

Bristol Old Vic Theatre School

**CANDIDATE INFORMATION PACK
NON-EXECUTIVE TRUSTEES**

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Welcome from Paul Eccleson, the Chair of Trustees

Thank you for considering applying to become a Trustee of Bristol Old Vic Theatre School.

The School is one of the premier theatre schools in the world with approximately 90 applications per place for our undergraduate courses, unparalleled links with the entertainment and creative industries, and students that have gone on to become some of the most successful actors and industry professionals of their generations.

The School is undergoing exciting changes to continue delivering the conservatoire-style training that we are internationally famous for. We are celebrating our 80th year of educating some of the world's best performing arts professionals in 2026. We are looking to re-design the School to a radically new model of creative training, whilst preserving our rich legacy and ensuring the sustainability of the School for many years to come.

We are looking for energetic and skilled trustees to support us through this period of change. The Council of Trustees will be integral to the success of the School and will ensure that it continues to prosper. Membership of the Council provides a unique opportunity to be part of our exciting future and to make a meaningful impact on the creative industries we serve.

Our aim is that public funding will remain an important way by which we deliver accessible training, and our intent is to support that delivery with varied and resilient income sources. We want to take decisive steps to be diverse, inclusive and free from elitist barriers by putting talent first regardless of background or circumstances. We want to work in closer partnership with our alumni, trusts, supporters and the entertainment industry to ensure the training we provide is truly relevant and robust for the 21st century.

Together, as Trustees, Executive, Staff and Students we will lead Bristol Old Vic Theatre School into a sustainable and inspiring future, and we very much hope that you would like to join us.



CANDIDATE INFORMATION PACK NON-EXECUTIVE TRUSTEES

Bristol Old Vic Theatre School

The School

Bristol Old Vic Theatre School is one of the most successful and well-respected drama schools in the UK. We attract the very best talent in students and staff, and our courses are recognised globally as a benchmark of quality in professional acting, technical, production and management training.

Founded in 1946, the School moved to its current location in Downside Road, Clifton, Bristol in 1956. It was part of the Bristol Old Vic Company until 1989 but is now an independent higher education institution offering undergraduate and postgraduate programmes of study validated by the University of the West of England (UWE Bristol) as well as short courses for creative industry professionals, young people and others.

The School is jointly led by its Principal, Stuart Harvey, and Charity CEO, Tom Beasley.

The School is fully committed to its values of:

Belonging:

We are sincere, we accept uniqueness and we adapt to include everyone who is part of our diverse and welcoming cultural community.

Challenge with a safety net:

We are always learning in a practical and dynamic way, creating and collaborating within a forward-looking, safe and caring environment.

Identifying great talent:

We look to all backgrounds and communities to find the creative potential who will join us in setting the tone for excellence in our industry.

Working productively and properly:

We are efficient, respectful and collaborative and understand that everyone needs down-time.

Inner confidence:

We are proud of our expertise and passionate about passing it on to the next generation of industry professionals, knowing they will make a difference.



CANDIDATE INFORMATION PACK NON-EXECUTIVE TRUSTEES

Bristol Old Vic Theatre School

The Council of Trustees

The Council of Trustees is the senior governing body of the School and is responsible for:

- Approving the Mission and Strategic Plan of the School, the long-term academic plan and the Business Plan.
- Ensuring compliance with the requirements of any validating body.
- Appointing the Principal and the CEO and putting in place suitable arrangements for monitoring their performance and remuneration.
- Delegating authority to the Principal and the CEO for the academic, corporate, financial, and personnel management of the School as relevant. Keeping under regular review the policies, procedures and limits for those management functions undertaken by, and under control of, the Principal and the CEO.
- Establishing and monitoring systems of control and accountability, including financial and operational controls and risk assessment and procedures for handling internal grievances and for managing conflicts of interest.
- Ensuring processes are in place to monitor and evaluate the performance and effectiveness of the School against the plans and Key Performance Indicators and to compare them to the performance of peer affiliates.
- Managing and maintaining the property assets of the School.
- Establishing procedures to monitor the effectiveness of the Governance arrangements of the School.
- Ensuring the conduct of the School is in accordance with best practice in the higher education sector and with the principles drawn up by the Committee on Standards in Public Life.
- Safeguarding and enhancing the good name and values of the School.
- Making such provision for the welfare and support of students as necessary.
- Ensuring compliance with the requirements of Charity law, operating the school for public benefit and managing the funds, particularly the restricted funds, of the School in accordance with donor's wishes.
- Ensuring compliance with the Memorandum and Articles of Association



CANDIDATE INFORMATION PACK NON-EXECUTIVE TRUSTEES

Bristol Old Vic Theatre School

Candidates

Trustees must have a strong commitment and empathy with the values, aims and objectives of the Theatre School. Trustees should also conduct themselves in accordance with the Nolan Principles of Public Life – selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty, and leadership.

Trustees are expected to undertake their roles diligently and with appropriate skill including making every effort to attend meetings, reading the circulated papers in advance, sharing their views on relevant items of discussion honestly, objectively and courteously, and always bearing in mind the best interests of the School.

