



Trustee Search for Norwich Puppet Theatre

The role

Do you want to be involved in a community enterprise but never understood how? Norwich Puppet Theatre invites you to express your interest in joining our active Board as a Trustee!

The key responsibilities of this exciting voluntary role are to take ultimate responsibility for directing the affairs of a small arts charity, and ensuring that it is well-run, solvent, and delivering the charitable outcomes for the benefit of the public for which it has been set up.

Which skills do we need?

We always welcome interest from professionals with experience and expertise at senior levels in financial management, governance, business/fundraising development and marketing, as well as staff and organisational management/development, whether from the arts, public sector or commercial environments.

What we currently wish to strengthen is know-how at our Board table:

- Up-to-date experience and skills in the primary education curriculum
- Public fund-raising and corporate sponsorship schemes
- Community engagement and volunteer strategy.

If you'd like to be involved in directing our affairs and helping us to be well-run and effective in delivering benefits to all our users then read on.

What to do next

If you think you could use your know-how and experience to help a much-loved small arts charity and in so doing gain enormous personal satisfaction at the same time as developing your professional skills and experience, then please contact me with a short email expressing your interest.

We invite your interest now and until the 14th November. Our AGM is on the 5th November, and it is at this that new Trustees may be elected.

Thank you for your interest!

Nic Hopkins, Chair of NPT Board of Trustees, nic@nichopkins.org.uk

More About Norwich Puppet Theatre and its Board

Our mission is to further the art of puppet theatre through education and performance, as a Centre of Puppetry Excellence for performers and audiences.

NPT has 8 staff, led by a newly appointed Director, supported by a General Manager, Marketing Coordinator, Education and Outreach Officer, Workshop Coordinator and Venue Manager.

We need Trustees from a wide range of backgrounds to reflect the community we serve. At present we have the help of people with backgrounds in the arts and from business and from education, with a mix of both professional and voluntary interests, and experience of current practitioners and those who are deploying their broad skills having retired from their main professional roles.

As we are a registered charity and company limited by guarantee, the role of Trustee includes the responsibilities required by the Charity Commission and as a Director under the Companies Act.

Board composition is a minimum of 5 and up to 12 trustees supported by the Director and General Manager and other staff as required. Of the current membership, one third comes from

a puppetry or arts management background, and the remaining two-thirds from a non-arts business or education perspective.

The Board has a hands-on, activist style of working, with trustees often acting as volunteers to provide additional capacity for particular tasks – such as our Group for Educational Engagement in the Community; the Finance sub-committee scrutiny of business affairs; a Marketing Steering Group overseeing the development of an updated marketing strategy and our public relations programme; and from time to time Trustees play an active part in the recruitment and development of staff and organisational structure.

Specific fund-raising initiatives have often called on Trustee engagement. And of course, at all times, we hope Trustees act as important ambassadors to promote our work, gather insights about public needs and attract support for our work.

The memorandum and articles set a maximum of 12 trustee directors, but the board does co-opt interested parties whose skills are otherwise not available. In such cases, co-opted members often agree to fill vacancies as they arise as full trustees.

What are you letting yourself in for?

As a well-run not-for-profit enterprise, Directors have liability limited to £1, subject to exercising due care and diligence in their duties. Full Board meetings take place every 2-3 months, but in the intervening months there is a working operations committee usually attended by 4 or 5 directors and the executives of the company. Inevitably these probably require a couple of hours preparation in reading the relevant papers sent out for the business of the meeting. In addition, you may get involved in projects with greater involvement – but driven by you! And of course you may sign up as a volunteer for a range of tasks, become a Friend of the Theatre and become involved in audiences for puppet theatre, related arts and workshops.

Our protocol for joining our Board

- We don't rush things even if the need is urgent - we recognise the commitment folk may be making - or fearing!
- We advertise first and then seek to develop informed expressions of interest through informal discussion with the Chair.
- Formal expressions of interest are made through a skills audit application exploring skills the individual would bring to bear, their view of how they could make an impact, and what their motivation is, how they are looking to develop through the work with us.
- A sub-group of the full Board sifts these expressions of interest and invites promising applicants to observe a Board meeting and meet the team.
- On the basis of this a formal offer is then made if appropriate. Formal elections can be made in the course of the business year, but all new Trustees must be formally confirmed in appointment at our AGM in November of each year.
- The chair undertakes to induct individuals, and a Home Day (as we have our own venue we don't hold Awaydays) usually provides an opportunity for the whole Board and Staff to bring newcomers up to speed. We expect these to happen between January and the end of March, as part of our strategic planning cycle.