

## **About Milton Keynes Arts Centre**

Milton Keynes Arts Centre (MKAC) was established by Milton Keynes Corporation in 1974 and incorporated as a limited company (No. 02618453) in 1991. A registered charity (No. 1007409), MKAC's legal purpose is to provide opportunities for people in Milton Keynes to work with artists, to experience and participate in art activities, with the object of improving people's quality of life, to promote social equality and to advance education.

As one of the earliest arts organisations to be formed in the then-new city of Milton Keynes, for almost 50 years, from its base in the historic 18<sup>th</sup> century grounds of Great Linford Manor Park, MKAC has provided artist studio spaces and specialist production facilities - including in ceramics, silversmithing and woodworking. Here, we have offered multiple entry points for diverse communities to become involved with our work, to learn life-enhancing skills through working with professional artists, to meet new people and to feel part of a creative and inclusive community. We are also one of the largest employers of artists in MK.

Since its establishment, the city MKAC was created to serve has changed radically. Today, MK is one of the fastest growing towns and the third most successful economy in the UK. 12 areas in the city are amongst the country's 10% most affluent. Yet, 9 are amongst the 10% most deprived and MK has been given the dubious moniker of 'the capital of youth homelessness'. Increasingly, MKAC's work has focussed on supporting people who are left feeling marginalised or vulnerable in this rapidly changing city. Working in partnership with artists, community groups and other cross-sector organisations in the city, we specialise in co-developing projects that are designed to address, through creativity, the local and global issues affecting people's lives: from climate change to poverty, loneliness and social mobility; and through this to support environmental responsibility, social cohesion, wellbeing and skills development.

In 2018, MKAC's work was rewarded when we were invited into Arts Council England's National Portfolio of Organisations and were offered an annual grant towards our programmes of activity. In 2022 we successfully applied for a continuation of this funding, which is in place until 31 March 2026.

This funding comes at an exciting period in MKAC's evolution. For the past two years, we have been revisioning and restructuring our organisation in order to:

- Focus our resources on the organisation's core charitable purpose: ensuring that our work prioritises MK communities in greatest need of support.
- Ensure that MKAC is a key agent in MK Council's ambition to 'harness the transformational power of culture' in addressing future challenges – locally and globally.

- Develop more ambitious, higher quality projects with artists and communities, which leave a lasting positive legacy on people's lives.
- Enable us to go out to MK communities, rather than relying on them coming to us, so helping to overcome geographic, economic and social barriers to cultural engagement and ensuring that our work is relevant and fully reflects the diversity of MK.
- Reduce our carbon imprint through an innovative reinterpretation of what an arts centre is and can be.
- Make MKAC more resilient and sustainable for years to come.

We recognise the value of the specialist facilities we have on our Great Linford site, and the pleasure they bring to the many people who attend our courses. But we recognise too that the courses are a drain on the organisation's limited human and fiscal resources; and that their beneficiaries do not reflect our priority users. With poor transport links across MK, many of the communities we work with tell us they cannot reach us, and those that do cannot afford to pay the course fees we are compelled to charge towards their costs. Meanwhile, most of our heritage site is inaccessible to people with restricted mobility and preconceptions of the site and its associations with white privilege can be a barrier.

From 1 April, MKAC will end its course provision and close the building in which they currently take place. We have then reduced and restructured our staff team in order to develop fewer but better resourced artist projects in collaboration with, and sited within, the communities we seek to serve rather than relying upon them coming to us.

Projects currently in development include 'Home', led by the artist Maddi Nicholson, working in collaboration with residents of Beanhill and Netherfield; 'I Live Here' led by the Czech artist Katerina Seda, who is developing with residents of Eaglestone a new navigation system; 'Calling the Body to Attention' : a dance project led by Yewande YoYo Odunudi through working with people of African and Caribbean heritage; and art and nature programmes specifically developed to support adults and young people experiencing poor mental health.

Our vision is of an Arts Centre not bound by buildings or geographical location; but one that is future-looking, dynamic and fleet-footed: able to respond to need across MK and to invest its resources where they have greatest impact whilst reducing our own negative imprint upon the environment.

We are now seeking new trustees who can support us in achieving this vision.

**For further information, go to: [miltonkeynesartscentre.org](http://miltonkeynesartscentre.org)**

## **JOB DESCRIPTION:**

### **Chair of Board of Trustees (Voluntary)**

#### **Overall Purpose**

The Board of Trustees are responsible for the overall governance and strategic direction of Milton Keynes Arts Centre, developing the organisation's aims, objectives and goals in accordance with the governing document, legal and regulatory guidelines.

