



# Chair Recruitment Pack

September 2023



# Introduction from the Deputy Chair

We're delighted that you're interested in this exciting opportunity to become the next Chair of the Stephen Joseph Theatre.

## Who we are

The SJT is a producing theatre based in Scarborough; it has a regional, national and international reputation, historically pioneered by playwright and director Alan Ayckbourn (whose work continues to be premiered here) and now sustained and developed through a wide-ranging programme of high-quality theatre, film, music and comedy designed to offer audiences the broadest possible choice. For local audiences and the thousands who visit this beautiful part of the world every year, the SJT provides year-round entertainment: diverse, funny, surprising, visually daring and packing a big emotional punch.

Alongside the programme of work on its stages, the SJT also provides an extensive participatory programme, working across the borough and with all ages and communities: a youth theatre programme for anyone aged from 0 – 25; cross-generational dementia workshops which are acclaimed within the industry; schools' sessions and summer holiday activity. This work is seen as a vital resource in a town with multiple needs.

## Who we're looking for

We are looking for a successor to Helen Boaden, who has so successfully chaired the SJT Board for the past six years. Under her leadership the theatre has:

- Appointed an exceptionally strong Executive team who deliver the Board's creative strategy of presenting highest quality popular productions alongside innovative new writing, winning critical praise and record ticket sales.
- Continued to present and celebrate the work of Director Emeritus Alan Ayckbourn. The theatre may be named after his mentor, Stephen Joseph, but its flourishing growth over the past sixty-odd years owes far more to this famous protégé whose new plays are still proudly premiered each year in Scarborough.
- Developed the metrics for a sophisticated audience analysis and development strategy which anticipated and now underpins our reporting for funds to the Arts Council.





- Managed the Covid lockdown with ingeniously scaled-down shows and a shorter closure period than most theatres, while using the downtime to overhaul marketing and housekeeping.
- Fully replenished theatre reserves with enough to set up an innovation fund.
- Reviewed and reworked strategy for reaching out to, and engaging with, the town's different communities.
- Increased and hugely strengthened working relationships with other arts organisations in the town, collaborating on major investment projects, such as Scarborough Fair.
- Developed funding plans for essential infrastructure renewal of our historic 1930's building, along with a refurbishment and improvements to the lay-out of the McCarthy theatre.

We need our incoming Chair to:

- Lead the board effectively to ensure the highest standards of governance and accountability
- Act as critical friend, adviser and support to the Executive.
- Be a powerful advocate for the SJT locally, regionally and nationally.

It's essential that our Chair understands and shows real commitment to the town of Scarborough, and can argue a passionate case for the value of culture and the importance of supporting live theatre here.

We want to cast our net as widely as possible, and so are keen to hear from you if you feel you have the right qualities. If it meant we could bring a wider range of skills and experience to the Board, we would potentially be open to exploring different chairing models, for example, having co-chairs, or a strong partnership between Chair and Deputy. Nothing is set in stone.

We are committed to diversity in its widest sense and want our Board to reflect that. We are thus keen to hear from potential Chairs across the spectrum of age, disability, socio-economic background, gender, and racial identity.

If you would like this pack in a different format, please contact Executive Assistant Jaye Lewis on [jaye.lewis@sjt.uk.com](mailto:jaye.lewis@sjt.uk.com).



If you are not sure about whether this is the right opportunity for you, we would encourage you to get in touch with our recruitment consultant for an informal and confidential chat. Her details are in the 'next steps' section.

Please note that the deadline for sending us your expression of interest is midday, 16 October 2023.

Thank you again for your interest in the SJT. We very much look forward to hearing from you.

Kate



Kate Fenton

On behalf of the Board





## Vision

This is yours

## Mission

We at the SJT believe that culture provokes interest and fires our imaginations; that sharing our experiences and our stories helps build communities and that collaboration builds a compassionate and engaged society.

Our role is to give everyone the opportunity to discover and celebrate their creativity.

