

Black Swan Arts, trustee information

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About us

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. An extension was built in 2000 to link the main building to an old drying house, otherwise known as the Round Tower.



What we do

- exhibit work from local and national artists and makers
- sell artwork online and in our shop or during exhibitions
- rent studio spaces to emerging artists and makers.
- host and run workshops
- hold an annual Art Open submission
- hold a bi-annual Young Open submission
- rent a café space
- regular pop-up events in line with other festival events in the town e.g. Art Carboot, Christmas event with stalls, Frome Art Fair

Our vibrant and varied programme ranges from traditional crafts to contemporary art. And we have a strong focus on our role in the community. We support and coordinate with other events and venues in the town e.g. Frome Festival, Christmas lights switch-on, Anniversaries.

Our 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.

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.

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. Our continuous staff are; a centre manager (20 hours per week) and part-time bookkeeper (4 hours per week). We provide short-term contracts for specific roles and projects or when allocated funding. Our volunteers steward the Gallery and take on other responsibilities. A group of local artists operate as the programming committee, booking and curating most of the exhibitions in the Long Gallery.

Current trustee vacancies

General

We are looking for individuals with the skills, knowledge and dynamism we need, to help us reach the next stage in our development. As a trustee, you will commit to give up your time to support the overall aims of Black Swan Arts, and to offer personal and business skills as part of this.

You do not need to have had previous experience of working with an arts organisation but you should have:

- enthusiasm for the work of Black Swan Arts
- an informed interest in, or professional knowledge of, the visual arts/crafts

- an interest in Frome and its surrounding communities
- a willingness to deal openly with colleagues, staff and volunteers
- a commitment to equal opportunities and a willingness to learn about best and developing practice in this area
- 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
- the ability and commitment to treat sensitive information confidentially
- eligibility to act as a charity Trustee*

*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).

Specific roles

We also hope to fill two more formal roles:

- The Chair, an articulate advocate for the Black Swan and a great networker - ideally with considerable local knowledge and contacts.
- The Treasurer, with strong finance skills, and the ability to explain finance to non-finance people. Preferably with accounting qualifications, and an understanding of charity accounting.

The benefits of being a trustee

- Roles are voluntary but there are many other unpaid rewards to being a trustee, including:
- Making a valuable contribution to your community
- Gaining 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.

How to apply

To apply, please send your CV to office@blackswanarts.org.uk with a brief covering letter of no more than 2 pages explaining what you would bring to Black Swan Arts. Please include the Equalities Monitoring Form, so that we can be sure of our reach.

Read more about Black Swan Arts on our website www.blackswanarts.org.uk. If you'd like an informal conversation about any of the roles, contact Rebecca Morland, rebecca@rmorland.com

Duties and responsibilities of 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 should be:

- an outgoing person with excellent networking skills
- comfortable with public speaking
- influencing skills
- aware of local politics in its widest sense.

Duties of the Chair

- 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.
- Be 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.

Duties and responsibilities of the Treasurer

The Treasurer is responsible for ensuring that the financial affairs of Black Swan Arts (and its associated companies) are kept in order. They must ensure that Trustees are provided with the appropriate financial information so they can make key decisions.

The Treasurer should have:

- strong financial skills and the ability to be hands-on in the creation of budgets, accounts and other financial reports
- experience of producing management accounts and regular reports
- 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.

Duties of the Treasurer

- Working closely with our bookkeeper, 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
- 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

Black Swan Arts is a Charity and a Limited Company, so our trustees have a range of responsibilities we need to cover.

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 regularly.
- 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, to enhance the company's profile and assist with fundraising for the company.
- Acting as a listening post 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, away days 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.