

Chair of the Board of Trustees

Overview

Chisenhale Art Place seeks a new Chair of the Board of Trustees as we move into our next phase of development. The Chair will succeed Nigel Brown after ten years of committed service. It is an unpaid, non-executive position.

Chisenhale Art Place (CAP) is an arts education charity in East London. Occupying a former factory, it is home to three distinct initiatives: two independent arts charitable organisations; Chisenhale Dance Space and Chisenhale Gallery; and Chisenhale Studios which comprises 40 artist studios. All are members of CAP.

The Chair plays a vital role in the whole organisation, providing leadership to ensure good governance and a sustainable future, charting direction in consultation with the Board of Trustees, Members and the Executive Director. To be successful, the post holder will have a clear knowledge and understanding of how arts organisations function, and the particular challenges facing charitable organisations and individual artists. An open and collaborative leadership style is essential, and the post holder will be genuinely committed to equality, diversity, sustainability and community. Previous experience of running an arts organisation would be highly beneficial.

We are keen to reflect the diversity of representation present on the Board and would particularly welcome applications by candidates from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds, candidates of all genders and disabled candidates. Applications from two people wishing to be 'Co-Chairs' can be considered.

About Chisenhale Art Place

Chisenhale Art Place (CAP) occupies a special position in London's East End, providing valuable space for the production and experience of contemporary visual arts and dance – all under one roof.

CAP was established in 1980 when a group of artists and dancers were evicted from their studios at Butler's Wharf by property developers. At the time, vast numbers of buildings lay empty in East London including Chisenhale Works, a former factory that had been derelict for over a decade. Founding members recall a filthy, empty shell – apart from an enormous pile of silver shoes – with little to suggest its future purpose.

To the group however, the place was ideal. Rubbish and graffiti had to be removed, roofing, electrics, glazing, walls and doors all had to be installed – with most of the work being carried out by the artists and dancers themselves. It took over two years to create

Chisenhale Art Place, complete with 40 artist studios and two dance studios. In time, the Gallery was created to provide a public exhibition space.

Today, Chisenhale Art Place is thriving. Home to three distinct initiatives – Chisenhale Dance Space, Chisenhale Gallery and Chisenhale Studios – with each operating unique programmes that enable emerging and established artists and dancers to develop, experiment and make exceptional work. And in turn, creating extensive opportunities for audiences and communities near and far to participate, learn and engage.

Chisenhale Art Place is a company limited by guarantee (no.01615990) and its main source of income is from the licence fees paid by its members. The company is also a registered charity (no. 285125) established to promote art education. CAP's Board of Trustees act to ensure the smooth and compliant running of the organisation and that the charitable aims & objectives are met and sustainable. Chisenhale Dance Space and Chisenhale Gallery are independently managed with their own Boards of Trustees. A representative from each sits on CAP's Board of Trustees along with elected artists from Chisenhale Studios.

CAP is currently in its second concurrent lease of twenty-five years, which ends in December 2031. Rent reviews are held every five years and the next is December 2021. Affordability and sustainability are the main challenges for the organisation and the Chair will be pivotal in ensuring a future for all members within the building.

To help address this future, an external consultant has been engaging with the wider organisation to explore the objectives of CAP and its members, and to map a route to achievement. With a clearer path to follow, this is a key time for business planning and the incoming Chair will be supported to input and shape this process.

Trustees and the Board of Directors

The Chair of Chisenhale Art Place is also a trustee. The Trustees have overall responsibility for the organisation and act as its governing body. Trustees are legally responsible for directing the affairs of Chisenhale Art Place and ensuring it is solvent, well run, and delivering on its charitable objectives.

There are currently eight trustees and three co-optees yet to be voted in as Trustees. Several trustees will 'retire' within the next year and a skills audit is underway to identify future recruitment needs.

The Board of Trustees normally meet four times a year, plus the Annual General Meeting. However, it may be necessary to convene additional meetings as business dictates and it is essential the Chair is able to attend those meetings. While social distancing measures are in place as a result of COVID-19, meetings take place via Zoom. Otherwise, they take place in an accessible ground floor room at CAP.

