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**SHARE Museums East Volunteer Awards**

*for Museums in the East*

**Guidance notes for Applications**

**Introduction**

We are pleased to announce that the SHARE Volunteer Awards are now open for

nominations. Most of the museums in the SHARE region could not open to the public

without the support of volunteers and once again we want to recognise this massive contribution across our region. Volunteers play a major role in caring for and interpreting our heritage and culture, ensuring that it is accessible to all. The Awards will recognise the immense input volunteers make to the East’s museums, large and small.

These Awards are an ideal chance to highlight how important volunteers are to museums, showcase the range of roles volunteers undertake, and show the diversity of the people who offer their time as volunteers. In addition, through these awards, SHARE will highlight best practice in both volunteering and volunteer management.

The Awards are funded by Arts Council England through their Museum Development

programme, managed in the region by SHARE Museums East.

The Awards will be presented at an informal ceremony and celebration that will take place between **6pm to 8 pm on Wednesday 8 June 2016** at the Museum of East Anglian Life, Stowmarket. We will invite all nominees to this event.

**Who can we nominate?**

You can nominate anyone who has volunteered in an Accredited (or Working Towards Accreditation) East of England region museum over the last year, including volunteer Trustees.

* The museum must be Accredited or be actively Working Towards Accreditation.
* Nominations are welcome from museums of all shapes and sizes.
* Museums can only nominate once in each category, and may not nominate the same team/volunteer for more than one category.
* If you are a museum or museum service with more than one site, you can treat each site as a separate museum.

**What will the judges be looking for?**

Successful nominations will evoke one or more of these thoughts in the judges’ minds –

• “I wish I’d thought of that.”

• “That’s really made a positive difference.”

• “What amazing commitment.”

• “This group/person really understands what their museum needs.”

• “I wish we had more groups/people like this in the region”

• “We can easily use this project/result to inspire others.”

**How to nominate?**

We realise that nominating can be hard, so we have created a range of nomination categories that will recognise individual or team achievements.

Nominations need to be submitted by someone who has some form of working relationship with the nominee in question, whether as a supervisor, line manager, volunteer co-ordinator, team member, trustee or museum director.

Please nominate using the nomination form, which can be downloaded at

[**www.sharemuseumseast.org.uk/volunteer-awards**](http://www.sharemuseumseast.org.uk/volunteer-awards).

The deadline for nominations is Friday 21st April 2016. Late nominations cannot be accepted.

Nominations should be sent in electronic form to [**volunteerawards@norfolk.gov.uk**](mailto:volunteerawards@norfolk.gov.uk)

**We welcome nominations in the following categories:**

**Working Together Award**

**For volunteers who have brought their museum together to work with another organisation.**

This could be on a one-off, or regular basis but both parties will have benefitted and see potential for future collaboration.

e.g. Littletown Museum has a garden which needs upkeep. Volunteers approach Littletown Gardening Club for help. Gardening Club members start coming to maintain the museum garden. In return the museum offers them their meeting room for their winter party, and the museum puts on an evening talk for the group on gardening equipment in their collection. Further partnership work may develop… local gardens exhibition, museum volunteers offered places on the Gardening Club summer outings etc.

A mutually supportive relationship has blossomed!

*Nominations for Teams or Individuals*

**Outstanding Young Volunteer Award**

**Specifically for volunteers under the age of 25 who have excelled in any of the categories or who have achieved something else exceptional**. Young people are often overlooked or regarded as “just wanting to boost their CV” when volunteering. This is your opportunity to recognise those who really stand out. They may have contributed to a museum project or developed an innovative way of working while at the museum as well as being a positive ambassador.

*Nominations for Individuals*

**Volunteer Management Award**

**For someone who may be a paid member of staff or a volunteer; this could be their full time job or part of a broader role that they carry out.** The successful candidate will have shown strong skills in supporting and managing individual volunteers or teams of volunteers. They will have a proven ability to motivate people in their given task as well as the ability to work with empathy and understanding. They will be an effective communicator and have the capability to empower, encourage innovation, create an enjoyable working environment for all while raising the profile of volunteers within their organisation. Both volunteers and colleagues are able to nominate someone for this award.

*Nominations for Individuals*

**Unsung Heroes Award**

**For those whose contributions are not usually recognised by people outside their museum.**

The individual may empty the bins, act as a general fixer, or think of innovative ways to solve problems which have persisted for some time. Whenever needed they are already there and do not ask for thanks. It can apply to a particular project or to contributions over a more extended period. The principle is that your museum couldn’t operate without them, but in a way that may not be obvious and doesn’t regularly get recognised.

*Nominations for Individuals*

**Learning Volunteer Award**

**For volunteers who are enthusiastic about developing and delivering inspiring and engaging learning activities using their museum collections and buildings.**  They enjoy telling the stories held within their museum collections and bringing history to life for a wide range of visitors.  They may have developed a partnership with a local school or be delivering family learning activities but whatever they are doing it will be innovative and inspiring and will make visitors feel that they would love to find out more.

*Nominations for Teams or Individuals*

**Front of House Volunteer Award**

For volunteers who demonstrate excellence and innovation in their interaction with visitors. They will have a good knowledge of their museum, both its layout and collection. They will have been recognised by both their managers and visitors and should be seen as having tact and diplomacy in their interactions with the public. Ultimately, this award is for those who have improved the museum experience for all visitors.

*Nominations for Teams or Individuals*

**Trustee Award**

Much of the work of our Trustees, all of whom are volunteers, is under-appreciated because it takes place out of the sight of many in their organisations. This award will recognise outstanding contributions from those teams who set strategy and direct the work of our museums, ensuring that appropriate policies are in place and are delivered to the benefit of all. The category may include, for example, design and delivery of innovation with effective communication of intent across the organisation. There are also times when, without the leadership which only Trustees can give, serious problems might have arisen. Because of the nature of Trustees’ work, this is the only category in the scheme where volunteering over a longer period than the 2016/17 year will be considered.

*Nominations for Teams*

**Collections Champion Award**

This award is for volunteers who are committed to developing their museum’s collection and making it accessible to the public. Volunteers may work on the museum’s catalogue, help with conservation cleaning, or assist with displays and exhibitions. They understand the importance of balancing conservation considerations with access to the collection. Volunteers will enjoy thinking of innovative ways to make the collection accessible to diverse audiences. The successful candidate(s) will understand how the collection is key to the work of the museum and can be integrated into all areas of the organisations activity.

*Nominations for Teams or Individuals*