

# Experience Oxfordshire

## Chair Recruitment Pack





# Award-winning destination management

**Experience Oxfordshire** is the official Destination Management Organisation (DMO) for Oxfordshire. We are the trading arm of the parent charity, **Experience Oxfordshire Charitable Trust**, and are a not-for-profit partnership organisation that is committed to the promotion, management, and development of Oxfordshire as a great destination to live, work, visit and do business whilst improving growth and productivity across the visitor economy. The DMO provides essential business advice and support to visitor economy businesses across Oxfordshire.

The organisation is highly regarded locally and nationally and has won many awards including UK Inbound Destination Marketing Organisation of the Year, Oxfordshire Business Awards Cultural and Tourism Award and the Trip Advisor Certificate of Excellence for ten consecutive years for the operation of Oxford Official Walking Tours. **Experience Oxfordshire** was also cited as a best practice case study in the recent de Bois Review of DMOs for our business support services during the pandemic.

Visitors to Oxfordshire are vitally important to the county's economy. The iconic city and surrounding county attract local, national and international visitors. The county's proximity to London and other key cities in the UK, coupled with the range of experiences available, make Oxfordshire an highly attractive destination for leisure and business travellers.

The partnership network spans all parts of the visitor economy, and through effective collaboration the organisation is working to ensure Oxfordshire maintains its position as a leading destination for tourism, culture and business.

The visitor economy in Oxfordshire was severely impacted by the pandemic. Statistics show that the county has maintained its attraction for visitors but has been impacted by the downturn in the global economy and national labour force issues. There is much to do before we see a return to the sector's 2019 record value of £2.5 billion.

During this time, **Experience Oxfordshire's** role is to advocate for the county's visitor economy and seize every opportunity to speak on behalf of Partners at local, regional and national level. It engages with local and national authorities and agencies. It champions the sector in the media and at conferences and events. It supports its Partners with business advice, creates opportunities for them to network and debate and runs 24/7 marketing activations that keep Oxfordshire's profile high amongst potential leisure and business visitors.

The organisation is about to enter a period of change following the structural recommendations of the de Bois DMO Review and the incoming Chair will be expected to be heavily involved in this process as we enter an exciting, albeit challenging, time for Destination Management Organisations across England.



# A Professional approach to partnership

**Experience Oxfordshire** is an ambitious organisation working with over **150 Partners** across the county, from visitor attractions, hotels, transport, retail, restaurants, events, conference venues, local authorities to the wider business community, championing the sector and the great products offered across the county. We have a growing network of Ambassadors who support and promote **Experience Oxfordshire** and are a driving force behind ensuring that Oxfordshire has a DMO. Their support and investment are extremely important and valuable to our organisation. Current Ambassadors are:



## Building stronger partnerships nationally and locally

**Experience Oxfordshire** has a strong record of recognition from government including a former prime minister and tourism ministers for its work on behalf of the county. It was cited in the 2021 de Bois Review of Destination Management in England as an example of best practice for its work assisting the county's businesses during the pandemic. In the written consultation **Experience Oxfordshire** received praise from respondents for its actions during the pandemic, with one commenting that it represented '*an example of resilience and entrepreneurialism working against all the odds*'.





## Experience Oxfordshire Events #ExOxEvents

**Experience Oxfordshire** runs a year-round programme of events much-valued by its Partners. The events offer the opportunity to hear from other operators in the visitor economy, share experiences and insights with each other and network with Partners from different business types. **Experience Oxfordshire's** extensive network of contacts provides access to industry leaders who provide a national context to local challenges and opportunities.

During the pandemic, **Experience Oxfordshire** took its events programme online and Partners benefitted from updates from VisitEngland, technology suppliers, business support as well as having the opportunity to engage with local MPs.



# Promoting Oxfordshire to local, national and international audiences

**Experience Oxfordshire** maintains an ongoing dialogue with new and established visitor audiences through extensive use of social media. It has a dedicated consumer website to promote the county and Partners; produces targeted monthly e-newsletters to consumers, travel trade and groups and produces an annual digital destination guide and a venues guide. It has a strong relationship with local and national media and supports campaigns run by the national

tourist board. Post pandemic it has successfully bid to run high profile marketing campaigns as part of national initiatives and local recovery activity including: Escape the Everyday in Oxfordshire, Only in Oxfordshire, Rediscover Oxford, Inspirational Oxfordshire and Escape the Everyday to Oxford. It attends consumer and trade travel shows and represents the county on VisitBritain international sales missions.





