

# Personal Statement

## Paul Baker

I have a proven track record in strategic leadership, team development, audience engagement, income generation and project management. I am ambitious for the organisations I represent and committed to inspiring others to achieve excellence. As a creative problem solver, I have extensive experience of transforming cultural organisations, and I am motivated by the potential for culture to make a meaningful difference in people's lives. I have led a wide range of museum teams and projects, several of which have received major sector awards.

My achievements include international recognition for innovation, sustained leadership within the heritage sector, and a strong record of transforming museums and historic sites. I am committed to both my own professional development and that of the teams I lead. I am a Fellow of the ACE-funded Museum Resilient Leadership programme, an international Best in Heritage Laureate, a European Award winner, Director of GEM's Emerging Leaders Programme, a Museum Development Midlands Board Member, and Chair of Trustees at Wirksworth Arts Festival. I also participate annually in the 'Be the Change' leadership programme for cultural professionals.

During my 5 years as Manager of Framework Knitters Museum, I led a transformative programme of organisational change, including a review of the business model and site expansion. This included the creation of a distinctive digital learning resource which received a European Award. Later at Creswell Crags, I was appointed following the loss of all council funding, which required a comprehensive review of operations, income streams and delivery models, alongside a renewed focus on professional and team development.

I currently work in a freelance capacity across a portfolio of fixed-term, part-time roles, some of which are nearing completion or are seasonal. My work focuses on leadership development, organisational planning, identifying commercial opportunities and mentoring. Prior to this, I was Executive Director of Creswell Heritage Trust for seven years until 2023. The Trust is responsible for Creswell Crags Museum and Archaeological Park, a well-established East Midlands attraction with over 100,000 visitors annually, a turnover exceeding £1 million, and a workforce of 50 staff and approximately 30 volunteers. I led a significant period of transition which delivered financial growth, increased visitor numbers, organisational rebranding, capital investment, and the recruitment and development of a new management team.

Throughout my career, I have represented and promoted the work of a range of cultural organisations, primarily independent charities with complex stakeholder environments, boards of trustees and diverse income streams. These roles have required careful relationship management, clear reporting and strong governance.

I have held a wide variety of roles within the sector and have developed extensive experience across all aspects of museum practice. This includes accreditation, financial management, volunteer recruitment, public programming, and team development. I have also managed a number of capital projects, taking responsibility for fundraising, reporting and evaluation.

My early career focused on curatorial practice and exhibition development. I was part of the team that relocated Birmingham's designated Science and Industry Collection and delivered

Thinktank. This experience informed my later work managing the relocation of the HM Prison Service collection from Rugby to Nottingham and the development of its associated gallery. Since then, I have continued to apply my creativity and entrepreneurial approach to building effective teams and challenging established ways of working.

I have predominantly worked within independent charities and have a strong affinity with the sector, particularly its focus on sustainability and resilience. I bring a clear consumer focus, a commercially driven mindset and a strong track record in developing and growing income and engagement opportunities. I have been particularly successful in fundraising, sponsorship and partnership development. Notable achievements include securing over £1 million in Culture Recovery Funding during the pandemic, establishing a partnership with the University of Nottingham Museum which enabled Creswell Crags to deliver their schools programme, and developing an innovative sponsorship agreement with a local brewery that created a new income stream for Framework Knitters Museum.

Prior to entering the heritage sector, I spent 15 years in retail, including store management roles, working as a Merchandiser in the Buying Office at Harvey Nichols in Knightsbridge, and as a Buying Assistant at the Covent Garden General Store. I later worked as a Training Advisor for the retail sector. This experience has given me a strong consumer focus, commercial awareness and transferable leadership skills. I subsequently returned to academia, achieving a first-class degree in Humanities from Nottingham Trent University, followed by an MA in Heritage Studies.

Throughout my career, I have built a reputation for innovation, entrepreneurship and creating cultures that encourage autonomy, ambition and creativity. I achieve results through collaboration with motivated staff and stakeholders, supported by clear objectives, effective prioritisation and strong time management. Further details are available on my website and LinkedIn pages.

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Website - <https://www.museumsthinkingdifferently.com/>