

# Candidate Information | Chair of Trustees

THE ROALD DAHL  
MUSEUM AND  
STORY CENTRE



For an informal discussion about the role, please contact Melissa Baxter on: [melissa.baxter@russam.co.uk](mailto:melissa.baxter@russam.co.uk) | 07789 985 229  
Please let us know if you need us to make any adjustments for you to be able to apply for this role or to attend an interview.  
The Roald Dahl Museum and Story Centre is committed to inclusive and equitable recruitment.

**Trustees  
Unlimited**

# Contents

About The Roald Dahl Museum and Story Centre	3 - 4
Impact of Coronavirus 2020/21	5
The Unlocking Stories Project	6
The Board at RDMSC	7
About the Opportunity	8
The Role of Board Chair	9
About You	10
How to Apply	11
Recruitment Timetable	11



# About the Roald Dahl Museum and Story Centre

We are an independent heritage education charity. We were founded by Licky Dahl, Roald Dahl's widow, to be a home for Roald's amazing archive of personal and working papers. The collection is a peek into the mind of a master storyteller, showing how characters and plots sparked, shifted and settled into the stories enjoyed worldwide by millions.

Our business model has been based on earning circa 70% of our operating costs from visitor income, with the rest supported by generous donations from the Roald Dahl Story Company. We have a close relationship with the Story Company; we own and care for the physical archive, the Story Company owns and manages the copyright ideas on those pages. Supporting the Director in managing this relationship for mutual benefit is critical to the role of Chair.

At present, there is a professional staff team equivalent to 15FTE, plus seasonal frontline roles. The Director is Steve Gardam.

Visit our website [here](#).

## Our Charitable Objective

To further the education of the public in the art of literature and creativity by the provision and maintenance of a museum and literature centre based on the works of Roald Dahl.

## Our Purpose

That everyone who experiences the Roald Dahl Museum & Story Centre understands how the work of Roald Dahl can be a key to unlock the stories we all have inside.

## Our Vision

Everyone is a Storymaker

We believe that making stories is essential to being human. We strive to use the heritage in our care to help people do this more consciously, more confidently.

Since opening our doors in 2005, the Museum has been a popular visitor attraction for families and schools, averaging 63,000 visitors a year until 2019-20 and reaching a peak of 90,000 in 2016-17 for Roald Dahl's centenary year.

We are based in a Grade 2 listed former coaching inn, set on Great Missenden High Street in Buckinghamshire: the same High Street that Dahl would have walked as a village resident between 1954 and his death in 1990.

The current Museum galleries select stories from Roald Dahl's life to show how he developed his creative practice to write his most famous books. The heart of the Museum is the preserved interior of his famous Writing Hut, a magical, messy shrine to imagination where so many beloved characters were 'born'.

Although paused by the COVID-19 pandemic, our school programme typically serves +10,000 students per year in high quality facilitated workshops to support literacy at Key Stage 2 and 3. This programme has been close to capacity for several years.



# Impact of Coronavirus 2020/21

Like so many other organisations, our track record has been disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic, which we have survived thanks to emergency funding, Roald Dahl Story Company support, reducing costs and using some of our reserves.

We closed in March 2020, eventually reopening for summer 2021, increasing capacity as restrictions have ebbed and confidence has flowed. We are a physically small, interactive site and navigating a path through changing health guidance and public attitudes to visiting venues has been challenging, but our professional team has been fantastically resilient, supported by the Board.

Indeed, the pandemic has created a remarkable opportunity: taking our award-winning school programme online through livestream video workshops.

Many organisations pivoted to digital 'lockdown learning' as a quick response to the impact of coronavirus; we have crafted an online school offer for the long term, and can now scale our audience beyond the limits of geography and physical capacity. The livestream service has been offered since autumn term 2021, and we know that it will take time to raise its profile, but the potential is tremendous.

Although recovery remains a work in progress in early 2022, the Board, Director and staff team are continually learning and adapting to our evolving context. Over the next couple of years, we are determined to keep improving the Museum of today and to inform the Museum of the future that we aim to achieve through our major capital regeneration 'Unlocking Stories Project'.



