

Tender: Board Development Workshops

Museums and Heritage Highland – Pathways Project

1. About Museums and Heritage Highland

Museums and Heritage Highland (MHH) is a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation supporting museums and heritage organisations across the Highlands.

MHH is currently delivering the Pathways to the Future project, a two-year pilot designed to strengthen the sustainability and resilience of small rural museums. The project includes practical support for museum administration, income generation and organisational development, alongside opportunities to strengthen leadership, governance and wellbeing.

As part of the project, MHH is seeking an experienced consultant to deliver a programme of board development workshops for eight participating museums.

2. The opportunity

We are looking for a consultant with strong experience of charity governance and board development, ideally with a good understanding of the realities of small, rural and volunteer-led museums.

The appointed consultant will deliver one half-day workshop for each of the eight participating museums:

- Strathnaver Museum
- Waterlines Heritage Centre
- Historylinks Museum
- Tarbat Discovery Centre
- Tain & District Museum
- Highland Museum of Childhood
- Grantown Museum
- Mallaig Heritage Centre

The workshops should be practical, engaging and tailored to the needs of each individual board. We are particularly interested in an approach that helps boards to reflect on how they work together and gives them practical tools they can use beyond the workshop.

3. Workshop format

Each workshop should be approximately half a day and include two elements.

Part 1 – Board refresher

A shared core session of approximately **60–90 minutes** covering the fundamentals of effective board working.

We envisage this including areas such as:

- the role and responsibilities of trustees/board members
- the distinction between governance and operational management
- board/staff roles and relationships

- the importance of constructive challenge and diversity of thinking
- effective decision-making and appropriate use of risk
- strategic rather than operational thinking
- good communication and clear boundaries
- the importance of focusing on the organisation's purpose and long-term sustainability.

We would like the session to be accessible, participative and relevant to small, rural museums.

Part 2 – Bespoke board development

Following a short break, the consultant will deliver a bespoke session responding to the individual museum's priorities.

MHH's Museum Operations & Support Coordinator's will work with each museum to identify its priority area in advance. Potential topics could include:

- succession planning and trustee recruitment
- identifying future skills and board development needs
- developing or reviewing a forward plan
- strategic thinking and planning
- decision-making
- board/staff relationships
- roles and responsibilities
- improving board meetings
- effective challenge and constructive disagreement
- delegation and accountability
- other governance or organisational development priorities identified by the museum

The consultant will use the information gathered by MHH to develop an appropriate session for each museum. We would particularly welcome an approach that enables boards to work through real issues and leave with practical next steps, rather than simply receiving information.

4. Delivery

Our preference is for workshops to be delivered in person at each museum, allowing the consultant to understand the local context and work directly with the board.

However, we recognise the geographical spread of the participating museums and would consider online delivery where this is more practical or appropriate. A blended approach could also be considered by agreement with MHH.

All workshops should be delivered between November 2026 and March 2027. Dates will be agreed between the successful consultant, MHH and the participating museums.

The consultant will work closely with MHH throughout the programme, including with the Museum Operations & Support Coordinator, who will provide information about each museum and its identified priorities.

5. What we are looking for

We are particularly interested in consultants who can demonstrate:

- significant experience of charity governance and board/trustee development
- experience designing and facilitating effective board development or governance workshops
- an understanding of the **heritage and museum sector**
- an understanding of the particular challenges faced by **small, rural and/or volunteer-led organisations**

- an engaging and participative facilitation style
- the ability to adapt workshops to different organisations and levels of governance experience
- an ability to turn discussion into practical actions and improvements

We are less interested in a highly formal or compliance-led training approach. The workshops should be supportive, practical and encourage boards to think about how they can become more effective.

6. Budget

The total budget available is **£4,800 inclusive of VAT**.

This is intended to cover the delivery of the eight workshops and associated preparation and development of the bespoke sessions.

Consultants should clearly state their proposed fee and any assumptions about travel and expenses within their tender.

7. What to include in your tender

Please provide a short response (ideally no more than 4 pages) covering:

1. Your approach to delivering the workshops, including how you would structure the core board refresher and bespoke sessions.
2. Relevant experience, particularly experience of charity governance, board development and working with museums, heritage organisations or small rural organisations.
3. How you would identify and respond to the individual needs of each museum.
4. Proposed timescale and availability between November 2026 and March 2027.
5. Fee proposal, including VAT and any travel/other expenses.

Please also provide details of two relevant examples of previous work and the names/contact details of two referees who can comment on your relevant experience.

8. Assessment

Tenders will be assessed on:

Criteria	Weighting
Understanding of the brief and quality of proposed approach	30%
Relevant governance and board development experience	25%
Experience of museums, heritage and/or small rural organisations	20%
Quality of proposed approach to bespoke support and facilitation	15%
Value for money	10%
Total	100%

MHH may invite shortlisted consultants to a short conversation/interview before making an appointment.

9. How to apply

Please submit your tender and fee proposal to Museums and Heritage Highland by 15th September 2026, 5pm.

For further information about the brief, please contact Nicola Henderson,
nicola.henderson@museumsandheritagehighland.org.uk.

MHH reserves the right not to appoint if no submission is considered to offer suitable experience, approach and value for money.