



Amy Barker

Fundraising & memberships manager

I manage all the fundraising at the Palace. As a department of one person, there is a lot to cover – Friends, Patrons, individual donors, fundraising appeals, trusts and foundations and fundraising events – but I have the support of some wonderful volunteers, which definitely helps!

○ What do you like most about your job?

I enjoy doing different kinds of fundraising, which gives me opportunities grow my skills and learn more about areas that I was less familiar with.

○ What do you want people to know about your work?

The Palace is an independent charity, so we receive no regular government funding. Donations are therefore hugely important, whether its supporting one of our projects, giving a monthly donation, or by being a Friend or a Patron.

○ What qualifications/prior experience do you have relevant to your work?

I have a degree in history, but my work experience is more relevant to my current role. I worked for two charities and the Ashmolean Museum in their membership department. All of these roles gave me a wide understanding of fundraising for the arts. Before my first fundraising job, I got some initial experience doing telethon fundraising for my university.

○ What is a museum/heritage misconception that you had before joining the sector?

It's easy to have the misconception that museums and heritage sites are rooted in old-fashioned thinking. I've found through my work at Fulham Palace and in expanding my network that this is not the case. Many museums and heritage sites are very forward-minded, community-focused and are leading important conversations about decolonising collections and tackling climate change within the sector.

○ What skills do you need to do your job?

Organisation and good record keeping are very useful skills, as keeping good data on past/present/future donors helps with stewardship and building donor relationships. It also helps to be a good people-person and be able to talk to a wide variety of people, as you need to be able to communicate your passion for the cause you are supporting – whether that's a museum, or a different kind of charity.

○ What advice do you have for young people looking to work in the sector?

I encourage people to find volunteer work. It's not always easy for people to find time in between studying or working another job, and it's definitely an accessibility issue within the sector as a whole, but any kind of volunteering shows interest in the sector. This can be volunteering once a week for an afternoon, or even finding a place that will allow you to do administrative work from home.

○ What is the best part about working at Fulham Palace?

I love that there are opportunities to work in different areas and learn more about different kinds of fundraising. I love working for this heritage site because I love how varied the palace is with the gardens and historic rooms. I also like that it's a small team, it has a good community feel to it.

○ If you were a museum, what kind of museum would you be?

I would be the museum of tiny things or the museum of the muppets.



Alex Rankin

Learning producer

My job is to run the schools and families programme at Fulham Palace. I organise all the school visits and the families engagement. I am also part of a number of Palace projects which are very varied. At the moment we have a new school membership scheme which I have been developing.

○ What do you like most about your job?

The variety. I do lots of different things including a bit of design, a bit of event planning, a bit of development. I also love working with so many different people, I can be working with five-year olds in the morning, then student placements later on and then mature volunteers after that!

○ What do you want people to know about your work?

How important learning is! A lot of people wouldn't think of learning first when they think of museum work but it's a massive part of the organisation's charitable aims to be educational and valuable to the local community.

○ What qualifications/prior experience do you have relevant to your work?

I have a BA and MA in History of Art, but I wouldn't say these were strictly necessary to do my job. After graduating I was a TA in a school which gave me experience working with kids and families. This experience really inspired me to pursue museum learning. I then worked in front of house giving talks and tours and I volunteered in my local museum's learning team.

○ What is a museum/heritage misconception that you had before joining the sector?

That the only jobs were curators or collections managers. In fact, there are all sorts of different roles in museums that value a range of different strengths, skills and interests.

○ What skills do you need to do your job?

Good people skills are essential. You need to be comfortable engaging young children of course, but also a range of partners, external contractors, volunteers and colleagues. Organisation is also key. My role involves organising every facet of the schools and families programme: from initial planning, to development and delivery, right through to evaluation.

○ What advice do you have for young people looking to work in the sector?

Get any experience you can. Getting experience through volunteering definitely helped me get my first job in museum learning. I would also recommend finding things to do in your current role that lend themselves to the learning world, for example I volunteered to do talks and tours while I was working in front of house.

