

New Trustees & Chair for the Rose Theatre Board

Introduction

We are seeking expressions of interest in joining our Board of Trustees. We are looking to refresh the Board with a wide range of voices to replace members who have, or will shortly be, retiring after long periods of service. One of these is our Chair who is due to leave the Board in 2027, although hopes to pass on the responsibility in 2026.

Our Theatre

Rose Theatre, which opened in 2008, is a very new and a very old theatre. A structure of concrete, steel and glass, with a performance space modelled on Shakespeare's Rose, it has a theatrical dynamic that stretches back over hundreds of years. The stage is backed by a three-storey high grid of narrow concrete pillars.

Christopher Haydon, Artistic Director, says, "This scale gives the theatre a truly epic feel. It is not a space that was designed for intimate two-handers or drawing room dramas. Rather, it is a magnifying glass for plays that seek to explore the full breadth and depth of human society"

The Artistic Programme

The Rose aims to be recognised as a distinctive producing house for great theatre. The current production of *Our Town* with Michael Sheen typifies this. But this was the aim from the outset with an early landmark production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, with Dame Judi Dench and directed by Sir Peter Hall who until his death was Director Emeritus. A major production in 2025 was *Emma*



Our Town, 2026

directed by Christopher Haydon. Our most recent 2025 Christmas production was *Cinderella* involving the Rose Youth Theatre. The reviews were outstanding and our audiences delighted. We typically produce our own shows: 'Rose Theatre Productions' co-produce shows with other theatres, and work with commercial producing partners when we can.

Led by Chief Executive, Robert O'Dowd and Artistic Director, Christopher Haydon, we want to give our audiences great experiences, whatever the show. We aim to produce and

Chief Executive
Robert O'Dowd

Artistic Director
Christopher Haydon

Advisory Associate Director
Sir Trevor Nunn

Rose Associate Artists
Jane Asher Niamh Cusack
Lucian Msamati Melly Still

present work that is accessible and commercially viable for both adult and family audiences. Our activities range across theatrical performance, music, comedy, interview, and dance.

Equality, Diversity, Inclusion & Belonging

The Rose aims to be a theatre where artists come to make their best work. The Board and the Executive believe diversity is essential to achieve it and the values of equality, diversity, inclusion and belonging are integral to our artistic programme.



As part of our plan to increase diversity, we have set several publicly available targets. We have commitments to the diversity of directors, creatives, writers, actors, and of the workforce. We work to develop a culture where diversity is hard-wired into all we do, understood by all of us, and reflected in how we operate. This applies to our own Board. It is important to us that we reflect our community, and that our Board members bring varied personal and professional experiences.

Artistic Development & the Youth Theatre

Helping young artists and companies to realise their ambitions is a key strand of our artistic programming. The *Rose Youth Theatre* has over 1000 active participants, alongside summer schools with more than 350 members. Our Christmas productions involve groups of young actors who train, rehearse, and perform alongside the professional cast and professional creative team. They are an integral part of these shows.

We believe every young person should have access to the transformative power of theatre, regardless of their background. Our *Rose Routes* programme will provide 12,000 local school children with theatre tickets and creative learning activities over the next three years. It is designed to work with schools that are most in need, focusing on state schools in areas of high deprivation. *Rose Routes* aligns directly with our charitable mission to entertain and empower our community, helping to build lifelong cultural connections. Once financial barriers are removed, there is a huge demand and need for our work.

The *Rose Collective* is resident at the theatre for six months, after which members 'graduate' as theatre-makers with a portfolio of experience and a network of contacts. There are short summer courses for young people; regular classes for adults who present a community production every other year in the main space, and adult classes for beginners and over 55s. Bursaries to help cover course costs are available, with priority given to those facing financial hardship, with mentoring and support also offered.

We offer workshops for local schools and colleges, focusing not just on the curriculum but techniques for interviews and public speaking. All our classes and workshops are taught and

facilitated by industry professionals in conjunction with our permanent Learning and Participation staff.

The *Emerging Artists Fellowship* was established in Sir Peter Hall's name as a tribute to his achievements in encouraging new artists. So far three young directors have been given opportunities to showcase their work.

