



Crescent Arts Centre Board Appointment Pack

Applications must be returned by 12 noon on Friday 26 July 2019.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Thank you for your interest in joining the board of the Crescent Arts Centre.

With the support of our stakeholders, we continue with our programme to attract the widest range of people as audience and/or participants. From our creative learning programme to our live events, and our outreach work in community centres and health care settings, we aim to provide creative and interesting opportunities for everyone.

As we plan for the future, we seek new board directors to lead us successfully through the next few years. While we seek candidates with expertise in business development, compliance, community involvement, venue and facility management, fundraising and artistic programming, the list is neither prescriptive nor restricted.

Volunteering as a trustee on a charity board is a great way of sharing your knowledge, enhancing your own personal network and can be a very rewarding experience. Board members of the Crescent have the opportunity to gain new skills and enjoy the privilege of being part of an exciting, innovative creative hub in the process.

Even though this is a voluntary role, being a board member is a crucial leadership role in maintaining the financial and cultural well-being of our organisation.

I hope this information pack provides all the details you need. However, please don't hesitate to get in touch with me if you have any questions.

I look forward to hearing from you

Best wishes
Charlotte Jess
Chair

2. WHAT WE DO

The Crescent is a community arts centre, situated in South Belfast, which has served the population of the city and beyond with a very wide range of arts and cultural activities for over 40 years. Last year (2018), more than 5,000 people engaged in the Crescent's cultural programmes, half of whom were active participants in creative courses and one-off workshops, the other half attended live events or our festivals. That does not include those who participated in outreach programmes, came to non-ticketed activities, or used the café.

The Crescent is a four-storey listed building located at 2-4 University Road, originally established in 1873 as Victoria College for girls, founded by pioneer educationalist and suffragist, Margaret Byers. It was established as a cross-community arts centre in the midst of the "Troubles" in 1976. For the next two decades, despite the poor physical state of the building, The Crescent developed a wide range of arts programmes and events and provided crucial incubation space for a range of creative and youth organisations.

The centre was substantially renovated in 2010 and now:

- Programmes over 750 weekly creative learning classes and workshops, 40 weeks a year, in a wide variety of art forms – the largest creative learning programme in Northern Ireland.
- Runs a large programme of live events - from centre, music, dance, film, cabaret, readings, poetry, literature, etc.
- Runs the annual Belfast Book Festival and CityDance, as well as hosting a wide range of other festivals in the City. These festivals help raise the profile of the centre and reach out to new audiences.
- Hosts thirteen carefully selected arts organisations, which occupy space in the vibrant creative environment the Crescent provides. The current residents are: Open Arts, Tinderbox, Dumbworld, Belfast Trad, Lamb Films, John Morrison, Sestina, Belfast Music Society, Centre NI, Du Dance, Maiden Voyage, Dance Resource Base, and Bright Young Things.
- Through our Outreach and Education programme we are particularly focused on narrowing life inequalities by providing artistic and cultural activities for people who do not normally do so.

The neutral location of the building, within the Queen's Quarter but also close to the communities of Lower Ormeau, The Markets, Donegall Pass, Sandy Row and Donegall Road, and on several bus routes and close to Botanic Rail Station, encourages visitors and attendance from all communities, and has provided excellent opportunities for cross-community work.

Through funding from Arts Council NI and Belfast City Council, the wide-ranging programmes and events have been a crucial provider of diverse arts activities. Many of those attending classes and workshops in the Crescent had their first encounter with a particular art form in the centre. These classes and workshops embrace many art forms including dance and movement, visual arts, creative writing, music of all kinds, centre, drama, crafts, and

languages. It also hosts a programme of activities and workshops for children and young people.

The outreach programme has developed and grown, embracing new arts and cultural developments and creating new partnerships which has enabled our large bank of professional tutors to work with all ages and ranges of ability across the city.

