

Candidate Brief for the recruitment of

CEO (Director)

Towner

May 2026



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About Towner

Turner Prize Opening - Victor Frankowski

Towner

Director

About Towner

Towner Eastbourne is already one of the UK's most distinctive visual arts organisations, with over a century long commitment to collecting and exhibiting modern and contemporary art. It is home to the most significant public collection of Eric Ravilious, alongside a growing international contemporary collection.

Following significant national recognition – including Art Fund Museum of the Year 2020 and hosting the Turner Prize 2023 – Towner is now entering an exciting and ambitious new phase of growth and diversification. Guided by its Strategic Priorities 2025–30, the organisation aims to:

- Grow its national and international profile.
- Consolidate its role as a regional cultural changemaker and leader in the wider creative industries.
- Deliver commercial innovation and long-term sustainability underpinning its long-term success.

Integral to this next phase is the major development of Towner Seven Sisters at Black Robin Farm, an ambitious new cultural destination within the South Downs National Park, alongside ensuring the continued success of Towner Eastbourne, and providing leadership in Newhaven's regeneration.

The CEO will be responsible for building on success to date and leading Towner through this next phase of expansion and transformational.



*Jesse Darling Turner
Prize Acceptance
Speech, 2023. Photo by
Victor Frankowski*



The Role

David Nash, 200 Seasons - Rob Harris 2

Towner

Director

The Role

Purpose of the Role

The CEO is the strategic, artistic and executive leader of Towner. They will:

- Deliver the organisation's vision and strategy building on the firm foundations already in place.
- Provide inspirational leadership both internally and externally
- Continue to build the profile of Towner as a major arts and cultural organisation.
- Represent Towner regionally, nationally and internationally.
- Balance artistic ambition, public value and commercial realism, ensuring Towner remains resilient, relevant and impactful in a shifting cultural, political and funding landscape.



Sussex Modernism - Cameron Brown 2



Sussex Modernism - Cameron Brown

Key Responsibilities

THE KEY RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE NEW CHIEF EXECUTIVE WILL BE:



Strategic Leadership and Vision

- Working closely with the Chair, board and senior leadership, lead the delivery of Towner's Strategic Priorities 2025–30, ensuring clarity, momentum and organisational alignment.
- Articulate a compelling artistic and organisational vision that connects art, heritage, landscape and place in a commercially sustainable manner.
- Steer Towner's evolution as a multi site organisation, building on the pivotal role of Towner in Eastbourne and delivering impact for visitors and communities across Eastbourne, Newhaven, and the wider south coast region.
- Ensure Towner is well positioned to achieve long term success within the context of local government reorganisation, devolution and changing national cultural policy.

Artistic and Cultural Leadership

- Champion artistic excellence, risk taking and innovation across exhibitions, collections, learning and engagement.
- Protect, develop and promote Towner's Collection, in particular its reputation as the home of the Eric Ravilious Collection.
- Support ambitious contemporary programming that reflects diverse voices and engages local, national and international audiences.
- Ensure inclusivity, access and public value are embedded across all artistic activity.



Towner Seven Sisters - Feilden Fowles 3

Key Responsibilities

THE KEY RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE NEW CHIEF EXECUTIVE WILL BE:

Delivery of Towner Seven Sisters (Black Robin Farm)

- Provide executive leadership for the Black Robin Farm project, overseeing capital development, fundraising, partnerships, stakeholder engagement and programme vision.
- Ensure the project delivers as a model of cultural, ecological and social transformation, aligned with the South Downs National Park.
- Balance long term ambition with deliverability, resilience and environmental responsibility.
- Build strong governance, commercial and operational frameworks for the site's opening and long-term sustainability.
- Build strong and effective relationships with Eastbourne communities as a key stakeholder group.

Financial Stewardship, Business Innovation and Fundraising

- Lead Towner as a sustainable cultural enterprise, strengthening a mixed income model including grants, commercial activity, fundraising and partnerships.
- Oversee a comprehensive financial model spanning charitable and earned income, free and ticketed programmes.
- Drive business innovation, identifying new income streams and partnerships that align with mission and values.
- Play a visible leadership role in major capital and revenue fundraising, building strong relationships with funders, donors and supporters, across the arts sector and beyond.



David Nash, 200 Seasons - Rob Harris

Key Responsibilities

THE KEY RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE WILL BE:

Civic, Regional and National Leadership

- Consolidate and develop Towner's role as a cultural changemaker for Eastbourne, East Sussex and the South Coast.
- Further develop strategic partnerships across culture, tourism, heritage, education, environment and regeneration.
- Act as an influential advocate for the value of art and culture in place making and public life, nationally as well as in the region.
- Advocate persuasively for Towner with local authorities, national bodies, sector networks, local community groups and the media.
- Develop Towner as a thought leader in the sector.

