



# Trustee Recruitment Pack









# Contents

Background and Context	3
The Sunderland Empire Theatre Trust	5
Role of the Trustees	9
How to apply	12
Appendix A - Person Specification	13
Appendix B - Main tasks and duties of a Trustee	15

## Introduction

Dear potential Trustee,

**Thank you for taking an interest in becoming a Trustee of the Sunderland Empire Theatre Trust.**

In this recruitment pack, you will find information about the revitalised Trust and what it hopes to achieve in the future, as well as information about the role of Trustees in taking this work forward.

This is an exciting opportunity to be part of an organisation established almost 45 years ago to promote and encourage the performing arts in Sunderland and which is now undergoing important changes in structure and focus.

The Trust is looking for people who are passionate about the Empire Theatre and performing arts and who will champion opportunities for the Theatre to benefit the people of Sunderland and the wider North East by ensuring it makes a key contribution to both our economy and our cultural life.

We hope that this pack will provide you with the information you need about the Trust to encourage you to apply.

We look forward to hearing from you.



**Paula Hunt**  
Trustee



# Background and Context

## **The Empire Theatre - A Cultural Cornerstone**

The Sunderland Empire Theatre is the largest theatre between Edinburgh and Manchester and can accommodate approximately 2,000 visitors. It is one of the few remaining theatres in the UK to have four tiers: the Orchestra Stalls, the Dress Circle, the Upper Circle and the Gallery. The Theatre celebrates its 110th birthday this year and remains as architecturally beautiful today as it was when it first opened all those years ago.

The Theatre underwent a major redevelopment in 2004, costing approximately £4.5 million, to enable it to host large West End productions. Since that time the Theatre has secured many major productions including The Lion King, War Horse, Evita, Billy Elliott, Chitty Chitty Bang Bang, Starlight Express, Wicked and the Sound of Music to name a few, and has become known as the 'West End of the North East'. The Theatre now draws audiences of approximately a quarter of million people each year.

The Theatre is currently managed by Ambassador Theatre Group (ATG) under a management agreement with the Trust and Sunderland City Council. Both ATG and the council are therefore key partners of the Trust.

## **The Music Arts and Culture Quarter (MAC Quarter)**

The Empire Theatre is situated in the heart of the MAC Quarter. The aim of the MAC Quarter is to transform this historic area of Sunderland and some of its most iconic buildings into an exciting and vibrant part of the city. The regeneration of this area is of key economic and cultural significance to the city. The Empire Theatre itself is now aiming to increase its offer and appeal with the launch of its new £500,000 bar and bistro development which opened in February 2017.

The regeneration in the MAC Quarter, as well as surrounding areas such as the former Vaux brewery site and Keel Square, will result in increased footfall and focus and presents an opportunity for the Trust to build on its success and to promote its charitable aims further in the city.

Sunderland has also announced its bid to be UK City of Culture in 2021. This is likely to create a buzz around cultural activity in the city in the coming years, and presents opportunity for the Theatre's Trust to become one of the city's most significant cultural partners.





# The Sunderland Empire Theatre Trust

The Empire Theatre Trust is a registered charity with charitable objects as follows:

**“to promote, maintain, improve and advance education, particularly by the production of educational plays and the encouragement of the Arts, including the arts of drama, mime, dance, singing and music and to formulate prepare and establish schemes therefore provided that all objects of the company shall be exclusively charitable.”**

The Trust is currently undergoing modernisation to enable it to step up its fundraising activity to fund specific performing arts and community based projects and initiatives both inside and outside of the Theatre.

ATG have a creative learning team at the Theatre who deliver community engagement projects on behalf of the Trust. Examples of the work of the creative learning team are set out below.

Such educational projects are central to the work of the Trust in ensuring that the local community benefits as far as possible from this historic asset. The Trust is now seeking opportunities to fund and deliver more projects of this type going forward and will also pursue opportunities to protect and improve the historic Theatre building.

Once the Trustee recruitment process is complete, the first task of the new Trust will be to prepare a robust and accountable business plan which clearly identifies the activities that the Trust shall focus on in the short to midterm and how those activities will be funded.

It is expected that the Trust will be self-sustaining, therefore fundraising, sponsorship and income generation will be a key aspect of the Trust's business plan. Many of the Trust's plans will only be possible with external funding.

## Creative Learning & Community Engagement Projects

The Trust is seeking to further build upon the excellent work carried out by the creative learning team at the Theatre. For example, in recent months, the creative learning team at the Empire have been working with partners in the city on the 'Sound Around' Project, which will see the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra work with a group of young producers from mainstream and special needs backgrounds in making key decisions in producing and presenting the performances in March 2017.



