

The Sherborne

home for the arts, in the South West

THE
SHERBORNE

Head of Development

Role	**Head of Development**
Location	The Sherborne, Sherborne, Dorset
Hours	Full-time, 40 hours per week (Or part-time 32 hrs/week)
Salary	£60,000–£65,000, commensurate with experience
Reports to	Chief Executive Officer
Contract	Permanent
Probation	3 months

A message from the CEO

“The Sherborne is a young organisation with incredible potential. Since opening in 2024, we have achieved a great deal - from being awarded the South West Refurbishment/Revitalisation Award at the RICS UK Awards 2026, to winning the Arts, Culture and Theatre category for Dorset, Somerset and Bristol in the 2026 Muddy Stilettos Awards, to being celebrated by Condé Nast Traveller as a catalyst in Sherborne's creative momentum - and yes, a Loo of the Year award too, because we believe every detail matters. There is still enormous potential ahead of us, and the Head of Development is a new role, with the unique opportunity to shape our philanthropic strategy from the ground up.

You'll be joining at a formative time - helping shape the case for support for an arts space that is both historic and contemporary. At its heart, this is a role about resourcing a tradition that runs through this building's DNA. This building has always been a place of creativity and thought leadership - in the nineteenth century, William Charles Macready hosted literary and scientific salons here, drawing guests including Charles Dickens, Robert Browning and William Makepeace Thackeray. That same

spirit is now being consolidated and embedded in our growing programmes; This role will help fund and sustain the Charity for the long term. This is a rare opportunity to work with extraordinary individuals and organisations, and to help ensure The Sherborne continues to flourish as a home for the arts, in the South West."

About The Sherborne

The Sherborne is a heritage landmark in the thriving Dorset market town of Sherborne, and one of the newest cultural venues in the UK - a home for the arts in the South West, with a cultural programme of growing ambition and impact. After more than 30 years of unsuccessful restoration attempts, this Grade I listed Georgian house reopened in spring 2024 after extensive renovation, and is home to the nationally significant Thornhill Mural alongside an equally striking contemporary pavilion extension.

We believe in sharing inspiring creative and culinary experiences for everyone to enjoy. Visitors can experience exhibitions and events, beautiful gardens, our iconic restaurant, bar and coffee pavilion, and a shop showcasing artisanal creators and makers, all within an 'art everywhere' ethos.

The Sherborne's restoration was undertaken with great sensitivity to its historic fabric and a strong commitment to sustainability - principles which now extend to how the building is used. Our upstairs galleries house a changing exhibition programme, alongside separate facilities for hot-desk and office hire, including our top-floor offices, and further art-filled spaces within the historic house available for private hire.

The Sherborne was reborn in 2024 thanks to the extraordinary generosity and drive of philanthropist and food and beverage entrepreneur Michael Cannon, a role continued by his wife, Sally Cannon. His vision for The Sherborne continues to be built upon

Our mission

Our mission - shaped through consultation with the local community, including students from Gryphon School, and refined with our design partners, Rose Design - is to inspire audiences, artists and communities across the South West, Wessex and beyond, with a cultural programme of local relevance and national ambition: exhibitions in galleries and sculpture gardens, heritage (including natural heritage), indoor and outdoor music, dance and theatre performances, outreach and events, and wellbeing and yoga in the gardens - enhanced by elegant dining, flexible events

spaces, artist residencies, and a beautifully curated shop - accessible to all. Our aim is to be a cultural hub for the South West, locally and regionally relevant, while drawing audiences from across the region and nationally.

Governance and Finances

The Sherborne House Trust 2018 is governed by a Board of Trustees. Trustees meet quarterly and as required to conduct the business of the charity and to provide strategic direction. Sherborne House Enterprises Ltd is the commercial subsidiary for the Charity and is managed by a Board of Directors that also meet quarterly.

The Group turnover for 2025/2026 was £2,065,868, of which SHE contributed £1,142,846 and £800,000 was donated by our principal benefactor. Income from other charitable activities, including cultural events was £83,240.

Our strategy and ambition is to continue to drive income through F&B, however, this alone will not provide sufficient income for the Charity to become self-sustaining. As such our overall income strategy is focused on developing a mix of earned income (through F&B and through our cultural programme) and contributed income (through fundraising).

An outstanding heritage asset, reimagined and restored for posterity

The Sherborne is where history meets innovation - an arts and cultural space breathing new life into one of Sherborne's most iconic buildings. Behind its Georgian façade lies a story stretching back more than 800 years: from its early life as a bishop's estate - a mansion, courthouse and barn built by Bishop Richard Poore for the newly chartered medieval borough of Newland - to the grand vision of Sir Henry Seymour Portman in the 1720s, the house has always been a place of ambition, artistry and reinvention. Pevsner himself described it as “a very handsome early Georgian mansion”.

Sherborne as Dorset Town of Culture 2027

Sherborne has been named by The Sunday Times as one of the best places to live in the South West and - most recently - as Dorset Town of Culture 2027, following a competitive bid process run by Dorset Council and the Arts Development Company. We're proud to be playing our part in the town's Town of Culture success; from this year's Zak Ové sculpture, extending from Pageant Gardens to The Sherborne itself, to 2028 plans for a Wessex Culture Trail across art forms, and the celebration of Sherborne's own remarkable cultural heritage and alumni. Liz Gilmore, our CEO, has

been invited to be one of the directors of the Town of Culture 2027 to provide strategic advice and help shape the creative programme.

