

Back to Ours Arts Limited

BOARD OF TRUSTEES RECRUITMENT PACK

July 2026



Hello,

Thank you for your interest in becoming Chair, or Co-Chairs, of Back to Ours Arts Limited.

It has been a genuine privilege to serve as Chair of this remarkable organisation.

My connection to Back to Ours goes back to its beginnings in 2017, when it first emerged as part of Hull UK City of Culture. Since then, I have had the opportunity to witness and support its growth into something truly special. From those early foundations, through its development as a Creative People and Places programme, to becoming an independent charity and now an Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation, Back to Ours has continually evolved with purpose and integrity.

Most recently, we have secured a significant multi-year partnership with Hull City Council to deliver a major community project over five years. The first of these, Our City, took place in March this year and transformed the city centre into a vibrant, shared cultural space. It was a powerful reflection of what Back to Ours does best – bringing people together, creating moments of joy, and placing communities at the heart of culture.

What makes Back to Ours extraordinary is its people. The passion, dedication and talent of the team are exceptional. They are matched by the energy and commitment of the artists we work with, our volunteers, Hub Members, and the communities who shape and lead the work. Together, they create something that feels both ambitious and deeply rooted.

Hull itself is an incredible city. It is a place of resilience, creativity and pride, and a canvas for bold and meaningful cultural work. Back to Ours plays a vital role in that ecology, working with and for the people of Hull to ensure that culture is something everyone can access, shape and enjoy.

As I step down as Chair, I do so with immense pride in what has been achieved and real confidence in what lies ahead.

We are now looking to appoint a new Chair, or Co-Chairs, to lead and work in partnership with our Board of Trustees, our Artistic Director & CEO, and our wider stakeholders to shape the next chapter of Back to Ours' journey.

We are seeking a dynamic and culturally-passionate individual or duo, ideally with experience of working in arts and culture, who can bring strategic leadership, curiosity and care. This is an opportunity to support an organisation that is ambitious, values-led and deeply connected to its communities.

This is a significant moment for Back to Ours, and an exciting one.

If you share our belief in the power of culture to connect people and transform places, we would love to hear from you.

Yours Sincerely,



David Watson
Chair of Trustees





About Back to Ours Limited

Back to Ours exists to bring outstanding arts and cultural experiences to the people and places of Hull, with a particular focus on neighbourhoods where access to arts and culture has historically been lower.

Our story began with the belief that world-class cultural experiences should not only happen in city centres, theatres or formal arts venues. They should also happen in schools, shopping centres, community spaces, streets, pubs, parks and estates; in the places where people already live and feel at home.

The idea behind Back to Ours began in 2012, when Hull received Building Schools for the Future funding and a new network of school buildings shone a light on the potential of community assets across the city. The question was simple but powerful: how could these brilliant spaces, sitting at the heart of Hull's neighbourhoods, be used to bring people together through arts and culture?

From that idea, Back to Ours emerged as a neighbourhood festival produced as part of Hull UK City of Culture 2017. It

then became Hull's Creative People and Places programme in 2018. For five years, the programme was hosted by Goodwin Development Trust, with a Steering Group chaired alongside Freedom Festival Arts Trust, Absolutely Cultured and Hull Culture and Leisure.

In October 2022, Back to Ours received the news that it had been successful in its application to Arts Council England to become a National Portfolio Organisation. From 1 April 2023, Back to Ours began operating as an independent charity and organisation in its own right, led by Artistic Director & CEO Louise Yates BEM FRSA.

At the heart of Back to Ours is people. We want local people to take the lead in choosing, creating and taking part in amazing arts experiences, as audiences, participants, decision-makers, artists, volunteers and Hub Members.

We know that cultural experiences can have a lasting impact on people, families and local areas. Our work aims to increase the number of people who feel connected to the arts, while supporting skills, confidence, ambition and creativity in Hull's neighbourhoods.

Our Mission

Back to Ours exists to:

- Deliver outstanding arts and cultural experiences with and for the people of Hull, which are open and welcoming to all.
- Support the commissioning, production, creation and touring of new, original and inspirational work.
- Engage local people as audiences, participants, creators and commissioners.
- Bring the arts to life in familiar settings as people have never seen them before.
- Use Hull's community assets, including high streets, schools, community centres, clubs, shopping centres, streets, parks and pubs.
- Work with creative partners across the city and beyond.
- Bring people and families of all ages together to have a cracking time.