# The Unlocking Stories Project

The Museum needs to evolve and regenerate. Our current galleries have taken more than 15 years of hard use and remain in fair shape today, but we are racing time before they cease to satisfy our visitors.

Just as important, we believe we can make a far better Museum that supports more people to explore their own creativity. We want all our visitors to realise: your visit might start with a love of Roald Dahl's stories and characters, but in the end, it's about YOU. Everyone is a Storymaker, and making stories makes us all more human.

The Unlocking Stories Project, if we can fundraise to achieve it in full, will see a comprehensive physical redevelopment of the Museum, re-presenting all our gallery spaces and making better use of every inch of our site. The process to develop these spaces will be driven by cooperation and consultation with a wider range of audiences. We will become a 'bigger' museum by better use of the space we already have, working with more participants than ever before.

The amount of funding we can secure will affect the achievable scope of change: clarifying the most viable approach is a prime strategic task in 2022.

The appeal of Roald Dahl's stories goes so much wider than one Buckinghamshire village. We want to bring the voices, faces, and stories of Roald Dahl fans into the Museum, connected through the heritage of Dahl's creative craft.



# The Board at RDMSC

Board members are governing Trustees who bring their professional and personal experience to guide the strategic direction of the charity, holding shared responsibility for the organisation. They use their knowledge and judgement to support and when necessary, challenge the Director and the professional team. All trustees have specialist skills relevant to Museum activity, but Board members are non-executive volunteers who donate their time, and this is always respected: the Museum can and does employ paid professional advisors as needed.

As of February 2021, there are ten Trustees on the main Museum Charity Board. We also have a Trading Board with six members, to oversee the work of our commercial subsidiary, The Roald Dahl Centre (Trading) Limited – this is the entity that operates our shop and café and gifts its profits to the Museum charity.

We often refer to all members of both groups as ‘the Board’ or ‘the Trustees’. The two boards usually meet in a combined meeting. Members of one board can contribute to discussions on matters governed by the other board, but cannot vote, should that be necessary. The Museum Charity Board is the senior body; it appoints and can remove directors of the Trading Company.

Four members of the Trading Board are also members of the Museum Charity Board. For governance best practice, at least one member of each board must be ‘unconflicted’ i.e. only on one of either the Trading or the Museum Charity Board. The Chair and Vice Chair are the leaders of both boards.

The Board is currently led by Paul Mitchell as Chair, and Elaine McQuade as Vice Chair. Both Paul and Elaine have served the Museum brilliantly over several years. However, all boards should evolve, and it is time for new leadership. We want our new Chair to spend some time on the Board whilst Paul and Elaine remain in post, learning from them as a ‘Chair designate’. Our new Chair designate must fully understand the Museum – its operating context and history – as we seek to deliver on the promise of the Unlocking Stories Project and livestream learning.



# About the Opportunity

The Museum has weathered the pandemic to date thanks to support from the Job Retention Scheme, Arts Council England, Art Fund, and the enduring generosity of the Dahl family and company.

At the start of 2022, we are in recovery, but not yet fully recovered. However, the future looks bright. We have been able to invest in digital capacity and infrastructure, visitors have returned since summer 2021 in higher numbers than we had forecast, and we have a brand new, best-in-class livestream learning offer for schools so we can now engage with children online who might never have the chance to visit the Museum in person. Forthcoming Roald Dahl movies and animated streaming shows from Netflix will revitalise the stories and characters for new audiences.

Over the next 5 years, the Museum charity faces the challenge and fantastic potential of regenerating our core asset: the Museum site.

YOU have the opportunity to lead our Board of Trustees to realise this major initiative to champion creativity and storymaking. Is this your next chapter?





