



Oxford Archaeology Director of People and Culture

**Candidate pack
August 2026**



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 **oxford
archaeology**



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Welcome

Thank you for your interest in joining Oxford Archaeology (OA) as our Director of People and Culture.

I've been Chief Finance Officer here since 2021, and one of the reasons I took this job is the same one that's probably drawing you to it - OA does something genuinely different.

We're a charity with more than 50 years' history in archaeology, and also a busy commercial operation of nearly 500 people working on everything from a single house extension to major national infrastructure schemes like HS2. Seeing a Roman mosaic emerge from a trench, or watching a school group hold a genuine fragment of the past for the first time, isn't something most finance leaders get to witness. I suspect you'll feel that same pull toward our purpose, whatever your own background.

We've grown fast, and that growth is something everyone here should be proud of. But it also means the people, culture and organisational foundations that got us here now need to be rebuilt for what comes next. Right now, I hold overall responsibility for HR alongside finance, legal, property and our IT modernisation programme – simply too much for one role, and it means our people function hasn't had the dedicated senior leadership it deserves. Closing that gap is exactly what this role is for.

This isn't a role about maintaining what's already there. You'll sit on our Executive Team alongside our CEO Beth Brook, our COO Dan Poore and me, with direct engagement with our Board of Trustees.



You'll be shaping and developing our People and Culture function, ensuring that it delivers the clear People and Culture proposition that the organisation needs. This will include introducing new systems and improving governance, further building a compelling case for why talented people should join and stay, and developing a culture that matches the passion our archaeologists bring to their work every day.

What I can offer as your line manager, and what I think you'll find in our wider team, is a real appetite for challenge and change. We know we need someone who will push us as much as support us.

If this sounds like the kind of challenge you're looking for, I'd encourage you to get in touch for an informal, confidential conversation before you apply. Please contact our recruitment partner for this appointment, Katherine at Charisma Charity Recruitment.

I look forward to reading your application,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Andrew". The script is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping tail on the final letter.

Andrew Lane
Chief Finance Officer

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About us



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About Us

Oxford Archaeology

Connecting with our shared past

From single house extensions to large infrastructure projects, organisations and individuals trust Oxford Archaeology to deliver archaeological services required by the planning process. Since our foundation fifty years ago, we have shared our research and educated people in the wonders of archaeology.

Why archaeology matters

The physical remains of the past hold our shared story. Understanding what came before us creates a sense of place and identity which can inform and enrich our lives today. This is recognised in the UK's planning process, which seeks to strengthen local economies, support communities, and protect and enhance our environment through consideration of archaeology and heritage in development.

Through our investigations, we help to physically and digitally preserve the past and ensure it is accessible to everyone now and forever.

Archaeology for a better future

Our vision is to contribute to an equitable and sustainable future through understanding and connecting with our shared past.

As a charity, our mission is to create public benefit by exploring the human experience through archaeological investigation. We collaborate with communities and clients to facilitate learning and discovery, fostering a greater connection with our shared past.

Oxford Cotswold Archaeology

We also work in joint venture with Cotswold Archaeology, under Oxford Cotswold Archaeology (OCA), which was established to combine the expertise, resources and capacity of two leading archaeological charities in order to deliver major, complex infrastructure projects that neither organisation could easily undertake alone. Since formalising the partnership, OCA has become one of the UK's largest archaeological service providers, working on nationally significant projects including HS2, Sizewell C, the Lower Thames Crossing and the A66 upgrade, while maintaining a strong commitment to research, community engagement and public benefit.

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About Us



Shaping the future

Our vision and strategy

Oxford Archaeology's [5-year strategy for 2025-2030](#) is designed to ensure our continued success as one of the UK's leading archaeological organisations. The strategy will guide OA's efforts over the next five years, ensuring that we remain at the forefront of archaeological practice and research.

The strategy's five pillars reflect our commitment to balancing professional excellence, public benefit, and commercial resilience, ensuring we continue to provide value to our clients through expert, reliable service while making a lasting difference to the communities with whom we work.

OA's Strategy 2030 will enable us to contribute to the creation of an equitable and sustainable future through understanding and connecting with our shared past. It is built around five strategic pillars:

- Working sustainably
- Delivering public benefit and social value
- Pioneering archaeological research and innovation
- Shaping the future of the profession
- Empowering our people

Our values

At Oxford Archaeology, [our values](#) guide our work, shape our culture, and reflect our commitment to understanding and sharing the past.

