

NEW VIC

Chair of the Board of Trustees
Recruitment Pack

April 2026



WELCOME

We're delighted that you're interested in this exciting opportunity to become the next Chair of the Board of Trustees at New Vic Theatre.

The New Vic is a thriving, ambitious producing theatre and successful entrepreneurial charity, with a strong national reputation and a deep connection to the communities we serve in Newcastle-under-Lyme, Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire.

We make theatre that entertains, challenges, brings people together and opens up new ways of seeing the world. From large-scale productions in our unique theatre-in-the-round, to work with children, families and communities, everything we do is rooted in a belief that great theatre should be accessible to everyone.

Our current Chair is retiring after long service, so now we are seeking a Chair who will help us build on this success and support the next phase of our development.

We are looking for a collaborative and generous leader who shares our belief in the power of theatre and who is excited by the opportunity to play a key role in shaping its future.

You will have leadership experience in a professional organisation and a demonstrable understanding of the key role of good governance in a successful organisation. We imagine that you will already have worked with boards, from the perspective of either a Board member or an executive, but you don't need to have previous experience as a Chair (although if you do, that would be great too).

You will have the ability to be a compelling and credible ambassador for the theatre locally, regionally and nationally.

It's essential that our Chair shows real commitment to the Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent region and can articulate a strong case for the value of culture and the importance of supporting live theatre here.

We want to cast our net as widely as possible, and so are keen to hear from you if you feel you have the right qualities. If it meant we could bring a wider range of skills and experience to the Board, we would be open to exploring different chairing models, for example, having co-chairs, or a strong partnership between Chair and Deputy.

We are committed to building a diverse Board and welcome interest from people with a wide range of backgrounds, experiences and perspectives.

If you would like an informal conversation before applying, we would be delighted to hear from you. We would warmly encourage you to get in touch with our recruitment consultant for an informal and confidential chat. Her details are in the 'next steps' section.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Professor David Amigoni

Trustee and Chair of the Recruitment Committee
New Vic Theatre

ABOUT THE NEW VIC

The New Vic was born from the determination of local people to have a 'theatre of their own'. From that grassroots ambition grew Europe's first purpose-built theatre-in-the-round, a working arts organisation where craft, creativity and community sit side by side.

For over 60 years, we have created outstanding theatre that is both locally rooted and nationally recognised. Our work is distinctive in its combination of:

- Ambitious, high-quality theatre production
- A permanent, highly skilled creative workforce
- Nationally recognised education and community programmes
- A commitment to making theatre that reflects and connects with the communities we serve

Our home in Newcastle-under-Lyme, North Staffordshire, remains the beating heart of what we do. We employ a permanent team of skilled craftspeople, technicians and creatives, from set builders and costume makers to lighting, sound and design specialists, sustaining high-quality, hands-on jobs in the arts, right here in the Potteries. These roles are part of a long local tradition of skilled work, now applied to world-class theatre-making.

Each year we produce 8 to 9 in-house shows, tour our work across the UK and beyond, from Broadway to local schools, and welcome over 180,000 people through our doors. Over 30,000 take part in our community and education programmes, including award-winning work for young audiences.

New Vic Borderlines, our community programme, works year-round with people of all ages and backgrounds, using theatre as a way to bring people together, share stories and tackle social issues. Alongside this, our Education programme supports people at every stage, from first experiences of theatre, to skills development and pathways into creative careers through to work

with older people. As lead organisation for the Arts Council England Creative People & Places programme Appetite, we also work with partners and communities across Stoke-on-Trent and Newcastle-under-Lyme to ensure that more people can shape and experience high-quality cultural activity in their own neighbourhoods.

Together, this work reflects the full breadth of the New Vic: a producing theatre, a learning organisation and a civic partner, rooted in place and committed to widening access to the arts.

LOOKING AHEAD

The next phase of the New Vic's development focuses on:

Growing our audiences

Continuing to welcome more people into the theatre and broadening who we reach.

Strengthening our theatre-making

Investing in the people, spaces and infrastructure that enable us to create work of the highest quality.

Extending our reach

Developing touring, partnerships and new ways of sharing our work beyond our building.

At every stage, our focus remains the same: making great theatre and sharing it as widely as possible.

