



Trustee Information Pack

June 2021

Dear Friend

Thank you for your interest in Oxford House.

It is a great time to join us. We reopened in late May and have welcomed visitors to the café, restarted our activity and community programme, and even had our first gig in the cafe (to a socially distanced audience, of course) on 12 June.

Oxford House is a tremendous community and arts space, offering an amazing mix of activities all under one roof. We are home to 20+ arts, cultural and campaigning organisations who rent office space from us, provide an arts centre that includes a theatre, gallery and dance studio, have a new café/bar with an outdoor terrace in the Pocket Park created with Tower Hamlets and much more.

As a Trustee, you will help us develop our enterprising social, cultural, and business model. Having completed the refurbishment and survived the impact of the pandemic we want to build our programme, finances and impact as a cultural and community space.

With some trustees recently standing down at the end of their terms we also wanted to refresh the board and ensure we reflect the communities we serve. We are looking for trustees to join a board that is ambitious, skilled and wants to see Oxford House thrive. We are particularly keen to make sure the board reflects our local context. We are looking for trustees who meet some or all the criteria below:

- Are of Bangladeshi or Somali heritage, or from other Tower Hamlets communities
- Have digital or fundraising skills
- Identify as female
- Are either under 30 or over 60 (we have a good age range in between!)
- Live or work in East London and bring a knowledge of the community

We look forward to your application.

With best wishes

Michael Judge

Chair

Polly Richards and Jamie Andrews

Vice-Chairs

Oxford House in Bethnal Green

About Us

'Our mission is to provide a community-led, inspiring, diverse, and sustainable multipurpose arts space'

[Oxford House](#) was established in 1884 by Keble College, Oxford, to address the problems caused by the growth of urban poverty and its impact on the community in London's East End. Residential volunteers living in Oxford House provided opportunities for education, welfare advice, youth clubs and arts and cultural clubs. 137 years later, Oxford House remains at the heart of a neighbourhood characterized by diversity, deprivation, and the challenge of gentrification where the need for classes and activities to combat isolation and loneliness and foster community cohesion is just as great.

Today, Oxford House is a community-led, inspiring, diverse, and sustainable arts space with three main strands of work:

- a [community space](#) with a café, affordable workspace, and spaces to hire.
- a [creative place](#) with classes and activities delivered with community partners in our theatre, dance studio, gallery, chapel, and roof terrace.
- a [place to volunteer](#) that develops employability skills and helps support community life.

In 2019 we completed a £3.3 million refurbishment that provided much-needed investment. The project has given us a new lease of life and provided new roof and rooftop space for community events; new café/welcome space and provided a heart to the building to welcome more visitors; refurbished former chapel as space for cultural activities and hire; new lift to serve the chapel; created Settlement Room as a learning / education space; accessible toilets on 3rd floor; improved infrastructure; and created a new Cultural Programmer role and 2-year activity programme of community events.

We are a small organisation of 11 staff (a mix of full and part-time) supported by freelance finance and marketing roles. All are led by John Ryan, who has been our Chief Executive since 2008.

We are a [registered charity](#) and company limited by guarantee, governed by a trustee board who are elected at the Annual General Meeting. We believe it is important that trustees reflect the diversity of the local community we work in and have the necessary skills to support the governance of the charity.

Becoming a trustee

One of the key qualities we look for in our trustees is that you have a passion for what we do, understand the importance of community and arts, and can actively help us achieve our mission. You may not have been a trustee before; however, you will understand the importance of good governance and clear decision-making. You will be curious and have an interest in the whole organisation. As a trustee, you need to take a strategic view and you will need to mix the financial implications of a decision with an operational perspective and whether the decision will help us fulfill our mission. Asking questions, examining options and/or considering the legal responsibilities of being a trustee are all part of the process. Finally, you will want to be part of a team that can work together to make a difference and have the personal commitment in time and energy to achieve this.

