

# Trustee Recruitment Pack

**The Atkinson Development Trust is a charity established to help The Atkinson use its collections and building to make a positive impact on local people's lives.**

We want to recruit new Trustees to join our Board, to help guide current delivery and shape future development.

## About The Atkinson Development Trust



### Background

The Atkinson is the council-owned arts centre in the heart of Southport, which serves the whole borough of Sefton.

The Atkinson is home to free-to-access galleries, museum and Southport's main library, plus a main fixed-seating theatre and smaller flexible seating Studio used for ticketed events spanning all types of performing arts, talks and film.

The Atkinson Development Trust is a charity which supports and enhances the impact of The Atkinson within Sefton. Established in 2015, The Atkinson Development Trust (TADT) is run by a small, committed Board of volunteers who have a shared love of The Atkinson, and a shared belief in the value of cultural engagement.

The Trust was set up to work in partnership with The Atkinson, to raise money to extend its reach. Our ability to step outside the funding and strategic restrictions associated with the public sector means we are able to apply for different funding and open conversations with potential donors which a Council-run service would struggle to have.

## Our purpose and aims

The purpose of the Trust is to support The Atkinson to use art, heritage and culture to enhance local people's lives and share Sefton's stories.

We believe in the transformative power of art and we believe that communities thrive best when they have civic pride and a sense of place. Through partnership with The Atkinson we aim to:

- Connect people with local stories and cultural activity
- Improve access to the collections and the building
- Have a positive impact on local people's lives

## What we do

We work supportively with The Atkinson to expand and enhance their work. To achieve this, we raise money - from individuals, businesses and funding bodies.

Money comes to us from a variety of fundraising including project-specific activities e.g. applications to trusts and foundations and crowdfunding, alongside ongoing income through donations boxes in the building, memberships, and individual gifts.

As well as looking for opportunities to raise more income, we manage the modest pot we have built up, in order to gain maximum impact from it. Sometimes we provide a small amount of money as leverage for The Atkinson to bid for a much bigger amount from a funder. Sometimes we contribute directly to fund specific projects which meet our aims.

We don't work directly with beneficiaries. We work closely and supportively with The Atkinson. We're not looking to influence the programming or running of the venue and we're not doing work which they should be doing anyway: we extend their work to reach more people.



## Where we focus our efforts

The Atkinson Development Trust exists to make a positive impact on local people's lives, using the fantastic collections and resources of The Atkinson.

Our main focus is social impact: we have particular interest in supporting projects which benefit the wellbeing of the more vulnerable and under-served people in this community. For example, children in areas of economic deprivation, disabled people and their families, or older people at risk of loneliness and isolation.

More broadly, our work aims to connect people with local stories and improve access to the collections and the building. We support conservation and acquisitions when this enables new stories to be shared with the public, or unlocks new engagement projects.

With the support of donors, we've been able to give theatre tickets to school children who wouldn't otherwise be able to attend, enabling them to experience the wonder of live performance. We have set up a choir which has brought joy and friendship to people at risk of isolation. And we've restored precious works of art so people can see them for the first time.

## How we work

Board members meet monthly, usually from 5-7pm. For the past year, due to the pandemic, we have met via Zoom. Ordinarily we meet either at The Atkinson or Southport Town Hall. We don't pay travel expenses to attend meetings.

Whilst maintaining the legal formalities in our meetings, we aim to foster an informal atmosphere in which all individuals are invited to contribute to the discussion. We want people to actively participate, be heard and feel valued for their knowledge and ideas.

The Board isn't providing guidance for a paid team to get on with: if we want our ideas to become reality, we have to make them happen. Therefore, as well as a commitment to attend monthly meetings, Trustees need to be willing and able to take on some individual responsibility outside the Trust's meetings.

**We think being a Trustee is rewarding, but please note this is a completely voluntary, unpaid role.**

## What we're looking for

We want to recruit Trustees who will contribute their energy, enthusiasm and expertise. Prior experience as a Trustee is not necessary.

We've identified some skills that the Board needs in order to grow and thrive. We are particularly keen to recruit people with skills and solid experience in the following areas:

- Fundraising and bid-writing
- Charity law
- Marketing
- Project management

We are also keen to diversify our Board. We recognise that having a range of people with different life experiences and different perspectives is beneficial. So whilst we will be looking to address these skills gaps, we would also greatly value other attributes such as strong relationships with under-represented communities.



# How to apply to become a Trustee

## Let us know about your suitability for the role

We are inviting you to consider the opportunity to influence and shape a charity that can deliver far reaching benefits right to the heart of our communities.