Today, Back to Ours is a registered charity and company limited by guarantee. It is financially stable, but like many arts charities, operates in a challenging funding environment. For the financial year ending 31 March 2025, we recorded a total income of £570,930 and expenditure of £552,383. Income was mainly made up of donations and legacies, including grant funding, alongside charitable activities. £321,789 of income came from Arts Council England and the remainder from other trusts, foundations and earned income.

Our current and recent funders include Arts Council England, Hull City Council, The National Lottery Community Fund, The National Lottery Heritage Fund, Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, The Micheal Bishop Foundation, Backstage Trust and individual donors. A key priority for the next phase is to continue building financial resilience through longer-term funder relationships, partnership funding, corporate support and earned income where appropriate.

How We Work: Community-Led and Co-Created

All of Back to Ours' work is community-led and co-created with Hull residents. We do not see communities as passive audiences or end users of a finished programme. Local people are involved in shaping ideas, making decisions, testing approaches, taking part, volunteering, performing, hosting, welcoming audiences and helping us understand what will feel meaningful in their neighbourhoods.

Our Hub Members are central to this way of working. They are local residents who work alongside the Back to Ours team throughout the year, bringing knowledge of their communities, lived experience, creativity, challenge and care. They help us make better decisions about what we programme, where activity happens, how we communicate with people, and what practical barriers need to be removed so more people can take part.

We also work closely with artists, producers, creative organisations and local partners to make ambitious work possible in everyday places. Our role is often to connect these worlds: supporting artists to make excellent work in community settings, while making sure Hull residents have genuine ownership and influence within the process. This means our programme is not simply delivered to communities. It is made with them.



Recent Work

Our City

Our City is a major five-year partnership with Hull City Council, designed to bring people together through large-scale community-led cultural activity. The first Our City event took place in March 2026 and transformed Hull city centre into a shared cultural space, with two processions, live performance, singing, fire, music and a large evening finale in Queen Victoria Square.

The project was shaped through citywide engagement, with thousands of conversations and creative interactions with residents, schools, community groups, artists and partners. Around 1,500 people took part in the processions, with an estimated audience of 13,000.

Our City showed Back to Ours' model at scale: residents, artists, communities and partners working together to create something ambitious, joyful and deeply rooted in Hull's identity.

Bransholme Chat

Bransholme Chat is our long-term community space in North Point Shopping Centre. It is a welcoming shop unit where residents can drop in, have a cuppa, take part in creative activity or just chat, meet others and help shape what happens next.

The project is guided by a Steering Group of local residents, who play an active role in decision-making, planning and commissioning. Activity has included singing, creative workshops, social events, seasonal celebrations, family activity, practical support and informal conversation.

Bransholme Chat reflects Back to Ours' commitment to sustained neighbourhood presence. It is not about parachuting activity in; it is about building trust over time and creating a space where residents feel ownership.

Right on Your Doorstep

Right on Your Doorstep is where Back to Ours began, and it remains central to who we are. We continue to programme high-quality arts and cultural experiences in familiar neighbourhood spaces, from schools and community centres to social clubs, shopping centres and outdoor spaces.

The work is shaped with Hub Members and local residents, who help us choose shows, understand what will work in different neighbourhoods, welcome audiences and make sure activity feels genuinely accessible. Hub Members also help us look beyond Hull, travelling to see work elsewhere, including at Edinburgh Fringe, before helping bring the right work back to the city.

"Going to Edinburgh with Back to Ours made me feel part of the whole process. I'd never been that far from home before. We weren't just watching shows for ourselves, we were thinking about what people in Hull would love, what would work where we live, and what we could bring back for our communities. I feel so proud to know my opinion helps shape what happens here."

Back to Ours Hub Member



The Next Chapter

Back to Ours is entering an important and exciting phase of its development.

Since becoming an independent charity and Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation, we have strengthened our position as a trusted, ambitious and deeply community-led cultural organisation. We have a strong track record, a clear purpose, an experienced team, committed Hub Members and volunteers, and growing partnerships across Hull and beyond.

