

Trustee
recruitment
pack



The
Cultural
Spring



A Welcome from our Chair

As we prepare to celebrate our tenth anniversary, we are looking to recruit additional trustees who share our passion for community arts.

Since its inception in 2014, The Cultural Spring has been bringing communities together with artists and performers across Sunderland and South Tyneside. Our mission is simple – arts and crafts are for everyone. And increasingly, we've been seeing how people are reporting measurable improvements in their health and wellbeing as a result of engaging with our events, activities and workshops.

Our work is funded by Arts Council England together with trusts, foundations and local authorities. And our charity board has ambitious plans to further extend our activities and community engagement across the area.

So, if you have an interest in or experience of the way community arts can be life-changing, we'd love to hear from you! We'll meet six-ten times a year and we're a friendly lot so you'll have fun if you join us.

Graeme Thompson MBE

Who are Cultural Spring?

The Cultural Spring started in 2014, originally as a project hosted by the University of Sunderland and funded by Arts Council England through their Creative People and Places programme.

Working with communities across Sunderland and South Tyneside, we are a community arts project aiming to bring arts activities and programmes to areas which have low engagement with the arts.

We promote any art or craft, but to date, we have focused mainly on music, the visual arts, theatre, dance, creative writing and storytelling and crafts including textiles, ceramics, calligraphy, and jewellery making.

Our programme is influenced by local people who are an important part of our decision making processes. Our offer is often free or low cost to ensure that money is not a barrier for participation.

We have worked with over 65,000 people since 2014, through large scale events, workshop activities in a range of community venues, a Go and See programme and Your Art-Community Commissioning.



Our vision

For arts and culture to be an expected and accepted part of everyone's lives in Sunderland and South Tyneside.

Our mission

We believe that by working together with our communities we will develop a truly inspirational arts and cultural programme that will increase levels of social engagement, participation and open other opportunities for local people to take part.



Our values

Being an exemplar

We want this project to continue to be a national exemplar and we want to do things well.

We are committed to being open, clear, respectful and transparent in our work with artists, organisations, communities and stakeholders.

We will strive to achieve best value for money and will work hard to maximise the impact of this programme where it counts most – in the communities of Sunderland and South Tyneside.



Excellence

We will strive for excellence and innovation in all our work and will work with the best artists to ensure that our engagement processes and artistic activities and content are of the highest quality.

We will encourage work that is fun, pushes boundaries, takes risks and builds the aspirations of everyone involved.

We will take a broad definition of art, creativity and culture – film, fashion, design, television and radio will sit alongside visual arts, drama, literature, music and dance.

We will apply this learning and new understanding to ensure a process of continuous improvement throughout the programme, as well as leaving a 'learning resource' that can be utilised post-funding to sustain our Cultural Spring vision.



Inclusivity and pervasiveness

We will instigate initiatives and activities involving a wide range of individuals and groups.

Our ultimate ambition is that the Cultural Spring in some way touches as many residents living in Sunderland and South Tyneside as possible.

We will also strive to be socially pervasive, working with a broad range of stakeholders across health, education, and the business community in order to demonstrate the role that arts plays in all our lives, at home and work.



Local ownership and local leadership

We want to ensure everyone has the opportunity not just to participate in our project but to shape and influence it.

We will ensure people have a say in how resources are used and deployed, what projects take place and how this commissioning can be achieved with the communities at their heart.

What we do



Summer Streets

Following original consultation sessions with Southwick ward in 2014, it became clear that local residents wanted to see Thompson Park used for arts activity.

We were able to bring Sunderland born, Ross Millard (The Futureheads, Frankie and the Heartstrings and Split Festival) in to be the artistic director for Summer Streets, a free music festival aimed at showcasing professional and amateur musicians, mainly from the Sunderland and South Tyneside area.

This festival has become a yearly highlight in Sunderland's cultural calendar.

summerstreetsfestival.com



The Cultural Spring



RUSH

A large outdoor dance performance featuring a large cast of local people who worked alongside dance company Southpaw Dance Company.