## Birmingham Royal Ballet - Tempest Schools Arts Award

Another example of the creative learning teams work last year includes a programme delivered in carousel format with two Sunderland schools which was packed to the brim with incredible Tempest ballet themed activity including:

- An outreach Tempest workshop led by BRB ballet dancer;
- Back stage tour;
- Costume Insight led by company manager, Will Mauchline;
- Rare opportunity to watch the company class;
- Talk and Q&A with production manager, Diane Childs;
- Tickets to see the show;
- Arts Award support, including a Tempest specific log book for students to complete.



In addition to specific projects, the creative learning team run regular weekly community engagement activities as follows:-

- **Curious Connections** - A youth theatre for young people aged 13+ with additional needs such as Autism. Sessions give young people the opportunity to have fun and enjoy participating in different art forms. The Creative Learning Team has delivered a number of projects working with young people with ASD (Autism Spectrum Disorder). This has also involved working with National Partners and has continued to develop, working with other local partners from across the city;
- **Musical Monkeys** - A weekly fun sing a long session themed around favourite children's books such as The Very Hungry Caterpillar and The Gruffalo. Suitable for pre-school ages, including babies;
- **Movers** - A weekly dance class held at Sunderland Empire for anyone aged 65+ harnessing traditional and contemporary dance techniques (due to increased numbers this is now delivered twice a week with a third session to be introduced in the near future);
- **Fusion Project Youth Theatre** - A weekly community youth theatre for 11-16 year olds, offering young people the opportunity to experience an eclectic fusion of creative performance skills and activities; and
- **Community Chorus** - Uplifting weekly session that includes singing from a range of styles including: pop, folk, gospel, classical, whilst learning new tips on technique and performance skills. Open to all ages.









# Role of the Trustees

The new Trustee Board will:

- Create a resilient and robust governance structure;
- Ensure that the Empire Theatre is operating at its full potential;
- Develop a new public profile and identity;
- Embed and support an ethos of entrepreneurialism;
- Identify and develop new income sources and growth opportunities;
- Develop a strong and meaningful partnership with local businesses and organisations, ATG and Sunderland City Council;
- Support the city's wider cultural agenda through proactive engagement on significant/high profile projects e.g. UK City of Culture Bid 2021.

The Trustees are collectively responsible for directing the affairs of the Trust, ensuring that it is solvent, well-run, and delivering its charitable objects. Trustees will also be directors of the charitable company.

## Trustee Role Description

The main tasks and duties of any charitable trustee are described at Appendix B. To summarise, however, all Trustees are collectively responsible for the decisions and management of the Trust. The role of Trustees is to:

- Take ultimate responsibility for directing the affairs of the Trust, and to do so with innovation, creativity, ambition and appropriate challenge;
- Ensure that the Trust has a clear vision, mission and strategic direction and is focused on achieving these as the Trust develops;
- Act reasonably and prudently in the best interests of the charity, never in pursuit of personal interests or the interests of another organisation, meeting the legal obligations common to all Trustees;
- Monitor the commercial operation of the Theatre through Trust meetings and take any appropriate action (where necessary).

It is anticipated that the Trust shall hold one meeting a month while the process of modernising the Trust and preparing and completing the business plan which is anticipated to take between four and six months. There is an expectation that the Board will be active and engaged, and that Trustees will take forward tasks on the Trust's behalf between meetings. Trustees will need to be able to commit the necessary time to be effective.

Whilst the decisions about the frequency, timing and location of board meetings will be a matter for Trustees, it is probable that meetings will occur bi-monthly following the first four to six months and that they will take place in the early evening to allow for maximum attendance.

## Structure of the Trust

The Trust aims to recruit seven Trustees through this recruitment process, including a Chair. There will also be two Trustees nominated each by Sunderland City Council and ATG.

Normal terms of office will be three years after which the Trustee will be required to resign but may stand for re-election.





# How to apply

## Recruitment Process

If you are interested in becoming a Trustee of the Sunderland Empire Theatre Trust, please submit a C.V. and covering letter explaining why you are interested and how you meet the Person Specification set out in Appendix A attached.

Please email your C.V. and covering letter to: [pauline.smith@sunderland.gov.uk](mailto:pauline.smith@sunderland.gov.uk)

**The closing date for applications is Tuesday 2 May 2017.**

If you wish to discuss this opportunity in more detail you are welcome to contact Trina Murphy on 0191 561 8426 or [trina.murphy@sunderland.gov.uk](mailto:trina.murphy@sunderland.gov.uk)

Shortlisting will take place between Wednesday 3 May and Friday 5 May.