The next chapter is about building on those foundations with confidence and care.

Over the coming years, Back to Ours will continue to create outstanding arts and cultural experiences with and for the people of Hull. We will remain rooted in neighbourhoods, working alongside residents to shape activity that feels relevant and meaningful. At the same time, we will continue to grow our citywide role, creating moments that bring people together across communities and strengthen Hull's cultural life.

Our ambitions include developing long-term community-led programmes, deepening our work with Hub Members, strengthening our artist and partner networks, building financial resilience, and continuing to make high-quality cultural experiences accessible to people who may not otherwise have those opportunities.

This next phase will also include the continued development of major projects such as Our City, our long-term work through Bransholme Chat, our touring and neighbourhood events, and new projects shaped by Hull residents themselves.

As we grow, our mission and values will remain central. Back to Ours will continue to be led by people, place and connection. We will keep asking who culture is for, who gets to shape it, who feels welcome, and what needs to change so more people can take part.

The incoming Chair, or Co-Chairs, will play a key role in helping to shape this next chapter. They will work in close partnership with the Board of Trustees, Artistic Director & CEO, staff team, Hub Members and communities to support the organisation's strategic direction, sustainability and impact.

This is a role for someone who can bring thoughtful leadership, curiosity and sound judgement. Back to Ours needs a Chair or Co-Chairs who can support and challenge, help the Board stay focused on the bigger picture, and champion the organisation's values as it continues to evolve.

The next Chair or Co-Chairs will also have an important external role: advocating for Back to Ours, regionally and nationally, helping to build relationships with funders and partners, and supporting the organisation to make the most of future opportunities.

This is not about stepping into a finished organisation. It is an opportunity to join Back to Ours at a moment of momentum and help shape what comes next: an organisation that is ambitious, community-led, values-driven and committed to making culture part of everyday life in Hull.





Back to Ours officially
launched the first phase
of the project in 2018.

You can read
more about our
launch [here](#) >>

The Role of Chair / Co-Chairs

The Chair, or Co-Chairs, provide leadership to the Board of Trustees and play a key role in ensuring that Back to Ours is well governed, strategically focused, and able to deliver its mission and ambitions.

The role works in close partnership with the Artistic Director & CEO, supporting and constructively challenging the organisation to thrive.

Leadership and Advocacy

- Provide clear, inclusive and values-led leadership to the Board of Trustees
- Ensure the Board plays a full and constructive role in shaping and reviewing the organisation's strategy
- Working closely with the Artistic Director & CEO to:
 - o Support delivery of strategic objectives
 - o Monitor performance against agreed goals
 - o Ensure the long-term sustainability of the organisation
- Act as a trusted sounding board and critical friend, offering support, perspective and challenge where appropriate
- Ensure that the Board receives accurate, timely and relevant information to support effective decision-making
- Champion and embed diversity, equity and inclusion in governance and across the organisation
- Act as an ambassador for Back to Ours, building and maintaining strong relationships with:
 - o Funders
 - o Partners
 - o Stakeholders locally, regionally and nationally
- Support and, where appropriate, lead on income generation and fundraising activity
- Attend and engage with organisational activity and events where possible, deepening understanding of the work and its impact

Governance and Oversight

- Ensure that the organisation operates in line with:
 - o Its governing document
 - o Charity law and company law
 - o Relevant regulatory and safeguarding requirements
- Chair Board meetings effectively, ensuring:
 - o Open, balanced and constructive discussion
 - o Clear decision-making
 - o All Trustees are able to contribute meaningfully
- Work with the Artistic Director & CEO to:
 - o Set Board agendas
 - o Prioritise key strategic issues
 - o Ensure appropriate time is given to discussion and decision-making
- Ensure appropriate oversight of:
 - o Financial performance
 - o Risk management
 - o Organisational sustainability
- Support the Board in maintaining and reviewing:
 - o Policies and procedures
 - o Governance structures
 - o Terms of reference for committees (where applicable)
- Ensure clear and effective communication between:
 - o The Board
 - o The executive team





Board Development and Culture

- Foster a positive, inclusive and collaborative culture within the Board
- Enable Trustees to:
 - o Contribute confidently
 - o Use their skills and experience effectively
- Support the recruitment, induction and development of Trustees
- Ensure the Board has the appropriate balance of skills, experience and lived perspectives
- Identify gaps and support succession planning, including future Chair arrangements
- Lead on regular reflection and development of Board effectiveness

We welcome candidates interested in shaping a thoughtful and effective shared leadership model.

