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**Chair Recruitment**

**Candidate Information Pack**

**September 2025**



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8. **Welcome**

Thank you for your interest in the role of EastSide Arts Chair and I hope you will give thought to the role. We are seeking a Chair who shares our passion for creativity and inclusion, and who will bring vision, leadership, and drive to support the team as they continue to deliver work of exceptional quality and creative engagement.

Our plans are ambitious as we begin to focus on making sure that everyone in east Belfast has access to culture and creativity every day of the year. We want to help our artists make more work and our audiences to see themselves reflected in our stories.

You will see in the pack that we are looking for some specific experience around Relationships, Networks and Knowledge with the Arts and Cultural sectors; Financial Management and Business Planning; Commercial Income Generation and Fundraising Strategies.

As part of EastSide Partnership, our focus in the coming years is the regeneration of east Belfast through culture in its widest sense, so we would love to hear from anyone who has experience in this area.

I warmly invite those who are inspired by the arts, committed to community, and motivated to make a real difference, to consider stepping into this role. I look forward to seeing it flourish under new leadership.

Fiona Bell

Chair, EastSide Arts

1. **Overview of EastSide Partnership**

*2.1 Overview, Vision and Mission EastSide Partnership*

EastSide Partnership is a local charity leading the regeneration of east Belfast. Working alongside other community-based organisations, elected representatives, statutory agencies and local businesses, EastSide Partnership delivers a wide variety of projects with a clear mission to create ‘A Thriving, Connected and Welcoming east Belfast’.

We believe our mission is to improve the lives of people across east Belfast and this means working on a range of projects;

* Helping local people to have a say in what happens in their lives and in their local area.
* Supporting people who are most in need to improve their life chances and take opportunities.
* Encouraging everyone in east Belfast to enjoy green space and culture.
* Celebrating the diverse cultures of east Belfast.
* Welcoming new people to visit and live in the area.

We were formed in 1995 and founded in 1996. Our work is governed by a parent board through a Chief Executive and a core central team providing shared service support to the following projects:

* **EastSide Arts** - whose aim is to create an east Belfast where the arts are valued, creativity is for everyone, and people are connected with each other and the wider world.
* **EastSide Greenways** - whose aim is to promote the sustainable development, management, improvement and use of open green  spaces and routes, parks and rivers for the benefit of the public.
* **EastSide Learning** – whose aim is to reduce educational underachievement and raise aspirations in east Belfast.  Supporting children, young people and their families to reach their potential, whatever their background.
* **EastSide Property** - whose aim is to contribute to the physical regeneration of east Belfast through the strategic acquisition, development and management of sites and properties.
* **EastSide Tourism** - whose aim is co-ordinate and deliver responsible, sustainable and impactful culture-led neighbourhood regeneration through tourism, putting east Belfast on the map for visitors.
* In addition, we deliver the Neighbourhood Renewal contract with the Department for Communities (DfC) by firstly ensuring that all of the above projects engage with the communities identified within the contract, as well as providing ongoing support to the Inner East & Tullycarnet Neighbourhood Renewal Partnerships.

**EastSide Partnership Staffing Structure Chart (Sept 25)**



*2.2 Values*

As recognised in EastSide Partnership’s mission and vision, we consider people, and their connection to each other to be at the heart of everything we do. We want to work with others, for the benefit of everyone, responding to people’s needs as they change over time.

We agreed that we value:

* **INTEGRITY:** Working for others with objectivity, accountability, openness, and honesty.
* **COLLABORATION:** Working in co-operation with others both internally and externally.
* **INCLUSIVITY:** Respecting others and celebrate diversity, culture and heritage.
* **EQUITY:** Working to support people affected by poverty and disadvantage.
* **PEOPLE:** Working to create opportunities for wellbeing through connection, reflection and learning.
* **SUSTAINABILITY:** Working in an environmentally responsible way.
* **ADAPTIBILITY**: Responding to needs in east Belfast as they evolve.

1. **Overview of EastSide Arts**

*3.1 Aim & Objectives*

Our vision, mission and values are aligned to that of the parent company, EastSide Partnership. EastSide Arts has the specific project aim of ‘***creating an east Belfast that is a thriving cultural hub; where the arts are valued, creativity is for everyone and people are connected with each other and the wider world****.’*

Objectives

1. To improve equity of opportunity for people in east Belfast to engage with creative activities
2. To create a variety of meaningful, open and inclusive opportunities for people in east Belfast to explore creativity and connect with others
3. To celebrate the past, present and future of east Belfast;
4. To develop relationships that ensure the long-term stability of EastSide Arts and create investment in the arts in east Belfast
5. **The role of the EastSide Arts Board**

*4.1 Context*

EastSide Arts is a Company Limited by Guarantee and is a Charity recognised by the Charity Commission for NI and HM Revenue and Customs. It is a not-for-profit organisation and one of 7 wholly owned subsidiaries of EastSide Partnership. EastSide Arts was constituted in January 2015 and registered as a charity with the Charities Commission NI in 2021.