Arts & Community Hub

As well as the main house, there is a rehearsal and meeting space (the Gallery), plus the Studio used primarily by Kingston University. We hold exhibitions in the areas around the auditorium, and have a café and bar open all day, recently reconfigured and refurbished with a generous philanthropic grant.



That may sound very spacious, and we would like to be able to extend the use of the theatre for community activities even further. The foyer areas on all three levels are often host to different groups, and mid-morning the building can be crammed with parents and infants.

Jazz Cafe, January 2026

Strategic Local Partners

Our relationships with the local authority and the local university are integral to our work, and their financial support is key to our sustainability.



**Kingston
University**
London

With the Royal Borough of Kingston, we have a funding agreement under which we aim to address many aspects of the Borough's own aims for the well-being of the whole community. In practical terms these include free ticketing schemes, work with schools and access to the Rose for community groups and Borough events. The Borough nominates two members to the Board.

Our other principal partner and funder is Kingston University, and we have a particularly close relationship with the Kingston School of Art which teaches a wide range of disciplines including drama, dance and music. The University has priority access to our Studio and holds its graduations in the theatre.

We play our part in the town's business life, and our substantial contribution to Kingston's economic success is well-researched and well-recognised.

Finance & Development

The economy of the Rose has three main components:

1. Generated income through the sale of tickets, and commercial activity such as the café and hires.
2. Fundraising from individuals, trusts and foundations, and corporate partners.
3. Regular financial support we receive from our stakeholders, the Borough and the University.

It is the quality of our artistic programme that drives success particularly in the first two categories, while the integrity of active partnership especially underpins the third. The Board has overall responsibility for oversight of financial matters, supported by its Finance Committee which provides continuous close scrutiny of detail.

Development fundraising is a critical element of our economy and the Board supports this via its Development Board.

We do not receive any regular Arts Council England support, however we apply for and receive grants specifically for the development and workshopping of individual projects.

The theatre can seat an audience of 762, and our turnover is just over £4.5m.

What We Are Looking For



The Rose is a producing theatre, and our Trustees are passionate about theatre and the arts more widely along with their impact in the community. There are many perspectives on this, and different skills and lived experiences can be relevant to the role. We would actively encourage applications from people who identify as from the Global Majority. We are also interested to hear from people who see the role as contributing to their own development. It is not essential to have experience of sitting on a board or of being a trustee of a charity, though it may be an advantage. It is also not necessary to have reached any particular stage in your career, nor a background in the arts. An enthusiastic interest in theatre, and a commitment to the local community, especially as a resident or through involvement with local business, are more important.

Emma, 2025

We would also welcome applications from younger candidates. Candidates must be able to show that they share our commitment to equality, diversity, inclusion and belonging, environmental sustainability and safeguarding, which may be because of their own experience.

We are also seeking a Chair to replace Bill Price. The Chair leads the Board, works closely with the Chief Executive Officer and Artistic Director, and ensures the highest standards of governance as well as acting as a crucial ambassador for the Rose.

The Not-So-Small Print

Kingston Theatre Trust, the company which runs the Rose, is a company limited by guarantee and a registered charity. All Board Members are Directors of the company and Trustees of the charity.

Board Members are responsible for compliance with our governing documents and with charity and company law. They set the strategic direction with the executive; they are advocates for the Rose.

Board meetings are held every other month in the evening in Kingston (the Finance Committee meets on alternate months currently during the day); committees may meet at other times of day. Once a year we hold a half-day 'Engagement Day' when we stand back to look at ourselves and the sector with the help of external theatre-makers.

Appointments are for four years, extendable to a maximum of eight years in total.

Information about Kingston Theatre Trust, including annual reports and accounts, can be found on the websites of the Charity Commission and Companies House. Further information can be made available on request at an appropriate stage of the recruitment process. If you would like a preliminary informal conversation with a Trustee or the Chief Executive, please let Robert O'Dowd know (robert.odowd@rosetheatre.org).