Relationship with the Artistic Director & CEO

- Develop a strong, open and trusting working relationship
- Provide support, guidance and constructive challenge
- Work with the Board to:
 - o Review performance
 - o Ensure clarity of expectations
- Maintain appropriate boundaries between:
 - o Governance (Board role)
 - o Management (executive role)

Co-Chair Model (if applicable)

Where a Co-Chair model is adopted:

- Responsibilities will be shared collaboratively, with a clear and agreed approach
- Co-Chairs will work together to:
 - o Lead the Board effectively
 - o Share responsibilities in a way that reflects their strengths
- The model may:
 - o Enable a broader range of perspectives and lived experiences
 - o Provide flexibility in time commitment
 - o Support a more inclusive leadership approach

Person Specification

We are looking for individuals who can bring strategic leadership, integrity and a commitment to our values, alongside an openness to how Back to Ours works with communities.

Essential Experience, Knowledge & Skills

- Experience of strategic leadership, governance, or senior decision-making
- Experience of working within, or closely alongside, the arts, culture or creative industries, with an understanding and knowledge of the cultural sector, and/or of how cultural organisations operate
- The ability to:
 - o Lead discussions and build consensus
 - o Navigate complex conversations with clarity and confidence
- Strong interpersonal and communication skills, with the ability to:
 - o Support and challenge constructively
 - o Build trust with a wide range of people
- A clear understanding of, or willingness to develop knowledge of:
 - o Governance and the role of a Trustee
 - o Financial oversight and risk management
- The ability to interpret information and ask the right questions to support good decision-making
- Experience of working collaboratively and enabling others to contribute effectively

Desirable Experience, Knowledge & Skills

- Knowledge of, or connection to, Hull and its communities
- Experience in one or more of the following:
 - o Community engagement or participation
 - o Fundraising and income generation
 - o Marketing and communications
 - o Finance, legal or HR
 - o Public sector or cross-sector partnerships

Chair / Co-Chair Experience

For a single Chair appointment:

- Previous experience as a Chair, Vice-Chair, or senior Trustee is strongly desirable

For a Co-Chair model:

- At least one of the Co-Chairs should have previous experience of chairing a board or similar leadership role
- We welcome partnerships that bring:
 - o Complementary skills
 - o Different lived experiences
 - o A shared commitment to collaborative leadership

Values and Approach

- A strong belief in the power of arts and culture to connect people and transform communities
- A commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion, and to reducing barriers to participation
- An approach that is:
 - o Open
 - o Collaborative
 - o Curious
- A willingness to:
 - o Listen as well as lead
 - o Engage with different perspectives and lived experiences
- A genuine interest in community-led practice and participation



What Will Make You Successful in This Role

You are likely to thrive in this role if you:

- Are comfortable working in and with an organisation that is:
 - o Community-led
 - o Values-driven
 - o Evolving and ambitious
- Can balance:
 - o Strategic thinking
 - o Practical judgement
- Bring both:
 - o Confidence
 - o Humility
- Are motivated by:
 - o Supporting people
 - o Enabling creativity
 - o Making a tangible difference

Independence and Conflicts of Interest

To ensure the integrity and independence of the role, applicants should:

- Be able to act independently and in the best interests of the charity at all times
- Not hold a role that would create a significant or ongoing conflict of interest

This may include:

- Senior political roles where decision-making could directly influence the organisation
- Roles within organisations that have a direct financial, commissioning or contractual relationship with Back to Ours

All potential conflicts will be discussed openly as part of the recruitment process.

We recognise that conflicts can be manageable in some cases, and will take a fair and proportionate approach.





Recruitment Process

We are committed to a recruitment process that is fair, transparent and inclusive, and reflects the values of Back to Ours.

Our process is designed to ensure that a range of perspectives are involved, including Trustees, staff, external stakeholders and community voices.

