

Black Swan Arts

Trustee Role Description

Introduction

Black Swan Arts is in the heart of the renowned creative market town of Frome in Somerset. Housed in a Grade II listed building, our vibrant and varied programme features contemporary and innovative art and crafts. We are a popular arts venue for the creatives of Frome and beyond, providing exhibition, shop, studio, workshop spaces and a friendly café.

We are looking to recruit new board members to work with us in a voluntary capacity, with the skills, knowledge and dynamism we need to take us to the next stage in our development. We are looking for three Trustees to fulfil very specific roles. These are:

A Chair: who needs to be an articulate advocate for the Black Swan and a great networker - ideally with considerable local knowledge and contacts.

A Treasurer: someone with strong finance skills, and the ability to explain finance to non-finance people. Preferably with accounting qualifications, and an understanding of charity accounting.

And, finally, a **practicing artist or crafts person**, to ensure that the needs and aspirations of artists and makers are kept at the centre of every Trustees' meeting.

There are many benefits to being a Black Swan Arts Trustee:

- Making a valuable contribution to your community;
- Acquiring further knowledge and understanding about charities and the visual arts;
- Applying your professional experience in a new context to develop your skills and further build your experience;
- Making useful new contacts and connections in your local community.

In the following pages you'll find an outline of Trustee roles and responsibilities. Further information about Black Swan Arts can be found on our website www.blackswanarts.org.uk . If you'd like an informal conversation about any of the roles, please contact Rebecca Morland in the first instance at rebecca@rmorland.com.

To apply, please send your CV to office@blackswanarts.org.uk with a brief covering letter of not more than 2 pages explaining what you'd bring to Black Swan Arts. Proposals should be received no later than **31 August 2019**.

Please would you also complete the Equalities Monitoring Form, so that we can be sure of our reach.

Background

Black Swan Arts is a registered charity and limited company, formally known as Black Swan Arts Guild. It is based in a grade II listed building in the centre of Frome. The Black Swan public house closed in 1955, and re-opened as the Black Swan Guild Arts Centre in 1986. Since then it has operated as a centre for the visual arts and crafts, with an extension being built in 2000 to link the main building to an old drying house, otherwise known as the Round Tower.

In recent years, due to changes in revenue funding, it has changed its business model. It leases one area of the building to a craft shop and lets workshops and studio spaces to arts-



based tenants. In January 2018, it took its café back in-house, which is now operated through a separate trading company, BSE Ltd.

Mission:

For Black Swan Arts to be a centre of excellence in Frome for the region, creating opportunities for engagement in arts and culture that span all ages and multiple interest groups, housed in an architecturally significant building.

Key objectives:

Arts and Culture:

- Black Swan Arts will be a centre of excellence, promoting and nurturing a wide range of dynamic and diverse craftsmanship and artistic practice. Black Swan Arts will make a major contribution to the town's artistic and cultural development.

Art and the Community:

- Black Swan Arts will encourage and support a dialogue between the public and contemporary art and culture in a non-threatening, inclusive and responsive environment;
- Across the range of its activities, Black Swan Arts will be accessible to, and welcoming of, all ages, abilities, cultures and interests.

Arts Engagement:

- Black Swan Arts will take a leading role in furthering the public understanding and appreciation of contemporary art and culture;
- Black Swan Arts will actively collaborate with others across all sectors and levels of education and with other arts organisations.

Achievements: Black Swan Arts' greatest achievement has been to develop a sustainable business model which enables it to operate without subsidy, but still to present a diverse and high quality range of arts and crafts exhibitions. During 2018 our specific achievements were as follows:

- Over 50 volunteers
- Estimated visitors across all galleries, studios, café and shop c 20,000
- The Long Gallery (main space) was open for 281 days, and had 6984 attendances over 8 BSA-promoted exhibitions
- 50% of the shows in the Round Tower were community based, including work from schools, community arts groups etc.
- The BSA Guild was launched - an opportunity for artists and crafts people to share and promote their work

Organisational information

Black Swan Arts is run by a group of committed trustees from a wide range of backgrounds. All trustees take on specific responsibilities. There is a centre manager who is employed on a part-time basis (20 hours per week), a part-time book-keeper, and occasional other paid support (eg curation of Open Exhibitions) and some finance and marketing support. The Café is operated through a separate trading company, BSE Ltd, with separate directors (all currently trustees), has a Café Manager, and small staff team. A pool of volunteers, approx. 50 in number, steward the Gallery and also take on other responsibilities. A group of local artists operate as the programming committee, taking responsibility for programming and curating the majority of the exhibitions in the Long Gallery.

Duties and Responsibilities

The Chair

- The Chair is the leader and spokesperson of the Board and as such must keep closely in touch with the company and its activities. The Chair will normally represent the company at outside events, though may delegate this to a Vice Chair or another colleague. The Chair will therefore be expected to:
 - Lead Black Swan Arts, and in particular its trustees and volunteers
 - Be the public face of Black Swan Arts, both locally, regionally and nationally
 - Network and advocate for Black Swan Arts, using their extensive contacts for the overall benefit of Black Swan Arts
 - Take a leading role in ensuring that all Black Swan Arts stakeholders are communicated with and feel valued;
- Additionally, the Chair acts as the decision maker on any matters that cannot be progressed without Board authorisation, but cannot wait until the next Board meeting. Ideally, the Board will delegate specific powers over matters in progress to the Chair, but this is not always possible. The Chair cannot make alone financial decisions involving amounts above a certain figure (currently £250.00);
- All decisions made by the Chair between meetings will be brought to the full Board for ratification and must be within agreed policy parameters;
- In the absence of the Chair, the Deputy Chair or another previously agreed colleague will undertake the duties and powers of the Chair.

