

Trustee and Chair Recruitment Pack – The Watermill Theatre

About The Watermill Theatre

Nestled on the banks of the river Lambourn, our converted Grade II listed rural watermill is home to a unique powerhouse of residential and artistic facilities which provide a crucible for creativity, innovative storytelling and artistic excellence. Artists and creatives from the UK and beyond develop their craft with us, making work which bursts out of the building to tour across the UK, or transfer to the West End. The reach, quality and innovation of our productions is evidenced by a strong track record of co-productions with commercial and subsidised companies, resulting in 50% of our productions being optioned for transfers and tours over the last 5 years (most recently Bleak Expectations in the West End and Spike on UK tour).

Our work is characterised by an enduring pursuit of artistic innovation and the weaving of actor-musicianship through new writing and reinvigorated classics. We create the environment for actors and creatives to take risks, we tell stories on stage which reflect diverse lived experiences and we discover new ways to connect our annual audiences of 60,000, with live theatre that truly resonates. With a core belief in the transformative power of the arts, we open up opportunities for people from lower socio-economic backgrounds, young families and isolated or displaced communities to explore their own creativity. Our engagement programmes reach 20,000 people each year, in the theatre, schools and other community settings. We engage with those who are underrepresented, hard to reach, or at risk and we drive long term impact for communities.

Having been cut from the Arts Council's National Portfolio from March 2023, the company is now focused on developing its business model, exploring ways to diversify and grow its income to ensure that it can continue to make world-class theatre and creative programmes that inspire and engage its local communities.

Under the leadership of Paul Hart and Claire Murray as joint Chief Executives, The Watermill embarked on its most ambitious project to date: The Lord of the Rings: The Musical (July – October 2023). This production celebrated the Theatre's greatest strengths: its unique and beautiful site, its track record for reimagining musicals with actor musician-led ensembles and its ability to create epic experiences in the most intimate of spaces. Furthermore, staging this show at this time reflected the company's resilience, ambition and reach; over 17,000 people saw the show (including many who travelled internationally to be there) and over 47% were visiting The Watermill for the first time.

The Watermill is seeking a Chair and Trustees who share its passion and commitment and who can contribute to a thriving future.

About the Role: Trustee

Role Overview

Salary - Voluntary – unpaid. Travel expenses where applicable will be covered.

Time commitment - Six Board meetings a year, usually on Saturdays. Subcommittee meetings by agreement meeting 4 to 6 times a year. It is also desirable that candidates would attend and support the work onstage, e.g. attending press nights.

Terms of service - Initial 3-year term. Board members can be re-appointed to the Board of Trustees up to a maximum of 2 terms.

Location - Hybrid – Board and Subcommittee meetings are either in-person at the Theatre or over Zoom. We hope candidates would commit to visiting The Watermill at least twice a year for meetings.

Who Are We Looking For?

We are seeking new board members to join the Board of Trustees to help us to continue to reach and grow our artistic ambitions and develop the business to ensure our long-term sustainability.

New Trustees will have a passion for theatre and community engagement and the confidence and ability to become part of an experienced and highly-motivated board guiding The Watermill's future. We would like to hear from candidates who share our passion for creating a more inclusive and diverse sector, community engagement and environmental sustainability, and are particularly interested to hear from those with skills and experience in:

- Theatre Management
- Finance
- Fundraising
- Hospitality
- Legal

As a member of the Board of Trustees you will:

- Ensure that The Watermill has a clear vision, mission and strategic direction.
- Approve the next Business Plan in due course, including overall objectives and budgets while delegating implementation to the staff, ensuring The Watermill's overall financial stability and sustainability.
- Oversee the delivery of The Watermill's funding requirements, supporting strategic direction, agreeing appropriate targets and evaluating performance.
- Ensure that the charity's governance is of the highest possible standard in pursuit of its objectives. This includes compliance with its governing document, charity law, company law and any other relevant legislation or regulations.
- Support The Watermill's vision and provide critical oversight with regards to the practical and financial implications of the artistic programme.
- Safeguard the reputation and values of The Watermill.

- Champion equality and diversity and ensure The Watermill fosters a positive, inclusive culture.
- Have a willingness to contribute to the fundraising targets of The Watermill annually, which could include: attending fundraising events, introductions to potential individual or corporate supporters, or personal support through membership, donation etc.
- Be willing to use your professional networks for the benefit of The Watermill.
- Periodically evaluate the board's effectiveness in consultation with senior management.

Board members are jointly and severally responsible for the overall governance and strategic direction of the charity, its financial health, the probity of its activities and developing the organisation's aims, objectives and goals in accordance with the governing document, legal and regulatory guidelines.