Interviews for shortlisted candidates will be held 9-10 May 2017.

## Benefits of being a Trustee

While this is an unpaid, voluntary position, Trustees will benefit from a proper induction to the Theatre and the operator ATG.

Trustees will have the opportunity to develop skills, knowledge and experience from holding this important role and hopefully have some fun and build strong networks along the way. There will also be an opportunity to see some performances at the Theatre in order to inform the work of the Trust.



# Appendix A - Person Specification

The new Trustees will champion opportunities for the Theatre to benefit the people of Sunderland and the wider North East region by ensuring it makes a key contribution to both our cultural life and our economy.

In particular, the new Trustees will seek to maximise opportunities for the community to engage with the performing arts through, for example, creative learning and community outreach projects, as well as opportunities to protect and improve the historic fabric of the Theatre building itself.

## Experience

We are particularly interested in hearing from people with experience in the following areas:

- Fundraising and securing sponsorship, particularly in relation to theatre and arts based projects;
- Heritage, tourism or the arts;
- Hospitality, particularly in the hotel and restaurant sectors;
- Learning, curatorial or volunteering;
- Marketing, communications and public relations;
- Events management;
- Commercial or legal skills.

## Skills

- The ability to think creatively and strategically, demonstrating good judgement and analytical ability;
- Good communication, team-working and interpersonal skills, demonstrating tact, diplomacy and the ability to build and manage strong relationships and networks;
- An ability to command respect among local, regional and national stakeholders – acting as an ambassador for the Trust.

## Passion and Commitment

- Interest in and commitment to the work of the Trust;
- A readiness and ability to play a role in fundraising/development activities; and
- Fair, impartial and open to new ideas.

## Eligibility

- An understanding and acceptance of the roles and responsibilities of Trustees, and eligibility to act as a Trustee;
- Willingness to devote the necessary time and effort, including attending board meetings and occasional daytime and evening events.
- Employees of local authorities and/or elected members will not be eligible to apply.

## Mandatory Requirements

Prior to being formally appointed applicants will need to confirm that they are eligible to be a Trustee by confirming that they:

- Are not disqualified from acting as a charity Trustee or company director, have not been removed from serving as a charity Trustee, or been stopped from acting in a management position within a charity;
- Have not been convicted of an offence involving deception or dishonesty (or any such conviction that is legally regarded as spent), and have not been involved in tax fraud;
- Are not an undischarged bankrupt or have not made compositions or arrangements with creditors from which they have not been discharged; and
- Will at all times seek to ensure that Sunderland Empire Theatre Trust funds and tax reliefs are used only for charitable purposes.



# Appendix B - Main tasks and duties of a Trustee

## Accountability; Legal and Financial Duties

- Ensure that the Trust complies with its governing document, charity law, company law and any other relevant legislation or regulation;
- Ensure that the organisation pursues its charitable objects as defined in its governing document and uses its resources exclusively in pursuance of its objects;
- Monitor the Trust's financial performance to ensure financial stability;
- Ensure that the charity's governance is of the highest possible standard, and that it is openly and transparently accountable to funders, customers and stakeholders.

## Policy and Planning

- Ensure that the charity has a clear vision, mission, values and strategic direction and is focused on achieving them;
- Contribute actively to the board of Trustees in giving firm strategic direction to the organisation, setting overall policy, defining goals and setting targets and evaluating performance against agreed targets;
- Approve and review the business plan, focusing on key issues and providing guidance on new initiatives;
- Ensure that all significant risks associated with the Trust are recognised and that appropriate mitigation measures are put in place and regularly monitored.

## Advocacy

- Safeguard the good name and values of the Trust, acting as an enthusiastic and well-informed ambassador at all times, and taking responsibility for the Trust's 'corporate behaviour';
- Promote the Trust, its activities and its needs, to the public, private and voluntary sectors so as to enhance the Trust's profile and assist with its fundraising activities and income generation.

## Other Duties

- Scrutinise board papers, taking an active part in board discussions, leading discussions and board sub-groups as required, using any specific skills, knowledge or experience to help the board of Trustees reach sound decisions;
- Ensure the effective and efficient administration of the organisation, ensuring that appropriate internal policies are in place and monitored effectively respecting the role of staff and volunteers;
- Act as guardians of the assets owned and managed by the Trust, both tangible and intangible, taking all due care over their security, deployment and proper application.







