



## CHAIR OF TRUSTEES – ROLE DESCRIPTION AND PERSON SPECIFICATION

English PEN is the founding centre of PEN International, a worldwide writers' association with 145 centres in more than 100 countries. English PEN works to promote literature and the right to freedom of expression through a range of campaigns, events, projects and publications. This year, English PEN marks its centenary with *Common Currency*, a year-long programme which brings together writers, readers and activists for an ambitious collaboration with partner organisations for events, residencies, campaigns and conversations across the UK and Ireland.

We are looking for a new chair of trustees to take over from Maureen Freely who will step down in December 2021 after more than seven years.

### Board Structure, Composition and Terms

The current board is a group of experienced and dedicated individuals with a wide range of skills and experience from sectors including journalism, publishing, translation, legal and the media. Trustees are appointed for an initial term of up to 3 years and 6 months and may serve for a maximum of 7 years and 6 months. For details of current trustees, visit <https://www.englishpen.org/board-of-trustees/>.

The board offers guidance and expertise to the director of English PEN, Daniel Gorman. Two sub-committees exist to provide more in-depth scrutiny and advice – the Finance and Audit Committee, chaired by the treasurer, and the Governance Committee, chaired by the vice chair.

The president of English PEN is Philippe Sands.

## CHAIR ROLE DESCRIPTION

### Responsibilities

- Provide leadership of the board and set its agenda
- Ensure the provision of accurate, timely and clear information to trustees and ensure the effectiveness of individual trustees and the board as a whole
- Ensure that trustees are given sufficient time to consider critical issues and given realistic deadlines for decision-making
- Ensure that the board concentrates on strategy and the monitoring of decisions delegated to the director
- Ensure that there is a comprehensive induction programme for all new trustees, supported by the director
- Address the development needs of the board as a whole with a view to enhancing its effectiveness including regular revision sessions on subjects such as legal status and responsibilities
- Review the performance of themselves, the board and the director once a year
- Represent the organisation together with the director.

As a member of the board of trustees, the chair also shares the following statutory duties with other trustees:

- Ensure that English PEN complies with its governing document, charity law, company law, and any other relevant legislation or regulations
- Ensure English PEN pursues its objects as defined in its governing document
- Ensure that English PEN applies its resources exclusively in pursuance of its objectives
- Contribute actively to the board's role in giving firm strategic direction to the organisation, setting overall policy, defining goals, setting targets, and evaluating performance against agreed targets
- Safeguard English PEN's good name and values
- Ensure the effective and efficient administration of English PEN
- Ensure the financial stability of English PEN
- Protect and manage the property of English PEN and ensure the proper investment of its funds
- Appoint the director and monitor their performance.

## **PERSON SPECIFICATION**

We are looking someone with a passion for literature and commitment to the vision, mission and values of English PEN, as well as the following experience, knowledge, skills and attributes:

- Significant experience of leading an organisation, at board or executive level, with appropriate knowledge of corporate and charity governance
- A clear communicator with an open and inclusive style and with experience of chairing meetings efficiently and effectively
- Strong interpersonal skills with experience of building a high functioning and strategic team
- A thick skin: as an organisation committed to freedom of expression, we operate in a contested area which requires us to take brave and sometimes controversial stands
- A strong personal network, able to build good relationships with funders and stakeholders
- Willingness to uphold and follow the principles of public life and the requirements of effective governance
- Understanding of the duties and responsibilities of trustees

## **Time commitment**

The chair needs to commit to the equivalent of two to three days per month to perform their duties.

The following meetings normally take place on weekday afternoons and evenings:

- Quarterly Board meetings
- Quarterly Finance & Audit Committee meetings
- Quarterly Governance Committee meetings
- Annual strategy day
- Annual general meeting

## **How to apply**

If you would like to discuss this role in confidence, please email Daniel Gorman, Director at [daniel@englishpen.org](mailto:daniel@englishpen.org).

To apply, please send your CV and a brief statement (maximum two sides of A4) telling us about your suitability for the position to [recruitment@englishpen.org](mailto:recruitment@englishpen.org) by 1pm on Friday 9 July 2021. Shortlisted candidates will be invited to meet with representatives of the board online during the week beginning 19 July 2021.