○ What is the best part about working at Fulham Palace?

How tight knit the team is. We collaborate on lots of different projects and I get to learn new skills from everybody I work with. Working in a small organisation has also given me independence and a lot of creative freedom.

○ If you were a museum, what kind of museum would you be?

It would be cool to have a museum of poultry. I have a little collection of porcelain ducks and chickens and it would be nice to see them in their own museum, celebrating all things poultry!



Kate Kern

Learning & engagement manager

I oversee the learning and engagement programme which encompasses a broad range of things including learning (schools, adults, families & young people), archaeology, volunteer management and communities. I work with lots of other departments to develop and deliver interesting and fun workshops and activities for all ages.

○ What do you like most about your job?

What's really fun about what we do is trying to find so many different creative ways to engage people with the site. I find the strategic planning really fascinating and I still get to do some facilitation.

○ What do you want people to know about your work?

How broad learning and engagement is. It isn't just school visits or a tour. It's any way we want to engage with people who come on site, whether they are coming to the café, to an event or just cutting through to go to the tube. We want to try and engage with them and help them discover something.

○ What qualifications/prior experience do you have that is relevant to your work?

BA in History and MA in Medieval Studies. When I graduated, I volunteered at a local museum in exhibition design but discovered the learning and engagement department and realised that is where I wanted to be. I then volunteered at many other museums in learning and engagement. This combined practical experience helped me get a paid role.

○ What is a museum/heritage misconception that you had before joining the sector?

How it's funded. Most museums rely on funding from external organisations to exist and it's a constant battle to afford to look after these beautiful buildings. This means that a lot of job roles are only able to be fixed term for the length of a project.

○ What skills do you need to do your job?

Organisation is key! Experience facilitating and leading school sessions. Confidence in public speaking and networking. So much of what we do is about building partnerships. Feeling confident to chat to anyone, lead a conversation and connect with them is important. It is through these conversations that the majority of my work happens.

○ What advice do you have for young people looking to work in the sector?

Anyway you can get hands on experience. Even if it's not in the specific area that you want to work in, you are still seeing inside that organisation and getting experience of how a museum or site runs. There's also a huge amount of funding that goes toward working with young people up to age 25, so do research in your area for opportunities.

○ What is the best part about working at Fulham Palace?

The beautiful place – I think it's such a unique site. I have never worked anywhere that has so much history but also not just the history, it's the gardens, the sustainability work, and the fact that the history is from the neolithic period onwards is really lovely.

○ If you were a museum, what kind of museum would you be?

I would be a historic house. I always loved the idea of an old house and what happens to it throughout its history. I love the social history of a historic house, that it can be a home, or a hospital and it's the stories of the people that live there that are really interesting for me.



Siân Harrington

Chief executive officer

I am CEO and company secretary to Fulham Palace Trust (FPT), this means that I'm responsible for ensuring the charity is well managed and fulfils its charity aims

○ What do you like most about your job?

I love finding out about the Palace's history and engaging with visitors, as many different visitors as possible. Trying to tell the stories of the Palace because I love history.

○ What do you want people to know about your work?

I would like people to recognise the great work that FPT does and how important the site is historically.

○ What qualifications/prior experience do you have relevant to your work?

BA in Anthropology, and MA in Museum Studies which both helped me get my first job in museums because it was and it is very competitive. It was the standard route. Now I think there's less onus on qualifications. Museum studies is relevant to jobs in museums, but your first degree isn't always relevant to jobs in museums. I did anthropology but I don't use it to look after anthropology collections. It does help my work but it's not essential. Later on, I did a Masters in Business Administration which helps with business aspects of my role, the management and strategic side of my role.

○ What skills do you need to do your job?

Good financial awareness. An appreciation of history and heritage helps to enjoy your job. An enthusiasm to work with and manage people and volunteers. Project management skills too.

