

Swanage Railway

Job Description: Learning & Community Engagement Manager

Reports to: Chief Executive Officer

Hours: 4 days per week (32 hours)

Location: Swanage Railway, Dorset

Salary: £33,000 pro rata

Contract: Permanent

Purpose of the Role

The Learning & Community Engagement Manager will lead the development and delivery of Swanage Railway's learning, interpretation, and community engagement programmes. The postholder will play a central role in realising the Railway's mission to educate, inspire, and connect people with railway heritage, creating inclusive experiences for schools, families, volunteers, and the wider community.

This role will strengthen the Railway's position as an educational charity and community asset – supporting heritage learning, volunteering pathways, lifelong learning opportunities, and meaningful community partnerships.

Key Responsibilities

Learning and Interpretation

- Develop and deliver a dynamic Learning Programme for schools, colleges, and youth groups linked to the National Curriculum and heritage learning outcomes.
- Design and lead curriculum-linked workshops, tours, and interactive sessions (both on-site and outreach).
- Work with volunteers and staff to enhance interpretation across stations, museums, and exhibitions.
- Create learning resources, trails, and digital materials that make railway heritage engaging and accessible to all ages.
- Evaluate the learning programme through feedback, participation data, and impact measures.

Community Engagement

- Build strong relationships with local community organisations, schools, and councils, ensuring the Railway is inclusive and reflective of the Purbeck community.

- Develop outreach initiatives that reach underrepresented audiences and promote diversity, inclusion, and wellbeing.
- Coordinate community projects, events, and partnerships that use the Railway as a platform for learning and connection.
- Support volunteering pathways for young people and families, including the 'Sygnets' youth volunteering scheme.

Partnerships and Collaboration

- Collaborate with museums, heritage networks, and educational partners such as local schools, and universities.
- Represent the Railway in local and regional education networks and forums.
- Work with the Marketing and Communications team to promote learning and engagement activity.

Project Development and Funding

- Identify and apply for external funding (e.g., Heritage Fund, local authority, corporate sponsorship) to support educational and engagement initiatives.
- Manage project budgets, timelines, and reporting requirements.
- Support strategic initiatives linked to the Railway's Vision, Mission, and Values and its charitable educational objectives.

Volunteer Support and Training

- Recruit, train, and support volunteers to deliver education and community activities.
- Create learning opportunities for volunteers, including heritage skills, public engagement, and interpretation.
- Foster a culture of inclusion, recognition, and empowerment in line with the Railway's values.

Person Specification

Essential

Proven experience developing and delivering learning programmes within a museum, heritage, or education setting

Excellent communication and presentation skills for diverse audiences

Strong understanding of curriculum design and informal learning methods

Desirable

Knowledge of the heritage railway or transport sector

Experience in digital learning and online engagement

Experience writing successful funding applications

Experience in partnership working with schools and community organisations

Qualification in teaching, museum education, or heritage management

Ability to lead, motivate, and work collaboratively with volunteers

Knowledge of Dorset and Purbeck's local communities

Excellent project management and organisational skills

Understanding of safeguarding and inclusion in education settings

Commitment to the values of Integrity, Safety, Respect, Education, and Empowerment

Values and Behaviours

The postholder is expected to demonstrate Swanage Railway's five values in all areas of their work:

- Integrity – act honestly, transparently, and in the best interests of the Railway.
- Safety – place the safety and wellbeing of passengers, staff, and volunteers above all else.
- Respect – treat everyone with dignity, professionalism, and fairness.
- Education – promote learning, curiosity, and understanding of heritage.
- Empowerment – enable others to flourish, contribute, and take pride in their work.

Additional Information

- The postholder may be required to work occasional evenings, weekends, or school holidays.
- The role requires an enhanced DBS check and adherence to the Railway's Safeguarding Policy.
- Based at Swanage with travel along the line and local community sites.