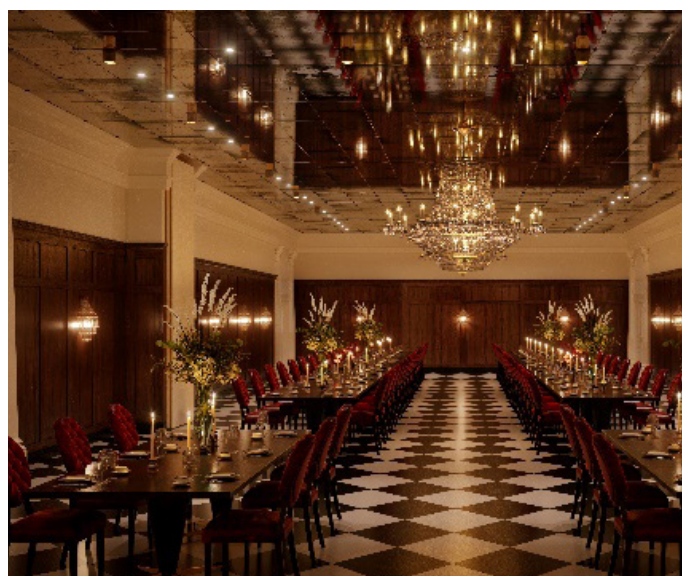
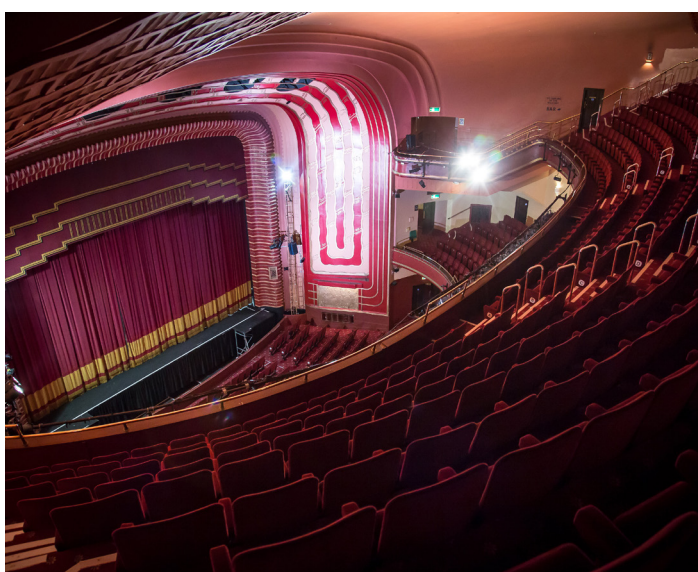


## Experience Oxfordshire Venues

The **Experience Oxfordshire venues** service is the official and free venue-finding service for Oxford and Oxfordshire. The service represents a single point of contact for regional, national and international event organisers, providing bureau services and introductions to the unique venues in Oxford and Oxfordshire.

The team attend industry events to pro-actively promote Oxfordshire's MICE offer (meetings, incentive travel, conference and exhibitions) to targeted markets. We have previously attended MeetGB, MeetEngland, IMEX and the Meetings Show.

Our services include: **Partner Referral Service**, find and book groups accommodation, recommending venues and experiences, providing delegate welcome packs and information, production of digital venues guide, hosting venues website and managing a dedicated venues social media presence.







**OXFORD OFFICIAL  
WALKING TOURS®**



## Oxford Official Walking Tours

**Experience Oxfordshire** operates public and private walking tours under its **Oxford Official Walking Tours** brand and it is an important part of our income generating activity. Guides welcome and entertain visitors from across the globe with an extensive programme of award-winning experiences.

From the most popular tour, Oxford University & City, which helps visitors get behind the stonework of the magnificent institutions, through more specialist tours exploring Lyra's

Oxford for fans of Philip Pullman's *His Dark Materials* and *Book of Dust* to Oxford as a film set, with tours of the backdrops to the *Inspector Morse*, *Lewis* and *Endeavour* series and a *Harry Potter* Highlights tour.

Walking tours offer visitors an introduction to local businesses, experiences and attractions and are marketed as a key element of an enjoyable overnight stay. Experience Oxfordshire's tours consistently receive 5-star TripAdvisor reviews.



Jane D  
Leamington Spa, UK • 259 contributions



**FANTASTIC - Must Do!**

Fantastic!

Must do!

Hannah our guide was superb!

The pace of the walk and the amount of information shared was perfect. Some really interesting and memorable facts.

It lasted just over 2hrs. We are so glad we did it in the morning as Hannah had lots of hints & tips on where to go / what to do for the rest of the day.

Would highly recommend

[Read less](#) ^

Written 29 May 2022

# The Value of the Visitor Economy to Oxfordshire

The Visitor Economy is a vitally important sector in Oxfordshire. Prior to the pandemic we welcomed 31 million visitors to the county who spent £2.5 billion in the local economy which in turn supported 42,000 jobs. At **Experience Oxfordshire** we monitor national and local trends and survey visitors and businesses to measure the performance of the destination. We are currently monitoring the pace and nature of recovery to pre-pandemic levels.