A NOTE FROM OUR ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

“The New Vic was the first purpose-built theatre-in-the-round in all of Europe. It’s one of only a handful of such theatres in the UK, and one of only 40 globally. It’s a dynamic, inclusive, uniquely democratic way to make and see theatre.

Within 20 miles of the theatre is one of the most affluent parts of England, and also some of the most disadvantaged areas too.

Our work on stage embraces all this variety. On the surface it’s inclusive, engaging and accessible, often boisterous; usually with a sense of fun. Underneath it’s fiercely intelligent, deploying sophisticated theatricality and innovation. It enjoys physical theatre, live music, epic staging and often engages with circus, which is part of our local heritage (the inventor of the modern circus, Philip Astley, came from Newcastle-under-Lyme - we have a dream to build a circus creation centre). We enjoy pushing the boundaries of technology: through sophisticated digital projection; through using virtual reality as a design tool; and we’re currently implementing the installation of a new sound system which only one other theatre in the country currently has – the National’s Olivier auditorium. In this as in many areas, we punch above our weight in the scale of the shows we deliver, the ambition and vision with which we deliver them, and in their reach beyond our area. It’s all driven by being a good news story for this area; by striving to be the very best we can be for our communities; and by a passion for what a theatre can be.

As an organisation and as individuals we’re fuelled by a strong sense of social justice. We genuinely want to make sure that the theatre and participative experiences we offer are open to everyone; and that not only is the opportunity there, but that we work hard to support individuals, families and communities to access it. Whether that’s through taking experiences to parks,

streets, rail stations, schools and community centres; or opening our casting processes up as widely as our resources can accommodate; or welcoming families and schools to this distinctive theatre.

In our business plan our mission is expressed as ‘to make excellent theatre with a positive social impact’ and this mission to make a happier, healthier, fairer and more equitable society underpins all of our work. We have been told we perhaps don’t talk about that enough. That’s probably because we’re too busy *doing it.*”

Theresa Heskins, Artistic Director

‘Brings fresh thrills to familiar material and promises to enchant audiences’

★★★★★ The Stage on *The Little Mermaid*

‘A buoyant, comical clowning adventure’

★★★★★ The Stage on *The Princess and the Pea*

‘A thrilling take on Angela Carter’s cult classic’

★★★★★ The Telegraph on *The Company of Wolves*

‘Full of wow-factor, a life-affirming treat’

★★★★★ The Telegraph on *Marvellous*

‘Magic’

New York Times Critic’s Pick *Around the World in 80 Days*

‘A play as creative as the escape itself’

★★★★★ The Evening Standard on *Tom, Dick & Harry*

‘This superb promenade production’

★★★★★ The Guardian on *Coppelia: A Mystery*

‘Stupidly ambitious and gorgeously inventive’

★★★★★ The Guardian on *Astley’s Astounding Adventures*

‘A superlative theatremaker’