Chair of the Board – Kingston Theatre Trust (known as Rose Theatre), Registered Charity & Company Limited by Guarantee

Responsible to: Board of Trustees

Direct reports: Chief Executive

Location: Kingston upon Thames

Time commitment: estimated 2-3 days per month, including 6 formal Board meetings, committee meetings, meeting preparation, stakeholder engagement and occasional evening/weekend attendance at performances and events

Remuneration: Unpaid; reasonable and pre agreed expenses reimbursed. Trustees do not receive payment for acting as trustee.

Purpose of the role: to provide inclusive leadership to the Board, ensuring effective governance, strategic clarity and a productive culture. The Chair will work closely with the Chief Executive to uphold the charity's purposes for public benefit and deliver artistic and community impact in line with The Rose Theatre's mission and values.

Key Responsibilities

Governance and Compliance

- Ensure the Board collectively discharges the six core trustee duties:
 - Carrying out purposes for public benefit
 - Complying with governing document and the law

- Acting in the charity's best interests
- Managing resources responsibly
- Acting with reasonable care and skill
- Ensuring accountability
- Embed the Charity Governance Code principles:
 - Organisational purpose
 - Leadership
 - Integrity,
 - Decision-making, risk and control
 - Board effectiveness
 - Equality, diversity & inclusion
 - Openness and accountability
- Oversee meetings and decisions that are well-planned, minuted and encourage clear decision-making
- Maintain robust policies for conflicts of interest and ensure they are actively identified, recorded and managed at Board and committee level.
- As the charity is a company limited by guarantee, ensure director duties under Companies Act 2006 are understood and observed (act within powers; promote success/purpose; independent judgment; reasonable care, skill and diligence; avoid conflicts; not accept third-party benefits; declare interests).

Strategy, Artistic Ambition & Public Benefit

- Lead the Board in setting and reviewing a long-term strategy alongside the Executive that integrates artistic programme, audience development, learning and community work, and financial sustainability, always aligned to charitable objects and public benefit.
- Ensure the Board focuses on strategic matters and monitors delivery against approved plans, budgets and risk registers.
- Safeguard the organisation's artistic integrity and relevance, supporting the Chief Executive and Artistic Director and holding management to account for outcomes and impact.

Financial Stewardship, Risk & Fundraising

- Ensure strong financial oversight and thoughtful management of risk, drawing on guidance from the Charity Commission for England and Wales to safeguard the organisation's funds, property and other assets from fraud, misuse or loss.
- Lead the Board's oversight and support of fundraising activity, in line with trustees' legal duties and the Code of Fundraising Practice issued by the Fundraising Regulator. This includes carrying out due diligence on partners, keeping clear records of decisions about whether to accept or decline donations, and ensuring all fundraising is conducted in a way that is lawful, open, honest and respectful.
- Champion a values-led fundraising culture that protects vulnerable people and upholds reputation.

Safeguarding, EDI & Culture

- Make safeguarding a governance priority: ensure fit-for-purpose policies, safer recruitment/DBS where applicable, clear reporting/escalation, serious incident reporting to the Commission, and regular reviews of practice.
- Ensure trustees and staff understand their safeguarding duties (including when working with children/young people) with named lead trustee and training in place.
- Embed equity, diversity, inclusion and belonging in the Board's composition, culture and decision-making, reflecting communities served and sector expectations.

Relationship with Senior Leadership

- Operate a support and challenge relationship with the Chief Executive, including agenda planning, monitoring of agreed actions, and an annual appraisal on behalf of the Board.
- Maintain an open and constructive dialogue with the Artistic Director (who is line managed by the Chief Executive), offering support, guidance and challenge as appropriate.
- Maintain a "no surprises" ethos and clear delegation lines between governance and management.

External Representation & Stakeholders

- Act as an ambassador for the theatre, engaging donors, partners, local authorities, networks (e.g. UK Theatre) and funders while ensuring public communications reflect Board-approved positions.
- Understand the expectations of Arts Council England, the Royal Borough of Kingston and Kingston University and, where applicable, support compliance with funding terms and governance of development programmes.

Board Effectiveness

- Lead Board recruitment, induction and appraisal, ensuring the Board has the right mix of skills and experience.
- Ensure Board and committee terms of reference, annual calendars and review cycles are maintained and proportionate.