This project was supported by South Tyneside Council and has subsequently been created in Hull as part of their year as City of Culture in 2017 and Blackpool.

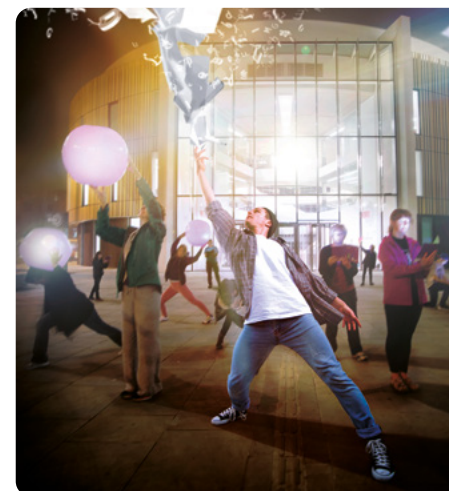
The model for both was taken from what was created in South Shields and it has supported the professional development of Southpaw Dance – a NE based dance company. A link to the film of this work can be found here:

vimeo.com/127928606

WordPlay

Following the success of RUSH we worked with Southpaw Dance Company again in 2016 with our partners at South Tyneside Council to celebrate the opening of The Word with WordPlay.

theculturalspring.org.uk/past-events/2016-2/wordplay



theculturalspring.org



A Great Night Out

In May 2016 WildWorks produced 'A Great Night Out', a night to remember as part of the Cultural Spring's programme for the spring and summer months, this was the culmination of 18 months of development work.

They worked with a wide range of local people who shared their stories. Some of these stories were dramatized for the final performance.

A Great Night Out was held at The Point in Holmeside, Sunderland, on Sunday, May 1. The venue transformed into a 'glittering dream space' in which people were entertained by local performers while celebrating the city's proud heritage through tales and stories.

theculturalspring.org.uk/past-events/2016-2/a-great-night-out



Bitesize Theatre

Four pieces of theatre were commissioned by Cultural Spring community champions to tour a range of non-traditional venues across Sunderland in 2023.

This included 'Foodbank Generation Game', by Theatre Space NE, 'Sweet Caroline' by We Make Culture, 'Milk and Two Sugars' by Woven Nest and 'Red Coat' by The SixTwenty. Each show was no more than one hour long with food included for a ticket price of £5 per person.

Audience members got to talk with the actors/theatre companies while sharing food and **we received fantastic feedback from the project.** More information about the project and a link to a short film can be found here:

theculturalspring.org/bitesize



Community workshops

Community workshops are also a huge part of our programme. These take place in a range of different ward areas. In each phase we prioritise a number of wards for this element of our programme.

We work with a range of venues across the area, offering an opportunity for people to try out a range of different art skills. Ceramics, dance, drama, calligraphy, writing, singing crafts, glass making – whatever consultation shows we'll look to programme. Workshops are offered on a pay what you feel basis.

Workshop programmes have led to some groups becoming self-sustained; Hylton Ukes, the Gub Club (Guitar/Uke and Bass group), The Grindon Marras (drama group), The Keel Line Singers. This short film shows some examples of our workshops:

youtube.com/watch?v=FtltkDAKpdk

Inventors

In Autumn 2015 Dominic Wilcox encouraged hundreds of people in Sunderland and South Tyneside to return to their inventing roots.

Dominic worked with schools, community groups and the public across the Cultural Spring wards to inspire as many new Inventors! as possible.

A selection of the 500 drawings were chosen by Dominic Wilcox and a panel of local makers, expert trades people and manufacturers to be made into real life objects that featured in a pop up exhibition in Fawcett Street, Sunderland throughout January 2016. More information about the original project and a short film can be found here:

theculturalspring.org.uk/past-events/2015-2/inventors

This project's legacy has been amazing. Dominic turned 'Inventors' into 'Little Inventors' a Creative Education organisation, with five of the original inventions from the project in Sunderland having been acquired by the V&A in London as part of their permanent collection.

littleinventors.org



The Cultural Spring



The present

We achieved Charitable status at the end of 2020. As a project led by the University of Sunderland in a consortium partnership with others, the project has found it difficult to attract funding from trusts and foundations, due to governance and funding criteria.