All board members should be aware of their individual and collective responsibilities, and should not be overly reliant on one or more individual board members in any particular aspect of the governance of the charity.

Diversity and accessibility are core to our work and in order to ensure this in every part of the organisation, we will work with new Trustees to meet any requirements that support access to meetings and other Board duties.

About the Role: Chair

Who Are We Looking For?

We are looking to recruit a Chair with proven strategic knowledge of either the arts sector, the charity sector or the hospitality sector, to provide guidance and support to the team at The Watermill.

We are looking for an individual who can demonstrate a strong visible passion and commitment to the arts; a clear and confident communicator, excellent at driving productive Board activities, who is excited to use their networks to support The Watermill in serving our communities and audiences.

We are keen to ensure diversity and accessibility at every level of the organisation and welcome applications from candidates from all personal and professional backgrounds.

A Testimonial from the Current Chair, Andrew McKenzie

“Being Chair of the Board of Trustees of The Watermill Theatre has been a privilege and a pleasure. To get to see up-close the work of this dedicated team of professionals and enjoy their artistic vision has been one of the most fulfilling roles I have ever had.

My tenure has seen some difficult times; COVID lockdown, followed by the slow, careful restart and various funding dilemmas to name but a few. What has been most rewarding, however, is seeing

how resilient The Watermill team has been and how the fully engaged group of Trustees have shown their unwavering support to ensure the theatre not only survived but thrived; a great team in which to be involved.

The Watermill is such a 'Jewel in the Crown' within West Berkshire and the work it does in the local communities is priceless. It opens the doors to the world of theatre to many groups and individuals who would otherwise be excluded. However, The Watermill's renown goes far beyond its immediate reach, and this is all down to the quality and originality of its productions, delivered by a fantastic team that any future Chair would be proud to head up."

Main Responsibilities

Lead Governance and Accountability

- Ensure the Board fulfils its duties to ensure sound financial health of the charity, with systems in place to ensure financial accountability.
- Ensure the Trustees and The Watermill comply with its governing documents and relevant legislation, policies and Charity Commission regulations.

Board Management

- Develop the knowledge and capability of the Board of Trustees and encourage positive change where appropriate.
- Appraise the performance of the Trustees and the Board on an annual basis.
- Ensure that the Board of Trustees is regularly refreshed and incorporates the right balance of skills, knowledge and experience needed to govern and lead the charity effectively and which also reflects the wider population.
- Ensure that Trustees are fully engaged and that decisions are taken in the best, long-term interests of the Charity and that the Board takes collective ownership.
- Foster, maintain and ensure that constructive relationships exist with and between the Trustees.
- Chair the board meetings.
- Agree the annual cycle of Board meetings and set the agenda.
- Monitor Board decisions to ensure they are implemented.
- Be the main point of contact between the CEO and the Board of Trustees.

Support the CEO

- Be available when the CEO requires support with difficult and challenging issues. This could include: legal issues and action, dismissals or redundancies within the team, complaints or grievances.
- Manage the CEO, setting KPIs and scrutinising delivery.
- Support the Chief Executive, whilst respecting the boundaries which exist between the two roles.

Strategic Direction

- Work with Trustees and the CEO to give strategic guidance to The Watermill.
- Facilitate change and address any potential conflict with external stakeholders.
- Bring impartiality and objectivity to decision-making.
- Make connections and influence at senior levels with funders, commercial organisations and within local government.

Submitting Your Application

Application Deadline: Friday 12 January 2024, 12pm (midday)

Interviews: Wednesday 7 February and Friday 9 February (Zoom)

Applications should be made by submitting a statement explaining why you are interested in joining the Board and how you feel your experience could contribute to The Watermill. If applying for the Chair position, please specifically discuss your interest in and suitability for this.

In addition, please include:

- A CV.
- A completed Equal Opportunities Monitoring form (this information is anonymous and will not be taken into consideration when assessing the potential candidates).

Applications should be emailed in confidence to Claire Murray, Executive Director:
admin@watermill.org.uk c/o the Nominations Committee.

If invited to interview, we will:

- Pay for your travel costs to attend interviews where these take place in person.
- Pay for childcare (or other caring obligations) to enable you to attend interview.
- Pay for reasonable expenses.
- Make any reasonable adjustments that would assist you — for example, having a BSL interpreter if you would like this.
- We guarantee a first stage interview for disabled candidates who meet the minimum requirements for the role.

If we can support your application by offering an alternative format, please do let us know. Likewise, we want to ensure interviews are as accessible as possible, so please do let us know in your application if there is anything we can do to support this.