Our current board includes Michael Judge, our Chair, who is an associate director for NIE Theatre. We have two Vice Chairs, Dr Polly Richards, who is an Interpretation and Masterplanning Consultant and Jamie Andrews, Head of Cultural Engagement at British Library. Ibrar Ilyas joined the board to provide financial skills and is our Treasurer and works for Credit Suisse. Linda Kaur is a local resident and businesswoman and runs a successful retail/online business in Bethnal Green; Matt Railton is a Managing Director, culture, at Four Communications, an arts and creative sector consultancy; Rob Robinson is a Co-Founder and Director at Notes Coffee Roasters & Bars and Nivek Amichund is Chief Exhibitor at the Tower of London/HM Royal Palaces.

Time commitment

You will need around half a day month to fulfill your duties. You may also wish to attend events at Oxford House too.

Board meetings

Board meetings are bi-monthly and scheduled in advance (May, July, September, November, January, and March). We have the following sub-committees:

- Finance sub is monthly.
- Programming sub up to 3 times a year
- Anti-racism sub is up to 3 times a year.
- Comms and marketing are up to 2 times per year

Location

Currently, most meetings are held online via Zoom. At some point in the future Board meetings will be held at Oxford House.

Training

Induction and training will be provided as required. We will allocate a fellow trustee as a buddy during your induction.

Role Description

Trustees are in effect the guardians of the charity and work closely with the Chief Executive. We are regulated by the Charity Commission who provide excellent [guidance](#) on what you need to know and what you need to do.

Statutory duties

- To ensure that the organisation complies with its governing document, charity law, company law and any other relevant legislation or regulations
- To ensure that the organisation pursues its objects as defined in its governing document
- To ensure the organisation uses its resources exclusively in pursuance of its objects: the charity must not spend money on activities which are not included in its own objects, no matter how worthwhile or charitable those activities are
- To contribute actively to the board of trustees' role in giving firm strategic direction to the organisation, setting overall policy, defining goals, and setting targets and evaluating performance against agreed targets
- To safeguard the good name and values of the organisation.
- To ensure the effective and efficient administration of the organisation
- To ensure the financial stability of the organisation
- To protect and manage the property of the charity and to ensure the proper investment of the charity's funds
- If the charity employs staff, to appoint the chief executive officer and monitor his/her performance

Other duties

In addition to the above statutory duties, each trustee should use any specific skills, knowledge or experience they have to help the board of trustees reach sound decisions. This may involve:

- Scrutinising board papers
- Leading discussions
- Focusing on key issues
- Providing guidance on new initiatives
- Other issues in which the trustee has special expertise

Trustee person specification

- Commitment to the organisation
- Willingness to devote the necessary time and effort
- Strategic vision
- Good, independent judgement
- Ability to think creatively
- Willingness to speak their mind
- Understanding and acceptance of the legal duties, responsibilities, and liabilities of trusteeship
- Ability to work effectively as a member of a team
- Nolan's seven principles of public life: selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty, and leadership.

Recruitment Process

If you are interested, then candidates are asked to email your covering letter, CV, and diversity monitoring form to john.ryan@oxfordhouse.org.uk.

1. **Your CV.** A short CV that gives us a good idea of your skills, interest, and experience.
2. **Covering letter.** A brief letter - up to 2 sides – telling us about why you want to be a trustee and what you can bring to the role. Alternatively, you can send a short video introducing yourself and outlining your interest and what you will bring to the role.
3. **Diversity Monitoring form** – enables us to monitor our applications and review our processes.

You can also do one of the following if you have a specific query or want to find out more about us. A visit to Oxford House and a tour of the building if you have not visited us recently, are recommended.

- **Have an informal chat** with CEO or Chair or Vice-Chair – contact John Ryan
- **Take a tour of the building** and meeting with staff members – contact John Ryan

Recruitment timetable	
Action	Date
Applications open	22 June 2021
Deadline for applications	31 July 2021
Meet The Trustees In-person at 5-6pm (not essential but a good way to meet potential colleagues) Tours of the building available throughout the week	Monday - 12 July
Interviews	Aug/September
Observe a Board Meeting - Candidates will be asked to attend a Board meeting in September as observers	September
Induction and Start	Oct 2021



A Music event in. our Chapel



New Interpretation in the Café



Oxford House in Bethnal Green

Oxford House in Bethnal Green
Oxford House
Derbyshire Street
London E2 6HG
www.oxfordhouse.org.uk

Charity Number: 208582
Company Number: 59858