JOB DESCRIPTION

**Job Title** Operations Manager

**Reports to** Director

**Term** Full-time, permanent

**Salary Range** £38,000-40,000

**About the Food Museum**

The Food Museum connects people with where food comes from and the impact of our food choices: past, present and future. We use our collections, buildings, landscape and programmes to explore our main themes: Grow, Make, Eat.

We work with a wide range of partners to produce inclusive and diverse programming which speaks to 21st-century audiences. We want everyone to see themselves reflected in the work we do. We aim to be relevant, challenging and sustainable.

We care for 17 historic buildings set in 84 acres of countryside, in the heart of Stowmarket, Suffolk. The museum is a charity supporting the community and we undertake a wide range of social projects and programmes. We seek to maintain high professional standards in the presentation and protection of our collection, buildings and site and continually improve our practice.

**Purpose of the Job**

The Museum’s estate includes historic and modern buildings, river meadows, woodland, gardens, allotments and orchards. We have a small amount of livestock including horses, cows, sheep, goats, pigs and poultry.

The Operations Manager will be responsible for overseeing a team (currently 8 staff plus volunteers) to maintain high standards of presentation across the museum’s land and buildings. They will be responsible for maintaining our 84-acre estate through sustainable agricultural approaches that maintain soil health, enhance biodiversity, and help visitors to understand the challenges of growing food.

The museum’s estate has a lot of potential and we are looking for someone who has the knowledge and skills to help us realise it. Some of the projects that might be implemented include a regenerative vineyard, a Community Supported Agriculture scheme and a closer relationship between what is produced in our Walled Garden and our café.

They will oversee the maintenance of the museum’s buildings, commissioning repairs and managing maintenance contracts for specialist equipment.

**Who are we looking for?**

We are looking for an individual who is committed to the Food Museum’s mission of connecting visitors with where their food comes from and can help us to model this on our own land. You will have practical skills in either horticulture or agriculture, with at least five years of professional experience. You will be deeply interested and engaged with current debates on agriculture, horticulture and conservation, and committed to sharing your knowledge with others.

You will need to be an effective people manager, able to motivate staff and volunteers with a range of abilities and experiences. You will be an organised person who thrives on getting into the detail, but who also is effective at driving forward change and thinks strategically and realistically about how change can be implemented.

**What will the job involve?**

1. Main duties:
2. Contribute as a key member of the museum’s senior leadership team. Own the Operations KPIs and produce reports on progress.
3. Provide leadership to a team, which currently consists of three Growing Officers (full-time), three Museum Housekeepers (part-time), a Visitor Officer (full-time), a Security/H&S Officer (part-time) and a team of regular and casual volunteers. Ensure that the team has a common understanding of purpose and works effectively together.
4. Ensure that high standards of presentation are sustained across the museum’s landscape, gardens and buildings.
5. Supervise daily operations across all estate activities including farm, meadow, woodland and river management.
6. Shape and deliver the development of the museum’s estate, seeking ways of maximising income from the museum’s 84 acres. Lead on the development of the Walled Garden, polytunnels, orchard and vineyard. Create long-term plans which prioritise sustainable productivity alongside commercial viability. Set and deliver financial targets around this.
7. Oversee crop rotation planning, cover cropping, and integrated pest management systems
8. Oversee a rolling programme of maintenance according to the museum’s Maintenance Plan. Coordinate maintenance of equipment, infrastructure and facilities. Commission and manage the work of contractors.
9. Manage the museum’s maintenance budget and project budgets as they arise. Ensure that the museum’s resources are being spent efficiently and effectively. Complete the museum’s stewardship returns and apply for funding.
10. Ensure compliance with regulations and law and keep accurate records, for example of vehicle servicing and animal movements. Be an organisational champion for health and safety.
11. Oversee the setup for museum events.
12. Build partnerships and relationships outside the museum. Act as an ambassador for the museum. Look for opportunities to work with others to deliver activities and help the museum to be an open and welcoming place. Build networks with the wider farming and conservation community.
13. Keep the wider museum team informed of the work that the Ops Team does and contribute towards the museum’s internal learning programme.
14. Recruit and manage volunteers, working creatively to provide opportunities to engage others with the work of the museum.
15. Respond responsibly in the event of an emergency or incident, taking charge as the most senior member of staff where appropriate.
16. **Key relationships will be with the Director, the Learning Manager, the Events Manager and with direct reports.**
17. **This job information cannot be all encompassing. It is inevitable over time that the emphasis of the job will change without changing the general character of the job or the level of duties and responsibilities entailed. This information may be periodically reviewed, revised and updated in consultation with the post holder to reflect appropriate changes.**
18. Staff must be aware of and abide by the museum's policies. All staff must work in such a manner as to ensure their own safety and the safety of others – including members of the public – and report to their manager any hazards, dangerous occurrences or dangerous equipment they see, and any accident they are involved in or that they witness.
19. The post holder will be expected to travel occasionally in the UK.