○ What is the best part about working at Fulham Palace?

Fulham Palace! The house and the garden is very beautiful. The buildings are lovely so, I think that's the highlight for me - just being in a place like this that's very old.

○ What advice do you have for young people looking to work in the sector?

You've got to be determined and really want to do it. You should try and get volunteering work if you can or work experience because it shows prospective employers that you are committed. I know a lot of people that started in admin or front of house in museums and have worked their way into curatorial or education or other roles. Even if you haven't got loads of experience you've got to start somewhere so I think it's about showing commitment and enthusiasm.

○ What is a museum/heritage misconception that you had before joining the sector?

I thought I would be in a storeroom cataloguing objects and putting on exhibitions, but most roles are much wider than that. I didn't think I'd have much contact with people, but it's very different. You do have a lot of contact with visitors, colleagues and volunteers.

○ If you were a museum, what kind of museum would you be?

Probably a museum about ancient history or Indigenous peoples. I've always been interested in Native American history.



Lucy Hart

Head gardener

I'm responsible for the 13 acre outdoor garden at Fulham Palace. That includes lots of work that goes on in the walled garden. I manage the team that help do all this. There are 6 full-time staff members and about 70 garden volunteers. While I spend a lot of time planning and working in the office I do get to be outside training and leading volunteer groups.

○ What do you like most about your job?

Horticulture means you get to work with all the seasons. It makes life very enjoyable and the seasons are so important.

○ What do you want people to know about your work?

We focus on biodiversity and organic growing and being kind to the environment. We don't use any chemicals so there might be a few weeds here and there, there might not be a perfect well kept park that they used to have in the 80s and 90s. We need to educate the public and older gardeners that being too tidy is not a good thing. My role is about making sure we get the perfect balance of beauty as well as encouraging and enhancing biodiversity.

○ What qualifications/prior experience do you have relevant to your work?

I worked at a local nursery since age 13. I discovered that I love plants through this work. I went straight into horticultural college at 16. I got a degree in horticulture and then worked in various jobs like landscape maintenance, nursery production, and historic gardens. I went on to do the Kew Diploma and worked at Kew for 8 years before Fulham Palace.

○ What is the best part about working at Fulham Palace?

Being a part of this organisation that is so forward-looking with our attitudes, inclusive, and trying to get young people in. I have been here 14 years and every year we are doing something new which is wonderful.

○ What skills do you need to do your job?

My job involves a lot of managerial things so people managing skills. Working with plants, you need to be open to experimentation so that you can develop new skills. Go through the process of trial and error. Always be ready to learn new things through background reading/ additional research and you need to be a step ahead.

○ What advice do you have for young people looking to work in the sector?

Get out there and get the practical experience. Volunteering is much more available these days. Try to get as much practical experience under your belt. Have a play on your window sill, grow your own stuff.

○ What is a museum/heritage misconception that you had before joining the sector?

Before I started at Kew, I was very nervous. I was already told that someone on my course had already saved a species from extinction. I had thought that I was a bit out of my depth, but if you've just got a passion for it you can do anything. You may feel that if you're not from that sort of background that it isn't for you, but actually if you're interested in it, you go for it, and you do it and everybody should be welcome.

○ If you were a museum, what kind of museum would you be?

Obviously, something plant based, so a botanic garden with lots of bars and pubs dotted around and (I can say this because I have kids) adults only.



Geoff Grodner

Finance director

I oversee the finance department for Fulham Palace Trust. There are several parts to the job including including control of processing and procedures, monthly and annual accounts, budgeting and cash management. I work closely with each department, ensuring that we run the financial operations efficiently

○ What do you like most about your job?

The best part of the job is working with friendly people in a close and cooperative environment.

○ What do you want people to know about your work?