## Experience Oxfordshire Board Members and Trustees



**Joanna Davidson** CBE  
current Chair of Experience Oxfordshire having previously been Chief Executive of two local authorities and on the Finance and Resources Committee



**Miranda Markham**  
Community Relations Director, Bicester Village and Deputy Lieutenant of Oxfordshire



**Stuart Crook**  
Partner at Wellers and on the Finance and Resources Committee



**Dominic Hare**  
Chief Executive Officer Blenheim Palace



**Christopher Wigg**  
Chair of Finance and Resources Committee Former Treasurer and Financial Director at St Anne's College, University of Oxford



**Tom Bridgman**  
Executive Director for Development Oxford City Council



**Nicola Poole**  
Director of Innovation and Culture Hedges Law



**Cllr Duncan Enright**  
Oxfordshire County Council Cabinet Member for Travel and Development Strategy





## Our Ambition Statement

Experience Oxfordshire's Ambition Statement was developed before the global pandemic impacted, at a time when Oxfordshire welcomed **31 million visitors** each year generating an annual value of more than **£2.5bn** for the local economy and supporting some **42,000 jobs**. The principles outlined in the Ambition Statement remain equally relevant, if not even more critical, today as we look forward, with hope, to a recovery of the sector and a return of domestic and international markets to Oxfordshire for business and leisure tourism.

### Experience Oxfordshire's ambitions are to:

- Work with businesses and stakeholders to improve growth and productivity across the visitor economy; leading effective destination management, whilst ensuring that tourism works for everyone across Oxfordshire
- Encourage visits that offer the best balance of impact and contribution to the county
- Work to deliver a joint vision of pride in place across the city and county that engages with both residents and visitors to improve welcome and experience
- Spread the tourist season throughout the year to decrease the impact of seasonality and to encourage visitors to explore the whole county of Oxfordshire
- Increase overnight stays from both international and domestic visitors ensuring an increased spend per visit
- Encourage and enable the exploration of cultural treasures across the county by local people
- Advocate for the importance of the sector and influence stakeholders to address issues that hinder productivity and growth and to encourage skills development and job creation
- Drive growth across the visitor economy by increasing the value of visitor expenditure by 5% year-on-year
- Encourage long term investment and support from the public and private sector to ensure that the county has a sustainable DMO that can deliver on destination management ambitions and drive growth
- Grow the Experience Oxfordshire partnership and make it work for small and large businesses, offering a flexible value for money proposition

Experience Oxfordshire will deliver this by seeking investment from partners and stakeholders and providing a range of services for partners. The organisation prides itself in being a partnership where every business has a place and everyone can benefit.

# Application

We are seeking a new Chair of the Board to start in spring 2023 to allow for a handover from the current Chair, Joanna Davidson CBE, who will be stepping down after six years.

## The Position:

Chair of the Board of Trustees of Experience Oxfordshire Charitable Trust and Chair of the Board of Experience Oxfordshire Limited.

Experience Oxfordshire is a not for profit organisation and there are currently eight trustees and directors; all unpaid volunteers. The role of the Chair is to provide leadership to the Board and see that it has the skills and experience required to govern, develop and support the business. The Chair is line manager of the Chief Executive.

The last three years have seen a major restructuring of the organisation resulting from removal of significant local authority funding and the impact of the Covid 19 pandemic, which drastically reduced trading income. Successful grant applications allowed the organisation to continue to support local businesses and champion the role of the visitor economy. Experience Oxfordshire has a high local and national profile; the recovery of the visitor economy is underway and the DMO is well placed to participate in proposed arrangements for streamlining and re-structuring DMOs in England.

## Experience

- ▶ We are looking for someone with knowledge of the county, its visitor attractions and an understanding of local issues coupled with an appreciation of the local economy and politics and good connections with relevant Oxfordshire, regional and national networks.
- ▶ You will have held senior leadership positions with a broad range of business and commercial experience including developing and implementing strategy and the ability to apply this in a small/medium sized organisation.
- ▶ Experience working in both the public and private sector would be valuable alongside an understanding of the principles of running a charitable organisation and not for profit organisation.
- ▶ Practical and personal experience in effectively chairing board meetings.
- ▶ An understanding of and passion for the visitor economy would be desirable.

## Personal Attributes

- ▶ Excellent interpersonal skills, public speaking, dealing with media, internal communications and building and maintaining relationships with stakeholders.
- ▶ Able to listen, analyse, prioritise and inspire.

## Commitment

- ▶ There are quarterly Board Meetings and Finance & Resources Committee meetings.
- ▶ Time commitment is up to four days a month which can be spread across a number of days, meetings and events.
- ▶ Flexibility is necessary to attend meetings or functions early or late in the day.
- ▶ The role is unpaid and the appointment is for an initial three year term.

If you would like to discuss this further with the existing Chair of the company, Chair of the Finance and Resources Committee or the Chief Executive then please contact Julie French who will be able to schedule meetings as appropriate on [julie.french@experienceoxfordshire.org](mailto:julie.french@experienceoxfordshire.org) or call **01865 868432**.

The application deadline is 12 noon on Tuesday 31st January 2023. Applications should consist of a full curriculum vitae along with a covering letter of application addressing the role and person specification and your reasons for applying. All applications should be sent to [julie.french@experienceoxfordshire.org](mailto:julie.french@experienceoxfordshire.org)