

About Us

Background Information

It is an exciting time for the Powell-Cotton Trust (PCT). We are working hard to deliver a transformational change programme, entitled 'Reimagining the Museum', ensuring that our Collection, Museum, House and Gardens, campaigns and programmes for our beneficiaries, stakeholders and customers are fit for purpose and relevant. This change programme has been initiated to coincide with inheriting an undivided half share in the former Powell-Cotton Settled Estate valued at circa £50m. It is a challenging and exciting time.

The Powell Cotton Trust – the collection

The Museum was established at Quex Park in 1896 by Percy Powell-Cotton (1866-1940) to house natural history museum specimens, cultural objects and photographs collected on expeditions to Asia and Africa. Powell-Cotton was a pioneer in the use of the diorama to display mounted mammals in representations of their natural habitats. The Museum's natural history museum dioramas are outstanding examples, unique to the UK, stunning for their size, quality and imagery.

The Museum's collection includes over 20,000 ethnographic objects; 6500 mammal specimens; fine and decorative arts from across Asia; approximately 8,000 archaeological finds from the Thanet coastline and an archive of supportive material including over 30,000 photographs and 40,000 documents.

We welcome many different audiences to enjoy and view our museum through volunteering, visiting, academic research and co-collaboration. In turn, we support and encourage the study and understanding of the zoological, ecological and cultural diversity unique to the many countries and communities represented through our collections.



In subsequent years the family also gifted the Charity, first established in 1926, a substantive share of Quex House and Gardens.

The 'Reimagining of the Museum, House and Gardens'

In September 2020, PCT announced that we would be closed for day-to-day visits so that we can carry out a 'Reimagining' programme of projects at the museum. During this time, we undertook the beginnings of significant change to our focus and work as a charity. As we continue projects, establish partnerships, and make progress as a Charity, we will focus our work at the heart of local communities impacted by our work, in the UK and internationally. The programme to 'reimagine' the Museum, House and Garden has at its heart equity and diversity.

Our Vision: People Matter

The Powell-Cotton Trust is for everyone – current and future audiences, staff, volunteers, our local community, the source communities from where our collections originate and anyone else who wants to work with the Powell-Cotton Museum, House and Gardens and to be part of our forward journey. To be for everyone, we will make space for those voices in our museum: past, present and future. This comes from both listening to the diversity of voices within our community today and using our collections to make space for people who have historically been silenced.

Our Aims

- To be collaborative and inclusive.
- Our working culture will be for everyone, collaborative in nature and will empower all to participate.
- To be transparent in the process and delivery of this programme.
- This programme of work will have a measurable framework of deliverables and milestones and we will hold ourselves accountable for both our processes and finished works.
- To embrace change and build on the momentum of forward movement we've already



- established.
- The Museum began working to tell a wider, more inclusive, story in 2018. In February 2020 we started laying the groundwork for our re-imagining programme. However, the COVID-19 pandemic, and the level of societal inequality it has exposed, brought a dual shift in how we work and focus on what matters. This gave us the impetus to take this work from ‘behind the scenes’ and into the public eye. Bringing our reimagining programme to the fore now gives us a window of opportunity to radically rethink what we do and how we do it. This is a moment for change in our organisational culture - the understanding that, if we want to, we CAN do things differently and should be empowered to do so.
 - To embed our commitment to change, as outlined via our social media channels in June and July 2020, within our museum so that these changes become long-term, sustainable working practices, not just words.
 - What we refer to as ‘decolonising the museum’ aims to address the silences of the past, acknowledge privilege and adjust balances of power in the present. It is a process of returning context to the past via our interpretation and engagement and working with our communities near and far today to be equitable, honest and transparent moving forward. This is our commitment to a new way of working, not a finished product.

Our Objectives

- Securing a sustainable future for the Powell-Cotton Museum, Quex House and Gardens. This will cover finances, the fabric of the buildings (which will in turn secure the future of the collections) and our resources. It is also reflected in our relationships with our staff and the value we place on their knowledge and experience.
- Make sure that all our engagement, both internally and externally, is meaningful, aligning with our Vision and Values.
- Engagement doesn’t always have to be of clear or tangible benefit to the Museum – sometimes it will simply be the right thing to do.
- Establish the identity and function of the Powell-Cotton Museum, Quex House and



Gardens. Previous work has identified the historic identity of the site, but the future will be what we make it. This will include our external identity as a brand, but also the best relationship between our component parts (museum, house, garden) to give us an innovative, independent and sustainable future.

Our Values

Our vision – people matter – is foundational to the values of this programme of work. These values will be embedded across the organisation from visitor experience and collections to operations and to HR. These values relate to everyone who works with us, in whatever way that may be.

- Everyone's lived experiences are valued by the organisation and everyone should be empowered to fulfil their potential. In this regard, we work to the principle that equity is as important as equality.
- We place importance on the emotional connections that exist between people and places.
- We have courage in our convictions: we will be brave in our actions and innovative in our approach.