Strategic Plan

The current plan was adopted in September 2018. The Mission, Vision & Values are:

Mission

To be a vibrant and welcoming hub where everyone can experience the power of the arts and develop their creativity.

Vision

A society which actively values and promotes creativity and the arts for everyone.

Values

The following values should underpin every aspect of the organisation's culture and activities:

The Power of the arts

We believe in the power of the arts to transform lives and promote personal and social wellbeing. We believe that everyone can benefit from engagement in the appropriate art form at the level that meets their needs and progress. Central to our work will be delivering high quality arts programmes and events, which help meet people's needs and aspirations.

Respect

We believe in the intrinsic worth and dignity of every person. We are committed to providing exceptional customer service, providing a friendly and welcoming environment and treating each individual with respect, seeking to promote their wellbeing, creative development and enjoyment.

Integrity

We recognise the importance of building honest relationships based on trust and transparency. We will say what we mean and mean what we say. We will be open and accountable in all dealings with participants, customers, stakeholders and each other.

Innovation

We recognise that everyone has different needs, strengths and aspirations. We will listen to our participants and customers and continuously reflect on our programmes and be flexible and innovative in responding to changing needs and priorities.

Inclusion

We believe that a healthy and stable society needs to be built by people working and sharing together. We will be open to those of all ages, classes, faiths and cultures and celebrate the diversity of the society in which we live.

Aims

The Crescent's Core Aims are:

Aim 1: Provide appropriate opportunities for people to enjoy, learn, develop and express their creative and artistic skills.

Aim 2: Deliver a high-quality artistic events programme for people to experience and enjoy various art forms.

Aim 3: Promote the development of integrated arts programmes, combining classes, workshops and live events.

Aim 4: Develop the collaborative hub of creative organisations based in the Crescent.

Aim 5: Deliver a successful, high-quality Belfast Book Festival.

Aim 6: Promote engagement of under-represented community groups in the arts and develop their artistic/creative interests/talents.

The full 2018 – 2020 strategy [can be viewed here](#).

Staff

There is a staff team of 10 permanent staff and additional freelance individuals who mainly cover reception, box office and front of house when required.

Financial History

We receive annual renewable core funding from Arts Council of Northern Ireland (currently £200,000), Belfast City Council (currently £38,000). Core funding is approximately 30% of total income.

We raise project funding from a variety of sources. Project funding is approximately 10% of total income.

We generate income from events box office, creative learning programme and room hires. Earned income is approximately 50% of total income.

3. ROLE DESCRIPTION

Job Role: Board member

Accountable to: Chair of the Board

Responsible for: The overall governance, strategic direction and management of the Crescent Arts Centre's affairs.

Purpose of the Role

- Board members help to set the strategic direction, and review and monitor the Crescent's work, both financial and operational.
- Board members play a key role in bringing their own experience to inform strategy and act as ambassadors for The Crescent in maintaining its good reputation at all times.
- The Chair of the Board may delegate certain tasks associated with this role to the Vice Chair and other Board members.
- Board members are required to abide by the code of practice, organisational values and the regulatory requirements as set out by the Charity Commission.

Main Responsibilities

- To ensure the Crescent has a clear sense of direction which is effectively articulated in agreed strategic and operational plans which are effectively implemented, are within the budgetary framework and regularly reviewed.
- To work in partnership with other Board members and funders to support and develop the centre, and take responsibility for the corporate governance of the organisation.
- To ensure robust financial and business planning management systems, including risk management procedures, are in place for internal and external financial control and the protection of the Crescent's funds and assets
- To help ensure that adequate policies and practices are in place to protect the organisation from risk and are in keeping with its aims and values
- To ensure the Crescent complies with all legal, regulatory and statutory requirements.
- To ensure that the organisation's governance is of the highest possible standard.
- To build a good understanding of the Crescent's day-to-day operating processes, procedures and practices.
- To ensure there are effective mechanisms to listen to the views of participants, stakeholders, and beneficiaries.
- To have a serious commitment to participate actively in committee work.
- To actively promote and communicate the organisation's work to the community performing an ambassadorial role on behalf of the centre.
- To maintain the duty of care for the health and safety of all associated with the organisation, its staff, volunteers, audiences and the general public.
- Follow the Code of conduct at all times, particularly when exercising the function of a Board member or participation in any of the committees, sub-committees or groups.
- Dependant on area of expertise, board members may be expected to mentor staff and participate in fundraising.

