

Candidate Brief: Chair Position

Welcome

The Guildford Institute (GI) has been at the heart of the community for over 130 years, and continues to remain a vital space in the town centre. Our charity is continually growing and is at an exciting stage in its development. I am delighted that you're considering the role as Chair of its Board of Trustees.

Based in its beautiful Grade II listed building since 1892, the GI provides cultural education to the people of Guildford and beyond in an accessible and friendly environment. Overseen by dedicated trustees, managed by an enthusiastic team and helped by wonderful volunteers, we provide our members and visitors with opportunities to learn and build meaningful connections with others.

We're proud of the high-quality teaching on offer through our bi-annual programme of activities, which continues to expand with varied subjects as we strive to appeal to audiences across the community. In addition, we host many community groups, clubs and societies, helping to create vital social opportunities. Our friendly vegetarian cafe and historic Library are both important community spaces in our building.

The new Chair will guide the GI through an exciting phase in its development. Having opened our Community & Wellbeing Centre last year, we need to continue to adapt to meet the needs of our community while also securing financial stability and longevity for our charity. We plan to achieve this by continuing to grow our programme of activities, ensuring that our greatest asset - our historic building - is in continual use throughout the year. Our other key goal is to extend our reach into the community by forming important partnerships with other like-minded organisations. We're also planning to launch impactful fundraising campaigns and apply for grants to secure vital funding.

We're seeking an exceptional individual who can further raise the GI's profile and help guide us through the changes ahead, while keeping our community focus at the forefront.

In what follows you will learn more about the great work we're doing, our plans for the future, and the vital role the Chair will play. We look forward to hearing from you soon.

Brian Creese - Current Chair, The Guildford Institute

Who we are

We are a local registered charity and limited company, providing cultural education to the people of Guildford and beyond in an accessible and friendly environment.

We are open to all and serve a diverse audience from across the local community including older people, professionals, young people and children.

What we do

We deliver a flexible, high quality and diverse range of activities and provide space to support a variety of local groups and charities.

Our principle business is the provision of education and cultural events to the adult community through courses, events, visits, talks and access to our historic library and archive.

We are also home to a group of talking therapists - counsellors, psychologists, psychotherapists and family mediators - based in our Community & Wellbeing Centre.

We run an accessible community cafe, providing quality, healthy and nourishing food in a comfortable and welcoming space.

In order to subsidise our charitable activities we also lease out parts of our Grade II listed building.

Where we are

We are based on the **corner of North Street and Ward Street**, in the heart of Guildford, where we have been educating, inspiring and uniting people across the local area for over 130 years.



Our Vision

To be a cultural, social and educational charity and community hub, that is accessible and inclusive.

Our Mission

To develop our vision of providing a welcoming and supportive space and an engaging offer of cultural, educational and social activities to enhance the lives of our community of users.

Our values

Our values are simple, we

- **are inclusive**
- **value participation**
- **deliver quality in all we do**
- **are committed to a culture of team work and collaboration**



“

Coming to courses and talks at The Guildford Institute is so important to me. I retired a year ago and am living on my own. I did not seem to have a purpose... coming here means that I am learning new things, at my age of life, and as importantly I am getting to know a lot of new people and hopefully these will develop into friendships.

”

Our year at a glance in 2024



Offered over **1,114** hours of course teaching



Delivered an afternoon talks programme to more than **1,250** people



Supported local cultural venues through **10** group visits



Began work to turn our ground floor from a bank to a **Community & Wellbeing Hub**



Had **102,000** visits to our website



Made Library book borrowing **freely available to the whole community**



Facilitated **67** yoga classes and **60** meditation sessions, promoting wellbeing



Served **8,502** people in our vegetarian community café



Offered a programme of **212** courses



Obtained a **new tenant on our second floor**, providing financial support to our charity



Ran **free coffee mornings** in our Library to showcase our historic archive



Grew our audience, with **16%** of orders coming from new customers



Installed **1** fixed and **2** portable hearing loops



2 of our volunteers celebrated **10** years of service



Provided weekly working opportunities for **4** interns

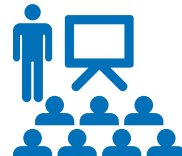
Our year at a glance in 2024



Facilitated **644** meetings for charities & not-for-profit organisations



Facilitated **133** NHS meetings



Provided staff training on **Autism, Dementia & Domestic Abuse Awareness**



Hosted over **245** hours of fun with Guildford Games Club



Conducted our **first digitally-led brochure launch**, to be environmentally conscious



Ran a programme of **free music events**



Acted as a drop-off location for a **Community Food Bank**



Ran **50** free drop-in sessions to tackle loneliness



Sent monthly e-newsletters to over **2,700** subscribers



Continued to be part of the **Safe Places National Network**



Provided a permanent space to **22** talking therapists, counsellors and psychologists



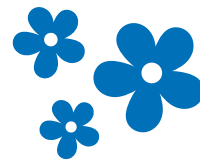
Partnered with Guildford Arts to provide **11** free exhibitions to support over **25** local artists



