

# Recruitment of Chair and Board members for The Gunnersbury Museum and Park Development Trust

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Thank you for your interest in joining the Board.

Please find below information as follows:

1. About the Gunnersbury estate
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4. The new governance structure
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## 1. About the Gunnersbury estate

Gunnersbury Park is an extensive 186-acre area of landscaped parkland in the heart of West London. Jointly owned by Ealing and Hounslow councils, it straddles the borders of the two boroughs, and is adjacent to the neighbourhoods of Acton, Brentford, Chiswick and South Ealing. The Gunnersbury Museum and Park Development Trust (the **Trust**) was registered as a charity in 2016 and its purposes include preserving and developing the heritage, cultural, educational and recreational assets and facilities offered by the estate for the benefit of the public. The Trust works alongside Gunnersbury Estate (2026) CIC (the **CIC**), a social enterprise (constituted as a community interest company) established in 2015 as a management vehicle for the park and the estate, including the museum service.

The estate includes 22 listed buildings and structures, including the Large and Small Mansions, the Orangery, and Princess Amelia's Bath House. Among many much-loved features of the grade II\* registered park are the ornamental gardens, the Horseshoe Pond, and a boating lake.

Gunnersbury Park is also home to a variety of sports and fitness facilities, including a purpose-built sports hub and a gym, exercise studios and sports hall, as well as outdoor pitches (8 tennis courts, 2 all-weather pitches, and 10 grass pitches for football, cricket and rugby).

Moreover, the Large Mansion is the home of the museum service for the two boroughs and its displays are able to draw on extensive collection of around 50,000 objects - one of the largest local authority collections in the country.

The park's landscaping and many of the buildings date back to the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, and in the 19<sup>th</sup> century the estate was owned by the Rothschild family, who passed it into public ownership in 1925. It was subsequently run jointly by Ealing and Hounslow councils for many years.

## **2. Recent achievements**

After an extended period of 'managed decline' there have been some very considerable improvements over the last decade. A total of £38m has been raised, safeguarding several historic buildings, restoring heritage gardens, providing new facilities for the museum, and establishing a major new sports centre.

The Park has achieved a Green Flag award and visitor numbers have increased to 1 million a year.

Most recently, despite the very considerable challenges of Covid, and also a fire which destroyed a newly built café, it has been possible to adapt fast and successfully. A major reduction in festival income in 2020 was offset by highly successful grant fundraising, public donations, and an increase in filming fees. The recent improvements to the planting and gardens, achieved to a high standard by a small gardens team, have won particular praise.

All this could not have been achieved without leadership from the two local authorities, the hard work of the CIC and the Trust, and the commitment, support and determination from many others including Historic England, the National Lottery Heritage Fund, a range of independent trusts and foundations, and the Friends of Gunnersbury Park and Museum.

## **3. Plans for further development of the estate**

Despite the recent progress there is still much to do. While some elements of a Masterplan drawn up in 2012 have been accomplished, the major outstanding works (which will require capital funding in the order of £30-35m to address) include:

- Restoration of the Small Mansion and Stables (weather-proofing works are underway, but this is only the start of what is needed).
- Restoration of other historic features including the Potomac Lake and the Japanese Gardens.
- Tackling the derelict Model Farm site.
- Completing the restoration of the Grotto and finding a purpose for the Bath House.

Furthermore, there is work to be done to enhance the quality of the visitor experience, not least improvements to paths and signage, improving access from different sides of the park, and generally making the park more welcoming.

In addition, work is needed to improve management of the estate, not least tackling poor drainage in several areas, and the lack of a suitable and secure on-site maintenance depot.

Set against these challenges, there are however many opportunities, not least the following:

- The local communities (residents, local businesses, voluntary associations) are a largely untapped resource, with huge potential. With imagination and flair it should be possible to considerably increase the level of volunteering and participation.
- While the Covid pandemic has been challenging for Gunnersbury, limiting some activities, and producing new financial challenges, it has also reinforced the realisation that Gunnersbury is of major importance in terms of health and well-being, for all sections of the community, and not least those experiencing social disadvantage. Looking ahead, it should be possible for Gunnersbury to establish itself as a significant health and well-being resource for West London, and attract partnerships and funding accordingly.

In October 2021 the Trust and the CIC drew up an interim strategic plan. This set out a vision for the future of the estate, with the following summary:

We want to make Gunnersbury not just good but also outstanding.

First and foremost this means that Gunnersbury must be welcoming and safe, with excellent facilities which are always maintained to the highest standards.

But more than this, we want to excite and delight. We want Gunnersbury to offer a rich variety of experiences and services that attract the widest possible range of visitors and add value to their lives.

Gunnersbury is exceptionally fortunate in both heritage and landscape. We want to restore and open up our buildings and gardens and parkland, and provide a rich mix of cultural and museum and learning services. We want to encourage discovery, with opportunities for people to explore and learn about the past that has shaped our present times, and understand and appreciate the natural world we inhabit.