#### **Main Responsibilities of the Chair**

- To provide strategic leadership - ensuring that the Board is effective in its task of setting and implementing MKAC's direction and strategy.
- To hold the Board and Executive Director to account for MKAC's mission and vision, providing inclusive leadership to the Board of Trustees, ensuring that each trustee fulfils their duties and responsibilities for the effective governance of the charity.
- To support the Executive Director and ensure that the Board operates in line with statutory and mandatory requirements to achieve agreed objectives.
- To ensure financial probity and that all resources are focussed on achieving the aims and objectives of MKAC for the benefit of service users.
- To act as an ambassador and the public face of MKAC in partnership with the Executive Director.
- To ensure the smooth running of Board meetings.
- To establish and maintain a strong, effective and constructive relationship with the Executive Director and the wider staff team.
- To develop and nurture effective and strategic external relationships for the benefit of MKAC.
- To lead on Board development, recruitment and training.
- To work in partnership with the Board of Trustees and Executive Director to ensure that MKAC has a clear vision, mission and strategic direction and that the charity, the Trustees and the Executive Director are focused on achieving these.
- To ensure that the Board of Trustees fulfils its duties and responsibilities for the proper governance of the charity.
- To safeguard the good name and values of Milton Keynes Arts Centre.

In fulfilling the above, the Chair will be required to undertake the following duties:

- To ensure that the Executive Director reports regularly to the Board of Trustees on progress towards the strategic objectives, business and annual plans.
- To ensure that the Executive Director's annual objectives support the achievement of the strategic objectives/priorities.

- To ensure that the Executive Director receives regular, constructive feedback on their performance in managing the charity and in meeting their annual and longer term objectives.
- To ensure that the Board's delegated authority is recorded in writing by means of terms of reference for board committees and sub-committees, role descriptions for honorary officers and key staff, reporting procedures etc.
- To ensure that the major risks to which the charity is exposed have been reviewed and systems have been established to mitigate these risks without the charity becoming totally risk averse.
- In partnership with the Executive Director to develop an annual programme of Board meetings and Board away days and ensure that relevant agendas and papers are prepared in good time for board meetings.
- To ensure the Board of Trustees regularly reviews the charity's governance structure and the Board's performance.
- To work closely with the Board and the Executive Director to ensure that the Board has on it the skills it requires to govern the charity well, and that the Board has access to relevant external professional advice and expertise.
- To ensure that there is a systematic, open and fair procedure for the recruitment of Trustees, future Chairs of the Board and future executive Directors (with a view to succession).
- To ensure that all members of the Board receive appropriate induction, advice, information and training (both individual and collective).
- In close consultation and in partnership with the Executive Director to agree respective roles in representing the charity and acting as spokesperson at public functions, public meetings and to the press/media.
- To chair the Annual General Meeting, other general meetings and relevant conferences organised by the charity.
- To ensure there are regular one to one meetings with the Executive Director when the Chair and Chief Executive can talk openly, discuss progress and problems, agree expectations of each other; plan the Board's annual programme together and prepare for meetings together. There should be no 'surprises' between Chair and Chief Executive at Board meetings.
- To act as a counter-signatory on annual accounts, charity cheques and any applications for funds, as required.
- To maintain absolute confidentiality about all sensitive/confidential information received in the course of the Chair of the Board of Trustees responsibilities to the charity.

### **Minimum time commitment**

Board meetings are held four times a year and usually take part in the evening from 6pm at Milton Keynes Arts Centre. Papers are distributed a minimum of one week in advance of the meeting.

In exceptional circumstances, The Chair may call Extraordinary meetings. EGMs are held for the consideration of non-recurring business that requires approval by the Board of Trustees.

The Chair can claim out of pocket expenses incurred in travelling to meetings.

## **Accountable to**

As the Board are responsible and liable for the governance and functioning of the charity, they are accountable in varying degrees to a variety of stakeholders, including: service users, members, funders, the Charity Commission, and Companies House. Close attention must be given to the governing document to ascertain the type of organisational structure and the range of interested parties.

**For further information see:** <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-essential-trustee-what-you-need-to-know-cc3/the-essential-trustee-what-you-need-to-know-what-you-need-to-do>

## **How to Apply**

Please send a CV and covering letter in the first instance to Milton Keynes Arts Centre's Director, Fiona Venables at [fiona@miltonkeynesartscentre.org](mailto:fiona@miltonkeynesartscentre.org) or, for further information, call 01908 608108.

## **PERSON SPECIFICATION: Chair (Voluntary)**

Milton Keynes Arts Centre's Board of Trustees is now seeking a new Chair of the Board. This is a critical role for which applicants must:

- Demonstrate a commitment to Milton Keynes Arts Centre, our strategic objectives, charitable purpose and our values.
- Have proven experience of operating at a strategic leadership level.
- Have experience of governance and of being part of a board.
- Have experience of chairing meetings.
- Demonstrate exceptional interpersonal skills and relationship building abilities to be comfortable and effective in the ambassadorial role.
- Have strong networking abilities and be able to demonstrate experience of partnership working.
- Be able to commit the time required for the role.

We particularly encourage applications from individuals who are underrepresented in the cultural sector and who reflect the diversity of Milton Keynes communities with whom the Arts Centre works.

We also require of applicants:

- **integrity**
- **strategic vision**
- **good, independent judgement**
- **an ability to think creatively**
- **a willingness to speak their mind**
- **an understanding and acceptance of the legal duties, responsibilities and liabilities of trusteeship**
- **an ability to work effectively as a member of a team and to take decisions for the good of Milton Keynes Arts Centre**