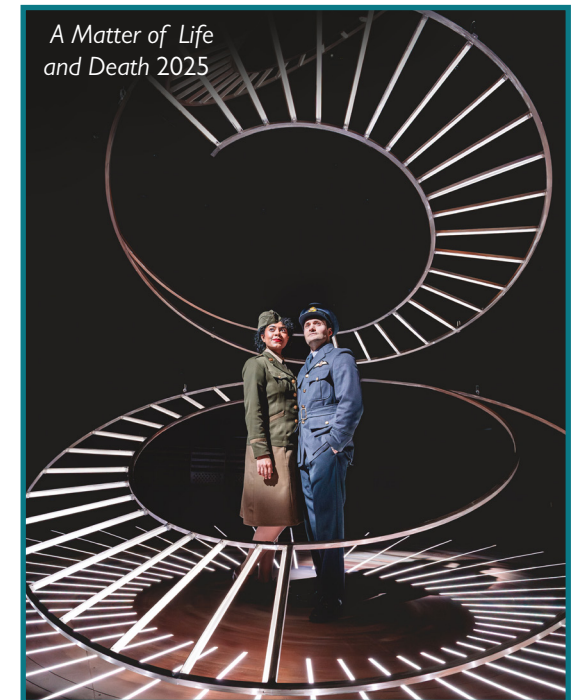
The Telegraph on Theresa Heskins



The Grand Babylon Hotel 2025



The Company of Wolves 2024



A Matter of Life and Death 2025

THE ORGANISATION

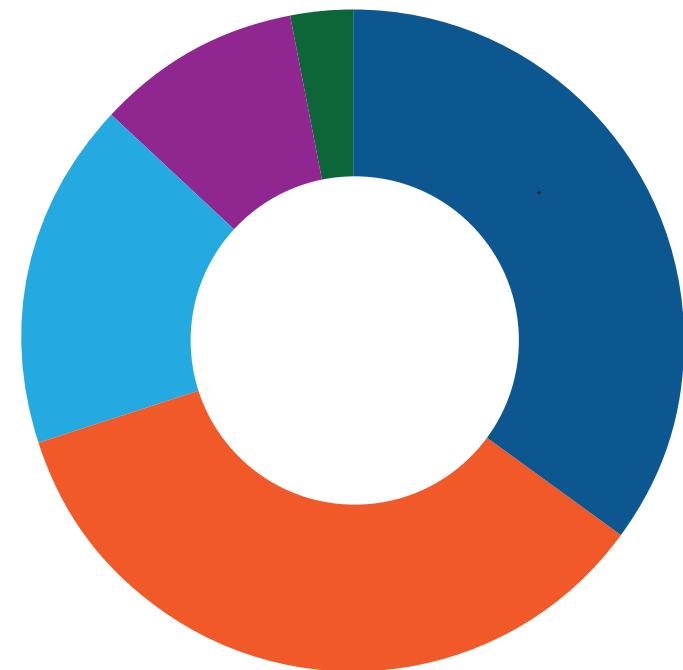
The New Vic is not only a cultural organisation but a significant economic contributor to North Staffordshire. With an annual turnover of around £5 million, the theatre sustains a permanent workforce of around 100 staff and supports the employment of over 200 freelance creative staff each year.

Our activity generates substantial local economic impact. Independent analysis has estimated that the New Vic contributes in excess of £9 million annually to the local economy through audience spend, employment and supply chains. This includes the 180,000 plus visits we welcome each year, bringing people into Newcastle-under-Lyme and the wider area to eat, shop and stay.

As a producing theatre, we invest directly in skilled jobs and local supply chains. Our in-house model sustains specialist crafts and technical expertise - from carpentry and costume to lighting and sound - ensuring that public investment is retained within the local economy and continues to build capacity and skills in the region.

We also operate with a mixed economy model, combining public investment, earned income and philanthropic support. Over recent years, we have grown earned income through increased audiences and more sophisticated ticketing and marketing approaches, demonstrating a strong return on investment from public funding while continuing to deliver public value.

WHERE OUR INCOME COMES FROM



- Donations & Philanthropy
- Education & Community Projects
- Public Funding
- Ticket Income
- Trading & Other Income

[Here is a link to our 2024/25 Annual Report](#)

OUR BOARD

The New Vic Board of Trustees has usually between 12 – 15 trustees, led by the Chair and Deputy Chair. As a rule, Trustees serve up to three terms of three years, so membership is regularly refreshed.

Charity Trustees are also Directors of the company under company law.

Current Trustees:

- Ayad Al-Ani
- Professor David Amigoni
- Bryan Carnes MBE (Chair – retiring 2026)
- Cllr Hayley Coles
- Wendy Dean
- Ann Fisher (Deputy Chair)
- Gabriella Gay
- Cllr Sarah Hill
- Anne Lakin
- Dr Thomas Petty
- Natasha Prince
- Penelope Smith
- Dorothy Wilson

THE LEADERSHIP TEAM

The New Vic is led by joint Chief Executives, [Theresa Heskins](#) (Artistic Director) and [Fiona Wallace](#) (Managing Director).



THE ROLE OF CHAIR

As Chair of New Vic Theatre, you will lead the Board of Trustees, ensuring the organisation is well governed, strategically focused and able to deliver its ambitions.

The Board holds ultimate responsibility for the theatre, including ensuring that public investment is used effectively and in line with our charitable aims. The Chair plays a central role in guiding this work and supporting the organisation to thrive.

The Chair is also a visible and active advocate for the New Vic - attending performances and events, representing the theatre, and building relationships with key stakeholders and partners.