Role Purpose

This is a new leadership role at a pivotal moment in The Sherborne's development.

The Head of Development will lead fundraising strategy for the charity – bringing a dynamic and entrepreneurial approach to maximising income from a variety of fundraising sources. Working closely with the CEO and the Board, the postholder will enable The Sherborne's artistic, cultural and public impact, and lay the foundations for long-term financial sustainability, independent of any single benefactor.

The postholder will have the opportunity to shape The Sherborne's case for support building on clear evidence of cultural and organisational impact. You will then build a programme of fundraising activity centred on exploring and implementing a major donor programme, developing our membership scheme, establishing a legacy programme and a suite of Trust and Foundation opportunities to support our core programming and activity. You will work closely with the CEO on all of this, as well as developing funding though Arts Council and government grants.

The successful candidate will create the pathways for sustainable income growth over the next five to seven years, working across the charity to identify and develop fundraising opportunities.

Key Responsibilities

Fundraising strategy and execution

- Lead the development and delivery of a clear, multi-year fundraising strategy aligned to the charity's mission, strategic plan and risk profile - spanning major donor, grants, legacies, and memberships - to support long-term sustainability.
- Identify and develop new income opportunities and innovative approaches, informed by insight, performance data and external best practice.

Donor cultivation and stewardship

Build and maintain strong relationships with existing and prospective donors, ensuring engagement through personalised communication, events and recognition. This includes:

- Major donor and HNW fundraising - working closely with the CEO and Board to leverage and grow strategic networks; designing and leading a

major giving strategy focused on high-net-worth individuals, and private philanthropists, built on trust, alignment and shared ambition.

- Patron and membership programmes – developing The Sherborne's existing Patrons' scheme and membership programmes to maximise income, strengthen loyalty and engagement, and build structured supporter journeys.
- Legacy giving and endowment - leading the development of a legacy giving programme, and exploring the potential for a long-term endowment strategy, including with our founding philanthropist and other associated high-net-worth individuals.
- Trusts & Foundations - leading relationships and income generation from trusts, foundations and institutional funders, and building a strategic pipeline aligned with organisational priorities, including towards a future Arts Council England National Portfolio application and National Lottery Heritage Fund opportunities.

Grant and proposal management

- Oversee the preparation, submission and tracking of grant applications, ensuring compliance with funder requirements and timely reporting.

Budgeting and financial oversight

- Work with the finance function to develop budgets, track revenue projections, and monitor fundraising performance against target - analysing return on investment across fundraising activity and adjusting approach as needed.

Compliance and record-keeping

- Maintain accurate donor records, and ensure all fundraising activity complies with Charity Commission requirements, the Fundraising Regulator's Code of Practice, and data protection legislation.
- Research and introduce an appropriate CRM.

Cultivation and collaboration

- Work across departments to align fundraising with the charity's mission, and lead cultivation and stewardship events - private views, talks, dinners and behind-the-scenes experiences.

Leadership and growth

- Contribute to organisational strategy, business planning and long-term sustainability planning as a member of the senior team.

Person Specification

Essential

- Significant experience in fundraising leadership across a multi-stream income portfolio.
- A demonstrable track record of delivering significant income growth, partnership development or step-change results.
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills, with the ability to articulate complex ideas clearly and credibly.
- The ability to influence, negotiate and engage confidently with senior stakeholders.
- The ability to build effective cross-organisational relationships and work collaboratively to shape and deliver partnership propositions.
- A sound working knowledge of UK charity governance, regulation and compliance requirements.
- An entrepreneurial and proactive mindset and approach to exploring and exploiting income generation opportunities in the current market.

Desirable

- Experience of fundraising within arts, culture or heritage organisations.
- Experience of legacy giving and/or endowment development.

Summary Terms and Conditions

Role Title:	Head of Development
Reports to:	CEO
Contract:	Permanent
Salary:	£60,000 - £65,000 per annum (depending on experience)
Hours of Work:	This role is offered as a full-time position. The working week is 40 hours. Usual office hours are 9am – 5pm, Monday to Friday. The nature of this role does necessitate some additional working outside of office

	hours. No overtime will be paid but time off in lieu (TOIL) may be taken with prior agreement.
Location:	Staff are based at our office building at The Sherborne working a minimum of 3 days a week from the office.
Probationary Period:	3 months
Notice Period:	3 months (after satisfactory completion of probation)
Annual Leave:	20 days plus all English bank holidays
Other Benefits:	Statutory Pension contribution One free coffee/tea from the Pavilion Bar on any working day A 10% discount in the shop and restaurant Access to Bright Exchange discounts
References:	All offers of employment will be subject to the receipt of satisfactory references.

Further Information

To discuss the role in more detail please contact Vicki Grace, Director of Recruitment and Organisational Change at Achates who are supporting us with this process, by emailing vicki@achates.org.uk to set up a confidential conversation.

How to apply

To apply for the role of Head of Development at The Sherborne please send a supporting statement (of no more than 2 pages) outlining why you want to work for us and how you meet the requirements of the role along with your CV (of no more than 2 pages) to recruits@achates.org.uk.

Please include the names of two people who can provide a reference. At least one of these should be your current or most recent employer (please note: no referees will be contacted without your prior consent).

Application Timeline

Application Deadline: 9am Wednesday 6 January, in person at The Sherborne
First Round Interviews: Wednesday 13 January 2027, in person at The Sherborne
Second Round Interviews: Tuesday 19 January 2027, in person at The Sherborne