As a charity with an educational purpose, we believe archaeology is for everyone. Whether we are providing top quality for our clients, uncovering new discoveries, working with communities, our values ensure that we approach every project with integrity, passion, and a sense of shared purpose.

- Lead by example
- Empower each other
- Archaeology for all
- Make a difference
- Celebrate our passion

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Job description



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Role details

Job title	Director of People and Culture
Line manager	Chief Finance Officer
Supervisory responsibility	HR Manager and overall responsibility for the wider HR and Learning and Development (L&D) team (5-6 in whole team)
Salary	£80,000 - £90,000
Contract	Permanent
Hours	Full time
Location	Oxford Archaeology has three main bases: Oxford, Cambridge and Lancaster. The organisation offers hybrid working, with a minimum of 2 days per week within one of OA's offices. Please note: the majority of the HR and L&D team work from the Oxford office. Regular travel, as well as some out of hours attendance at events will be required, through the UK.
Annual leave	25 days (exc. public holidays), plus 3 discretionary days (over the Christmas period) in the first 5 years of service. This rises to 27 days after 5 years and 28 days after 10 years of service.
Pension	17.2% employer contribution (Local Government Pension Scheme)
Benefits	• 100% of ClfA subscription fees paid, up to ACIfA level (those at MCIfA level will receive the equivalent of ACIfA level) • Cycle to work scheme. • Personal accident insurance. • Employee Assistance Programme that provides health advice, counselling and advice on a wide range of issues, from financial to housing, for employees and their immediate family. • Network of mental health first-aiders. • Industry-leading training schemes, with an ambitious and evolving training offer.

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Job description



Function

Oxford Archaeology has grown significantly in recent years, increasing its scale, geographic reach and impact. As the organisation has evolved, there is a need to strengthen and modernise the people, culture and organisational systems that will enable continued success.

The Director of People and Culture will provide strategic leadership for all aspects of people, culture, organisational development and change across Oxford Archaeology. Reporting to the Chief Finance Officer, the role will play a central part in shaping the future of the organisation, ensuring that its structures, leadership capability, workforce planning, culture and people practices support the delivery of its charitable mission, commercial ambitions and long-term strategy.

This is both a strategic and transformational role. The postholder will be responsible for establishing a compelling people and culture vision while also developing the foundations, systems and processes required of a modern, growing organisation. They will work closely with senior leaders, trustees and colleagues across the organisation to create an environment in which people can thrive and perform at their best.

Duties

Organisation-wide leadership responsibilities (Executive Team)

As a member of the Executive Team, the Director of People and Culture will contribute to the leadership, stewardship and long-term success of Oxford Archaeology as a whole, beyond their functional area of responsibility.

- Contribute to the development and delivery of the organisation's overall strategy ensuring that people, culture and organisational capability are integral to future planning and decision-making.
- Share collective responsibility for organisational performance, sustainability, governance and risk management.
- Work collaboratively with other senior leaders to address strategic opportunities and challenges facing the organisation.
- Provide constructive challenge, insight and support to colleagues in the development of organisational priorities and major business decisions.
- Lead and sponsor organisation-wide initiatives that strengthen organisational effectiveness, capability and culture.

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Job description



- Ensure that Oxford Archaeology's values, charitable purpose and commitment to public benefit are reflected in leadership decisions and organisational practice.
- Build leadership capability across the organisation, fostering a culture of accountability, collaboration, continuous improvement and learning.
- Support effective governance through positive engagement with the Board of Trustees and relevant committees, providing strategic advice and assurance on people and culture-related matters.
- Act as an ambassador for Oxford Archaeology externally, building relationships with sector partners, stakeholders and professional networks that enhance the organisation's reputation and impact.
- Contribute to the development of a cohesive, high-performing and values-led leadership team committed to achieving the organisation's mission and strategic ambition.

Key functional responsibilities

Strategic leadership

- Advise the Chief Executive, Executive Team and Board on people, culture, organisational development and workforce-related risks and opportunities.
- Act as the organisation's Designated Safeguarding Lead, taking responsibility for ensuring high standards of effective safeguarding policy and practice.
- Develop and deliver a People and Culture Strategy aligned to the organisation's charitable purpose, commercial ambition, strategic objectives and future growth potential.
- Ensure people considerations are embedded within organisational decision-making and business planning.