EastSide Arts is governed by a voluntary Board of Directors. The company is managed on a day-to-day basis by a Manager, who is appointed by the Board of Directors. The Manager, with the assistance of one full-time member of staff, manages the day-to-day activities of the company. The Manager reports to the Chairperson and the Board and is line-managed by the Director of Strategic Development of EastSide Partnership, the parent company.

EastSide Arts receives core funding from Arts Council Northern Ireland and Belfast City Council. Additional income is raised through applications to statutory funders, Trusts & Foundations and through ticket sales and sponsorship.

The Board is responsible for ensuring that the strategic direction of EastSide Arts is
consistent with its charitable aims and the wider regeneration aims of EastSide Partnership, and is pursued energetically, innovatively and effectively.

*4.2 Charity Commission Trustee Duties*

The Charity Commission has outlined 6 main duties for “the Essential Trustee”.

1. Ensure your charity is carrying out its purposes for the public benefit
	* Knowing what your charity can and can’t do within its purposes
	* Knowing how your charity is fulfilling its purposes and benefiting the public
	* Awareness of what difference your charity is really making
2. Comply with your charity’s governing document and the law
* Being familiar with your governing document
* Being up to date with filing accounts, returns and any changes to your charity’s registration details
* Having awareness of other laws that apply to your charity
1. Act in your charity’s best interests
* Making balanced, informed decisions
* Recognising & dealing with conflicts of interest
* Ensuring trustee benefits are allowed
* Being prepared to question and challenge
* Accepting majority decisions
1. Ensure your charity is accountable
* Managing risks, protecting assets (reputation) and people
* Getting the resources your charity needs
* Having and following appropriate controls and procedures
* Dealing with land and buildings
* Responsibility for, and to, staff and volunteers
1. Manage your charity’s resources responsibly
* Using your skills and experience
* Deciding when you need advice
* Preparing for meetings
* Getting the information you need (financial, management)
* Being prepared in case something does go wrong
1. Act with reasonable care and skill
* Meeting legal accounting and reporting requirements
* Being able to show that your charity complies with the law and is effective
* Being accountable to members and others with an interest in the charity
* Ensuring that staff and volunteers are accountable to the board
* Welcoming accountability as an opportunity not a burden
	1. *Chair Role and Responsibilities*
* To chair meetings of the EastSide Arts Board effectively and efficiently, bringing impartiality and objectivity to discussion and the decision-making process.
* To have a strong relationship and work closely with the Cultural Development Manager to give direction to the Board.
* To facilitate the effective contribution of all directors in and outside the board room ensuring effective relationships and participation.
* To manage performance of Board members and support learning and development opportunities.
* To determine the organisation’s mission and strategic direction and ensure that the organisation stays within its remit and within the law, and to ensure that the strategic and operational plans that direct the work of the organisation are approved.
* To involve and take into account the views of all stakeholders of the organisation when arriving at board decisions.
* To ensure effective business planning takes place, and to monitor performance against these.
* To develop and approve clearly defined financial management, control and expenditure policies and procedures for the purposes of ensuring transparent and authorised utilisation of resources.
* To approve financial plans and commitment and ensure regular and timely financial reporting against budget occurs.
* To approve and ensure effective corporate governance arrangements for the organisation are in place, and that these are fit for purpose.
* To ensure that board members have the appropriate suite of skills to comprehend and utilise financial and governance information they are asked to review. To this end, the board should enable this through appropriate and effective induction processes.
* To review and assess the effectiveness and impact of governance arrangements in the organisation on an ongoing basis.
* To ensure that the organisation meets all of its statutory and legal requirements with regard to complying with company law obligations, and that it at all times acts in accordance with the relevant governing documents.
* To ensure that the organisation meets all of its statutory and legal requirements with regard to employment practices, equality obligations and that staff are supported in fulfilling their roles by means of effective staff development processes.
* To ensure that an effective audit by a professionally recognised auditor takes place, approve the annual accounts, and take on board the resulting recommendations of the management letter from the external auditors.
* To select and ensure good management of the Cultural Development Manager.
* To ensure that adequate funding is in place, and that productive relationships are maintained with representatives of funding organisations, and that the organisation is represented in these settings through effective engagement with key stakeholders.