## Values

Inspiring

Creative

Entertaining

Aspirational

Inclusive

We act with integrity, informed by expertise, empathy and listening

## Aims

We will inspire and entertain through a high-quality programme of work and tell stories which reflect the diverse lives of our communities.

We will play an integral civic role in our town and our county

We will invest in our staff, artists and communities, supporting them on their journeys and developing local skills, knowledge and aspiration.

We will cultivate an organisation-wide audience engagement focus, developing relationships, loyalty, support and a sense of belonging.

We will adopt a socially and ethically responsible approach across all aspects of our operation and minimise the impact we have on the environment.

We will think commercially and work in partnership, harnessing our expertise to collaborate and innovate.



## Looking ahead

Having just completed our first full year of operation – post pandemic – and having secured three-year funding from both Arts Council England (as one of their National Portfolio Organisations) and from our local council, we are looking forward with a renewed sense of optimism and energy.

All theatres have had a difficult few years and we are clear that many challenges still remain. However, we have seen our audiences returning over this past year – to the extent that the first three of our productions in 2023 have proved to be our best-selling to date – and we are now working to build on that foundation. We have also spent a year diversifying our programme of visiting work in order to deliver our promise “this is yours”; as a result we have a vibrant and successful mix of theatre, dance, comedy and live music that sits alongside our seven in-house productions and ensures that we offer something for an increasingly large part of our community.

At the heart of our plans is an in-depth audience engagement strategy – commissioned and created during lockdown – exploring how we can develop a people focus across the whole organization. Through it, we have clarified our ambition, thinking about who we want to reach and engage and considering what difference we want to have for people. We are developing new approaches to co-creation and looking to establish and build long-term and strategic relationships within our communities; we are also putting in place a new programme of talent development, working with individuals from school age to adult to build aspiration and support clear development opportunities across professional and non-professional activities.

The theatre is building on its external connections, forging links with partner organisations – cultural and non-cultural – to deliver programmes of work and to build strong connections into communities. Artistic collaboration is an opportunity area for us and co-productions and artistic associations are allowing us to be more ambitious in the work we put on our stages and in our communities.

The SJT benefits from its proximity to the beautiful North Yorkshire coastline as well as the North York Moors and the Yorkshire Wolds. Scarborough was the first British seaside resort to be established in England and remains one of the UK’s most visited destinations. It is now undergoing a renaissance – fuelled by the growing desire for a better work/life balance and by an increasing level of investment in the town from independent businesses, a broadening tourism offer reaching out beyond the traditional British seaside visitor and through Government funding.

The theatre is at the heart of the cultural regeneration plans established by Scarborough Borough Council and now being taken forwards by North Yorkshire Council (who replaced SBC after Local Government Reorganisation). These include Scarborough Fair – a year-round cultural programme incorporating four high-quality, distinctive festivals – the creation of a new council wide cultural strategy and the reinvigoration of the high street.

The process of LGR has of course created new challenges but it has also created opportunities, not least as the devolution deal that underpinned the reorganisation will bring significant additional funding into North Yorkshire from 2024 through a combined mayoral authority.





# The Organisation

## Key facts

The SJT was founded in 1964. Our home is a beautifully restored 1930's Odeon cinema, which houses our famous theatre-in-the-round which was the first of its kind in the world. Our spaces include:

- The Round, a 400-seat theatre space in the round.
- The McCarthy Theatre (The Mac), a 165-seat proscenium arch theatre and home to our cinema programme.
- Rehearsal room, scenic workshop, wardrobe and store.
- Creative Engagement rooms, including dedicated studio space and classrooms.
- The Ramsay Reading Room.
- The Boden Room, a flexible function room.
- Bar and lounge, providing a flexible space for use by audiences and for events and the home of Eat Me Cafe.