Reached **40,400** people through our Instagram and Facebook posts



Offered **203** sessions online, for those who find it easier to take part from home



Partnered with Open Access Arts to offer free & creative **dementia-friendly sessions**

Our History

Our history

1891

The Mechanics Institute purchased a failing Temperance Hotel

1892

Created teaching rooms and a home for a library - this became The Guildford Institute

1964

Let the ground floor and basement of the Institute to Williams & Glyn's Bank and subsequently The Royal Bank of Scotland (RBS), to provide us with income to subsidise our core purpose - to offer educational activities - in an economically viable way

Present day

September 2024

Works in our new Community & Wellbeing Hub were completed, with all therapy rooms let at the point of completion to a total of 14 therapists, counsellors and psychologists.

November 2024

The hub was officially opened at a welcome event by the Institute's patron, The Mayor of Guildford, Sallie Barker MBE, alongside our local MP, Zoe Franklin.

Future Plans

Partnerships & Fundraising

Despite the successes at the GI, we still have a significant gap in our finances following the loss of the rental from our previous ground-floor tenant, and in the face of the current economic climate. A key goal for the way forward is to focus on addressing this by extending our reach into the community with a greater number of partnerships with like-minded organisations. We are also planning to launch fundraising campaigns and apply for grants to secure additional funding.

Growing our programme

We will continue to grow our programme offering and audience, through the addition of new activities and making use of our greatest asset – our historic building – by utilising it throughout the year. By doing this, we will ensure that we're providing as much as possible for the community.

About the Role

The Chair will provide strategic leadership, supporting the GI to achieve its mission, secure its longevity and thrive.

Leading Effective Governance

- Have a strong commitment to the GI, its members and users, working in a way that reflects the vision and values of our charity.
- Lead the Board of Trustees and staff team in ensuring operational decisions contribute to strategic priorities.
- Ensure there is effective and regular communication within the Board of Trustees.
- Proactively maintain positive relationships between Trustees, the staff team and volunteers.
- Give the Board of Trustees a clear lead and direction and ensure trustees work together as an effective team.
- Ensure the Board of Trustees guide the staff team in utilising resources responsibly and effectively.
- Ensure trustees understand their responsibilities.
- Ensure trustees are committed to, and working towards, developing the GI and securing its longevity.
- Set the culture of the Board of Trustees.
- Ensure the Board of Trustees understands the scope of any issues they need to consider and is clear about the decisions that need to be made.
- Lead on discussions and decisions about what actions to delegate to specific trustees and sub-groups.

Key Responsibilities and Relationships

- Work closely with the Board of Trustees, Institute Manager and the rest of the staff team to ensure the smooth running and development of the GI.
- Lead the Board of Trustees, ensuring strong governance and strategic direction.
- Have a thorough understanding and knowledge of the GI, its history, the local area and community that it serves.
- Ensure the oversight of the financial performance of the GI, and the effective use of its resources.
- Act as an ambassador for the GI, helping to raise its profile and awareness in the local community.
- Support fundraising and financial sustainability, focusing on securing grant funding and proactively forming partnerships that support the GI's strategic goals.
- Foster an inclusive and collaborative culture.
- Think strategically about the future direction of the GI and the steps involved to achieve these goals.
- Provide strong leadership of organisational change, particularly during challenging times.
- Set goals for the GI and work collaboratively with the Board of Trustees and staff team to achieve these.

Candidate Profile

The Guildford Institute is looking for an enthusiastic and dedicated individual to serve as Chair of the Board of Trustees. This important role offers the opportunity to shape the future of a charity that has been a pivotal part of the community for over 130 years.

We're seeking a distinguished leader with the following qualities:

- **Leadership & Governance:** Experience chairing a board or holding a senior leadership role in education, arts, business, or the public sector.
- **Passion for the Arts, Education & Community:** A commitment to accessible, life long learning.
- **Strategic Thinking:** Ability to guide organisations through periods of growth and change.
- **Financial Acumen:** Knowledge of financial oversight.
- **Commitment to Diversity & Inclusion:** Proven track record in promoting inclusivity.

Our people

- We currently have **8 trustees** on our Board.
- Our staff team is made up of **2** full-time and **6** part-time members of **staff**.
- We're providing development opportunities for **2 interns**.
- We're supported by a wealth of **volunteers**, who give their time running our Library, supporting us with events, assisting with the maintenance of our Grade II listed building and working on Reception.
- We have **39 tutors**, without whom we simply could not run our extensive activity programme.
- Our **customers** - members, users and visitors - who use our services are from right across the local community. People who want to learn, be entertained, socialise, or who need support, are why we do what we do.

Our Future Chair

We look forward to welcoming a new Chair who will play a vital role in guiding The Guildford Institute to continue to grow, secure its longevity and thrive.

How to apply

To find out more, please contact Amy Rice, Institute Manager, via amy@guildford-institute.org.uk or call 01483 562142.