



A DESTINATION AT EVERY STATION!

**West Station  
Neville Terrace  
Royal Tunbridge Wells  
Kent  
TN25QY**

### **Voluntary Commercial Manager Job Advert**

A unique volunteering opportunity has arisen at Tunbridge Wells' Spa Valley Railway to join the line as its Commercial Manager

The Spa Valley Railway, which saw a 41% increase in its visitor numbers during its 2016 season, is actively seeking a Commercial Manager to help support the railways General Manager. This vacancy has arisen following the retirement of the previous manager and the Spa Valley Railway is now looking for suitable candidates to take on the role and lead the department into the future.

The successful candidate would, following appointment, sit on the railways Leadership Team, the governing body of the Spa Valley Railway. This is where the managers, directors and trustees headed by the railways Chairman meet once a month to discuss and develop the railway.

Opened as a tourist heritage railway in December 1996 the SpVR has been operating trains ever since, initially as far as Groombridge Station and in 2011 to Eridge, providing the railway with a cross platform interchange with the national rail network.

The railways visitor numbers for the previous 4yrs have averaged 30,000 until 2016 when they hit a record high of 43,126. This figure needs to continue increasing and the Commercial Manager would work alongside the General Manager to continue boosting visitor numbers and the products the railway offers.

The Spa Valley Railway is owned and operated by the Wealden Railway Co. Ltd and supported by the Tunbridge Wells & Eridge Railway Preservation Society which is a registered charity.

Heritage trains operate weekends from February to the end of October each year with services running on Tuesday's Wednesday's & Thursdays during school holidays and the summer period. During December & early January Santa and Mince Pie specials operate making the railway nearly a year-round operation.

The five-mile heritage railway is blessed with a connection to mainline services at Eridge which brings in customers from all over the country.

This opportunity could lead to part time paid employment in the future.

For a full job specification please visit: [www.spavalleyrailway.co.uk](http://www.spavalleyrailway.co.uk)

If further information is required please email [jonnie.wesson@spavalleyrailway.co.uk](mailto:jonnie.wesson@spavalleyrailway.co.uk)

**Jonnie Wesson  
General Manager  
2<sup>nd</sup> March 2017**

## **Voluntary Job Description**

Title: Commercial Manager (CM)

Type of Work: Voluntary with a view to part time employment in the future

Start Date: May 2017

Hours of Work: Subject to voluntary commitment

Reports to: General Manager, Spa Valley Railway

Based: Groombridge station

The Spa Valley Railway is one of the country's fastest growing heritage railways and is celebrating its 20<sup>th</sup> year of operation in 2017.

The Spa Valley Railway consists of two organisations which work together to deliver a great heritage railway running from Tunbridge Wells to Eridge.

The Wealden Railway Co. Ltd owns and operates trains on the railway on a day to day basis, it is owned by its shareholders, most of these shares being with the Tunbridge Wells & Eridge Railway Preservation Society Ltd which is a registered charity. It is through the Society which the organisation gets its highly-valued volunteer workforce and members.

The CM will have the opportunity to work alongside our General Manager (GM) and significantly develop our marketing, catering, events & commercial opportunities for future generations.

During 2016, the railway saw a significant growth in its visitor numbers and seeks to continue this growth in the years to come, this is particularly important on days when no events are taking place and we need to continue to encourage visitors to the line.

The society has approximately 1,000 members, of which 250 actively volunteer. We aim to increase our membership to 1,500 by the year 2025 and are always in need of more volunteers.

The current CM role is vacant and has been since January 2016 following promotion of the previous manager to becoming the railways GM and he is now seeking a successor to the role of CM.

## **Voluntary Job Purpose:**

The role of CM is a challenging and rewarding role, it is a great opportunity for somebody who is currently seeking a unique volunteering opportunity at a fast-growing tourist attraction with the prospect of paid employment in the future.

Whilst a railway background is desirable it is by no means essential. We are looking for an individual who has a strong commercial, event and marketing background with proven business skills and people management. As part of the railways annual events plan the CM would take a leading role in its establishment and then execution throughout the operational year.

The CM will sit on the railways Leadership Team and will need to drive through change within the railway to continue its development. The CM will report monthly to the Leadership Team about matters within the department and will play a key role in carrying forward the lines 'Strategic Vision' document which will be published shortly (and will be available for seriously interested candidates in advance).

The role of CM, much like the lines GM will be hands on so a strong positive attitude is essential. An office space is provided for use at Tunbridge Wells West & Groombridge Stations along with access to computers and various software packages. The opportunity to be trained in various safety critical roles also exists.

### **Specific Desirable (although not essential) Skills:**

- Higher level education
- A good commutator at all levels
- Qualifications in an appropriate area
- Proven management skills
- Commercial working environment experience
- Marketing/PR experience
- Event management experience
- Experience of working with volunteers at all levels
- A good understanding of the importance of a safety critical environment
- Experience in a heritage railway environment or equivalent organisation
- Experience of managing volunteer staff
- Confident in using MS Office and/or experience in Adobe software packages.
- Be a competent writer for publications and able to communicate clearly and effectively with the public.
- Be familiar with and a user of social media such as Facebook & Twitter, including Facebook advertising.
- A strong willingness to learn.
- Customer service training
- Travel & Tourism experience
- Retail industry experience or willingness to self-develop a strong understanding.

### **Personal Requirements**

- Able to uphold and promote the vision, values and the Code of Conduct of the Spa Valley Railway.
- Able to represent the Spa Valley Railway anywhere throughout the country.
- Able to travel independently around the local area.
- Able to attend meetings by prior arrangement.
- A good 'people' person and able to work with members of the public.
- Will be subject to a Disclosure & Barring Service check.
- A good communicator and enjoy working with people of all ages and all backgrounds.

The Spa Valley Railway is a diverse organisation with people coming from all walks of life, the applicant for the role of CM can be of someone from any background or age range, our current GM for example took up the post at just 23.

**To apply or for any further information please contact our GM here:  
[jonnie.wesson@spavalleyrailway.co.uk](mailto:jonnie.wesson@spavalleyrailway.co.uk)**