Furthermore, we want Gunnersbury to be known as a resource for health and well-being, with areas of natural and informal beauty, quiet spaces, family activity, sport and exercise, recreation and play.

Above all we want Gunnersbury to be alive all the year round with people, from all backgrounds and cultures, income levels and walks of life. And beyond the park we want our offsite work and digital platforms to reach out and engage people from every part of Ealing and Hounslow, and beyond.

We want to make it possible for residents from across the two boroughs not just to enjoy Gunnersbury, but also to contribute actively to its success. So that they feel, as a result, that this is our Gunnersbury.

And last but not least, we want to safeguard the future of Gunnersbury. This means fulfilling our long term stewardship role, safeguarding the future of the estate, contributing to efforts to tackle climate change, and operating as a successful social enterprise, placing Gunnersbury on a sound financial footing.

## 4. The new governance structure

The Trust is an independent, registered charity, constituted as a company limited by guarantee. Its activities include (but are not limited to) helping raise capital funds for the park and estate. The CIC (also a company limited by guarantee) is currently owned and controlled by the two local authorities of Ealing and Hounslow.

While both the Trust and the CIC have made important contributions to the successes in recent years, there have been some drawbacks with these arrangements. To address those, and best secure the future of the park and estate, the Trust, the CIC and the two local authorities have agreed to restructure the governance arrangements. In particular it is believed that the restructure will:

- Remove impediments to fundraising and so help to address the forthcoming significant capital restoration and infrastructure challenges, and at the same increase prospects for year-on-year financial viability.
- Achieve better integrated strategic planning and operations, and so deliver improved services.
- Produce greater public transparency and community engagement, both of which are regarded as fundamental to future success.

In January 2022 the two local authorities approved in Cabinet a restructure which will result in the Trust becoming the parent charity and sole member of the CIC, and the CIC therefore becoming the Trust's wholly owned trading subsidiary.

Ealing and Hounslow are consequently stepping back from a controlling role (as they will cease to own and control the CIC) but will continue to remain fully involved as landlords of the estate and active partners in supporting its management and future development. The lease of the estate, as well as the funding agreement with Ealing and Hounslow (which contributes significantly to the costs of managing the park and estate), will continue.

Under the new structure, the Board of the Trust will comprise:

- A Chair, publicly recruited.
- Two Board members appointed by Ealing and Hounslow (one from each local authority).
- Four Board members carried forward for continuity from the boards of the current Trust and CIC (two from each).
- Four further Board members, publicly recruited.

The new Trust Board, once in place, will appoint the Board of its trading subsidiary, the CIC. CIC board members will include members of the Trust Board and, as necessary, further recruitment will be undertaken to address any skills gaps.

## 5. The role of the Chair and Board members

### **The role and responsibilities of the Trust Board**

The members of the Trust Board will be both Charity Trustees and Company Directors and are ultimately responsible for the oversight of the running of the Trust. They exercise their role

collectively, making decisions together. Their duties are set out by charity and company law and include the following:

- Ensuring the Trust is carrying out its purposes for the public benefit.
- Complying with the Trust's governing document and the law.
- Acting in the Trust's best interests.
- Managing the Trust's resources responsibly, including safeguarding and protecting the Trust's assets.
- Acting with reasonable care and skill.
- Ensuring the Trust is accountable.

Further detail from the Charity Commission can be found here: [The essential trustee: what you need to know, what you need to do.](#)

All Board members will take part in an induction process that will include an introduction to the Trust's governing document (its Articles of Association), current work plans, finances and budgets, and policies and procedures, including the Code of Conduct for Board members. Training opportunities will be made available, where useful, to address any learning and skills development needs.

### **Role and responsibilities of individual Board members**

The primary responsibilities of a Board member of the Trust are to:

1. Ensure that the Trust furthers its charitable purposes and that the Board acts in the best interests of the Trust and its beneficiaries at all times.
2. Develop, set and keep under review the Trust's strategy, business plan, measurable outcomes and annual budgets.
3. Ensure that the Trust's resources are used responsibly and prudently, and that there is good financial control and accountability for use of funds.
4. Identify, assess, manage and monitor risks and opportunities and declare, record and manage any conflicts of interest.
5. Oversee and hold to account the Chief Executive and the senior management team. Board members have a responsibility of supervision and challenge when necessary but should also offer support and guidance .
6. Act as effective advocates for the Trust and represent it at external events when required.
7. Monitor the activities of the CIC, of which the Trust is the sole member.
8. Attend regular Board meetings (a minimum of four per annum) and meetings of any Committee of which they are a member.
9. Prepare for Board and Committee meetings by reading the relevant papers in advance. Also respond promptly, and as required, to communications from the Chair, Chief Executive, senior management team members and other Board members.
  
