



**Trustee
Recruitment Pack**

Trustee: Role Description

Background

The Edinburgh International Book Festival is a world-leading cultural festival, with democracy, creativity and ideas exchange at its heart. We celebrate the power of words and writing in all of their dynamic and imaginative forms, bringing diverse perspectives together, and empowering our audiences to deepen their understanding of our ever-changing world.

Since 1983, we have welcomed hundreds of thousands of visitors to engage with the world's greatest and emerging writers, thinkers, artists, and performers. Each year, we programme innovative events that broaden the horizons and enrich the minds of our audiences, both in Edinburgh and online. These take the form of on-stage conversations, workshops, creative masterclasses, think tanks, and more, all informed by a culture of open dialogue, curiosity about the perspectives of others, and active embracing of new ideas and experiences. Over the last four decades, we have continually transformed our Festival model to reflect our rapidly evolving world, and ensure our ongoing relevance, with a programme which platforms the most interesting and inspiring publishing from around the world, and balances today's most challenging topics with exploration of how we can work together towards a brighter future.

A registered charity, we are run by a passionate team who believe in the power of words and ideas to ignite imaginations, foster human connection, and challenge the status quo – as well as offer solace, nurture wellbeing, and spread joy. Our Festival aims not just to open up conversations, but to broaden them too: existing as a space at the heart of civil society where nuanced discussion can happen and a spectrum of perspectives can be explored. We believe this role, supporting and influencing public conversation, is vital to society and to the Festival's future.

At the heart of our Festival is a commitment to accessibility, inclusivity, and the creation of a truly democratic environment for the exchange of ideas and collaborative thinking. We give a platform to voices who are often overlooked and aim to break down barriers to access for those who might not typically see themselves as a book festival audience. More than just a summer festival, we work year-round with partners in the local community – with schools, libraries, prisons, hospitals, and other community hubs – with the aim of developing engaged, knowledgeable audiences of all backgrounds and ages. The Festival also makes hundreds of events available to watch online via a Pay What You Can model, offering audiences who cannot attend in person the opportunity to take part, and making the Festival truly global in nature.

In 2024, our evolution saw the beginning of a new chapter under the leadership of Festival Director, Jenny Niven. It was also our first year presenting the Festival in our new home of the Edinburgh Futures Institute – a cutting-edge university building created from the stunning renovation of the city's old Royal Infirmary and positioned at the heart of the city's Festival environment. We are excited about the opportunities this offers us to collaborate with new partners and share innovations and a wide range of voices with our audiences, both now and far into the future.

The team and board

The Book Festival has a permanent staff of 23 throughout the year, expanding over the spring and summer to a peak of around 150 staff during the Festival. All team members play a role in the ongoing development of the organisation through full team planning and debrief meetings during the year. The heads of each department form the Senior Management Team.

Our board currently has nine members, including our new Chair, Jamie Crawford, who joined us in October 2024. Four board members will reach the end of their tenure over the next two years, and we want to recruit several new trustees in anticipation of this. We also want to increase the diversity of our board and ensure that a broad range of perspectives and experiences are represented.

The role

Key responsibilities

- To act as an advocate and ambassador for the Festival, championing our activity and embodying our values
- To attend board meetings, and read papers in advance of meetings
- To participate in discussions during meetings, offering an informed and measured perspective
- To keep informed about the activities of the Festival and wider issues which affect its work
- To lead and attend sub-committee meetings as appropriate
- To participate in other tasks, such as interviewing new staff
- To support with fundraising through representing the Festival at events, and similar
- To ensure that the Festival complies with relevant legislation or regulations, and take accountability for the fiduciary and fiscal health of the organisation

Interested 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:

<https://www.oscr.org.uk/guidance-and-forms/guidance-and-good-practice-for-charity-trustees>.

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

Person specification

All trustees must have:

- a commitment to the Edinburgh International Book Festival and its vision, mission, and values
- 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 equalities, diversity, and inclusion

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

Writing and/or illustration (based in Scotland)

We want to represent the views of the creative community on our board and welcome applications from published writers and/or illustrators based in Scotland, creating work aimed at adults or children.

Publishing/Media (wider UK)

Our Festival plays an important role in the UK publishing landscape and our board would benefit from strong representation from those with excellent publishing networks and a close engagement with the publishing and/or media industries.

Finance and risk

We'd love to hear from finance professionals, ideally with experience of charity finances and accounts. We're particularly looking for a chartered accountant to join our Audit & Risk Committee (ARC), with a view to becoming Chair of ARC in due course.

Law

Applicants are sought with general commercial legal experience with particular knowledge of governance and charity law. While the Book Festival seeks specific legal advice from outside counsel as required, Board members provide support and guidance around governance, general commercial matters, and the application on a day-to-day basis of charity law.

Community engagement/creative learning

We want to hear from people with an understanding of the scope and impact of arts and community partnerships, and the role they can play in our strategic development.

Sustainability/climate emergency

We'd like to include forward-thinking people with an interest in the connections between culture and climate, and the ability to guide the Festival in its response to the climate emergency. A professional knowledge of climate change adaptation is desirable.

Terms and conditions

Trustees will be expected to participate in an induction process which will include observing a board meeting and spending a day at the Book Festival offices to meet the team.

Board meetings take place four times per year in March, June, October and December. Meetings are held in central Edinburgh and take place during the day. There is the option to join remotely. Board members are also invited to participate in committees and short-life working groups, and away days.

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.

Equal opportunities

The Edinburgh International Book Festival's work is framed by a commitment to equality, diversity, care, and inclusion.

We want to create a working environment where everyone is treated fairly and our differences are celebrated as strengths. We actively encourage applicants with diverse backgrounds and experiences to apply. We also welcome applications from younger people in the early stages of their careers (aged 21-35) who are keen to build their board and strategic leadership experience.

If you have any access requirements, please let us know and we will do our best to meet your needs.

How to apply

If you are interested in joining us, please send a CV and covering letter outlining your relevant skills and experience and why you'd like to be part of our board to Sophie Moxon, Executive Director sophie.moxon@edbookfest.co.uk

We welcome conversations with potential applicants. Please contact our Executive Assistant, Danielle McCann danielle.mccann@edbookfest.co.uk in the first instance to arrange a call.

Closing date for applications: Monday 25 November 2024.

Interviews

Meetings will be held in central Edinburgh on **Tuesday 10** and **Wednesday 11 December 2024**. Online interviews are also possible on request.

The Edinburgh International Book Festival Ltd has its registered office at 121 George St Edinburgh and is a company limited by guarantee (SC079939) with charitable status (SCO10120).