Our Approach to Fairness and Inclusion

- Your equality monitoring information will be kept separate from your application and will not be seen by those involved in the selection process
- Applications will be assessed based on how your skills, experience and approach align with the role and person specification
- We follow the social model of disability, recognising that barriers exist and may need to be addressed
- We are committed to supporting access requirements at all stages of the process and in the role itself
- Our panels will aim to reflect a diverse range of backgrounds, perspectives and lived experiences

Recruitment Stages

STAGE 1:

Application Review

Applications will be reviewed by a Nominations Committee, made up of:

- Members of the Board of Trustees
- External stakeholders

The Artistic Director & CEO will also be involved in this stage.

Applications will be assessed against the requirements of the Chair / Co-Chair role.

STAGE 3:

Panel Process (In Person) Monday 10th August

Candidates progressing to the next stage will be invited to attend an in-person panel process.

This will include:

- A panel made up of Trustees and organisational leadership
- A community panel, reflecting the central role that communities play in Back to Ours

This stage is designed to be a two-way process, giving you the opportunity to:

- Meet a wider group of people connected to the organisation
- Understand how Back to Ours works in practice
- Share your thinking and approach in more depth

STAGE 2:

Initial Conversation (Online) to take place Tuesday 4th August

Shortlisted candidates will be invited to an initial online conversation.

This will be an opportunity to:

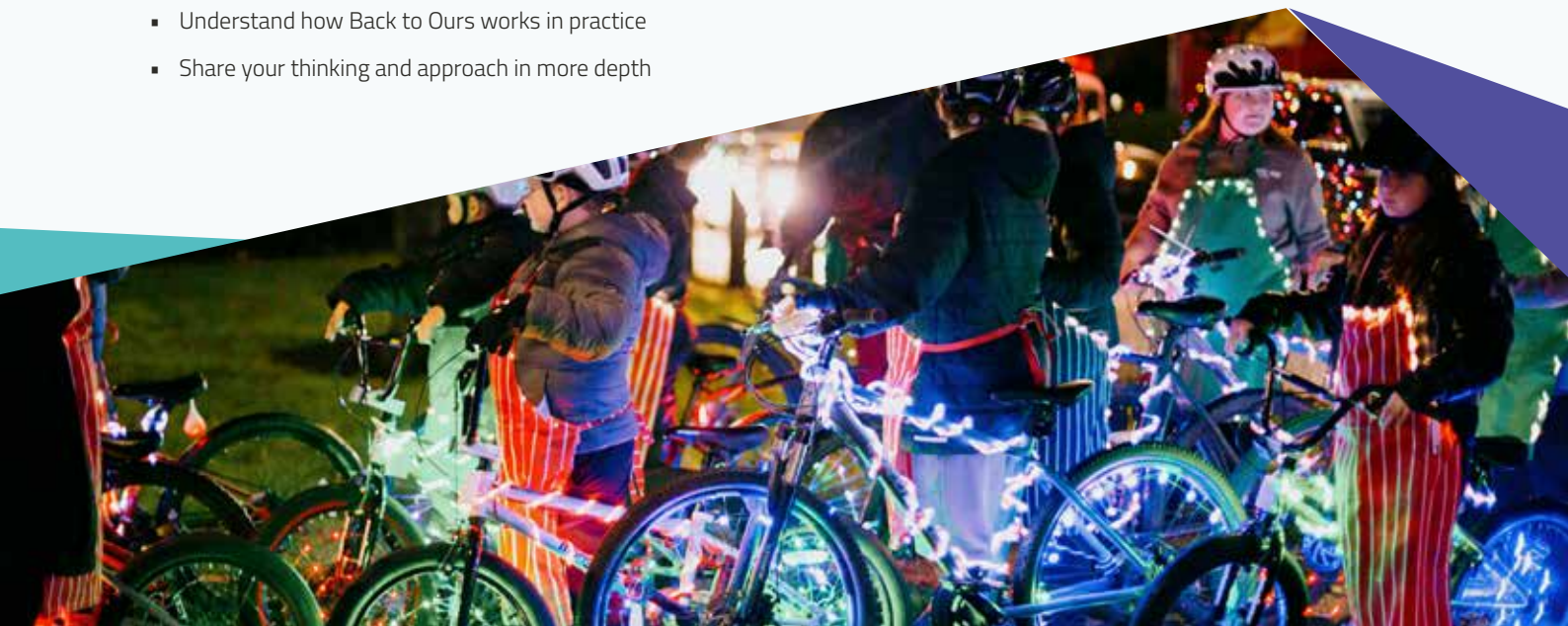
- Discuss your experience and interest in the role
- Explore your approach to leadership and governance
- Ask questions about Back to Ours