In the following pages you'll find a detailed description of the role and responsibilities of a Trustee, and more information about what we're looking for. If this all sounds good and you'd like to put yourself forward as a potential candidate:

- **Please write us a letter of application (maximum 2 sides of A4 please) outlining relevant skills, experience and/or interests, accompanied by a brief CV.**
- **Send it to [hello@atkinsontrust.org.uk](mailto:hello@atkinsontrust.org.uk)**
- **Deadline for applications is 5pm on Monday 17 May 2021**
- **If you'd prefer to have an informal chat to start with, please drop a line to [hello@atkinsontrust.org.uk](mailto:hello@atkinsontrust.org.uk) and we'll be in touch to arrange it.**

## What happens next?

After the deadline, we'll make a shortlist of people to meet with. We'll get in touch with the people on our shortlist within 2 weeks of the deadline to arrange meeting up for an informal interview. This is likely to be online.

If both parties are happy to proceed, candidates will then be invited to observe a meeting to see how we work and meet with the rest of the Trustees. If you are formally invited to join the Trust, you must formally respond in writing to accept.

Trustees are initially appointed for a term of two years, by a resolution passed by Trustees at a properly convened meeting of The Atkinson Development Trust.

New Trustees will be required to sign a declaration to confirm that they are eligible to act as a charity Trustee.

# What's involved in being a Trustee

## The role and responsibilities of a Trustee<sup>1</sup>

A Trustee's role is all about governance through *collective* decision-making.

Together, our six main duties as Trustees are to:

### **Pursue our mission and strategy**

- Set the Trust's direction and determine how it will get there
- Ensure the charity is carrying out its purposes for the public benefit

### **Comply with the law**

- Ensure the Trust complies with its governing document
- Ensure it complies with charity law and any other relevant regulations.

### **Act in the best interests of the Trust**

- Make balanced and informed decisions to benefit the charity
- Ensure no conflict with your own interests or loyalty to another organisation
- Be a positive and responsible ambassador for the work of the Trust.

### **Manage resources responsibly**

- Safeguard assets - both tangible (money, property etc) and intangible (the Trust's reputation and name)
- Be prudent in committing funds, ensuring that there are sufficient assets for the Trusts' long term survival
- Ensure assets are used appropriately and constitutionally

### **Look after the Trust**

- Act with care and skill. Prepare for and attend meetings. Seek specialist advice when needed.
- Ensure the Trust's renewal, decision-making and information-sharing processes are effective, group dynamics are positive, and that reflection, learning and development is taking place.

### **Ensure accountability**

- Monitor performance and be able to demonstrate that the charity is effective
- Maintain accounts and submit annual reports
- Listen and respond to stakeholders (e.g. local communities, funders, donors, members, staff at The Atkinson)

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<sup>1</sup> For more information from the Charity Commission about being a Trustee see: [www.gov.uk/guidance/charity-trustee-whats-involved](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/charity-trustee-whats-involved)

## What's legally required of all Trustees

- Act constitutionally and within the law
- Act in the interests of the beneficiaries
- Act reasonably and honestly
- Avoid conflict of interest
- Be active – Trustees are still liable for decisions made by other Trustees in their absence
- Act jointly – an individual has no powers on their own unless they have been specifically given them by the Trust (as recorded in the Minutes at a properly convened meeting)
- Have a duty of care – act prudently and reasonably
- Trustees must not delegate control
- Trustees must not benefit personally – unless allowed specifically in the constitution or by law

## What we ask of our TADT Trustees

- Strive to attend all meetings
- Prepare for meetings by reading the agenda, papers and emails beforehand
- Arrive on time and stay to the end
- Participate fully in meetings
- Contribute positively, respectfully and constructively
- Fulfil any responsibilities assigned at meetings and be prepared to report back
- Draw attention to any potential conflicts of interest that may arise in meetings
- Maintain confidentiality on sensitive and confidential information
- Advocate for the Trust. From time to time, act as the Trust's representative at external meetings and internal events such as exhibition openings.
- Keep the best interests of the Trust/beneficiaries in mind at all times



## Qualities, capabilities and skills required of TADT Trustees

### Essential

- Legal eligibility to act as a trustee under charity law
- Open-mindedness, independent thinking and good judgement
- Honesty, integrity, reliability
- Commitment to The Atkinson Development Trust and its aims
- Ability to devote time and effort outside the meetings to furthering our plans (e.g. take responsibility for writing a funding application or planning a project).
- Ability to work collaboratively and make decisions as part of a group
- Willingness to seek constructive debate and dialogue over confrontation
- Good communication skills
- Ability to act reasonably and responsibly when undertaking duties
- Ability to analyse information and, when necessary, challenge constructively
- An interest in arts, culture and/or heritage
- Willingness to fundraise

### Desirable

- Previous experience of fundraising, particularly in writing successful funding bids
- Expertise in marketing, project management or charity law
- Knowledge/experience of the arts/cultural/heritage sector
- Knowledge/experience of working with less well-served communities
- Well connected
- A working knowledge of the borough of Sefton
- Willingness to attend social events at The Atkinson (e.g. exhibition launches) and act as an advocate for the work of the Trust.
- Person-centred and empathetic

