THE BLACK-E education exploration enthusiasm
connecting artists and communities

REGISTERED CHARITY 501859

TRUSTEE RECRUITMENT PACK

Legal Trustee

Help shape the next chapter of The Black-E as we approach our 60th year.

The Black-E Arts and Community Centre
1 Great George Street, Liverpool L1 5EW
www.theblack-e.org
Registered Charity No. 501859

Welcome

Thank you for your interest in becoming a trustee of The Black-E. We are looking for a Legal Trustee to join our Board at an important moment in our history, and this pack explains who we are, what the role involves and how to apply.

We are recruiting for two roles at the same time: a Legal Trustee and a Finance Trustee. If you have the skills for both, you are welcome to say so in your application.

We welcome applications from people who are considering their first trustee role as well as those with board experience. If any part of this pack is unclear, or you would like it in another format, please get in touch.

About Us

The Black-E Arts and Community Centre is one of the UK's longest established participatory arts organisations. Its story began in 1967, when Bill and Wendy Harpe, with the support of the late Sir Peter Moores, took over the derelict Great George Street Congregational Church and rebuilt it with the surrounding community. It became the UK's first community arts centre, an open-door cultural centre where artists and communities work together as equals.

Our home is a Grade II listed building in the heart of Liverpool, between Europe's oldest Chinatown and Europe's oldest established African Caribbean community. Cultural diversity has never been an add-on at The Black-E. It is where we come from, and it shaped our role as a national pioneer of participatory practice, raising questions about access, power, authorship and representation long before they became sector-wide priorities.

Today we are a registered charity led by culturally diverse people, working across the Liverpool City Region, with a growing programme in Knowsley and St Helens. These are among the most deprived areas in England, and people from Black, Asian and ethnically diverse backgrounds continue to face real barriers to taking part in arts and culture. The Black-E exists to address that inequity directly, through culturally relevant, accessible and community-led creative practice.

Youth Arts Scheme, The Black-E Main Space

Our Mission, Vision and Values

Core aim

To harness the creative power of people and communities to deliver artistic excellence, social transformation and cultural equity.

Mission

The Black-E connects artists, children, young people and underserved communities with the life-changing benefits of arts and culture. We enable people to tell their own stories, develop creative agency and shape the cultural life of their place.

Vision

By 2030, The Black-E will be recognised internationally as a centre of excellence for participatory arts and culture-led social change: rooted in Liverpool, influential across the UK and beyond, and resilient for future generations.

Values

Cultural Equity	We challenge inequality and structural exclusion in the arts.
Community Accountability	We are answerable to the people and places we serve.
Artistic Excellence	Participation and quality are inseparable.
Intergenerational Practice	We value learning across ages and lived experience.
Care and Safeguarding	We prioritise safety, dignity and wellbeing.
Truth, Reconciliation and Memory	We honour history while shaping the future.

Our Programme

Our programme combines artistic ambition with deep participation, delivered at our venue and through outreach across the Liverpool City Region. Core strands include:

- Children and Young People's Arts Youth Scheme
- People's Dance and Opera, including Kitty's Amelia
- Participatory theatre, music and circus arts
- Digital arts, radio and sound studio
- Visual arts and community-led exhibitions
- Health through Arts and Culture
- The Compendium of Games, supporting cultural cooperation and learning
- Sankofa, the People's Digital Arts and Cultural Archive

Our 60th anniversary in 2027/28 will be a multi-year programme rather than a single celebration. It will reclaim and share hidden histories, commission new oral history work rooted in community narratives, strengthen our archive, and leave a lasting legacy in artistic practice, organisational resilience and community ownership.

About Our Board of Trustees

The Black-E is governed by a Board of Trustees, at least half of whom are local people from working-class backgrounds. Governance here is participatory and accountable to the communities we serve. The Board works alongside our CEO and staff team, with a clear distinction between governance and day-to-day management.

This is a period of renewal for the organisation. Our Business Plan for 2025 to 2030 commits us to recruiting a balanced and diverse Board through open recruitment, establishing a Finance and Audit Committee chaired by a finance trustee, and setting clear terms of reference for the Board, its committees and its officers. We are also preparing an application to Arts Council England's National Portfolio. The Finance Trustee and Legal Trustee will play a central part in this work.

In return, you will be part of a historic and vibrant arts organisation, gain experience of charity governance, and help shape the next chapter of The Black-E as it approaches its 60th year.

The Role: Legal Trustee

The Legal Trustee will bring legal insight to the Board's decision making and will help us strengthen our governance framework. You will support the Board to understand and meet its legal duties, manage risk, and make well informed decisions as the organisation grows towards its 60th anniversary.

This role suits a solicitor, barrister, legal executive or legal professional with a commitment to community arts and social justice. The Legal Trustee is not expected to act as the charity's solicitor or to give formal legal advice. Where specialist advice is needed, the Board will commission it independently.