*4.4 Expectations of the Chair and Individual Trustees*

Each Board Member has the following responsibilities, and is accountable to the Board for them;

* To read the board papers in advance of the meeting.
* To attend and contribute to Board, committee and working group meetings, and be punctual or, where attendance is not possible, to submit apologies for non-attendance in advance.
* To prepare for and contribute to Board and working group meetings by suggesting issues for discussion in the agenda and adhering to the agenda at meetings.
* To maintain respect for the confidential nature of issues designated as such by the Chair at meetings.
* To question appropriately but to share collective responsibility for decisions.
* To be well informed about the organisation’s purpose, services and strategies, and its operating environment.
* To challenge and support the Manager.
* To undertake other functions as required (e.g.) selection panels, working groups.
* To represent the organisation and speak on its behalf when asked to do so.
* To ensure balance is maintained between strategic and operational management.
* To develop and maintain good relationships with key stakeholders of the organisation, in particular the staff and those who the Partnership serves.
* To act with due care and diligence in discharging all legal, regulatory and organisational duties required of a board member.
* To avoid even the appearance of a conflict of interest, and to disclose any possible conflicts to the Chair immediately.
* To uphold and promote the values of EastSide Arts and EastSide Partnership.
	1. *Meet the Current EastSide Arts Board*

Chair – Fiona Bell

Director – John McGrath

Director – Marcus Hunter Neill

Director – Judith Millar

Director – Eimear McCracken

Director – Judith Sialianskia

Director – Collette Lydon

Director – Rachael Davison

1. **Commitment Required**

Why become the EastSide Arts Chair?

EastSide Arts is an exciting and innovative culture-led regeneration charity as part of the wider EastSide Partnership. We have an ambitious and creative year-round programme including the annual EastSide Arts Festival.

We also work with community partners to deliver reactive projects based on need. We have been awarded funding from the Paul Hamlyn Foundation to deliver the Creative Citizens programme which aims to address gaps in creative provision across east Belfast.

As the new Chair you will join the existing EastSide Arts and EastSide Partnership boards and be accountable for supporting the organisation to deliver its strategic plan, developing future strategic goals and leading the continued growth and profile of the organisation.

* The Board meets every quarter for approximately 1.5 hours. Meetings are currently held on a Tuesday evening at 5pm at the EastSide Partnership offices. Dates are set for all Board meetings at the beginning of the financial year.
* The EastSide Arts Chair will also be a member of the EastSide Partnership board to ensure alignment to the wider regeneration of east Belfast.
* An annual EastSide Partnership strategic planning day (or overnight) takes place annually which you will be invited to attend.
* On occasions you may be invited to attend public events to represent the organisation.
1. **What We Can offer You**
* The Chair will be offered a full induction programme and supporting material.
* We will offer you ongoing professional training and development and the opportunity to make significant regeneration impact in east Belfast.
* The role will give you the potential to develop your own leadership and decision-making skills and to grow your professional networks.
* This is a non-remunerated post, with reimbursement of all volunteer expenses.
1. **Board Recruitment Process**

*7.1 Person specification*

We are committed to making all of our recruitment as accessible and inclusive as possible. We want to be open and transparent about what we are looking for from applicants and ask you to complete an application form, rather than submit a CV. In order to maintain and develop an effective Board, we regularly review the Board’s membership to ensure there is a good balance of:

* Skills, knowledge and experience
* Perspectives and connections
* Diversity

We balance the need for continuity and renewal by having a maximum tenure of 3 years per term which may be renewed up to 3 times with a review after each term.

Based on our most recent analysis of the skills and expertise of the Board, we are keen to recruit a Chair that can demonstrate experience in the following areas;

1. Relationships, Networks and Knowledge with the Arts and Cultural sectors
2. Financial Management and Business Planning
3. Commercial Income Generation and Fundraising Strategies.

*7.2 How To Apply*

* Applications to be emailed to **gillian@eastsidepartnership.com** by **12pm on Monday 20th October 2025.**
* Shortlisting will be carried out by a small panel composed of membership from EastSide Arts and EastSide Partnership boards.
* Informal Interviews will take place in person at Avalon House, 278-280 Newtownards Road on **Friday 31st October 2025.**
* The newly appointed Chair will be co-opted onto the EastSide Arts Board and the EastSide Partnership board at the EastSide Partnership AGM in December 2025.

For further information about EastSide Arts, our strategy and projects, please visit our website at [www.eastsidearts.net](http://www.eastsidearts.net).

For further information about the opportunity, please contact -

**Neal Campbell, Cultural Development Manager**

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