Skills and Knowledge

- Ability to scrutinise information supplied to Board members via papers, reports and documents to enable effective and timely decision making.
- A good knowledge of the legal responsibilities attributable to the Board.
- A passion for community arts with a particular interest in the Crescent and its role regionally and nationally.
- A good understanding of the challenges facing arts organisations in Northern Ireland
- A broad overview of, and the ability to address, issues relating to the full range of the centre's operations.
- The ability and willingness to act as an advocate for the organisation and to represent its work to an external audience.
- The ability to think imaginatively and strategically, and contribute to effective decision-making
- Good communications and interpersonal skills, diplomacy and friendliness.

4. BOARD

There are currently 7 Trustees of the board, as follows:

Charlotte Jess (Chair)	Website Manager - Queen's University Belfast
Eileen Branagh (Vice Chair)	Chief Executive – Open Arts
Gareth McBride (Treasurer)	Belfast Technical Manager - IQEQ
David Wilson	Partner – Johnsons Solicitors
Jillian Kirk	Executive Performance Consultant – Ulster Bank
Gerry Hughes	Managing Director – Hughes McMichael Ltd (Property and project management)
Kelly-Anne Collins (observing)	General Manager – Young at Art

Full board profiles can be viewed at <https://crescentarts.org/>

5. SKILLS

We are seeking forward thinking Board Members who can help shape our development and contribute to our strategy for future success.

Moving into a new strategic development period, the Crescent wants to equip itself with a broad and appropriate skills base to ensure our growth, with board members providing leadership and experience to the board on growing the organisation's income and the development of activities that also fulfil our purpose and values. Our current priorities are to extend our reach, develop new partnerships, build our profile and create new strategic

collaborations.

Following a skills audit of the current board, we are now keen to recruit candidates with any of the following specific skills and professional backgrounds:

- Business Development / Income Generation / Fundraising
- Sponsorship
- Public Policy / Affairs / Relations
- Compliance, audit and risk
- Human Resources
- Health & social care / Public health
- Spoken & Written word
- Tourism
- Marketing & Digital
- Facilities management
- Charing boards

The successful candidates will have experience gained working at senior levels in relevant organisations. Experience in the public, private, community or voluntary sectors and knowledge of good governance is desirable.

We would welcome a diversity of backgrounds, skills, approaches and perspectives in our candidates.

Board membership requires a commitment to monthly board meetings, participation in sub-committees when necessary and occasional representation on behalf of the centre, if required. Attendance at Crescent events is encouraged.

6. TERMS OF APPOINTMENT

Board Meetings

Meetings are held monthly, on Tuesday evenings in the Crescent Arts Centre, 2- 4 University Road, Belfast.

Duration of Appointment

The appointment is subject to a three month observation period.

Remuneration

Unpaid

Board members serve a 3 year term with the option to extend to a maximum of 2 terms (6 years).

7. APPLY

If you would like an initial informal conversation about the board please contact the Crescent's Chair, Charlotte Jess at charlotte@crescentarts.org

To apply to join our board, please email charlotte@crescentarts.org with a copy of your CV and a covering letter outlining your suitability for a particular area, why you would like to join our board, what you hope to bring to the board and what you would like to get from your board membership.

Closing date for applications is **12 noon Friday 26 July 2019**

We will review all applications and arrange informal interviews with shortlisted candidates for the weeks commencing 29th July - 5th August. We intend to complete the selection process and appoint new directors by September 2019.