# The Role of Board Chair

The role of Chair is arguably the most rewarding of any Board member, although that does require a greater commitment of time than other trustees. This is what it means to fulfil the role:

- **The Chair is the nominated representative of the Board and principal contact with the Museum Director:** The Director reports to the whole Board through email, documents and presentations at meetings. However, the Chair is the principal Board contact for the Director on most matters, providing **oversight, support, challenge and guidance to the Director** through more frequent communication and enhanced understanding of both current and long-term issues.
- **Leading good governance** at RDMSC by modelling best practice: effective and inclusive chairing of Board meetings; ensuring the Trustees understand their role and accountability; and that all are acting collectively in the best interests of RDMSC.
- **Building the team:** playing a significant role in Trustee recruitment; being available for one-to-one conversations with Trustees outside of meetings; ensuring recognition and use of the diversity of the Board; delegating as necessary to ensure that workload is shared.
- Acting as a **spokesperson** if required.
- If necessary, stepping in to run the organisation in an emergency.
- Ensuring, either directly or through delegation, that **statutory requirements and regulations are met.**

## Time Commitment

Board activity is focused through quarterly Board meetings, to review reports and recommendations from the staff team, to consider and confirm strategic priorities. Time is also required to read through, assess and be ready to comment on the papers produced in advance of any meeting. There may be discussions and decisions by email, when necessary, as well as Committee and task-and-finish project group work.

Like many organisations, we held meetings online when the coronavirus pandemic took hold, finding some clear benefits but also missing time together. We are now moving to a hybrid of online and in-person meetings. We expect two meetings per year will be online (approx. 2 hours), and two meetings will be full day events at the Museum including Board development work. We usually hold an annual Awayday at another venue, including an overnight stay funded by the Museum. Additional Committee and Project Group meetings are expected to remain online.

In addition to the main Board meetings and any Committee meetings throughout the year, the Chair gives approximately 8-10 hours a month, including a weekly phone call, to liaise with the Director.

The Vice Chair gives approximately 5 hours a month. Sharing the Board leadership workload is very important.

# About You

The Board of the Roald Dahl Museum & Story Centre is looking for a committed, enthusiastic person to lead the governing body of the Museum charity. Could YOU be our next Chair of Trustees?

Candidates should be able to confidently answer 'yes' to the following questions.

- Are you excited by the opportunity for more people to make and share their stories, inspired by the heritage of Roald Dahl?
- Do you have experience of best practice in the governance of a charity?
- Do you have leadership and people management skills, especially in supporting senior executives from a non-executive role?
- Do you have compelling communication skills to advocate for our cause, influence funders and stakeholders, and develop a strong team of trustees?
- Are you committed to being a role model to increase the inclusivity of our organisation?
- Do you have experience of major capital and organisational development projects?
- Are you keen to give your time and keep learning?

## Being a Trustee at RDMSC

Like any trustee, the Chair of Trustees must have:

- The time and willingness to take part.
- The appetite to learn and improve your contribution over time.
- A clear interest in the charitable objective of the Museum to promote the art of literature and creativity.
- An ability to think strategically and to constructively question management reports, finances, forward plans, strategic objectives, major resourcing issues and potential risks. As Board members, it is more important to ask intelligent questions than know the answers.
- Legal eligibility: being at least 18 years old, never having been disqualified from being a trustee under the relevant legislation.



# How to Apply

Please include the following with your application:

**An up to date CV**

**A completed [Application Form](#)** which allows you to include the following information:

- Why you are interested in the role
- Why you are a good candidate based on what you understand of the role
- Confirmation that you understand the time commitment and can give the time needed to not only be a trustee, but also the Chair
- Confirmation that you are at least 18 years old, and you are eligible to be a charity trustee i.e. you have not been barred from holding such a position

All applications will be handled by our recruitment partner Trustees Unlimited (part of the Russam group). All applications should be uploaded [HERE](#).

For an informal discussion about the role, please contact Melissa Baxter on:

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Please let us know if you need us to make any adjustments for you to be able to apply for this role or to attend an interview. The Roald Dahl Museum and Story Centre is committed to inclusive and equitable recruitment.

## Timetable

**Closing date for applications:** Monday 9 May 2022

**Preliminary discussions with Trustees Unlimited:**  
Weeks commencing 9 & 16 May 2022

**Interviews with RDMSC:**

First interview: Friday 1 July 2022 (in person)

Second interview: Friday 8 July 2022 (via Zoom)

## Other dates to note

Museum Board meeting and AGM: 19 October 2022