The Charity now frees us up to apply to a range of trusts and foundations for additional funding that can be used towards core costs and project activity, enhancing and growing the opportunities available through our work to residents and artists across Sunderland and South Tyneside.

Since April 2023 our Creative People and Places funding is for the Sunderland project only and our work in South Tyneside is being funded through a range of trusts and foundations, for example we have been successful in receiving 'Know Your Neighbourhood' funding for 2023-2025, Sir James Knott and Joicey Trust.

We have also been commissioned for a number of projects with South Tyneside Council, including leading on the Community Engagement programme for the Summer and Winter Parades for 2023 and 2024.





The Board

We currently have six Board members and are looking to increase this in 2024. Our Articles of Association allow for up to 12 trustees.

We are particularly interested in hearing from people who are new to Boards and governance work. We want to have a diverse board, including people with a range of life/lived experiences.

We are particularly looking for people who have skills and expertise in HR and Legal.

You may be one of our project's current Community Champions who might be interested in this role.

We envisage between six to ten Board meetings each year, which includes away days/planning sessions and potential sub-group meetings. Meetings will be a mix of online and in person.

The term of office for each Board member is three years followed by an option to extend by a further two years.

Our trustees:

- Ellie Turner
- Ian High
- Graeme Thompson
- Mark Dawson
- Fiona Martin
- Denise Wilson



Ellie Turner

Ellie Turner has worked in the North East arts and culture sector for 18 years in positions both within arts and culture organisations and then as a funding specialist managing partnership programmes, developing philanthropy and funds to benefit the North East voluntary sector.

She is a specialist in charity governance, leadership and in developing national partnerships.

Ellie joined the Cultural Spring Board in July 2021. In her day job she is Joint Chief Executive and Executive Director of Open Clasp Theatre Company which places theatre at the heart of transforming the lives of women and girls. Ellie is also a director of Birkheads Wild CIC, which supports more young people to discover, explore and enjoy being outdoors.

Ellie is passionate about the role of the arts to change people's lives and build power for people and their communities.



Ian High

Ian is the current director of finance and administration for Sunderland Culture, an Arts Council NPO funded charity based in Sunderland. In this role Ian manages all aspects of the financial systems and processes as well as the business administration and management.

In his previous role he was the finance manager for the Leighton Group of companies, Pub Culture and the Sunderland Music, Arts and Culture Trust.

Ian also manages the finances for the Summer Streets music and arts festival.

Ian has supported The Cultural Spring since formation and became a trustee of the charity in 2020.



Graeme Thompson

Graeme has been chair of The Cultural Spring steering group since its formation in 2014 and also chairs our charity board. He's a UK Council member with Creative UK and is on the North Area Council for Arts Council England.

He's had a long association with The Customs House in South Shields where he co-writes the annual pantomime with Ray Spencer. He is chair of the education committee of the Royal Television Society and a Board member for North East Screen.

Graeme is a Visiting Professor of Creative Industries at the University of Sunderland where he was until recently a Pro Vice Chancellor.

Before arriving at the university in 2009, Graeme was an executive with ITV. He was awarded an MBE in the 2021 Queen's Birthday Honours List.



Mark Dawson

Mark is Managing Director of the Brand, Campaign and Design agency Everything who specialise in working with education, culture and social change clients that strive to make a difference in the world.

Mark is a qualified journalist and experienced copywriter and marketer, as well as being a keen artist and musician in his spare time.

Hailing from Sunderland, Mark is passionate about promoting and engaging with North East art, culture and music, particularly relating to improving access for young people.

As a trustee Mark brings experience in brand and audience development, particularly in the areas of education and social change.



Fiona Martin

Fiona has worked with children and young people since 2006 to engage them in the arts, and specialises in theatre for young people.

Fiona has worked at The Customs House, South Shields since 2008, in a variety of roles within the Learning and Participation Team, and she currently is Deputy Director: Learning and Participation. She supports talent development across the organisation, in particular for creatives aged 25 and under.