When working with charities you have to be very cost conscious with everything. Everything must be done in much more minute detail because the vast majority of charities are in a financially challenged position, so that's key. A difference when working for a charity from an accounting point of view is that you've got segregation between restricted and unrestricted funds so for a lot of projects you have to segregate what you are spending money on for the project and the money you are raising for that project from day to day activities that we carry out here.

○ What is the best part about working at Fulham Palace?

The grounds are really nice, the house is quite nice and the people are friendly which is not always the case when you are working in different places. Before I joined here I did a short stint with a hedge fund and that was really a very different environment.

○ What is a museum/heritage misconception that you had before joining the sector?

Fulham Palace is very well run and maybe I didn't appreciate that a charity would be well run and very well-organised. That was an image I had and it's proved to be incorrect.

○ What qualifications/prior experience do you have relevant to your work?

I'm a qualified accountant. I spent a lot of time working for property management companies and financial institutions typically much bigger than this. A lot of the accounting experience you gain can be applied to different types of industries.

○ What skills do you need to do your job?

Aside from the technical skills it's good to have good communication. You need to be able to relate to and work with different people like the CEO and the trustees, or people working in the garden, the fundraising team, and volunteers. That's a little different from what I've encountered in the past.

○ What advice do you have for young people looking to work in the sector?

Volunteer, try to find internships. Ask about - don't just apply for advertised jobs. Speak to friends, parents of friends and try to find out who works in that sector. Use social media and build your network. Take an interest in charities that you want to work in and follow them.

○ If you were a museum, what kind of museum would you be?

Something to do with sport, I really like rugby.



Valerie Weydert

Volunteer development officer

I manage the Volunteer Programme. We currently have 250 volunteers helping us, so it's one of the largest volunteer organisations in the borough. I make sure that volunteers are updated on what's happening and I'm the main point of call for any questions volunteers have. I recruit volunteers and liaise with line managers of each department to ensure that the recruitment goes smoothly.

○ What do you like most about your job?

I work across the organisation and it's lovely to oversee such a large team of people. It's such a varied team as well. Seeing the passion and motivation from people wanting to contribute to this organisation and the heritage site's success and the help is extremely valued.

○ What do you want people to know about your work?

Volunteering really counts, we couldn't do the work we do in the same way we do it now without the help from volunteers. It would not be possible without external funding so the help from volunteers is invaluable and it adds to the atmosphere and the organisation as a whole to have so many people involved.

○ What qualifications / prior experience do you have relevant to your work?

An MA in Philosophy and a degree combined with History. I started working in museums during my studies, doing front of house, visitor engagement and interpretation officer types of roles. I have experience in the heritage sector in visitor engagement. I also did a stint in recruitment. I received training on site and gathered experience as I went along.

○ What is the best part about working at Fulham Palace?

It is a stunning place, I just love going out to the garden whenever I find a minute to do so especially when the weather is nice. There is a community spirit that I like here, we have a fairly small team (staff) but we have so many volunteers that are helping us.

○ What skills do you need to do your job?

You have to be extremely organised. the volunteer program is quite large. You always have several things on at the same time. Its good to be accurate as well - I need to look at databases. You need to be friendly and approachable, and quite social really for this role. You want to establish good relationships with volunteers and staff across the organisation so having that skill is crucial.

○ What advice do you have for young people looking to work in the sector?

It's always good to look into the sector for anything that's related, whether recruitment or charitable work if you are going for the charity sector. Volunteering is really a good step in because the experience counts to your CV.

○ What is a museum / heritage misconception that you had before joining the sector?

I thought that it was difficult to get into especially when you are not British or if you don't fit into a specific social category. There was a preconceived opinion about an elitist culture but things have been changing over the past few years. The palace is really striving toward making sure that the Equality Diversity and Inclusion policy is strong.

○ If you were a museum – what kind of museum would you be?

Previously I would have said a contemporary museum, but I'm so in love with Fulham Palace that now I would say a garden and museum. My love of galleries has expanded a lot. Now it includes heritage sites with outside spaces with art telling the stories of the place.