Trustees are expected to act in accordance with the expectations of the Charity Commission (see the NCVO information here). They must:

- Ensure the School is carrying out its purposes for the public benefit
- Comply with the School's governing documents and the law
- Act in the School's best interests
- Manage the School's resources responsibly.

Trustees are not remunerated but are entitled to claim reasonable expenses.

Applicants should not be staff members or family of staff members of the School.

A review of Trustee' performance will be undertaken by the Chair one year following appointment and prior to any re-appointment.

Training and mentoring will be available as required.

We particularly wish to increase participation of women, people of the global majority, young people (over 18), and those with disabilities on the Council.

We are particularly looking for Trustees with expertise in:

- business development and organisational transformation
- charity governance
- inclusion and diversity
- human resources
- the digital world and artificial intelligence
- and marketing and communications.
- We would also welcome individuals with strong links and understanding of the 21st century performing arts industry for example talent agencies, production and streaming companies.

CANDIDATE INFORMATION PACK NON-EXECUTIVE TRUSTEES

Bristol Old Vic
Theatre School

Person Specification

Trustees are expected to have the attributes and experience set out below:

Essential

- Professional experience relevant to the governance of the School and its strategic plans
- Commitment to the Arts and to the future success of Bristol Old Vic Theatre School
- Ability to contribute to strategic thinking and exercise sound judgement
- Ability to uphold the highest standard of integrity, openness, probity and accountability
- Ability to challenge constructively with strong interpersonal skills and diplomacy
- A strong understanding of organisational decision making and governance and an ability to understand and question constructively information and data, including financial information
- An understanding of the need for inclusion and diversity in organisations
- Prepared to commit the time and energy required to be able to engage fully with the Council and the School
- Ability to develop positive and professional relationships with other members of the Board and with members of the School Executive and staff

Desirable

- Previous Board experience and/or senior committee experience
- Experience and/or knowledge of the arts and higher education sectors
- Experience and/or knowledge of working as a trustee in the charitable sector



CANDIDATE INFORMATION PACK NON-EXECUTIVE TRUSTEES

Bristol Old Vic
Theatre School

Attendance and time commitment

Trustees must be able to attend five Council meetings annually and may be expected to join the Finance or Audit sub-committees (normally four or five meetings a year) and/or other working groups. The preference is for in-person attendance at Council meetings, although some Trustees attend virtually when necessary. Sub-committee meetings are generally held on-line.

Trustees are encouraged to participate in the life of the School including attending student performances and formal events. Trustees generally commit around 20 to 25 days a year to the role.

Declaration and register of interests

Members of the Council of Trustees must act impartially and not be influenced by social or business relationships. A Trustee who has a financial, family or other personal interest in any matter under discussion must disclose the interest. In the light of this, Trustees are invited to declare any interests in the discussion at the beginning of each meeting.

The Company Secretary maintains a register of the financial and other declared interests of all members of the Council of Trustees.



CANDIDATE INFORMATION PACK NON-EXECUTIVE TRUSTEES

Bristol Old Vic
Theatre School

Fit and proper persons

As a requirement of the Office for Students Regulatory Framework, the Council is required to assure itself that its Trustees are fit and proper.

Prior to any appointment, including those of internal members and co-opted members of committees, a Companies House search, a Charity Commission search and an online search of social media sites will be undertaken.

Two references will also be taken up.

Where there are issues that lead the Council to consider that candidates do not meet the fit and proper definitions, the appointment will not be taken forward.

In addition to checks at appointment, trustees and co-opted members of committees will be required to certify annually that they are still considered fit and proper to act as governors and this will be included as part of the annual declaration of interests.



CANDIDATE INFORMATION PACK NON-EXECUTIVE TRUSTEES

Bristol Old Vic
Theatre School

Decision making

When making decisions, governors must, in accordance with the principles of Charity Law:

- act within their powers
- act in good faith, and only in the School's interests
- make sure they are sufficiently informed, taking any advice they need
- take account of all relevant factors
- ignore any irrelevant factors
- manage conflicts of interest
- make decisions that are within the range of decisions that a reasonable trustee body could make in the circumstances.

Frankness, openness, mutual trust and mutual confidence between Trustees are key to collective decision making on the Council of Trustees.

Once a decision has been made, members of the Council must abide by this principle of collective decision making, even if their views are not consistent with the outcome.

Trustees should avoid putting their specific interests or views before that of the institution.

Individual Trustees should not enter into any agreements on behalf of the School unless they have such authority.



CANDIDATE INFORMATION PACK NON-EXECUTIVE TRUSTEES

Bristol Old Vic
Theatre School

How to apply

For an informal discussion about these trustee roles, please contact the Chair, Paul Eccleson in the first instance via:

paul.eccleson@oldvic.ac.uk

You will need to submit the following information via: jobs@oldvic.ac.uk with the Subject heading: Trustee Recruitment.

- An up-to-date curriculum vitae
- A supporting statement (of no more than 1,000 words) indicating your reason for seeking to be a member of the Council of Trustees and highlighting the contribution that you would hope to make.
- The names and contact details of two referees
- A completed equality and diversity monitoring form [\(download it here\)](#).

The closing date for all applications is **31st January**, but we will be reviewing applications on a rolling basis as they are received.

The selection process will follow the School's usual recruitment process, with shortlisted applicants being invited to interview on a date to be confirmed.

