

Swanage Railway

Job Description - Retail Officer

Job Title: Retail Officer

Reports To: Chief Executive Officer (CEO)

Salary: £30K

Hours: Full-time, **40 hours per week**, worked **5 days out of 7** (including weekends, bank holidays, and event days as required)

Location: Swanage Railway - across all retail outlets including Swanage, Corfe Castle, Norden, on-train retail, and pop-up / seasonal outlets

Job Purpose

The Retail Officer **takes full ownership of Swanage Railway's retail operation**, with responsibility for the standards, performance, and day-to-day running of all shops and retail outlets across the Railway.

This is a **hands-on, visible role**, requiring the postholder to lead from the front by rotating between outlets, working alongside volunteers, and ensuring consistently high standards of presentation, service, and stock availability. The Retail Officer is accountable for ensuring that retail forms a core part of the visitor experience for **all visitors to the Railway**, while also delivering strong commercial performance.

Working closely with the Chief Executive Officer, the Retail Officer will lead on buying, merchandising, volunteer rostering, and event retail, ensuring the retail operation supports Swanage Railway's heritage, educational mission, and financial sustainability.

Key Responsibilities

Shop Ownership & Retail Operations

- **Take full ownership of all Swanage Railway retail outlets**, acting as the accountable lead for their operation and performance.
- Manage the day-to-day running of shops, kiosks, on-train retail, and seasonal outlets.
- Be a **visible, hands-on presence** in shops, regularly rotating across all outlets.
- Deliver excellent customer service to **all visitors**, ensuring a welcoming and inclusive experience.
- Ensure retail spaces are clean, welcoming, well-presented, and professionally run at all times.

- Lead by example, setting expectations for service, standards, and behaviour.
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Stock, Buying & Merchandising

- Lead the **day-to-day buying and replenishment of retail stock** across all outlets.
 - Plan buying cycles in line with the operating season, events calendar, galas, and visitor profiles.
 - Source products that reflect Swanage Railway's brand, heritage, and educational mission.
 - **Work with the CEO to identify, approve, and introduce new product ranges**, including exclusive and limited-edition merchandise.
 - Liaise with suppliers, place orders, manage deliveries, and resolve supply issues.
 - Ensure effective stock rotation, strong availability, and minimal waste.
 - Maintain accurate stock records and complete regular stocktakes.
 - Ensure merchandise is attractively displayed to maximise sales and visitor engagement.
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Events, Galas & Seasonal Retail

- **Plan, deliver, and take ownership of merchandise for galas and special events**, including Steam & Diesel Galas, Halloween, Christmas, and other seasonal activities.
 - Forecast quantities, manage stock levels during events, and review performance post-event.
 - Ensure a strong retail presence at events, including pop-up shops and on-train retail where appropriate.
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Volunteers & Rostering

- Recruit, train, support, and retain retail volunteers.
 - **Prepare and manage volunteer rosters** to ensure all retail outlets are appropriately covered.
 - Provide day-to-day supervision, guidance, and support to volunteers working in retail roles.
 - Act as the first point of contact for retail-related queries, issues, and problem-solving.
 - Create a positive, inclusive, and supportive environment for volunteers.
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Commercial Performance & Continuous Improvement

- Monitor sales trends and stock performance to inform buying and merchandising decisions.
 - Identify opportunities to improve layout, flow, displays, and customer experience.
 - Drive continuous improvement across the retail operation.
 - Suggest promotions, seasonal offers, and cross-selling opportunities.
 - Promote membership, donations, and add-on sales where appropriate.
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Compliance & Standards

- Ensure all retail activity complies with Swanage Railway's health & safety and safeguarding policies.
 - Follow agreed procedures for stock control and sales systems.
 - Maintain high professional standards at all times.
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Person Specification

Essential

- Strong customer service and interpersonal skills, with a welcoming approach to all visitors.
- Experience in retail, hospitality, or visitor-facing roles.
- Experience of stock control, buying, or merchandising.
- Ability to take ownership and work independently.
- Experience supporting or working with volunteers.
- Organised, reliable, and detail-focused.
- Flexible and willing to work weekends, evenings, and busy event periods.

Desirable

- Experience supervising or leading a retail team.
 - Experience in a visitor attraction, heritage organisation, or charity.
 - Understanding of retail performance, margins, and stock turnover.
 - Interest in heritage, education, or tourism.
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Values & Expectations

All Swanage Railway staff and volunteers are expected to:

- Act with **integrity, respect, and professionalism.**

- Place **safety and visitor experience** at the heart of everything they do.
- Support and empower colleagues and volunteers.
- Promote Swanage Railway's heritage and educational mission.
- Always act in the best interests of Swanage Railway.