STAGE 4:

Final Stage and Appointment

Following the panel process:

- Feedback will be gathered from all elements of the process
- The Nominations Committee will make a recommendation to the Board of Trustees
- The final appointment will be approved by the Board of Trustees



Terms of appointment

Eligibility

To be eligible to serve as a Trustee (and therefore Chair or Co-Chairs), you must meet the requirements set out by the Charity Commission.

You must not:

- Have any unspent convictions for offences involving dishonesty or deception
- Be currently declared bankrupt or subject to bankruptcy restrictions or an interim order
- Be subject to a debt relief order, a debt relief restrictions order or interim order
- Be disqualified from acting as a company director
- Have previously been disqualified or removed as a trustee, charity officer, agent or employee by the Charity Commission or the High Court due to misconduct or mismanagement

Remuneration

The role of Chair or Co-Chairs is unremunerated, and therefore we are unable to pay you for your time.

Expenses

Reasonable travel and out-of-pocket expenses will be reimbursed, subject to submission of receipts and in line with our expenses policy.

Length of Term

The term of appointment is 3 years. Trustees may serve up to two consecutive terms, subject to agreement by the Board.

Time Commitment

The Chair or Co-Chairs will be expected to commit sufficient time to lead the Board effectively and support the organisation. While the overall time commitment will vary depending on organisational activity and need, as a guide this is expected to be approximately 12 to 24 days per year, reflecting the breadth of the role and its responsibilities. This commitment includes:

- 4 Board meetings per year (approximately 3 hours each)
- 1 annual Board away day
- Regular 1:1 meetings with the Artistic Director & CEO
- Preparation time for meetings, including reading papers and follow-up actions
- Occasional additional or extraordinary meetings, where required
- Time to support the Artistic Director & CEO on specific strategic priorities or developments
- Attending key events and stakeholder activity.





How to Apply

If you would like to be considered for the role of Chair or Co-Chairs, please send us:

- A detailed and up-to-date CV (or equivalent)
- A supporting statement outlining:
 - o Why you are interested in the role
 - o What you would bring to Back to Ours as Chair or Co-Chairs
 - o How your experience aligns with the role and person specification

We are happy to receive applications in a format that suits you, whether that is:

- Written
- Audio
- Video

Please submit your application to team@backtoours.co.uk by **5pm, Monday, 27th July 2026.**

Applying as an Individual or for a Co-Chair Role

You may apply as an individual and indicate whether you would like to be considered for:

- The role of Chair
- A potential Co-Chair model

You do not need to have an existing Co-Chair partner to express interest in a shared role.

Applying as Co-Chairs (Joint Application)

We also welcome applications from individuals wishing to apply together as Co-Chairs.

If you are applying as a partnership, please submit:

- A joint supporting statement, outlining:
 - Why you are interested in the role
 - What you would bring collectively to Back to Ours
 - How your skills and experience complement each other
 - How you would envisage working together as Co-Chairs
- A separate CV for each applicant

This will help us understand both your individual experience and your proposed approach to shared leadership.

Equal Opportunities Monitoring

Please complete and return the [equal opportunities monitoring form](#) along with your application. [Download Link needed]

- This information will be treated as strictly confidential
- It will be used for monitoring and statistical purposes only
- It will not form part of the selection process

Images by: Jerome Whittingham, Luke Hallett & Jason Shipley

Informal Conversations

If you would like an informal conversation ahead of deciding whether to apply, to explore your alignment with the role, you can request a conversation with the current Chair and/or the Artistic Director & CEO.

Please contact team@backtoours.co.uk to arrange.

Access Support

We are committed to making this process as accessible as possible. If you require any support or adjustments at any stage of the application or recruitment process, please contact team@backtoours.co.uk. If you are unable to email, you can telephone **07442 205 524**. Please note this phone is not answered every day, but if you leave a message, we will get back to you as soon as possible.