10. Ensure that the Trust complies with all relevant laws, including charity and company law, and regulatory requirements at all times.

Board members need to be:

- Committed to the core purposes of the Trust, as set out in its Articles and strategic plan.

- Constructive, open to and respectful of other Board members' opinions in discussions, and in response to staff members' and volunteers' contributions at meetings and when carrying out any other related Board member responsibilities.
- Scrupulous in maintaining confidentiality regarding sensitive and confidential information.
- Willing to make collective decisions and take cabinet responsibility for them.
- Aware and respectful of boundaries between executive and non-executive functions.

#### **Additional role and responsibilities of the Chair of the Board**

1. Provide leadership to the Board, with a high level of integrity, and ensure that Board members fulfil their duties and responsibilities for the proper governance of the Trust.
2. Establish an effective working relationship with, and provide both support and challenge, to the Chief Executive, including periodic appraisal and remuneration review.
3. Ensure that the Board sets the vision, strategy and policies for the Trust within and in furtherance of the Trust's charitable objects and the powers and procedures in its governing document.
4. Ensure that the Board monitors the performance of the Trust and satisfies all legal and regulatory compliance requirements.
5. Work with the Chief Executive to establish the Board agenda and ensure that Board papers and briefings are clear and informative and provided in a timely fashion.
6. Chair meetings of the Board effectively, promoting a culture of openness and debate, and ensure that decisions are delegated appropriately, recorded and implemented.
7. Encourage all Board members to become fully involved in the work of the Board, and ensure they are all informed of significant developments and consulted as appropriate.
8. Provide support to any Chairs of Committees.
9. Together with the Chair of the Finance Committee/Treasurer (if one is appointed) and Chief Executive, monitor the financial health of the charity and ensure that robust financial control and accountability systems are in place.
10. Work with the Chief Executive to build and develop external relationships and support the Chief Executive in the presentation of the Trust's aims and policies to stakeholders including the two local authorities and key funding bodies.
11. Together with the Board and Chief Executive, regularly review major risks and opportunities and manage any conflicts of interest.
12. Ensure that the composition and performance of the Board and its members are reviewed and initiate any necessary action to achieve better performance.
13. Act as an effective advocate for the Trust, representing it at meetings and events and supporting fundraising activities.

#### **Summary of time commitment**

Frequency of meetings (beyond the requirement in the Articles for the Board to meet at least four times per annum) and other expectations will be a matter for the newly constituted Board to agree.

However, it is likely that the core time commitments for Board members will be about a day a month and for the Chair about two-three days a month.

## 6. Person specification for the Board member/Chair roles

The following are required for all Board members and the Chair:

- Commitment to the Gunnersbury estate and ambition for its future.
- Ability to reflect and listen.
- Understanding the importance of transparency and accountability to local communities.
- A commitment to inclusion and diversity.
- A good general understanding of charity governance.
- Willingness to commit sufficient time.

For the Board member roles the additional requirements are at least two of the following:

- Knowledge and understanding of the local area (Ealing and Hounslow) and of the diverse communities within the two boroughs.
- Experience of working within or serving on the board of a public sector, not for profit or charitable organisation.

Knowledge, understanding and experience of the heritage sector.

- Experience in managing or commissioning services, such as those relating to parks, museums, historic buildings, sports activities.
- Experience in leisure, hospitality and/or events industries.
- Commercial/entrepreneurial expertise.
- Expertise in one of:
  - Fundraising
  - Communications/marketing
  - Heritage and cultural sector
  - Public parks and green spaces
  - Community engagement
  - Accountancy
  - Project management/strategic planning
  - HR

The additional requirements for the Chair are:

- Strategic drive
- High level of integrity

- Facilitation expertise
- Prior board experience
- Understanding of both commercial and not for profit sectors
- Appreciation of and commitment to the public service/stewardship role

Please note: to ensure an effective and credible Board we wish to achieve a gender balance, as well as diversity in terms of ethnicity and cultural background. For the same reasons, applications are welcome from people of all ages, and from people with disabilities, and we are committed to providing reasonable access adjustments as required.

## 7. How to apply

Applications should be in writing and should include:

- a) A statement (maximum 2 sides of A4 please) explaining whether you are applying for the role of **Chair** or **Board member**, or would like to be considered **for both**, and setting out why you would like to join the Board and how you meet the requirements of the person specification.
- b) A CV (maximum 2 sides of A4 please). Please include in your CV the names and contact details of two referees, one who knows you in a work capacity – we will only take up references if you are offered a role. Also please let us know if you or a close family member are an employee or elected member of a local council.

### **Closing date for all applications**

Please complete your application by the closing date: Friday 9 September at 5.00pm.

### **Interview dates are TBC for early October**

(If you have any access requirements, or if these dates present a difficulty for you, please let us know in your application.)