As Chair, you will:

- Lead a committed and skilled Board of Trustees
- Work closely with our joint Chief Executives as a trusted partner and adviser
- Champion the New Vic as a leading producing theatre
- Advocate for the value of theatre in people's lives and in the life of our region

The Chair plays a high-level, leadership role in shaping the effectiveness and culture of the Board. They will inspire and guide Trustees, ensuring that the Board works collaboratively, that members are well informed, and that discussion is open, respectful and leads to clear, confident decision-making.

Working closely with the Executive and the Board's Audit, Investment and Risk sub-committee, the Chair supports the long-term financial strength and sustainability of the organisation, ensuring that appropriate oversight, scrutiny and strategic thinking underpin the theatre's future development.

A key aspect of the role is the relationship with the joint Chief Executives (the Artistic Director and the Managing Director). The Chair acts as a trusted adviser and critical friend, offering support and perspective, while also ensuring that the Chief Executives are well supported in their roles. This includes leading on appraisal, contributing to their ongoing development, and helping to nurture a positive organisational culture grounded in mutual respect and wellbeing.

The Chair also ensures that the highest standards of governance are maintained, with the support of the Company Secretary.

Beyond the organisation, the Chair acts as an ambassador for the New Vic, and through this advocacy, the Chair helps to champion the value and impact of theatre both within the region and more widely.



WHO WE ARE LOOKING FOR

We are looking for a Chair who brings:

Leadership and Experience

- A strong track record of leadership
- Experience of working with Boards or governance structures
- Strategic thinking and sound judgement

Skills and Attributes

- Excellent communication and relationship-building skills
- Ability to lead, influence and build consensus
- Financial awareness
- Integrity and commitment to good governance

Knowledge and Perspective

- Interest in theatre and the arts
- Understanding of governance in a charity or public context
- Appreciation of the role of theatre in communities
- Advocate for public investment in arts and culture

Connection to Place

- Commitment to Newcastle-under-Lyme, Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire
- Ability to advocate for the value of theatre in the region

Above all, we are looking for someone who believes in the power of theatre and is excited by the opportunity to help shape its future at the New Vic.

TIME COMMITMENT

- Approximately 2 days per month – with no set format
- 4 Board meetings per year
- Sub-committee meetings and away day
- Regular meetings with the Chief Executives
- Attendance at performances and events

This is a voluntary, unpaid role. Reasonable expenses are covered.

Our current Chair would be happy to discuss the pleasures, challenges and time commitment for this role if helpful.

Our hope is that our new Chair will be in post by the end of 2026. We envisage this person attending September and November board meetings as an observer, before taking over. But our timetable is flexible and we can ensure a comfortable handover period to suit the right candidate.

TERM

- Initial term of 3 years
- Typically renewable for a further two terms
- Supported handover with the current Chair

NEXT STEPS

Informal Conversations

For a confidential discussion or to find out more about the role, please contact:

Mary Caws (Recruitment Consultant)

Email: cawsmary@gmail.com

HOW TO APPLY

To begin a conversation, we are asking you to send us an expression of interest. This can be a letter of no more than two pages: or a video or audio of no more than 5 minutes if you would prefer.

Please make sure you tell us:

- Why you would like to be the next Chair at New Vic Theatre.
- What you think you would bring to the organisation and how your skills could support the board and team in achieving its ambitions.
- How your experience makes you a good fit for the role of Chair.

You need to send your expression of interest to Sara Lockett, slockett@newvictheatre.org.uk. By Tuesday 26 May at 12noon, along with a completed [Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form](#).

Please mark your email as confidential and include CHAIR EOI in the subject line.

We are planning to meet candidates during the week of 22 June 2026; when you contact us, please let us know if you are not free during this period.

For shortlisted candidates, we will make sure that there are opportunities to

meet our joint Chief Executives informally, as well as taking part in a more formal interview process.

We want everyone who believes they can contribute to the New Vic Theatre Board to feel welcome to apply. It is our responsibility to make the application process accessible, and to give you the information you need to decide whether you might be suitable. If you require the pack or any further information in a different format, or have questions before you apply, please get in touch with Sara Lockett, slockett@newvictheatre.org.uk

THANK YOU

Thank you for your interest in the New Vic Theatre.



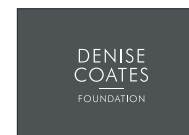
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**ARTS COUNCIL
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Staffordshire
County Council



City of
Stoke-on-Trent
Stoke-on-Trent City Council's
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Cover image: *The Little Mermaid 2025*
Photography by Andrew Billington

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