Trustees are not paid, but reasonable expenses such as for travel may be reimbursed. Remuneration for specific professional services may be agreed in certain cases and in line with Charity Commission guidance.

The Chair is asked to commit to a minimum three-year term on the Board, with the option of serving for further terms to maximum agreed in our current governance review.

The Chair will likely need to commit two days a month to the role and be able to carry out informal discussions and communications with the Executive Director and Trustees as required to fulfil the needs of the role. There is currently no vice-Chair but this is something we seek to establish.

More information can be found at Chisenhale.co.uk

Responsibilities of the Chair

In addition to the responsibilities of being a Trustee, the Chair has duties specific to the role. These include:

- With support of the Executive Director, ensuring the Board complies with charity law, company law and any relevant legislation as the organisation pursues its objectives as defined in its governing documents.
- Chairing and facilitating quarterly board meetings, ensuring all voices and views are heard and that decisions get made in a fair and transparent way.
- Providing leadership for the Board in their role of setting the short and long-term priorities for the organisation to meet the needs of the members, audiences and communities it serves.
- Ensuring the Board is representative of the people it serves, with an equal, diverse and inclusive approach to ensuring necessary skills and experience.
- Providing leadership, advice and support to the Executive Director (ED), as their line manager.
- Representing the organisation at appropriate events, meetings or functions.
- Acting as an advocate and spokesperson for the organisation as required, building positive relationships with key stakeholders.
- Maintaining a clear grasp of the charity's financial position by regularly liaising with the ED and financial trustees.
- Maintaining a careful oversight of risks to the organisation.
- Chairing and facilitating the Annual General Meeting, working with the ED on the timely flow of information to members.
- Participating in other committees or working groups when appropriate, with other trustees and/or member groups and representatives.
- Being the overarching Responsible Person for policies and procedures, including grievances and disciplinary actions, to ensure CAP meets and exceeds statutory regulations and good practice guidance.

- Taking interest and regularly attending events and showings of the work of members.

Chair Person Specification

Essential:

- The Chair should have an excellent understanding of the charitable and arts sector that includes arts organisations and individual artists, with an intimate knowledge of how they function and operate.
- Have previous experience as a Trustee.
- Possess a strong understanding of the legal duties, responsibilities and liabilities of trustees and of the Chair of the Board.
- Possess a leadership style that is open and collaborative, able to broker and guide divergent views as part of the decision-making process.
- Have the confidence and experience to effectively chair meetings, encouraging all voices and views are heard.
- Be an inclusive thinker, always ready to reach out to ensure equality and inclusivity of planned actions.
- Be committed to the vision of Chisenhale Art Place in its next phase of sustainable development and in promoting the best interests of its communities, members and staff.
- Be legally eligible to stand as a registered Company Director and Charity Trustee. Restrictions include being bankrupt, having unspent convictions for certain offences or being on the sex offenders list.

Desirable:

- Have experience of working for a local authority, city council or similar body at a senior level, or engaging with them as an organisational stakeholder.
- Have good knowledge or experience of capital /property development projects.

To apply:

Please submit a covering letter, expressing your interest in the role and your reasons for applying. It is important to also describe how your skills and experience will help you fulfil the responsibilities of the role and reach its potential (maximum two pages, no less than 12point font). Please also include a current CV.

You may alternatively submit an application as a video, responding to the above requested information (maximum 5 minutes).

Applications should be emailed to recruitment@chisenhale.co.uk by **12 noon on 5th July 2021**.

We also ask that you complete an Equality and Diversity Monitoring form as part of your application. It is anonymous and is to be completed here: [E&DM Form](#)

Shortlisted applicants will be contacted by 9th July for an interview. This will be with the Recruitment Committee formed of three Trustees and the Executive Director. We envision interviews to take place early in the week of 19th July, via Zoom, but could be the week prior if necessary.

If you would like to informally discuss the role, please contact: Andrea Davidson, Executive Director, at andrea@chisenhale.co.uk or by phone 020 8981 1916. A conversation with a current Trustee is also possible, as is a short visit to see the building.