



Edinburgh  
International  
Book Festival



Member of the  
Board of Trustees

# Members of the Board of Trustees: Role Description

## Background

The Edinburgh International Book Festival, a non-profit making organisation, is a distinctive international showcase celebrating the written word, literature, and ideas. It brings leading and emerging international, British, and Scottish authors and thinkers together to inspire each other and audiences in an extensive programme of public events.

Discussion, performance, and interactive events have become prominent features of the Festival, complementing the more traditional interview-style conversations and readings, and contributing to the Book Festival's reputation as a powerful forum for the public to exchange views with writers and experts on a wide range of issues: social, ethical, and political as well as literary and cultural. At the heart of the Book Festival's activity is an integrated approach to creative learning and community engagement, with the aim of expanding participation in democratic discussion, providing a platform for voices not always heard in cultural spaces, fostering a love of reading, and developing engaged, knowledgeable audiences of all ages and backgrounds.

Between 1983 and 2020, the Edinburgh International Book Festival took place in a specially built tented Festival village in Charlotte Square Gardens, in the heart of Edinburgh. With the global pandemic the world changed. Responding swiftly to the changing circumstances, the Book Festival staged a fully digital Book Festival in August 2020. The Festival team boldly embarked on creating a new interactive online environment, where authors came together in 147 live and pre-recorded events. Real-time chatrooms, live author Q&As, and book signings created a lively online forum where people gathered, and authors interacted with their audiences.

2021 and 2022 saw continued transformation: a long-term strategic partnership with the University of Edinburgh enabled us to stage a hybrid festival on a new site at the Edinburgh College of Art, resulting in a programme of 600 events for all ages. In 2022 over 500 writers from across the world shared their stories and perspectives, and 200 of the events were also livestreamed with Pay What You Can ticketing to increase accessibility.

In 2023, we continue to adapt and evolve, reflecting our constantly changing context, and building our resilience. This year we will return to Edinburgh College of Art, and then in 2024 the Book Festival moves to a new long-term home at the Edinburgh Futures Institute, a landmark development at the University. As well as an alignment of values and huge potential

for collaboration, Edinburgh Futures Institute will offer a range of indoor venues and outdoor areas allowing us to reimagine the Festival once again and build new experiences for writers, audiences, and partners in both the physical and digital space.

The Edinburgh International Book Festival is a founder member of Festivals Edinburgh, the organisation created by Edinburgh's 11 major Festivals to support joint strategic development and maintain the position of Edinburgh's festivals as global leaders.

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## The role

### Key responsibilities:

- to act as an advocate and ambassador for the Festival
- to attend board meetings, and read papers in advance of meetings
- to participate in discussion during meetings, offering an informed and measured perspective
- to attend sub-committee meetings as appropriate
- to participate in other tasks as arise from time to time, such as interviewing new staff
- to support with fundraising through representing the Festival at events, and similar
- to keep informed about the activities of the Festival and wider issues which affect its work
- to ensure that the Festival complies with relevant legislation or regulations.

Prospective candidates are recommended to read the publication 'Guidance and Good Practice for Charity Trustees' to gain a full understanding of the responsibilities of this role. This is published by the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator and can be found at: [www.oscr.org.uk/guidance-and-forms/guidance-and-good-practice-for-charity-trustees](http://www.oscr.org.uk/guidance-and-forms/guidance-and-good-practice-for-charity-trustees)

Edinburgh International Book Festival is a company limited by guarantee and as such each trustee is also appointed as a Director under the Companies Act legislation and registered with Companies House.

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## Person specification

### All trustees must have:

- a commitment to the Edinburgh International Book Festival and its mission and aims
- an understanding and acceptance of the legal duties, responsibilities, and liabilities of being a member of the Board of Trustees
- a willingness to devote the necessary time and effort to their duties as a Trustee
- the ability to think and plan strategically

- good, independent judgment and integrity
- the ability to think creatively
- a willingness to speak their mind, whilst demonstrating respect for other viewpoints
- the ability to work effectively as a member of a team
- a respect and understanding of the need for confidentiality
- a strong commitment to equality, diversity, and inclusion

We are seeking to appoint a number of trustees with specific skills, experience, and interest in any of the following areas:

- **Bookselling:** An experienced bookselling professional, preferably with board or non-executive experience. Ability to guide the Board of Directors in ensuring that bookselling projects are financially viable and sustainable and committed to improving diversity and inclusivity.
- **Marketing:** An individual with significant experience in the field of Strategic Marketing, Brand Strategy and Management, and Digital Marketing. We are keen to hear from people with experience of a broad range of settings.
- **Writing and/or Illustration for Adult and/or Children's Literature:** Individuals with evidence of published writing or illustrations for either Adult or Children's Literature. Knowledge of the Scottish literary sector is desirable.
- **Publishing - Scottish, UK, and international:** An individual with significant experience of the publishing industry in either Scotland, UK, or internationally. The ability to advise the Board of Directors on key issues facing the industry and identify opportunities for the Book Festival to develop meaningful relationships with national and international publishers for the benefit of the Festival programme.
- **Sustainability/Climate:** A forward-thinking individual with demonstrable interest in the connections between culture and climate. The ability to guide the Board of Directors in ensuring that the Book Festival plays a leading role in reducing its carbon emissions and responding to the climate emergency. A professional knowledge of climate change adaptation is desirable.
- **Scots, Gaelic, and other indigenous languages:** An individual with an interest and passion for Gaelic, Scots, or other indigenous languages. Potential to identify opportunities for the Book Festival to amplify literature in these languages both nationally and internationally.
- **Fundraising/Commercial:** An individual with fundraising/commercial experience to provide input and strategic advice around income and revenue generation.

## Equal opportunities

A key aspect of our ongoing development is the foregrounding of equality, diversity, and inclusion. We want to build on our commitment to removing barriers and supporting equality of access for all, across every aspect of our work, including our board. We are keen the board of Trustees at the Edinburgh International Book Festival represents a range of experiences and perspectives. With that in mind, we welcome applicants from all backgrounds. This includes but isn't limited to those who have experienced racism, are disabled or identify as neurodivergent, are trans, non-binary and/or queer, and people from working class/lower socio-economic backgrounds. We also actively encourage applications from Young Professionals in the early stages of their careers (aged 21-35) who are keen to build practical, hands-on strategic leadership experience.

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## Terms

Trustees will be expected to participate in an induction process which will include visiting the Book Festival offices and meeting key members of the team.

Board meetings take place five times per year in late February/early March, late April, June (to coincide with the Festival programme launch), October, and December. Meetings are held in central Edinburgh and take place during the day.

This is a voluntary position, but reasonable expenses incurred in attending meetings and other Festival related activities will be paid in accordance with our Board Expenses policy. Trustees are appointed for a term of 5 years initially, with the option to stand for re-election for an additional 3-year period.

If you are interested in joining us, please send a CV and covering letter outlining your relevant skills and experience to Kate Seiler, External Affairs Manager: [board@edbookfest.co.uk](mailto:board@edbookfest.co.uk)

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## Closing date: Friday 9 June at 4pm.

Meetings with prospective trustees will be held at the Book Festival offices, 121 George Street, Edinburgh EH2 4YN on **Monday 19 June** and the afternoon of **Wednesday 21 June**.

(Shortlisted applicants will be invited to attend on one of those dates.)