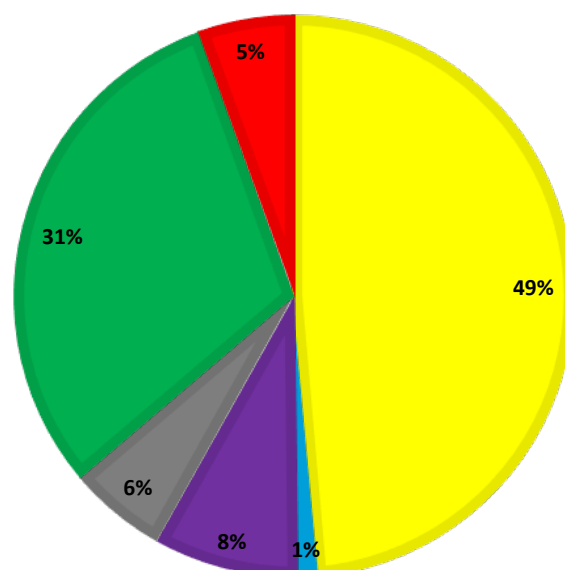
The SJT is currently in a strong financial position, with reserves of just under £600,000 of which £350,000 are unrestricted funds, with the remainder designated to support a range of strategic initiatives. We are an Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation, with a three-year funding agreement in place for £650,000 pa; we also have a similar agreement in place with North Yorkshire Council who provide £116,000 pa.

Our annual turnover as at 31 March 2023 was £2.2M



### INCOME AS % OF TOTAL TURNOVER

Box office Creative Engagement Trading Fundraising/other grants ACE NYC



The last three years' audited accounts can be found [here](#).



Pre-covid audiences were just below 90,000 pa, with 60% of those audiences being drawn from within 60 minutes-drive. Whilst we have not yet returned to those levels, 23/24 has already seen some of our highest ever attendances and we are currently targeting totals for the year of 70,000, up 23% from the previous year. Alongside this, our creative engagement programme reaches approximately 30,000 participants across the year.

The SJT is a registered charity (charity number 253606) and a company limited by guarantee (reg no. 815227 England/Wales)

## Our programme

We have now established a pattern to our year, designed to capitalise on the huge influx of tourists to Scarborough over the summer (when our population swells from 62,000 to 350,000) at the same time as ensuring that our local residents have a high-quality, year-round programme of creative activity.

We produce 7 shows a year, specifically:

- two Xmas shows – one for under 6's and one for families – targeted at local communities, particularly those less engaged in theatre as we recognise these shows provide an ideal entry point to creative activity;
- an Ayckbourn premiere, tying into the council's strategy to grow the number of tourists by acting as a specific draw for a national audience;
- two pieces of what we term Popular Excellence – shows with a broader appeal to increase the accessibility of our work to local audiences as well as to appeal to the tourist market;
- a new or nearly new (e.g. regional premiere) show in the autumn, specifically targeting audiences whose stories are less represented onstage and with a local appeal;
- an adaptation/Shakespeare reimagining the classics through a northern lens, produced in the spring designed to help extend the tourist season.

This programme of produced work is complemented by our year-round presented programme (including film, music, comedy and dance), which is focused on broadening our offer still further, identifying those whose interest may primarily not be in theatre but who still wish to enjoy creative experiences.

The theatre is about to embark on a £2M capital project, designed to replace the theatre's heating and cooling systems, to refurbish the McCarthy and significantly improve its accessibility; the project will be at RIBA Stage 3 in October 2023 and a fundraising campaign has now started.





## Our leadership team

The SJT is led by a joint Chief Executive; Paul Robinson as Artistic Director, and Caroline Routh, Executive Director.

They work with a team of six senior managers:

Head of Production

Head Creative Engagement

Producer

Head of Marketing

Head of Finance

Theatre Manager

For more information on all of these individuals, please click [here](#).

## Our board

The Board has eleven members at present, three of whom are due to retire at the end of this year. As a rule, Trustees can serve up to three terms of three years, so the membership is regularly refreshed, and we aim always to maintain a balance of useful skills.

There are subcommittees, some permanent, some ad hoc, along with small working groups set up to oversee the Arts Council's four Investment Principles.



# The role of Chair

We're looking for a leader to guide and shape the Board's strategic thinking; to support and advise the joint chief executives, and to represent the theatre to the outside world in the most compelling light.

