



## **Burns Tourism Partnership Project Manager**

### **Applicant Information Pack**

#### **Introduction**

This is a rare and exciting opportunity to play a leading role in helping to transform Dumfries into a globally recognised visitor destination.

Robert Burns is one of the most famous cultural figures in the world. His legacy is celebrated internationally and remains a living part of global culture. Dumfries, as the place where Burns spent the final and most productive years of his life, holds a unique and powerful position within that story.

In recent years, the Burns Tourism Partnership has brought together a wide range of organisations, businesses and stakeholders to begin realising this opportunity. Significant progress has been made through collaboration, shared planning and early delivery.

However, the central challenge has been clear: the absence of dedicated capacity to drive delivery at pace and scale.

This role, which has been made possible through funding received from Dumfries Town Board as part of the UK Governments Pride in Place Plan, has been created to address that challenge directly.

The Burns Tourism Partnership Project Manager will build on existing work led by the Burns Tourism Partnership, providing the focus, momentum and leadership required to move from ambition to delivery - ensuring that Dumfries takes its rightful place as a leading global Burns destination.

#### **About the Role**

The Burns Tourism Partnership Project Manager is a full-time, fixed-term role through March 2028, with the potential for extension subject to future funding. Employed by the South of Scotland Destination Alliance (SSDA) and based in Dumfries, the postholder will bridge strategic tourism expertise with local delivery.

This is a delivery-focused role requiring a proactive problem solver to drive existing plans forward. The postholder will unite stakeholders, translating joint priorities into tangible, visible outcomes for local businesses and communities.

The position offers significant autonomy and responsibility. The successful candidate will be trusted to work independently, maintaining momentum across a complex partnership environment. A sharp focus on measurable progress is essential; the postholder will track delivery against priorities and provide concise monthly updates to ensure transparency and accountability. This role is ideal for a tenacious self-starter committed to achieving impactful, high-momentum results.

## **Context and Background**

The Burns Tourism Partnership has existed for several years, bringing together the key organisations involved in Burns Tourism in Dumfriesshire and Nithsdale, including:

- D&G Council Arts and Museums Service
- Dumfries Town Board
- Dynamically Different Dumfries (DPAG)
- D&G Chamber
- SOSE
- VisitScotland
- University of Glasgow
- The Globe Inn and Burns Quarter
- Robert Burns Ellisland Museum & Farm
- Wigtown Festival Company
- Big Burns Supper
- Theatre Royal Dumfries
- Cairndale Hotel & Spa
- The Crichton Trust
- St Michael's Church
- Midsteeples Quarter
- Sanquhar Enterprise Company
- South of Scotland Destination Alliance (SSDA)

The Partnership has been significantly re-energised in the last two years, with the SSDA playing a key role coordinating activity.

Between November 2023 and May 2024, a [six-month SSDA action plan](#) brought together partners to deliver a wide range of coordinated activity. This was followed by a further ambitious [12-month action plan \(Sept 2024-Sept 2025\)](#) setting out clear objectives for developing Dumfries as a leading Burns destination.

This work has demonstrated both the strength of collaboration in Dumfries and the scale of the opportunity.

There is now:

- A strong and engaged partnership network
- Clear shared priorities
- Early evidence of successful delivery
- Alignment with regional and national tourism strategies

At the same time, it has become increasingly evident that without dedicated leadership and capacity, progress will remain constrained.

This role represents the next critical step: moving from collaborative planning to sustained, high-impact delivery.

## **Purpose of the Role**

The Project Manager will lead, coordinate, and deliver the development of Burns tourism in Dumfries. The core mission is to strengthen the visitor experience, increase tourism spend, and support local businesses while enhancing the town's global reputation.

More broadly, the role is about unlocking the economic and cultural potential of Burns through a sustainable, collaborative approach rooted in the local community. The postholder will also

contribute to marketing activity, ensuring all local delivery aligns with regional and national strategies.

A defining feature of this role is a relentless focus on delivery. Success will be measured not by activity alone, but by tangible outputs, measurable impact, and the demonstrated progress of the partnership over time.

