



William Morris Gallery Trust

Trustee recruitment information



WILLIAM
MORRIS
GALLERY

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About the Gallery

William Morris Gallery is the only public gallery devoted to the designer, craftsman, poet and political campaigner William Morris (1834–92).

Situated in Walthamstow, east London, in the Grade II listed building that was once Morris's family home, the Gallery holds the world's largest collection of his work. It also delivers ambitious exhibitions, alongside dynamic public and learning programmes. Free and open to all, the purpose of the Gallery is to share the rich artistic and social legacy of one of Britain's greatest designers.

William Morris Gallery is an accredited museum, owned and operated by the London Borough of Waltham Forest. The Gallery joined Arts Council England's National Portfolio in 2015. This funding supports our contemporary programme of exhibitions, learning activities and public programme.

As the most prominent cultural venue in Waltham Forest and currently the only National Portfolio Organisation in the borough, we have a critical role to play in demonstrating the importance of arts and culture for the wellbeing and prosperity of local communities.

In November 2017, the Gallery achieved ACE Designation status for its William Morris collection. This was a significant development in terms of our financial sustainability, our ability to forge new partnerships and in raising our profile.

Since the redevelopment of the Gallery in 2012, our visitor numbers have grown from 92,247 in 2012–13 to a record number of 169,778 in 2023–24.

Our relationship with our local community is a priority for us, and is supported by recent interventions which include establishing a Community Advisory Panel and a Communities in Residence programme for local grass-roots organisations. Through the development of an increasingly ambitious exhibition programme and expanded learning and public programmes, we have seen our growing audiences more closely representing our young and diverse community in Waltham Forest year-on-year since 2021.

At a time where local authorities are under more financial pressure than ever, there is a need for the Gallery to continue to find ways to increase our earned income and to seek growing external funding. However, London Borough of Waltham Forest remains committed to supporting the Gallery's ongoing growth, working in close partnership with the new William Morris Gallery Trust.





Our future plans

We are guided by the vision of William Morris: Creativity and beauty as part of everyone's daily life; Living in harmony with nature; Fighting for social justice & equality.

As we reach the Gallery's 75th Anniversary, we are in the process of reviewing, refining and strengthening our governance arrangements to meet the challenges and opportunities of the coming years. The new William Morris Gallery Trust is a key part of this. We have also reaffirmed our commitment to achieving greater diversity across our audiences, our staff, the artists and curators we work with as, well as those that govern and shape the activities of the Gallery.

In establishing the William Morris Gallery Trust, we are now on a journey towards the Gallery being both embedded in and supported by London Borough of Waltham Forest but also working with a greater degree of financial and operational independence, with the Trust taking on more governance responsibilities over time.

The ideas and principles of William Morris continue to provide clarity and inspiration as we set out to make these positive changes and as the Gallery continues to evolve.

Our priorities for 2024-27:

- Develop our audiences, trustees, staff, volunteers, artists, collaborators: to reflect the diversity of our borough across ethnicity, class, gender, sexuality, age and gender by 2027
- Extend the national and international reputation of the Gallery whilst building our local networks and widening local access to communities
- Keep our overall visitor numbers growing year on year
- Retail, licensing and diversified income activities driving growth
- Recognised as a gallery of national and international significance and the primary resource for William Morris in the world

About the Trust

The new William Morris Gallery Trust was formed in 2024.

William Morris Gallery and its collections are owned and managed by London Borough of Waltham Forest. Frank Brangwyn RA and Walthamstow Borough Council signed a trust deed – ‘The Brangwyn Gift’ – in 1935 to set up the Gallery prior to opening to the public in 1950.

The new William Morris Gallery Trust was formed in 2024. This new charity incorporates the original collection-based responsibilities of the Brangwyn Gift and will move beyond this, to start to act as a source of advice, support and governance for the Gallery as a whole.

A Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) now registered with the Charity Commission, the William Morris Gallery Trust will operate at ‘arms-length’ from the London Borough of Waltham Forest.

London Borough of Waltham Forest will remain the owner of the Gallery assets, i.e. the collection and building, and as a principal funder of the Gallery.

This is now an opportunity for a dynamic and diverse set of Trustees to be recruited for this new board that, over an initial 5 year period, will take on increasing responsibilities for the Gallery, its programme and its strategic direction.

Alongside this new Board, our Community Advisory Panel will continue to offer external advice and support.

In addition to our existing 5 trustees, we plan to recruit up to 6 new trustees in this period of recruitment.

Our existing trustees:

- Jamie Andrews, Director of Public Engagement, British Library
- Ros Bowman – Friends of the William Morris Gallery
- Cllr Rosalind Dore (Chair) – Cabinet Member for Culture, London Borough of Waltham Forest
- Anthony Misquitta, General Counsel, V&A
- Sba Shaikh, artist and educator





The Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees will act in an advisory capacity to senior staff at William Morris Gallery.

The Board of Trustees will be responsible for:

- Safe custody of the collection housed in William Morris Gallery
- Exhibition, public and learning programmes
- Strategic oversight and artistic direction of the Gallery
- Fundraising and commercial strategy
- Shaping the future governance developments and potential responsibilities of the Trust

Duties of the Trustees:

- Ensure that William Morris Gallery has a clear vision, mission and strategic direction and is focused on achieving these
- Ensure the Trust complies with its governing document, and objectives and with all legal and regulatory requirements
- Contribute actively in giving advice to the Gallery's Collections and Curatorial team in matters relating to the safe custody and guardianship of the collection housed in William Morris Gallery (recognising that the operations of William Morris Gallery are currently the responsibility of London Borough of Waltham Forest)
- Ensure that the Trust's governance is of the highest possible standard
- Contribute actively to the development goals of the Gallery in raising new funds, achieving commercial growth and seeing positive expansion across audiences and programmes

Role description

The William Morris Gallery Trust is seeking to appoint dynamic Board Members with the necessary knowledge, skills and experience to enable and support the Gallery to move forward in exceeding its goals around positive and sustainable growth.

Person specification

- A commitment to the purpose and ambition of William Morris Gallery and to be an advocate for our work
- An understanding and appreciation of the life and work of William Morris
- Knowledge or experience useful to the Trust as it seeks to ensure that its governance is fit for purpose and can evolve
- A commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion
- Integrity, strategic vision, good independent judgement, ability to think creatively
- An ability to work effectively as a member of a team and to take decisions for the good of the Gallery
- A willingness to meet the time requirement for being a trustee. Including a willingness to be available to staff for advice and enquiries on an ad hoc basis

Key skills

The Board has identified a need for skills and experience in the following areas:

- Financial management
- Community engagement
- Collections or artistic programming
- Retail licensing income generating
- Patrons/individual giving

Remuneration

This position is not remunerated but reasonable out of pocket expenses incurred fulfilling the duties of the role, including travel to meetings and childcare, may be re-imbursed at the Trust's discretion.

Time commitment

This appointment is for an initial term of three years. It will involve participation in 4 to 6 meetings each year, held at William Morris Gallery and occasional correspondence via email.

Additionally, trustees are invited to attend Gallery openings, events and tours.



How to apply

Please send a CV and supporting statement (no longer than 1 side of A4) to the Director of the Gallery:

hadrian.garrard@walthamforest.gov.uk

Waltham Forest Council welcomes applications from the widest possible range of people from all backgrounds and abilities and is keen to encourage interest from Global Majority candidates.

Closing date: **Monday 9 December 2024**



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