Thus, ideally, this would be someone who has run, or managed at senior level, an organisation at least as large and (relatively) complex as this theatre. Someone with generous and confident people skills.

Prior work with a charitable trust, whether as Trustee or executive, is welcome but not essential. Likewise experience of chairing a Board. What is essential, though, is a thorough understanding of the role and scope of governance in a not-for-profit organisation.

We'd love our Chair to be locally-based, but if that's not feasible, there must be a well-informed and demonstrable commitment to this town. Scarborough has huge charm – and huge problems. This once handsome seaside resort now has some of the worst pockets of poverty in Yorkshire. Ensuring that the theatre recognises and addresses the very different needs of the communities within the town is a key Board responsibility.

It goes without saying our Chair will love theatre, will appreciate and trumpet the enriching civic role of a theatre like the SJT, and will embrace the Arts Council drive to inspire creativity of all kinds out in the community.





## What our Chair does

As with any charitable organisation, our Chair leads a Board of Trustees, the legal responsibility of which is to ensure public money is being spent wisely and in accordance with our stated aims. 36% of our income comes in grant form from Arts Council England and local government.

All trustees are expected to attend four main board meetings a year, along with sub-committees and an annual awayday. We read the papers beforehand, and, importantly, act as a 'critical friend' at meetings. We ask the hard questions and interrogate progress to make sure the strategies we've agreed with the management are being put into effect. There are also small working groups set up jointly between Board and management to steer the Arts Council's newly created Investment Principles.

The Chair, however, has a more extensive role. He or she will meet, or at least talk, regularly with the joint chief executives to keep abreast of events and will be available to offer guidance on issues arising. They will also be responsible for appraising the performance of the CEO's and expect to be consulted on senior managerial appointments.

All Trustees are expected to attend at least five of the theatre's own productions (seven a year) and fundraising galas. The Chair, in addition, will from time to time represent the theatre at events involving local stakeholders, other arts organisations, and funders such as the Arts Council and local government.

All this takes time – perhaps two or three days a month – and given that it's a voluntary, unpaid role, we realise it's a big ask. But for someone with a passion for theatre, the role is both fascinating and rewarding. Our departing chair, Helen Boaden will be happy to discuss the pleasures, challenges and time commitment.

Our hope is that our new Chair will be in post by the end of this year. We envisage this person coming to the December Board meeting as an observer, before taking over in the new year. However, our timetable is flexible and Helen's term can be extended into next year if this helps with a comfortable handover.





## Next steps

If you'd like an informal and confidential chat about this role, please contact Mary Caws, our recruitment consultant, to arrange a time: [cawsmary@gmail.com](mailto:cawsmary@gmail.com)

## Application process

To begin the conversation, we are asking you to send us an expression of interest. This can be a letter of no more than two pages; you are also welcome to send a video or audio of no more than 5 minutes (preferred format via WeTransfer).

Please make sure you tell us:

- Why you would like to be our next Chair.
- What you think you would bring to the organisation and how your skills could support the board and team in achieving its vision.
- How your experience makes you a good fit for the Chair role profile.

**You need to send your expression of interest to Executive Assistant Jaye Lewis on [jaye.lewis@sjt.uk.com](mailto:jaye.lewis@sjt.uk.com) by midday 16 October 2023, along with a completed Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form ([online here](#)).**

Please mark your email as confidential and include CHAIREOI in the subject line.

We are planning to meet candidates on 20 November 2023; when you contact us, please let us know if you are not free on this day.

We will make sure that there are opportunities to meet our current Chair and our joint Chief Executives informally, as well as taking part in a more formal interview process.

We want everyone who believes they can contribute to the SJT's Board to feel welcome to apply. It is our responsibility to make the application process accessible, and to give you the information you need to decide whether you might be suitable. If you require the pack or any further information in a different format, or have questions before you apply, please get in touch with Jaye Lewis on [jaye.lewis@sjt.uk.com](mailto:jaye.lewis@sjt.uk.com).