If successful, by March 2028, there will be:

- Significantly increased visitor numbers and visitor spend relating to Burns tourism in Dumfriesshire
- Significantly improved visitor experience, with clear online bookable product and a strong flow from one business/attraction to another
- Increased local awareness and pride of Burns, and a strong sense as to how Burns Tourism is supporting community and economic prosperity
- Real street-level visibility for Burns, with Dumfriesshire becoming the home of Burns tourism
- Sustainable funding for this work to continue

### **Key Priorities and Phasing:**

#### **Year 1 (2026–27): Delivery and Momentum**

The first year focuses on building momentum through proactive delivery. Working with partners, the Project Manager will refine and execute Burns Tourism action plans to ensure priorities translate into visible outcomes. A primary focus is achieving "quick wins"- such as enhanced visitor experiences, and coordinated itineraries - to build stakeholder confidence. Central to this early momentum will be the active management and development of the existing Footsteps of Burns brand, website, and social media channels, ensuring these digital assets effectively drive engagement and visibility from the outset.

A key priority is developing travel trade-ready propositions. The postholder will collaborate with local businesses to create high-quality, bookable experiences and international itineraries, ensuring the offer is coherent and aligned with regional marketing. This involves proactive community engagement, including regular reports and drop-in sessions to ensure local voices help shape the visitor experience.

Simultaneously, the role requires strategic forward planning. The Project Manager will identify funding opportunities to ensure the long-term sustainability of the programme and the post itself, including securing support for the Footsteps project to ensure impact continues beyond the initial term.

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#### **Year 2 (2027–28): Flagship Project Delivery**

In the second year, the role enters a major delivery phase. As well as continuing Action Plan objectives - such as installing, refreshing, and upgrading coordinated, strategically placed signage - the focus shifts to leading the high-profile "In the Footsteps of Burns" project, pending funding. The Project Manager will manage full-scale delivery, coordinating design, procurement, and installation.

By engaging international networks, the postholder will promote this trail, raising the town's profile and creating a lasting legacy.

### **Person Specification**

We are seeking a candidate with a strong track record of delivery and the ability to operate independently in a fast-moving, outcome-focused environment.

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Essential</b>	<b>Desirable (but not essential)</b>
Proven experience of delivering comparable projects or programmes to a high standard	✓	
Strong self-motivation and ability to work independently	✓	
Ability to manage multiple priorities and maintain momentum	✓	
Focus on outcomes, outputs and measurable impact	✓	
Experience of collaborating with a diverse range of partners and stakeholders	✓	
Experience in tourism, visitor economy or place-based development	✓	
Experience managing and developing digital brands, websites, and social media	✓	
Expert at securing joint funding by leveraging partnerships to bridge financial gaps	✓	
Experience of working with the Travel Trade (tour operators, intermediaries, itineraries)		✓
Knowledge of Robert Burns or literary/cultural tourism		✓
Knowledge of Dumfries and/or local networks		✓

While sector-specific experience is welcome, the most important requirement is the ability to deliver effectively and consistently.

### **Working Style and Expectations**

We are looking for a proactive, delivery-focused professional who thrives on ownership and accountability. The successful candidate will be a self-starter, capable of driving projects forward at pace and navigating challenges with tenacity.

You should be comfortable working within a framework of clear targets and regular reporting, where progress is demonstrated through tangible, measurable results. This role is designed for someone who operates effectively without close supervision, translating ambitious plans into physical and cultural change. A collaborative and pragmatic approach is essential to balance high-speed delivery with effective partnership working.

### **Terms of Appointment**

**Gross Salary:** £30,000 per annum (pro-rata)

**Annual Leave:** 28 days paid leave plus 8 public holidays (pro-rata).

**Probation:** This appointment is subject to the successful completion of a formal probation period.

**Location & Governance:** Employed and managed by the SSDA, the role is embedded within the D&G Council Arts and Museums Service to ensure local integration and expert support.

### **Impact of the Role**

The Burns Tourism Partnership Project Manager will lead a transformative programme to establish Dumfries as a premier cultural destination. By increasing visitor spend and supporting local businesses, the role will drive economic growth and strengthen the town centre. Beyond economics, this work will foster community pride, reconnecting residents with their heritage and future potential.

With strong partnerships and foundations already in place, we now require a tenacious leader who can deliver at scale. This is a unique opportunity for an outcome-focused professional to take ownership, embrace accountability, and create a lasting physical and cultural legacy for Dumfries.

**To apply. Please send a CV and completed application form to Sarah Macdonald ([sarah@ssdalliance.com](mailto:sarah@ssdalliance.com)) by Monday 9am 29<sup>th</sup> June 2026.**