



In partnership with

Julie's Bicycle

CREATIVE • CLIMATE • ACTION

Join the Happy Museum Steering Group

Would you like to join us in **re-imagining museums for a sustainable future by fostering wellbeing that doesn't cost the earth?**

Museums face a host of pressing challenges – the ongoing effects of the pandemic, the cost of living crises, rising energy prices, pressure on funding streams and more. These combine with wider, deeper and accelerating challenges: the climate and ecological emergency, systemic inequality and social injustice.

At Happy Museum we see the wellbeing of people, place and planet as even more important, and at risk. This is a critical moment to re-consider the role of museums in creating a resilient and regenerative society: facing current realities whilst bringing a positive, imaginative and future-facing frame. Our manifesto can be found [here](#).

Happy Museum (HM) works in partnership with Julie's Bicycle, which holds legal and financial oversight for Happy Museum (read more about this relationship in the background details below). The Steering Group helps to shape HM's strategic direction and generate new opportunities. Find more about our current members [here](#).

We are now seeking to recruit up to 6 additional members (up to 10 people in all).

The Steering Group actively contributes to Happy Museums work through:

- **Advocacy and Support**, sharing the work of Happy Museum – including speaking at events, being a vocal supporter and highlighting the importance of embedding [Happy Museum principles](#)
- **Creating Connections**, participating in a thriving and vibrant community of practice, making links and recognising opportunities to build and develop activity
- **Reflecting and Reviewing**, offering practical insight and tangible applications of the Happy Museum principles.

The Steering Group meets approximately 6 times per year and Steering Group members should expect to attend these as well as to actively contribute to HM's work outside of meetings.

We are seeking Steering Group members with these qualities:

- Passionate about the purpose of Happy Museum
- Able to think and act strategically
- Capacity to contribute to the work of Happy Museum and the Steering Group

- Able to embrace risk and complexity
- Able to balance courage with control and challenging where needed
- Strong interpersonal skills to engage diverse stakeholders, broker relationships and networks and act as a spokesperson for HM
- Capacity to oversee (with others) the work of the Director and other freelance team members
- Capacity for future thinking/legacy

We are keen to include, but are not limited to:

- Members of Happy Museum's Community of Practice
- People from beyond the sector and from different disciplines or expertise
- A diversity of age and background, and diversity of ideas and perspectives
- People from outside of the UK
- An early career museum professional (we will provide mentoring support)

New members of the Steering Group will serve a three- year term. Members may put themselves forward for one further term, up to a maximum of six years.

The Steering Group is chaired by the Convenor – this is a rotating role for a Steering Group member for up to six months.

If you are interested in joining the Steering Group, please send us an **Expression of Interest (not more than 750 words) responding to these questions:**

What is your interest in the Happy Museum Project?

What do you see as the most pressing and challenging issues facing museums, staff, volunteers, and visitors at this time?

What do you believe you would bring to the Steering Group?

What support might you need in order to fully engage with the role?

What do you hope you might gain from the role?

How would your participation contribute to a diverse and inclusive Steering Group?

Please send this by the end of Sunday 5 March 2023 to happymuseumproject@gmail.com.

The selection and induction of Steering Group members will be made by existing members. Selection will be made through the Expressions of Interest and through interview.

Background to the Happy Museum Board governance and our current Steering Group Terms of Reference can be found below.

If you would like an informal chat about the role before putting yourself forward, please contact current Steering Group member Lisa Ollerhead at ljollerhead@googlemail.com.

Background to Happy Museum governance

Between 2011 and 2014 Happy Museum (HM) commissioned activities by museums and gathered the learning generated by our community of practice, as well as undertaking complementary research. In autumn 2014, the core HM team agreed to focus on a 5-year programme of work to explore the deeper and longer term impact on organisations and individuals of a focus on the wellbeing of people, place and planet, at the completion of which we intended to review and potentially bring the project to a close.

From 2011 to 2016, HM operated as an un-constituted project with funding managed through the Museum of East Anglian Life and subsequently People United, which also supported our governance development and management. In 2016 HM became a Community Interest Company (CIC) with three directors and three further board members.

In 2016, HM received Museum Resilience Funding from Arts Council England (ACE) for two years to support a longer term programme of work with these outcomes:

- Experimentation and learning lead to better practice
- People feel a real and different future
- Flourishing organisations
- Wellbeing and sustainability embraced and embedded.

