membership).

It is anticipated that the Chair will need to commit approximately 4 days per month to fulfilling their role for the South West Fed. The role will be for a three year term initially with the potential to extend for a total of nine years maximum (subject to elections at the AGM).