



DR. JOHNSON'S HOUSE TRUST

17 Gough Square
London, EC4A 3DE
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Trustee Role Description

This is a site of crucial importance in the development of the English language, and an open window into the development of 18th-century language and culture. It was saved and converted to a museum 110 years ago and we now seek to re-envision it as a House of Words for a new and broader audience, both on site and online, building on solid foundations but opening out our offering. Our vision is to realise the potential of this most evocative of settings, harnessing its historic role in language and literature to inspire and reach out to a far wider and more diverse public than ever before. We welcome your interest in the pivotal role of Trustee to play a key role as we celebrate how words define, enrich and enlighten our lives through this important heritage site and the stories of the people who have walked through its doors.

Background:

Samuel Johnson was a pre-eminent 18th-century literary and cultural figure, and his house at 17 Gough Square, c.1690s, is a remarkably untouched time capsule from the Age of Enlightenment, an extraordinary survival in the City of London. It is where Johnson created his iconic *Dictionary of the English Language* (1755), wrote some of his most famous works, and lived with a diverse and interesting group of dependents.

Dr Johnson's House Trust is a small, independent charity established in 1911 to care for this historic landmark and promote learning and scholarship. In recent years we have achieved many important milestones, doubling visitor numbers and tripling school visits; undertaking essential maintenance and repairs; and commissioning a new business plan and a new website. We are now entering a time of transition as we seek to broaden and diversify our appeal, develop new income streams, enhance learning, and undertake capital works to enhance the visitor experience, improve accessibility, and further preserve this treasure for the future.

About the role:

Our trustees play a vital role in making sure that we achieve our core purpose. They bring with them a wide range of business, professional, academic and cultural skills and experience, and oversee the overall management and administration of the charity, between them taking responsibility for specific aspects of our work. They also ensure that Dr Johnson's House has a clear strategy and that our work and goals are in line with our vision. Just as importantly, they support and challenge the small staff team to enable the charity to grow and thrive.

At times, the trustees are expected to be actively involved beyond Board meetings. This may involve scrutinising board papers, leading discussions, focusing on key issues, providing advice and guidance on new initiatives, presenting externally, or other activities in which the trustee has special expertise. Currently, we are seeking to recruit those with expertise in one of three areas of specialisation: marketing and business growth, IT, and education, particularly in Key Stages 1-4.

All trustees are collectively responsible for the decisions and governance of the charity. This does not mean that all trustees have to agree on every matter they make a decision on, but all trustees have a duty to actively participate in the decision-making process. Our trustees work closely together in a collegiate and mutually supportive atmosphere to help transform the charity and its offering.

Lord Harmsworth – President

Stephen Clarke FSA - Chairman

Dr. Johnson's House Trust Ltd.
Registered Charity Number 1122396
Company limited by guarantee

Responsibilities

You will:

- Support and provide advice on our purpose, vision, goals and activities.
- Approve operational strategies and policies, and monitor and evaluate their implementation.
- Oversee the charity's financial plans and budgets and monitor and evaluate progress.
- Ensure the effective and efficient administration of the organisation.
- Ensure that key risks are being identified, monitored, and controlled effectively.
- Review and approve the Trust's financial statements.
- Assist and support the charity's fundraising initiatives.
- Provide support and constructive challenge to the Director in the exercise of their delegated authority and affairs.
- Keep abreast of changes in the Trust's operating environment.
- Contribute to regular reviews of our own governance. Attend Board meetings, adequately prepared to contribute to discussions.
- Use independent judgment, act legally and in good faith to promote and protect Dr Johnson's House interests, to the exclusion of your own personal and/or any third party interests.
- Contribute to the broader promotion of Dr Johnson's House's objects, aims and reputation by applying your skills, expertise, knowledge and contacts.

Knowledge, Experience & Skills:

We are looking for people willing to bring energy, enthusiasm, and commitment to the role, and who will broaden the diversity of thinking on our board and advise and support our small staff team. You do not need previous governance experience – we will provide a full induction and training. However, you would be expected to have substantial experience in one of our target disciplines: marketing, education, and IT. These roles are especially important as we hire our first Marketing and Commercial Manager, seek funding for a dedicated Learning Officer, and seek to professionalise and streamline business practices and digital engagement.

Personal skills and qualities

- Willingness and ability to understand and accept your responsibilities and liabilities as a trustee and to act in the best interests of the organisation.
- Ability to think creatively and strategically, exercise good, independent judgement and work effectively as a board member.
- Effective communication skills and willingness to participate actively in discussion.
- A strong personal commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion.
- Enthusiasm for our vision and mission.
- Willingness to lead according to our values.

Terms of appointment

Terms of office

- Trustees are appointed for a three year term of office, renewal for two further terms to a maximum of nine years.
- This is a voluntary position, but reasonable expenses are reimbursed.

Time commitment

- Attending 3 Board meetings annually. Currently meetings are held in the City of London. Virtual attendance is facilitated, but personal attendance is encouraged.
- Attending occasional meetings on specific projects on which trustees may be engaged, and potentially occasional strategy / training days.

Additional duties

You will be asked to provide ad hoc and occasional support through working groups and / or support to the staff team.

If successful, you may be subject to an enhanced DBS check.

To Apply:

Please submit a C.V. **AND** a covering letter which states your suitability and interest in this role.

Send to: **recruitment.djh@gmail.com**

Closing date for applications: June 11, 2024

Our commitment to diversity:

Dr Johnson's House is an equal opportunities employer and is committed to encouraging equality, diversity, and inclusion among our workforce, board, and volunteers, and eliminating unlawful discrimination. The aim is for our organisation to be truly representative of all sections of society and our sector, and for each person to feel respected and able to give their best.