

**EXETER
NORTHCOTT
THEATRE**

BOARD AND CHAIR/CO-CHAIR

Opportunities



Photo: The Other Richard

EXETER NORTHCOTT THEATRE IS CHANGING AND WE NEED YOU

We are currently embarked upon a process of transformation – from ‘traditional’ regional theatre to dynamic, inclusive, cultural organisation, nurturing creativity within the communities we serve and contributing to the cultural renaissance of Exeter.

We’re looking for a number of new Board members, including a Chair/Co-Chair, who are passionate about the pivotal role performing arts organisations can play within regional cities, and who can bring new perspectives and diverse lived experience to our team, to help us realise meaningful change.

“The Northcott is vital to Exeter because so much of what they’re doing is delivering against our vision for **a thriving creative city**, particularly in terms of the transformation of the Barnfield Theatre into a city-centre ‘**creation and participation hub**’ and their work on **improving diversity and inclusion** within the city’s cultural sector.”

CLLR AMAL GHUSAIN

Culture Portfolio Holder,
Exeter City Council



Photo: Mark Dawson

WHERE WE ARE RIGHT NOW

Operating from its base on the University of Exeter campus for over fifty years, Exeter Northcott Theatre has established itself as a key regional centre for mid-scale theatre and performing arts, with a programme of drama, dance, music, opera, musicals, family shows and comedy that attracts an annual audience of around 100,000 people.

In recent years we've also begun to develop a thriving programme of projects & participation, and during the Covid-19 lockdown we've been reaching out to a diverse cross section of the population we serve, with a new focus on supporting the creative development and expression of young people, communities and artists.

We're currently working with Exeter City Council on the development of plans for a new city-centre 'creation and participation hub' within a rejuvenated Barnfield Theatre, and expect to take over the management and lease of that building from 1st August 2021.



OUR PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

Our Business Plan 2019-2022 describes our vision of the Northcott as -

“A vibrant artistic hub at the heart of the cultural life of Exeter and the South West; a place where diverse communities are gathering to experience exceptional live performance; a place where children & young people are discovering the transformative power of the performing arts; and a place where anyone, regardless of their circumstances, can get involved in the life of their local theatre and begin to realise their own creative potential.

A strategically important part of the wider creative and cultural sector; a centre for collaboration between artists and academics; a pipeline for regional creative and technical talent; and a producer of middle-scale touring theatre, with a particular focus on drama, work for children & families and new voices from the South West.”

It’s hard to overstate the impact of the last twelve months on our determination to drive the change needed to achieve these and other outcomes; to reinvigorate the relationship between the Northcott and the communities it serves, and to reset the organisation’s relationship with Arts Council England as it adopts a strategically significant new role for Exeter and Devon.

As we approach the process of setting the Northcott’s direction for the next five years, ahead of Arts Council England’s next big funding round, key areas of development underway include:

- Developing the vision of what the Barnfield Theatre can become for the city and how operating across two sites could transform our offer.
- Reimagining what the relationship between live and digital could be within our programme in future.
- Fundamentally addressing the questions of representation and inclusion across everything we do.

Our new Chair/s and trustees will play a crucial role in shaping and supporting this work.



OUR COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

We're committed to being more representative, to making space for a wider range of voices and lived experience within our leadership and workforce, and to sharing power as we seek to make our organisation more inclusive.

Ensuring that the diversity of our Board reflects the diversity of the communities within which we operate is a key part of this, and so we're particularly keen to hear from people from a culturally diverse background (including Black, Asian, Dual Heritage and Other Ethnic Groups), and from d/Deaf & Disabled people.

We also want to ensure that our Board includes the perspectives of artists and other freelancers, and that it's as balanced as possible in terms of age, gender, sexual orientation, caring responsibilities and socio-economic background, and we will take these factors into account when making appointment decisions.

We recognise that, to ensure that anyone can get involved in our Board, we need to be open to changing the way we do things, how we support trustees, and even how we define 'good governance', to remove any barriers that may exist. So, if you're interested in this opportunity but are unsure whether your geographical location, your employment status or working pattern, your access needs, or caring responsibilities might prevent you from getting involved, we'd urge you to get in touch and let us think about how we can change.

We warmly welcome applications from those who are new to trustee/ Board work as well as individuals who have a proven track record in governance roles.



THE COMMITMENT WE'RE LOOKING FOR

We've set out the key responsibilities of these roles below.

In terms of time commitment, Board Meetings are generally quarterly, plus additional quarterly Finance & Resources Committee Meetings and occasional other task-and-finish working groups, with the frequency of all meetings determined by need.

Meetings have traditionally lasted c.2 hours and have taken place at the Northcott Theatre, however adapting our governance to the needs and constraints of Covid has meant we've moved most meetings onto Zoom, and time-sensitive decision-making has shifted to email, removing the need for members to travel to remain fully involved. We would anticipate transitioning to some hybrid of online and occasional live meetings post-Covid.

We'd expect our Chair/s to be involved in some work between meetings, including supporting the Chief Executive and representing the organisation in various contexts.



Photo: Steve Tanner

CHAIR/CO-CHAIR ROLE

We're looking for someone who shares our passion for theatre and live performance, and our ambition for the role a transformed Northcott can play in the development of Exeter as a creative and inclusive city at the heart of culturally thriving region; someone who brings proven leadership skills, knowledge and experience, and who works collaboratively and creatively to bring about desired outcomes.

