

A bit more context...

These are some of the current considerations in the Visitor Experience Manager (VEM) areas of responsibility:

Visitor Experience (customer care, staff training, ticketing, everyday site presentation and care)

- You will be starting from a position of strength: our most recent Visitor Attraction Quality Assurance Scheme (VAQAS) in 2023 gave a score of 94%. We have a new ticketing system since February 2022 (DigiTickets), and we have maintained the quality of our site today, whilst still planning for a major redevelopment in the next few years.
- As a seasonal site, we need more frontline staff at some times of the year, and fewer at others. This creates challenges in training, development, recruitment, and retention. Overcoming these will make our customer care consistently good and constantly improving *by design*, not by chance.
- Our percentage of Gift Aid take up on ticket sales is strong – in the past year we have driven this up to consistently above 75%. Now, we are introducing donation points for the first time, so ensuring consistency and clarity about our charitable message is critical to build this income stream

Retail

- We principally sell officially licensed Roald Dahl merchandise, but we have developed a few lines of our own within the confines of copyright limitations. The VEM will need to assess where retail performance can be improved – do we train the skills for staff to make all the sales we could? Is merchandising of our stock as smart and as targeted as possible? What stock is missing from our offer?
- Online sales are very low. However, we have a new Shopify webstore since later 2023, and are taking consultant advice on how we can drive up sales.
- We also need to start replacing our outdated EPOS software – probably with Shopify, but that is to be determined – at some point before or during any closure for capital works.

Catering

- Food and drink are obviously important in visitor experience. We have an arrangement with an external caterer which needs to be actively managed. Thinking ahead to our potential closure and reopening, the VEM will need to make catering work, for the long-term.

Facilities (everyday maintenance, efficiency/continuity, longer term site presentation/systems)

- Facilities is always at risk of being an 'overly specialist' area of work; a significant risk if staff leave. The VEM will need to work with the Governance & Projects Manager (who has responsibility for Facilities) to continue and extend our recent efforts to document and distribute everyday Facilities checks and tasks amongst VisEx staff to ensure we are prepared to maintain business continuity.

- In short: we take care of ourselves, and for visitors, we still look good... but we are increasingly creaky underneath. Replacing outdated building systems is one of the key drivers for the Unlocking Stories capital redevelopment project (USP).

Health & Safety (risk, compliance, safeguarding)

- Although the Director will retain overall H&S responsibility supported by the Governance & Projects Manager. However, as the head of the largest staff team welcoming our visitors, the VEM has a key role to play to strengthen ongoing staff training and capability in risk assessment and mitigation, and documentation of practice. There will also be overlap with safeguarding practice which is led by the Learning Manager as Designated Safeguarding Lead, but is highly relevant to general VisEx operations.
- As in many areas, the Museum is in good shape here: a 2021 external H&S audit confirmed that our practice is generally very good, and the Museum is generally a low-risk environment.

Accessibility (WIDE)

- Although in practice being an accessible organisation cannot be separated from everyday operations and USP, it is a significant commitment in our strategic planning and as such is marked out here.
- In 2021-22 we took part in the South East Museum Development initiative MuseumWIDE (Welcoming, Inclusive, Diverse, Equitable) and we have adopted this acronym: being 'welcoming' softens the more 'technical' EDI in a way that feels right for our museum.
- As leader of our biggest staff team, the VEM will play a leading role in how we make recruitment and training more accessible and inclusive: both for our staff themselves, and in the way our staff are prepared to provide a WIDE experience for our visitors. We have been working on this and have evidence that shows we are a welcoming place to work and visit. But we must continue to be intentional and strive to do ever better.

Environmental sustainability

- Just as being more WIDE is essential to being the best organisation we can be, responding the climate emergency is not optional for future sustainability, on this planet.
- We have not done enough on this score to date: having spent so long working towards USP, we have been both correct in that some of the biggest changes we can make will require major capital works, but we have also postponed getting fully to grips with everyday operational actions we should be taking now. The VEM will need to be a champion for environmental practice, through marginal gains as much as contributing to sustainability planning via USP.