Our Programme of Works

1. Museum Works

We have a complex and far-reaching programme of Museum works, many of which you would expect to see in a museum. These would include:

- A new museum interpretation strategy. More information is available about our anthropology displays in Galleries 2 and 3, the Welcome Space, the Colonial Critters Project and the Namibian Narratives Project.
- Continue to update our inventory of the collection and introduction of a new Collections Management System that will facilitate national and internal access to the collection and



facilitate a better understanding of the collection.

2. Education and Engagement

We pride ourselves on an effective formal and informal educational and engagement programme. We fulfil our engagement and learning objectives in multiple ways making the collections accessible and inclusive to as wider audience as possible including SEND groups.

- Our *formal* learning is working with schools, colleges and universities. Running workshops that hit curriculum links for Key stage 1-5 that help schools develop children's cultural capital. Workshops can be talks, discussions, hands on learning about the collection and how it was created, to climate change along with creative workshops such as African Textile printing using traditional Adinkra blocks.

Our most recent formal learning project is called "The World on our Doorstep". This new history learning programme for primary schools enables children to discover *how* Percy Powell-Cotton was able to build the dioramas in the museum. This will involve learning about the British Empire, colonialism and how its ideas and attitudes have affected people today.

- Our *informal* learning works with anyone who visits the museum; this can include family groups, home-educating families and SEND groups. We have established collaborative partnerships with local groups and organisations. Informal learning can be an intervention made throughout the museum such as a backpack that can be taken by families to help explore the museum. We have a SEND backpack that has sensory objects like glasses with changeable coloured lenses and a torch. We also have trails that are around the museum and gardens to encourage curiosity and exploration.



Informal workshops have themes linked to the collections that run through the school breaks throughout the year, usually making a craft object to take home. These may be offered to visitors as part of a bigger event or to support a public engagement outcome for an externally funded project.

3. Community Outreach and Inclusion

One of the most exciting initiatives arising from the 'reimagining' programme is the Sunshine Project which repurposes the Walled Garden and Croquet Lawns of bygone days for the benefit of the local community with a particular focus on people from disadvantaged backgrounds who would not normally be able to access the Powell Cotton Museum, House and Gardens.

The team have been working with Kent County Council (KCC) social services team to provide a safe and stimulating environment for their clients with learning disabilities. Clients are enabled to enjoy the space of Quex Gardens and get involved in gardening and project activities. The winter garden glass house has been renovated and provides a day space for these clients and their carers. This model has now been extended to more community groups with special needs clients. The purpose of the initiative is twofold, firstly to break down the barriers within the local community for people with learning disabilities. Secondly to promote educational and engagement opportunities for people from disadvantaged backgrounds.

You can read more detail about our work and activities in our annual account at the following link [here](#).

The Successful Candidates

The successful individuals will be excited by our vision, mission, values and objectives. They will be an experienced leader at a senior level, who has worked effectively to bring about modernisation or culture change to an organisation or sector. They will be highly motivated to use their energy



and experience to drive the growth of the Charity through fostering of good relationships both within and outside the organisation.

Most vital is experience of working within the charity sector, understanding the challenges of operating a charity. The successful candidates will have the credibility and strong interpersonal skills necessary to help lead the organisation through this challenging but exciting time.

We are actively seeking three trustees with experience in Marketing; Income Generation & Fundraising; and Digital/Online Services.

Trustee Role Description

Purpose of Role

- To further the aims of the organisation, in keeping within its charitable objectives.

Main Tasks

- To take part in formulating and regularly reviewing the organisation's strategic aims.
- To ensure that the organisation pursues its objects as defined in its governing documents.
- With other trustees, help ensure that the organisation functions within the legal and financial requirements of a charitable organisation and strives to achieve best practice.

Main duties

- Consider the organisation's vision and principles, strategy and major policies at all times
- Contribute specific skills, interests and contacts and support the organisation in all of its activities.
- Follow the Code of Conduct at all times, particularly when exercising the functions of the trustees, or any of its committees, sub-committees, groups.
- Attend meetings of the Board of Trustees.
- Reflect the trustees' policies and concerns on all its committees, sub-committees, and groups.



- Be an active member of the Board of Trustees in exercising its responsibilities and functions.
- Maintain good relations with senior managerial staff.
- Take part in training sessions provided for the benefit of the trustees.
- Fulfil such other duties and assignments as may be required from time to time by the Board of Trustees.

Term of Office

The post-holder will serve for an initial three-year period with the potential to renew for a further three years.

Time Commitment

Between 8 and 12 days per annum. The Board of Trustees meets at least 6 times a year and sub-committees meet up to 3 times a year. Most meetings will be either in London or at the Museum in Kent. In addition to Board and sub-committee meetings, other contacts – usually electronic, by telephone and/or virtual – will be necessary.

Further Information on How to Apply

If you wish to apply for the role of trustee, please submit an up-to-date CV (including names and contact details of two referees) and a covering letter of no more than two pages explaining why you are interested in this role and the contribution you think you would make to the PCT as a Trustee.

These should be submitted either by post marked 'Confidential' for the attention of CEO, The Powell-Cotton Museum, House & Gardens, Quex Park, Birchington, CT7 0BH or by email to nigel.lewis@powel-cottontrust.org.

You can find out more information about PCT by visiting our website: www.powell-cottonmuseum.org

PCT is committed to equality, and we value the diversity of our volunteers and staff.

