



Chair of Trustees Recruitment Pack

The background of the entire image is a yellow wallpaper with a repeating floral pattern of white flowers and green leaves. In the lower-left corner, there is a white architectural molding, possibly a door frame or a decorative ledge, featuring a small circular medallion and a draped garland design.

Welcome

Welcome to Jane Austen's House...

Jane Austen's House, home of England's finest novelist and where she revised and wrote all her groundbreaking novels, is seeking a new Chair of Trustees to take this vibrant museum and literary house into its next phase.

The current Chair has steered the museum through its transformation into a Charitable Incorporated Organisation, through key Austen bicentenaries in 2013 and 2017, past the challenges of the pandemic-related closure and staggered re-opening, to the completion of major capital works to replace the House's 70-year-old roof.

We now seek an inspirational individual with experience and dedication to take the House forward as it prepares to mark 250 years since Jane Austen's birth in 1775, while continuing to develop innovative interpretation and programming to be enjoyed by a truly global audience.

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About Jane Austen's House

Jane Austen's House is among the most important literary sites in the world, with an unparalleled collection of Austen related artefacts. The Grade 1 listed 16th century cottage it occupies was the home of Jane Austen for the last eight years of her life. While living here Jane Austen revised her earlier works, *Sense and Sensibility*, *Pride and Prejudice* and *Northanger Abbey*, and wrote three new novels, *Mansfield Park*, *Emma* and *Persuasion*.

In the late 1940s Mr T. Edward Carpenter, a London solicitor, read that members of the informal literary society that was to become the Jane Austen Society wanted to establish the house as a public museum and offered to take on the project. Mr Carpenter purchased the house in memory of his son, who had been killed in action in the Second World War and established a charity to own and run the museum. Jane Austen's House opened to the public in 1949 and began collecting furnishings and items for display.

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About Jane Austen's House

Jane Austen's House will celebrate its 75th birthday in 2024, and today holds an internationally significant collection of Austen-related material, from rare handwritten letters to first editions and treasured personal belongings. We regularly welcome over 40,000 visitors a year, and have a thriving events and exhibitions programme, both onsite and online.

Jane Austen's House is fully Accredited under the Arts Council England scheme and operates according to the UK Museums Association's Code of Ethics. It is a member of various sector groups including the Association of Independent Museums (AIM), Tourism South East and the Association of Cultural Enterprises.

Our Charitable Objectives

“The advancement of education and in particular the study of English Literature, especially the life and works of Jane Austen. Activities in furtherance of this will include the maintenance of a museum for the public benefit in the house at Chawton, Hampshire that was Jane Austen's home for the last eight years of her life”.

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Trustees & Staff

Our Board of Trustees

Over the past two years we have successfully recruited new trustees, bringing together a talented, experienced and diverse board with specialisms in museums, arts and heritage, learning, advertising, law and finance, that delivers considered and enriching strategic leadership for Jane Austen's House. 2022 has been a handover year between new and existing board members, with a focus on developing strategy for the next three years.

Our Staff Team

Jane Austen's House employs a team of 15 staff, at a FTE of 8. The team is hard working, dedicated and innovative, delivering above budget performance and creating exciting programming, interpretation and secondary spend offers. They are ambitious for the future of the charity, with a deep understanding of the collections and the significance of the House. True brand ambassadors, they have a genuine affection for Austen's work, and a drive to communicate and promote her legacy.

Chair of Trustees

This is a key position within the Board of Trustees and it is anticipated that there would be an agreed period of handover between the current and next Chair.

As a member of the Board, the Chair's duties includes those of all board members. These are to:

Trustees at Jane Austen's House:

- Shape, develop and promote the strategic activity and objectives of Jane Austen's House, working alongside staff and other trustees
- Bring their experience and expertise to act as a 'critical friend' to the staff of the museum, in particular the Director
- Act as ambassadors for Jane Austen's House, including attracting funds towards projects and running costs
- Plan and agree the budget and financial policies for Jane Austen's House
- Attend at least four out of six trustees meeting a year
- Serve for a term of three years, which may be extended to another three by agreement with Chair.

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Chair of Trustees

- The Chair of trustees would also be responsible for:
- Providing leadership to the Board, including development of trustees , staff and volunteers.
 - Ensuring the Director, with support from staff and trustees prepares and monitors a time-bound strategic plan, enables the Museum to thrive and meets the standards of Arts Council England's Museum Accreditation scheme.
 - Line managing the Director of Jane Austen's House, providing mentoring support and agreeing personal objectives each year
 - Chairing board and other working group meetings and setting their agendas with the Director
 - Representing the organisation with key stakeholders including funders and other cultural organisations
 - Ensuring the audited accounts are prepared and submitted to the Charity Commission each year in a timely fashion
 - Ensuring that all policies and procedures follow legal and organisational best practice and are reviewed regularly.



Person Specification

Jane Austen's House is looking for a chair who can show:

- A demonstrable interest in the life and works of Jane Austen
- Evidence of strong leadership skills, through senior management experience
- A good understanding of the cultural sector; especially in the museums and visitor attraction context
- Experience within committee structures
- Empathetic with strong people skills

and is:

- A strategic thinker
- A confident member of existing networks that may be of value in developing the reach and profile of Jane Austen's House
- Able to travel to Chawton regularly.



Chair of Trustees

Commitments

The Chair's role will involve visiting Jane Austen's House and meeting with the Director and other staff on a regular basis. In practice, the role might involve up to three days a month meeting online or in person.

There are typically 6 board meetings each year and other working group meetings from time to time.

The Chair would be expected to attend key events including private views and fundraising activities as well as representing Jane Austen's House externally.

While the remit of Jane Austen's House is national and international, much of the day-to-day work takes place in or near Chawton, Hampshire.

Term of office

The position of Chair is elected for a period of three years with the option to serve for another three. There is then normally one year allowed to ensure that the Board of Trustees has been fully refreshed before standing down.



Our Recruitment Process

To express an interest in joining the Board of Trustees at Jane Austen's House and to be considered for the role, please first arrange for a conversation with our current Chair. To do this contact office@janeaustens.house and mark your email "For attention of Isabel Hughes."

We would then ask you to submit a CV and an accompanying letter outlining what you could bring to the role and explaining how you meet its requirements.

Jane Austen's House is fully committed to eliminating discrimination and promoting equality and diversity in our workforce and employment practices, in the work we undertake, and in the provision of all our services. We are committed to building a diverse and inclusive workforce including within the trustee body. We particularly welcome applications from people with disabilities and Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) candidates.

The position of Trustee is unremunerated, but reasonable expenses will be reimbursed.

We look forward to receiving your application.