Fiona directs the Senior Youth Theatre, facilitates youth theatre activity in the venue, and manages the Learning and Participation Team.

Fiona joined The Cultural Spring Board in January 2022, after working alongside many of the Team, and being inspired and excited by their work in South Tyneside and Sunderland.



Denise Wilson

Denise trained as a teacher before working for SpringBoard Sunderland Trust in 1978, becoming Trust Secretary (CEO) in 2002 until her retirement in 2017.

She is Executive Officer of the Sunderland City Provider Network supporting employment and skills development in the City. Denise is a School Governor and a Trustee for Springboard and recently joined the Cultural Spring Charity as a Trustee.

She believes it is vital to have a vibrant arts programme accessible to all and to encourage its take up. Denise is a member of Soroptimist International Sunderland and enjoys travelling, painting, art, and history.

Personal attributes of Board members

1. An enthusiasm for the work of The Cultural Spring
2. A commitment to carry out the duties of a Trustee
3. To be a respected member of the community with good networks
4. The ability to work as a member of a team and a willingness to state personal convictions and, equally, to accept a majority decision and be tolerant of the views of other people
5. A willingness to deal openly with staff and colleague Trustees whether pleased or displeased about an issue
6. A preparedness to offer personal and business skills and experience to support the work of the staff when required
7. A commitment to be well informed about the work of The Cultural Spring
8. A willingness to act as a champion for The Cultural Spring
9. The ability to treat sensitive information confidentially

Board members should:

- **Ensure that the charity complies with its governing document**, memorandum and articles of agreement, company law, charity law, and any other relevant legislation or regulations, and that it pursues its objects as defined in its governing document
 - **Advocate for the vision, mission and objectives of The Cultural Spring**, supporting and championing the business plan, strategy and policies
 - **Work in partnership with the project's staff**; to support the employees, helping them achieve the aims of the organisation
 - **Represent the organisation** at appropriate events, meetings or functions
 - **Supporting fundraising directly and indirectly**, Board members are expected to contribute financially in whatever way they can, dependent on their individual circumstances
 - **Sit on appointment panels** for other Board members or senior staff as required
 - Attend and **be a member of other committees or working groups** as required
- The Chair may designate and delegate any task to the Deputy Chair as appropriate.**
- A more detailed role specification for our Board can be found on our website and by clicking on this link.**

Process for applying

Having read through this pack, we'd be delighted if you expressed an interest in one of our Board member opportunities:

- 1 | Please express your interest by: 12:00am Monday 25 March 2024.
- 2 | Please contact Emma Horsman, emma.horsman@theculturalspring.org.uk if you would like to discuss any of the roles or the process before you apply or would welcome access assistance with your expression of interest. Emma will arrange for you to speak to a Board member in advance of you applying.
- 3 | When you submit your expression of interest, please send us a letter which includes how you fit the criteria outlined above and why you are applying for the role, provide a CV (if you have one), provide names and contact details of two referees and a completed Equal Opportunities Form, using this link: surveymonkey.co.uk/r/TCSCBA
- 4 | Please submit your expression of interest to Emma Horsman, emma.horsman@theculturalspring.org.uk Emma will acknowledge this and let you know the next steps.
- 5 | We will meet with those shortlisted for a one to one chat which will be with the Chair and either another trustee or the secretary. If you are selected to move to the next stage, you will be invited to a Board meeting before a final decision is made.
- 6 | References will be taken up in advance of the formal confirmation of any appointment.
- 7 | A full induction will be provided with Board buddying system and bespoke support and training where needed to meet your needs in becoming a brilliant Board member.

Want to ask us a question?

Board members and senior staff will be available for chats to help you decide whether to make an application. We are proud of what we do and we're always happy to talk about ways in which the Board can support and steer our activities. If you would like to speak to one of us in advance of your application please email info@theculturalspring.org.uk and we'll arrange a call.



theculturalspring.org

If you'd like to get in touch with us you
can email info@theculturalspring.org.uk

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