The Treasurer

The Treasurer is responsible for ensuring that the financial affairs of Black Swan Arts, and its associated companies, are kept in order, and for ensuring that Trustees are provided with the appropriate financial information in order to make key decisions. This involves:

- Working closely with the p/t book-keeper who ensures that all relevant income and cost data are entered onto the accounts package in a timely fashion;
- Using information from the accounts package to produce regular and timely management accounts for trustees of Black Swan Arts and directors of BSE Ltd (the trading company which operates the Café);
- Agreeing budgets for the year with the Chair;
- Working closely with the Café Manager and with the other directors of the trading company to ensure that the Café Manager has all the information necessary to operate the café in a financially sensible manner;
- Liaising with the accountants to ensure that they have all the necessary information to produce year-end accounts.
- Taking the lead in liaison with Black Swan Arts' bank whenever necessary.

General Trustee Duties and Responsibilities:

Because Black Swan Arts is a Charity and a Limited Company, trustees as a whole have a range of responsibilities which are detailed below.

Legal and financial duties

- Ensure that the company operates in accordance with Company and Charity Law. This includes the filing of statutory returns at Companies House, returns to the Charity Commission and keeping of Company Registers;
- The prudent financial management of the company. To exercise financial control; to scrutinise statements of the financial position; to discuss and decide on annual budgets and to review and, if required, revise those budgets;
- Ensure the company keeps proper accounts and that audited accounts are produced annually and submitted to Companies House and the Charity Commission;
- Ensure the payment of all taxes due to the Inland Revenue;
- Appoint bankers and cheque signatories and to make clear decisions about staff/trustee spending powers;
- Safeguard the company's assets and ensure they are well managed and maintained;
- Ensure that the company is properly insured;

NB: Directors should note that if the company is not run within the limits of its financial resources, it is possible that they could be held personally liable for the company's debts and disqualified from being a company director, if they are ever found to have acted imprudently. It is therefore essential that Directors are informed of the company's financial position so that they can monitor the company's ongoing financial situation.

Employment and human resources duties

Trustees should note that the Board of Directors is the employer of staff, and has overall responsibilities for volunteers. Responsibilities include:

- Appointment of staff;
- Defining the company's employment and volunteer policies, including equal opportunities and diversity policies, recruitment, pay, grievance and disciplinary, appraisal, sickness, holidays and training;
- Approving staffing structure and taking part in recruitment as required;

- Agreeing the job descriptions, person specifications and terms of employment of staff and to review levels of pay annually;
- Ensuring the safe and efficient use of premises for staff, volunteers, hirers and the public.

Policy and planning

- The Board defines company policies, sets policy priorities and determines strategies for the implementation of policies;
- The Board should monitor all aspects of service delivery and policy implementation on a regular basis;
- The Board should review all areas of policy and policy implementation documents annually and make appropriate revisions (this includes a review of this document);
- The Board takes the lead role in the promotion of equality and diversity.

Advocacy

- Being a passionate and informed advocate for Black Swan Arts, so as to enhance the company's profile and assist with fundraising for the company;
- Acting as a listening post in order to provide any information which may be of assistance to Black Swan Arts.

Management

- Establish and maintain a cycle of meetings with appropriate materials to service the Board efficiently;
- Establish an appropriate system of working groups to undertake detailed analysis of specified matters, take action according to delegated powers, and make recommendations of courses of action to the Board;
- Establish a system of communications and delegated decision making so that urgent decisions can be made and acted upon between Board meetings.

Attendance and performance

- Attend at least 80% of trustee meetings (unless acceptable reasons for absence are provided), and actively participate in these, taking on responsibility for delivering agreed Action Points [Trustee meetings take place on average every 6 weeks, and are currently in the evening];
- Engage in sub-committees, working parties, awaydays and/or other trustee activities;
- Attend the great majority of Gallery Openings and other public events associated with Black Swan Arts where possible, making themselves known as trustees on these occasions;
- Provide advice and support to staff, volunteers and colleagues either by telephone, by email or in person, as appropriate;

- Be capable of retaining confidential information and understanding what information needs to be confidential.

Role Specifications

We would be looking for the following characteristics, skills and experience in the Chair and Treasurer

Chair

- An outgoing person with excellent networking skills;
- Comfortable with public speaking;
- Influencing skills;
- Aware of local politics in its widest sense.

Treasurer

- Strong finance skills and the ability to be hands-on in the creation of budgets, accounts and other financial reports;
- Experience of producing management accounts and reports on a regular basis;
- An understanding of charity and corporate accounting requirements as well as experience of working with auditors or similar;
- The ability to explain financial issues to non-finance people, both verbally and in writing.
- Accounting qualifications and/or recent experience of working in an accounts role.

All Trustees should have the following characteristics, skills and experience.

- An enthusiasm for the work of Black Swan Arts;
- An informed interest in, or professional knowledge of, the visual arts/crafts;
- An interest in/knowledge of Frome and its surrounding communities or a willingness to learn;
- A commitment to give up their time to support the overall aims of Black Swan Arts, and to offer personal and business skills as part of this;
- The ability to work as a member of a team and a willingness to state personal convictions and, equally, to accept a majority decision and be tolerant of the views of other people;
- A willingness to deal openly with colleagues, staff and volunteers;



- The ability and commitment to treat sensitive information confidentially;
- Eligibility to act as a charity Trustee;*
- A commitment to equal opportunities and a willingness to learn about best and developing practice in this area;

*Please note that the law places certain restrictions on becoming a charity trustee. For example: you cannot be under the age of 18, previously have been removed from trusteeship of a charity by a Court or the Charity Commission, have been disqualified under the Company Director's Disqualification Act 1986, or have been convicted of an offence involving deception or dishonesty (unless the conviction is spent).