HM was unable to secure further funding from ACE from 2018 to continue this broad programme of work. Subsequently, HM has maintained its work through a series of smaller and discrete programmes of work, including: workshops hosted by museums in our Community of Practice; collaborations with organisations including Common Cause Foundation, Clore Leadership Programme, Culture Declares and Playful Places; active involvement in networks like Co-Creating Change and the Alliance for Culture Health and Wellbeing; contributions at conferences and workshops in the UK and beyond.

In 2020, we launched [No Going Back](#), a commission within the *Season for Change programme*, building on the particular power of museums to draw on past stories of rapid transition and transformation; and inspire museums and their communities to shape new stories and actions to address the climate and ecological emergency.

The Happy Museum did not set out to become an organisation – rather, to be an ongoing project. In 2020 the board decided to terminate the CIC, which had not served a useful purpose, and to enter a mutually beneficial partnership with Julie’s Bicycle. A partnership agreement and memorandum of understanding define this relationship, and at least one team member of Julie’s Bicycle is present at Happy Museum Steering Group meetings.

HM’s assets include intellectual property (with an extensive suite of open resources), our website, Community of Practice, networks and contacts.

Happy Museum Steering Group - Terms of Reference

1. Steering Group Role and Purpose

The Steering Group actively contributes to Happy Museum's work through:

1.1 Advocacy and Support, sharing the work of Happy Museum – including speaking at events, being a vocal supporter and highlighting the importance of embedding Happy Museum principles

1.2 Creating Connections, participating in a thriving and vibrant community of practice, making links and recognising opportunities to build and develop activity

1.3 Reflecting and Reviewing, offering practical insight and tangible applications of the Happy Museum principles.

2. Steering Group Membership

2.1 Founding members of the Steering Group will each serve a four-year term, concluding by the end of July 2025.

2.2 Non-founding members of the Steering Group will serve three-year terms.

2.3 Members can renew their membership of the Steering Group once, serving two terms consecutively. **2.4** The Steering Group will consist of up to 10 active members at any one time

2.5 Members should provide as much notice as possible if they decide to stand down before the end of their term.

2.6 Members of the Steering Group will be deemed to have stood down from the Steering Group if they have not attended three consecutive meetings.

2.7 Former members of the Steering Group may in confidence and without obligation share information about their decision to stand down with the Happy Museum Director.

2.8 The person specification for prospective new members is open to review.

3. Steering Group Roles

3.1 The Steering Group operates without an elected Chairperson and thus avoids any imbalance that appointing a 'First Amongst Equals' position can present within the dynamic of the group.

3.2 Instead, the role of Steering Group Convener is shared amongst members of the group, alternating between members every 6 months.

3.3 The role of the Steering Group Convener is to:

3.3.1 Arrange 3 consecutive bi-monthly meetings of the Steering Group

3.3.2 Consult with all members of the group and the Happy Museum project team to set Steering Group meeting agendas.

- 3.3.3 Agree and distribute agenda and minutes of meetings in a timely manner
- 3.3.4 Act as chair for the meetings they convene, ensuring all members have a voice
- 3.3.5 Ensure that actions are recorded and reported on at subsequent meetings.
- 3.3.6 Maintain records of the proceedings of the Steering Group.

4. Meetings Frequency and Conduct

- 4.1 Steering Group meetings will take place at least on a quarterly basis.
- 4.2 There will be an open invitation to the Happy Museum project team and a representative of Julie's Bicycle to attend all Steering Group meetings.
- 4.3 Additional meetings may be called as necessary.
- 4.4 Standing items on meeting agendas have not been defined; however given the group's purpose, Steering Group meetings will continually consider activity responding to: Advocacy and Support; Creating Connections; Reflections & Review.

5. Decision Making

- 5.1 Any decisions that the Steering Group are required to make will be made by establishing a general consensus through open discussion and all steering group members will have opportunity to raise objections to any conclusion before they are enacted.
- 5.2 The Steering Group's role is to support and steer the Happy Museum project and where consensus cannot be reached we will present options for consideration.

6. Resources

- 6.1 Members of the Steering Group all serve on a voluntary and unpaid basis.
- 6.2 Any expense claims must be justified with approval of the Steering Group and the Happy Museum project team.

Terms of Reference Review Date: Annually in consultation and with consent of Happy Museum project team and Julie's Bicycle.