We're keen for our new Chair/s to start as soon as possible, but could potentially accommodate a delay should other commitments make an immediate start difficult.

This role is offered initially for a three-year period.

Responsibilities

- You will lead the Board of Exeter Northcott Theatre, working closely with the Artistic Director & Chief Executive to set the policies and strategic direction of the company and monitor progress towards delivering against agreed targets.
- You will ensure that the highest standards of corporate governance and ethical/professional behaviour are maintained and, as appropriate, introduced across the organisation to meet changing circumstances and good custom and practice.
- You will ensure collaborative and effective relationships exist between the Board and the theatre's Executive and Senior Management Team.
- You will act as an ambassador, networker and spokesperson for the Northcott and its role in a growing a thriving city and region, assisting in developing relationships with key stakeholders such as Arts Council England, University of Exeter and Exeter City Council.
- With the Board, you will ensure that suitable financial controls and systems for managing risk are in place and operating effectively.
- You will conduct annual reviews with each Board member, to ensure that they are enabled to contribute as effectively as possible to the governance of the company.
- You will conduct annual appraisals of the Artistic Director & Chief Executive and provide regular feedback on their performance and any concerns raised by Board members.
- You will chair Board meetings (5-6 per annum) and, with the Artistic Director & Chief Executive, ensure that all matters requiring Board input and/or scrutiny are brought to the attention of the Board in a timely manner, and that Board members are positively encouraged to contribute to debate and decision-making within appropriate parameters.
- You will also support the Executive between meetings.

We would consider a co-Chair arrangement with two people sharing this role, and welcome either joint applications or expressions of interest in this arrangement if applying as an individual. We may also propose such an arrangement to successful candidates if we feel that it is in the best interests of the organisation.

TRUSTEE ROLES

We're looking for individuals who share our passion for theatre and live performance, and our ambition for the role a transformed Northcott can play in the development of Exeter as a creative and inclusive city at the heart of a culturally thriving region; people who can think strategically, work collaboratively and help us ensure that our programme and the services we offer are relevant and accessible to the diverse audiences we seek to serve.

We're keen for our new trustees to start as soon as possible, but could potentially accommodate a delay should other commitments make an immediate start difficult.

Our trustees are appointed for an initial term of between two to four years, renewable for up to a further two terms and a maximum of nine years.

Responsibilities

Trustees are required by law to:

- Ensure that the Northcott Theatre complies with its governing document, charity law, company law and any other relevant legislation, and pursues its stated objects.
- Ensure the effective and efficient administration of the charity, including maintaining proper financial control and using its resources in pursuance of its objects.
- Appoint the Artistic Director & Chief Executive and monitor their performance.
- Together with the Artistic Director & Chief Executive, create a firm strategic direction for the organisation, jointly setting overall vision, mission and values, defining strategic objectives and agreeing targets, and evaluating performance against agreed targets.
- Maintain and ensure effective Board performance.
- Safeguard the reputation of the Northcott Theatre.
- Protect, manage and adequately insure the property and funds of the charity.
- Approve and monitor the implementation of internal policies (which include Health & Safety, Equality & Diversity, and Grievance & Disciplinary procedures) and ensure that risk assessments for all aspects of the business are undertaken/updated effectively.

As well as these formal responsibilities, you'll get actively involved in charting the future direction of the Northcott, using your specific skills, knowledge or experience to help the Executive reach sound decisions. This may involve scrutinising Board papers or documents prepared by advisers; leading discussions; focusing on key issues; and providing advice or guidance on new initiatives where you have particular expertise or knowledge.

We expect all trustees to have an awareness of, and adhere to Nolan's Seven Principles Of Public Life – namely Selflessness, Integrity, Objectivity, Accountability, Openness, Honesty & Leadership.

HOW TO FIND OUT MORE

Website

Although current Covid-restrictions mean we don't have much in the public domain about future programme plans, we'd encourage you to have a look at the theatre's recently re-launched website, where you'll find a wide range of information about the organisation, details of our extensive projects & participation programme, and recent news stories.

www.exeternorthcott.co.uk

Drop-In Sessions

We'll be holding a couple of drop-in briefing sessions on 4th & 11th March (5.30-6.30pm), where you can chat to existing Board members and our Chief Executive, Daniel Buckroyd. These sessions will be held on Zoom, so we'd ask you to email to let us know if you'd like to attend and if you have any access requirements, for example BSL interpretation.

jobs@exeternorthcott.co.uk

Informal Chat

We're also happy to arrange an informal Zoom chat with one of our current trustees and/or our Chief Executive, Daniel Buckroyd, so drop us a line and we'll arrange a convenient time.

jobs@exeternorthcott.co.uk

HOW TO APPLY

To express an interest in getting involved, please complete the simple application form on our website, which, as well as asking for information about you and your experience, has a space where you can upload a short statement (up to 2 pages or a short video/audio file) about why you're interested in this opportunity.

www.exeternorthcott.co.uk/get-creative/work-with-us/

The Closing Date

Monday 29th March 2021 (12pm).

Initial interviews

Will take place during w/c 12th April 2021.

We'll contact everyone who expresses an interest to let them know the outcome of their application and, if requested, to offer feedback.

Access Support

If you require access support in order to apply, please email

jobs@exeternorthcott.co.uk



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