Governance and compliance

- Lead on people-related compliance (including modern slavery) and accreditation, to ensure high standards of quality, and ensure that legal compliance is met.
- Lead on the development, implementation and review of HR governance including an HR policy framework.
- Establish and continuously improve people systems, policies, processes and governance arrangements appropriate for a complex and growing organisation.
- Ensure compliance with employment legislation and best practice while maintaining a pragmatic and values-led approach.

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Job description



Culture and organisational development

- Lead the development of a clear and distinctive People Value Proposition that supports attraction, engagement and retention.
- Shape and embed a positive, inclusive and high-performing organisational culture aligned with Oxford Archaeology's values.
- Lead organisational development initiatives that strengthen leadership capability, collaboration, accountability and employee engagement.
- Design and implement approaches to measure and improve organisational culture and colleague experience, to ensure Oxford Archaeology is an employer of choice.

Organisational change and transformation

- Lead significant people-centred organisational change programmes that support the organisation's future effectiveness and sustainability.
- Review organisational structures, operating models and workforce arrangements to ensure they remain fit for purpose.
- Build organisational capability in change management, leadership and people management.
- Support leaders through periods of organisational growth, transformation and continuous improvement.

People operations and infrastructure

- Ensure effective workforce planning, recruitment, performance management, reward, learning and development, employee relations and succession planning.
- Develop management information, workforce analytics and reporting to support evidence-based decision making, and use key data and research to inform organisational plans and demonstrate impact.
- Lead the development and implementation of a framework for high quality volunteering across the organisation.
- Lead and develop the HR team ensuring that the team has the right competencies, capabilities and capacity to support the wider organisation effectively.
- Develop, agree, manage and monitor the team's annual budget and forecast, ensuring that all activities are delivered on time and within budget; devising and implementing business planning with relevant key performance and impact indicators and taking appropriate corrective action if required.

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Job description



Leadership and stakeholder engagement

- Build trusted relationships with leaders across the organisation, acting as a strategic adviser and coach.
- Work collaboratively with colleagues, employee representatives and external partners to support organisational objectives.
- Present people and culture insights, recommendations and progress reports to the Board and relevant committees.
- Champion the organisation's values, commitment to inclusion and charitable purpose and drive the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) agenda, ensuring a truly inclusive culture.



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Person specification



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Person spec



Requirements and attributes

Education and qualifications

- Membership of the CIPD level 7 or above and sound employment law knowledge and experience.
- Designated safeguarding lead – level 3

Experience

- Significant senior leadership experience in people, culture, organisational development or related disciplines.
- Experience of leading organisational transformation and cultural change within a complex organisation.
- Demonstrable success in developing people strategies that support organisational growth and performance.
- Experience of strengthening organisational systems, processes and governance while maintaining employee engagement.
- Experience of working closely with senior executives, boards or trustees on strategic organisational issues.
- Experience of successful budget planning and financial decision making

Knowledge and skills

- Deep understanding of contemporary people, culture and organisational development practice.
- Strong strategic thinking and organisational leadership capability.
- Ability to influence and build credibility at executive, board and operational levels.
- Strong change leadership and programme delivery skills.
- Excellent judgement, resilience and ability to balance strategic priorities with operational realities.

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Person spec



Personal attributes

- Values-led and mission-focused.
- Collaborative and inclusive leadership style.
- Courage to challenge constructively and drive meaningful change.
- Pragmatic, adaptable and solutions-focused.
- Able to inspire confidence and build trust across a diverse organisation.

The person

An inclusive senior leader with an engaging and approachable manner, you will have a proven ability to deliver continuous improvement, cultural change and best practice people management and development in a values-based business.



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How to apply



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How to apply



Oxford Archaeology is working exclusively with Charisma Charity Recruitment.

Applications should be submitted through the [Charisma website](#) and include:

- A comprehensive CV
- A supporting statement (no more than two pages) summarising why you're applying and how you meet the person specification

For an informal and confidential discussion about the role, please contact:

[Katherine Anderson-Scott](#), Executive Director of Charisma Charity Recruitment on 01962 813300 or email info@charismarecruitment.co.uk.

We welcome and encourage applications from people of all backgrounds. We do not discriminate on the basis of disability, race, colour, ethnicity, gender, religion, sexual orientation, age, veteran status or other category protected by law.

Closing date: 7 September

1st stage interviews with Oxford Archaeology: 18 September

2nd stage interviews with Oxford Archaeology: 28 September

Charisma vetting interviews must be completed by EOD on the 14 September ahead of the longlist submission on 15 September.



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