**Skills and Experience – what we require**

If you are unsure about any of this or would like to talk to someone about whether your experience is applicable, please get in touch.

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| **Essential criteria – you need to have these** | **How this will be assessed** |
|  | Understanding and commitment to the museum’s remit | Application form and interview |
|  | Good general education including literacy and numeracy | Application form and interview |
|  | At least five years of professional experience in either agriculture, horticulture or conservation | Application form and interview |
|  | Experience of leading and/or managing people and teams and ability to motivate and inspire others | Application form and interview |
|  | Experience of managing a budget to deliver best value | Application form and interview |
|  | Strong and demonstrable interest in regenerative farming and sustainable agricultural practices | Application form and interview |
|  | Physical fitness for outdoor work in various weather conditions | Application form and interview |
|  | Knowledge of health and safety compliance | Application form and interview |
|  | Strong problem-solving abilities and attention to detail | Application form and interview |
|  | Willingness to work flexibly and pragmatically, as part of a busy organisation | Application form and interview |
|  | Good computer literacy and written communication skills | Application form  |
|  | Driving license | Application form  |
| **Desirable criteria – it would be a bonus to have these** |
|  | Experience of working in a heritage setting, with listed buildings or in a visitor attraction | Application form and interview  |
|  | Grant writing experience for conservation or agricultural projects | Application form and interview |
|  | A qualification related to agriculture or horticulture | Application form and interview |
|  | Building maintenance skills | Application form and interview |
|  | Training and experience in ATV and tractor driving | Application form  |
| **Behaviours – how we expect you to act** |
|  | Be creative and imaginative: identify opportunities to deliver added value, be inquisitive, curious and thoughtful; be able to solve problems and think for yourself | Interview  |
|  | Be effective and efficient: take responsibility for managing own work; stay focused on getting the job done; have a can-do approach; plan and think ahead and make decisions mindful of their cost and environmental impact | Interview |
|  | Be tactful and collaborative: work well and supportively with other staff, volunteers and external people | Interview  |
|  | Communicate clearly: be precise and assertive – especially when dealing with difficult issues. Think about how to talk to people to get the best out of them. Listen to and respect diverse voices. | Interview |
|  | Maintain high standards of integrity and honesty | Interview |

**Additional Information**

**Terms**

* Your normal hours of work will be 37.5 per week. This will vary seasonally. In the museum’s Summer season, they will normally be Monday to Friday, 08:30–17:00 (inclusive of a 1-hour unpaid break). In the Winter season, they will normally be Monday to Friday, 08:00–16:30 (inclusive of a 1-hour unpaid break). The museum’s seasons follow British Summer Time.
* The successful candidate will be on probation for 6 months.
* There is a requirement on occasions to work unsocial hours or at weekends for which leave in lieu will be granted.

**Benefits**

* The annual leave allowance is 30 days per annum (inclusive of 8 public holidays) pro rata. After two years of service, holiday entitlement will rise by a day, reaching a maximum of 33 days after five years of service.
* The museum has a pension plan to which the successful candidate will be signed up.
* As a member of staff, you are entitled to free personal entry to the museum and for museum-organised ticketed events which take place on site.
* Nominated Guest Pass: You can nominate another adult (partner, parent or friend) to receive a pass to site. Any dependent children under 18 can also be issued with a free pass.
* 20% discount in the café. There is also a staff menu with reduced prices on fixed takeaway deals.
* 10% discount on shop products.
* Free tea and coffee
* Free parking in the museum’s car park

**Scoring**

We will score candidates against the criteria listed under ‘Skills and Experience’. The top-scoring candidates will be invited to interview. It is essential that your application form addresses the criteria fully. The Museum is committed to equal opportunities and welcomes applications from candidates of any and all backgrounds. As part of our commitment to diversifying the workforce, we offer guaranteed interviews to people from diverse cultural backgrounds and candidates who have hidden or physical disabilities who meet the essential criteria.

**To Apply**

1. Please apply using the museum’s application form only. We will not look at CVs or additional documents which are submitted.
2. In the personal statement section, please list the criteria under ‘essential’ and ‘desirable’ and set out how your experience relates to the things we are looking for.
3. Please label your application form with your name and submit it in either Word or as a pdf.
4. You need to complete a separate Recruitment Monitoring Form and submit it with your application. Please label this RMF and add your initials, as in ‘RMF XX’
5. Email both completed forms to jobs@foodmuseum.org.uk

**The closing date for receipt of applications is Sunday 21 September 2025 at midnight.**

**Interviews will take place on Monday 29 September.**