*Person Specification**

**further to those of all Trustees (see Trustee spec below)*

Essential:

- Proven experience of chairing boards or senior committees, with strong facilitation and inclusive leadership skills.
- Demonstrable understanding of UK charity governance and, where relevant, Companies Act director duties.
- Commitment to safeguarding, EDIB, and ethical fundraising standards.
- Knowledge of UK cultural sector
- Ability to support and hold to account the Chief Executive and Artistic Director, balancing artistic ambition with financial sustainability.

Desirable:

- Knowledge of UK theatre sector (producing and receiving houses, co-productions, touring, participatory practice) and funder expectations.
- Existing networks across local government, arts funders and philanthropists.

Trustee – Kingston Theatre Trust (known as Rose Theatre), Registered Charity & Company Limited by Guarantee

Role Description

As a Trustee, you will provide strategic oversight and support to ensure our theatre achieves its mission to deliver cultural, social, and economic impact through high-quality and accessible performing arts. You will uphold legal and financial stewardship and champion good governance.

Key Responsibilities

Strategic Leadership

- Co-create with the Executive and review the charity's vision, mission, strategic plan, and annual delivery plans.
- Monitor KPIs and performance to ensure delivery of outcomes.

Governance and Legal Compliance

- Ensure activities align with the Articles of Association, Charities Act, and the public benefit requirement.
- Attend at least 2/3rds of board and committee meetings; declare conflicts of interest.
- Uphold Charity Commission guidance, safeguarding, risk policies, and statutory filings.

Financial Oversight

- Approve budgets and annual accounts, oversee financial health and risk management.
- Actively contribute to fundraising efforts which includes proactively networking with donors and partners.

Executive Support and Oversight

- Serve as a critical friend to the Executive; support major decisions and recruitment.
Provide relevant sector expertise e.g. performing arts particularly theatre production, community engagement, fundraising, charity finance, environmental sustainability, and digital.

Advocacy and Profile

- Act as an ambassador for the theatre, promoting our work to funders and communities, especially diverse and underserved audiences.

Person Specification

Essential Experience and Skills:

- Passion for theatre and cultural inclusion
- Strategic thinking with strong communication and team collaboration
- Confidence reading financial reports and managing budgets

Desirable:

- Board-level governance experience or company/charity exposure but not essential
- Knowledge of UK theatre sector or not-for-profit governance
- Lived experience of target communities or audience groups

Personal Attributes:

- Objectivity, integrity; acts in the charity's best interest
- Collegial, collaborative, committed to board development
- Able to challenge respectfully and build consensus

Time and Commitment:

- Meetings: Attend 6 full board meetings per year (in-person or hybrid), plus occasional committees or workshops.
- Estimated time: 8–10 days per year, plus occasional events and advocacy opportunities.
- Status: Voluntary, unremunerated role. Reasonable pre-agreed expenses reimbursed.

Onboarding and Support:

- Induction includes reading The Essential Trustee (CC3), financial training, and governance orientation.
- Connect with peer trustees for mentoring and support.

Terms of Appointments:

- Eligibility: Must meet the legal requirements to be a charity trustee and a director; note automatic disqualification rules and identity verification requirements (where applicable in company law updates).

- Length of term: Four years, renewable up to a recommended maximum of eight years in line with Charity Governance Code good practice (unless the Board explains otherwise).
- Confidentiality and conduct: adhere to Code of Conduct and Nolan Principles; declare interests; comply with policies including safeguarding, data protection and health and safety.

How to Apply



Beverley Knight, Monique Touko, and Ntombizodwa Ndlovu, *Marie & Rosetta* Press Night, 2025

To express your interest, please send a short, written statement (via Lesley Rowden (Lesley.Rowden@rosetheatre.org)). This should be no more than 2 x A4 pages.

Please make sure you tell us why you would like to join the Board, something about yourself, and what you would bring to the Board. In addition, please enclose a completed Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form.

If we need to make any adjustments to enable you to participate in our recruitment process such as providing this information in a different format (e.g. hard copy, large print or text only version) please contact Lesley Rowden. You may send a video or audio (no more than 5 minutes) as an alternative to a written statement if this enables you to make an application.

Thank you for your interest. We look forward to hearing from you and how you can support the Rose, challenge us and contribute to our future.

The closing date for applications is 15 May 2026.