Key responsibilities

- Help the Board understand its legal obligations as charity trustees, and keep it informed of relevant changes in charity law and regulation.
- Lead the review of our governing document, Board terms of reference, scheme of delegation and committee structures, with a clear distinction between the role of the Board and that of the CEO.
- Oversee the regular review of key policies, including safeguarding, data protection, equality, health and safety, and complaints.
- Provide Board level oversight of employment and HR matters as we strengthen our HR systems and management structure.
- Advise the Board on property matters relating to our Grade II listed building, including leases, licences and listed building obligations, and on the future of our Huskisson Street property.
- Oversee the legal framework for our contracts and agreements, including venue hire terms, artist and freelance agreements, partnership agreements and funding agreements.
- Help identify, assess and monitor legal and regulatory risks through the Board's risk register.
- Support the Board on conflicts of interest, trustee recruitment and induction.
- Recognise when external legal advice is required, and help the Board to commission and interpret it.

The Trustee Role

As set out by the Charity Commission, the Board of Trustees is legally responsible for:

- Ensuring The Black-E is carrying out its purposes for the public benefit
- Complying with our governing document and the law
- Acting in the charity's best interests
- Managing the charity's resources responsibly
- Acting with reasonable care and skill

- Ensuring the charity is accountable

Ithalia with her Dancing Queens

Trustee duties

Trustees share collective responsibility. Even where decisions are delegated, the Board acts as a group rather than as individuals. Within this, every trustee is expected to:

1. Help set the strategic direction of The Black-E, including its plans, policies and budgets, and monitor performance against agreed targets.
2. Oversee financial plans and budgets and monitor and evaluate progress.
3. Ensure that key risks are identified, monitored and controlled effectively.
4. Review and approve the charity's annual report and accounts.
5. Provide support and constructive challenge to the CEO in the exercise of their delegated authority.
6. Contribute to regular reviews of the Board's own governance and performance.
7. Attend Board meetings and other meetings, prepared to contribute to discussion.
8. Use independent judgement, acting lawfully and in good faith in the interests of The Black-E, and declare any conflict of interest.
9. Promote the work, aims and reputation of The Black-E through their skills, knowledge and networks.

About You

We are looking for someone who brings:

1. Commitment to our mission, vision and values.
2. Enthusiasm, honesty and integrity.
3. A willingness to understand and accept the responsibilities and liabilities of a trustee, and to act in the best interests of the charity.
4. A strong personal commitment to equity, diversity, inclusion and anti-racism.
5. The ability to think strategically and creatively and to exercise good, independent judgement.
6. A collaborative approach, with the confidence to ask difficult questions and to reach decisions together.
7. Commitment to the Seven Principles of Public Life (the Nolan Principles): selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership.
8. An understanding of the communities we serve, or a willingness to learn about them.

Person specification

Essential	Desirable
▪ A legal qualification (for example as a solicitor, barrister or chartered legal executive), or substantial legal experience in a relevant field. ▪ Sound judgement on legal, regulatory and governance risk. ▪ The ability to explain legal matters clearly and practically to people without a legal background. ▪ The confidence to ask difficult questions and to hold others to account constructively.	▪ Knowledge of charity law and governance. ▪ Experience in employment law, property law (including listed buildings), or contract and commercial law. ▪ Knowledge of safeguarding and data protection requirements. ▪ Experience of serving on a board, governance committee or similar body.

Time Commitment

- Trustees are expected to attend four Board meetings a year and the Annual General Meeting. Meetings are held in person at The Black-E, with an online option.
- You will also be expected to lead the Board's governance review work, which may involve a small number of additional working group meetings each year.
- Trustees need time to read papers before each meeting and to complete a short induction and safeguarding training.
- There may be opportunities to support specific areas of work, including staff recruitment.
- Trustees are encouraged to represent The Black-E at events and meetings with partners and funders.
- We estimate the overall commitment at around four to six hours a month.

Terms of Appointment

- This is a three-year appointment, with the option to stand for a further term in line with our governing document.
- The role is voluntary and unpaid. Reasonable expenses and access costs are reimbursed.
- Trustees must be aged 18 or over and must not be disqualified from acting as a charity trustee under the Charities Act 2011. The successful candidate will be asked to sign a declaration of eligibility and a register of interests.
- Because our work involves children, young people and adults at risk, the appointment is subject to an enhanced DBS check, which we will arrange and pay for.

Diversity and Inclusion

Diversity is part of who we are and how we work, and we understand diversity in its widest sense. We are committed to a Board that reflects the communities we serve and we actively seek trustees with a broad range of experiences and backgrounds.

We particularly encourage applications from people who:

- are Black, Asian or from other Global Majority and ethnically diverse backgrounds
- have lived experience of racism or other barriers that have affected their opportunities
- are from working-class or low-income backgrounds
- live in, or have strong connections to, Liverpool, Knowsley, St Helens or the wider City Region
- are D/deaf, disabled or neurodivergent
- are women, or are LGBTQIA+

- have experience of seeking refuge or migration
- are young people or early in their careers, including those seeking their first trustee role

If you need any adjustments to take part in the recruitment process, please tell us and we will do our best to help.

How to Apply

Please send the following to Andrea Vaz, CEO, at **andrea.vaz@theblack-e.org**, with “Legal Trustee Application” in the subject line:

- Your CV
- A covering letter of no more than one page, telling us why you are interested in the role and what you would bring to it

If you would like an informal conversation about the role before applying, please email Andrea to book a time.

For more information about our work, please visit **www.theblack-e.org**.

Thank you for your interest in The Black-E. We look forward to hearing from you.