



COGGES HERITAGE TRUST TRUSTEE RECRUITMENT PACK 2024



C  GGES



Welcome and introduction

Paul Evans, Chair of Trustees

Firstly, thank you for finding out more about Cogges and the role of Trustees. I hope you will find the information interesting, and that it will help you decide whether you would like to join us.

Cogges has a strong sense of survival. Since before the Domesday Book, it has adapted to changing times as a settlement, a farm, and up until 2009, as a rural farm museum under Oxfordshire County Council's ownership, but was closed to the public by OCC due to financial difficulties.

Cogges was not to be beaten (and sold to a private buyer). The uniqueness of the place, and the strength of affection for it amongst the local community, persuaded the Council that an alternative use should be found, and the Cogges Heritage Trust was formed in 2011.

Over the past 12 years we have focused on attracting visitors (especially families), developing additional revenue streams through a popular events program and wedding offer, a successful food & retail offer, and becoming a respected and valued place for volunteering.



We secured the freehold of the site from OCC in 2020, and together with the help of a significant grant from the National Lottery Heritage Fund and other generous grant-makers and donors, we are now coming to the end of a suite of capital improvements.

These include a rethatch of our main visitor entrance, a new toilet block, interpretation within the Manor House, and improvements to the lighting inside the barns. Since the pandemic, income has fluctuated, however we continue to invest in the site/offer to ensure we are well positioned for the future.

There is still much to do, but we firmly believe that Cogges is on the right path, and that there is a significant opportunity for the organisation to grow and take advantage of its history, location, and the place it holds in the hearts of the people of Witney and surrounding area.

We are looking for Trustees who are eager to be part of this next phase, who will be excited by the opportunity, and keen to see Cogges thrive.

Thank you again for your interest in Cogges.

About Cogges Heritage Trust



Cogges Heritage Trust is the charity which cares for and runs Cogges Manor Farm, a unique historic site in Witney, West Oxfordshire. It was established in 2011 to take on the responsibility for the site from Oxfordshire County Council, and since then has completely rejuvenated Cogges from a tired, loss-making venture with dwindling visitor numbers, to a thriving local destination of international interest.

Cogges Manor Farm aims to:

- be a place whose past is recorded, understood, valued, and enjoyed by everyone who visits
- make a positive contribution to all its communities
- protect and enhance the natural environment and buildings
- be a place where people can relax, participate, learn new things, and have fun in a safe environment

Our charitable objects, as defined in the Trust's Memorandum and Articles are:

- To preserve, protect, develop and improve the archaeological, historical, architectural and environmental heritage of the site of Cogges Manor Farm and associated land, for the benefit of the people of the county of Oxfordshire, and the wider members of the public
- To advance the education of the public, in an understanding of rural heritage and contemporary and future farming and food production, including but not exclusively by; (a) the establishment and operation of a facility to be open to members of the public; (b) interpreting the rural history of the site
- Such other charitable purposes beneficial to the public, consistent with the objects above, as the trustees shall in their absolute discretion determine.

One of our key tasks is to increase revenue in line with our strategic plan. Our General Manager joined us last year, and together with a new staff structure are making improvements in our day-day offer and efficiency which will help support future growth.

Cogges Manor Farm is a fascinating place to be involved in. Local people enjoy the calendar of events and the lively café, schools revel in the hands-on approach to learning, and visitors from the UK and further afield come to step into the farm they've seen featured in TV programmes and films, including as Yew Tree Farm in Downton Abbey and Countryfile.

About Cogges Manor Farm



Cogges is run by a small staff team of 8 Full Time Equivalent posts. They are supported by around 180 active volunteers, divided into teams that focus on areas such as: the Manor House, welcome desk, the garden, maintenance, craft and animal care. In 2022, our volunteers were awarded the Queen's Award for Volunteer Service, which is the equivalent of an MBE, and is testament to the contribution they continue to make in the success of Cogges. The overall responsibility for managing the site rests with the General Manager.

Last year we recruited an additional Operations Manager who has been putting a wide range of improvements in place to ensure our visitors receive an excellent experience.

We welcome between 40,000-50,000 visitors a year, with over 2,000 holding season tickets providing them with 12 months unlimited admission. We also hold a series of events over the course of the year which provides valuable additional income for the Trust.

Cogges has a wholly owned subsidiary, Cogges Heritage Enterprises Ltd. The café and weddings are run through this organisation which has its own board of Directors.

Our average turnover (Trust and Enterprises combined) over the past few years (excluding the effects of Covid) has been c£350k.

Cogges is not an accredited museum and does not hold collections. It is a heritage site with a Grade II listed manor house and farm buildings and much of its land is designated a Scheduled Ancient Monument.



Being a Trustee at Cogges



There are currently 10 trustees, with sub-committees that focus on particular areas of work: People and Legal, Finance and Property, and Development Group.

Trustee roles serve on a voluntary basis, with four board and six sub-committee meetings per year, although this can change depending on operational circumstances. The Trust's Chair and Board members are appointed for a three-year term and are then eligible for re-appointment for one additional term of three years.

Trustees are expected to constructively challenge, bring fresh thinking, new ideas, and entrepreneurial qualities, to enable Cogges to be a successful and sustainable operation. Trustees play a key role in setting the strategic direction of the organisation and overall policy, defining goals, establishing and monitoring performance against agreed targets.

In addition, trustees give their time to:

- Provide specific advice to the General Manager and his team
- Attend occasional major functions such as the annual volunteer party, exhibition /activity launches etc
- Attend and support visitor events such as the Christmas Market, Halloween, Beer Festival, Theatre on the lawn etc

Principal duties of all trustees:

- To provide collective governance leadership of the organisation in support of its charitable objects.
- Under charity law trustees have the ultimate responsibility for directing the affairs of the organisation, ensuring that it is solvent, well-run, and delivering the charitable outcomes for which it has been established. Trustees have three duties: compliance, care, and prudence. Specifically, they are required to ensure their organisation is:
 - undertaking its purposes for the public benefit
 - complying with the organisations health & safety policy as it relates to visitors, staff, and volunteers
 - complying with the organisation's governing document and the law
 - acting in the best interest of the organisation
 - managing the organisation's resources responsibly
 - acting with reasonable care and skill
 - accountable

Resources for potential trustees:

The Charity Governance Code www.charitygovernancecode.org/en
and www.gov.uk/guidance/charity-commission-guidance

How to apply



Cogges Heritage Trust is committed to building a diverse and inclusive workforce, including volunteers, and within the trustee body. This unremunerated role is open to all, and we encourage anyone who feels they meet the criteria to apply.

Please submit a CV and a brief accompanying letter outlining what you could bring to the role, and explaining how you meet the requirements. In the first instance this should be sent to the current Chair of Trustees at paul.evans@cogges.org.uk.

You can find out more information at cogges.org.uk.





C  GGES