People, Culture and Organisational Leadership

- Lead, inspire and support a high performing senior leadership team and wider staff group.
- Foster an organisational culture rooted in generosity, creativity, relevance, integrity, inclusivity and bravery.
- Ensure structures, skills, resources and systems are fully compliant and fit for a growing, multi site organisation.
- Champion equality, diversity and inclusion across governance, staffing and programming.

Governance and Board Relations

- Work in close partnership with the Chair and Trustees to ensure strong governance and strategic oversight.
- Support the Board to navigate risk, opportunity and long-term planning, particularly during periods of change.
- Ensure exemplary standards of transparency, accountability and ethical practice.



The Person

Towner Art Store - Elizabeth Doak

The Person

ESSENTIAL EXPERIENCE AND KNOWLEDGE

Candidates will be able to demonstrate:

- Senior leadership experience at executive or CEO level within:
 - A significant visual arts institution, museum or major cultural or creative organisation.
 - Or a similarly complex, mission driven public facing organisation.
 - Strong commercial skills and track record.
- A demonstrable track record of strategic leadership, organisational growth and transformation.
- Proven experience leading complex, mixed economy business models, balancing public funding, commercial income and fundraising.
- Significant experience working with boards, trustees and senior stakeholders at local and national level.
- Experience of leading capital projects, major organisational change or multi site operations.
- Strong understanding of the UK cultural ecology, funding landscape, philanthropy and public policy context.

Artistic and Cultural Capability

- A credible authority on artistic and cultural practice, with extensive experience of building strong relationships with artists and other creatives.
- Ability to balance artistic ambition with public engagement and financial realism.
- Commitment to inclusive practice, access and audience development.
- Understanding of the relationship between art, place, landscape and civic identity.

Leadership and Personal Qualities

- An inspiring, visible and authentic leader with high emotional intelligence.
- Strategic, entrepreneurial and resilient; comfortable navigating complexity and uncertainty.
- Strong political and stakeholder awareness, with sound judgement and diplomacy.
- Values driven, ethically grounded and personally credible.
- Collaborative, generous and confident in empowering others.



The Person

ESSENTIAL EXPERIENCE AND KNOWLEDGE

Skills and Competencies

- Exceptional communication and advocacy skills, able to represent Towner at the highest levels.
- Strong financial literacy and commercial acumen.
- Fundraising capability, including major donors and institutional funders.
- Ability to build long term partnerships across sectors.
- Decisive yet consultative leadership style, with the ability to manage risk thoughtfully.
- National or international profile within the cultural sector.

Desirable

- Connection to, or strong interest in, Eastbourne, Sussex or the South Coast.
- Experience working across culture and place based regeneration.
- Knowledge of the creative industries.
- Experience engaging with landscape, heritage or environmental agendas.

Values Fit

The successful candidate will demonstrably align with Towner's values:

- Generosity
- Creativity
- Relevance
- Integrity
- Bravery

These values should inform not only what they do, but how they lead.



The Marine Workshops and Sidings Courtyard, Summer 2025. Photo by Peter Cripps



How to Apply

Towner Seven Sisters - Feilden Fowles

Towner

Director

How to Apply

In order to apply, please submit a comprehensive CV along with a covering letter which sets out your interest in the role and encapsulates the aspects of your experience relevant to the required criteria.

The preferred method of application is online at:

www.berwickpartners.co.uk/96092

If you are unable to apply online, please email your application to:

response.manager@berwickpartners.co.uk

All applications will receive an automated response.

All candidates are also requested to complete an online Diversity Monitoring system, which will be found at the end of the application process.

RECRUITMENT SCHEDULE

Closing Date for Applications	Friday 12 th June 2026
Preliminary Interviews with Berwick Partners	Wednesday 24 th & Thursday 25 th June 2026
Initial Client Interviews	w/c 6 th July 2026
Final Client Interviews	w/c 13 th July 2026



Gathered Around The Sun - Cameron Brown

How to Apply

For detailed information on how we process your personal data, please review our privacy policy on our website <https://berwickpartners.co.uk/privacy-and-cookie-policy/>

In line with GDPR, we ask that you do NOT send us any information that can identify children or any of your Sensitive Personal Data (racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs, trade union membership, data concerning health or sex life and sexual orientation, genetic and/or biometric data) in your CV and application documentation. Following this notice, any inclusion of your Sensitive Personal Data in your CV/application documentation will be understood by us as your express consent to process this information going forward. Please also remember not to mention anyone's information or details (e.g. referees) who have not previously agreed to their inclusion.

For a conversation in confidence, please contact:

William Pringle | Managing Partner | Berwick Partners

william.pringle@berwickpartners.co.uk

We are committed to ensuring everyone can access our website and application processes. This includes people with sight loss, hearing, mobility and cognitive impairments. Should you require access to these documents in alternative formats, please contact

kelly.stokes@berwickpartners.co.uk

Also, if you have any comments and/or suggestions about improving access to our application processes please don't hesitate to let us know.



Make Space - Cameron Brown



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