

JOIN OUR BOARD OF TRUSTEES



HASTINGS CONTEMPORARY

Our Board of Trustees is currently seeking new members

We are looking to recruit inspiring and dynamic individuals, with a broad range of lived experiences, to join our strong Board of proactive Trustees working closely with our experienced team of staff. If you share our passion for the visual arts and belief in how galleries can change lives for the better, we would love for you to work alongside us in delivering excellence for Hastings, East Sussex and beyond.

This is an exciting and challenging time to join Hastings Contemporary as we seek to build on the success of the last decade and ensure our beautiful gallery continues to thrive as a key part of the regional arts ecology.

Our Mission

Hastings Contemporary is a bold, independent arts charity in the heart of Hastings Old Town.

We bring inspiring art to our coastal community with an ambitious programme of exhibitions and events. We welcome everybody and aim to enrich lives by offering new experiences, supporting creativity and skills development, preserving heritage and helping our town to thrive.

With a programme anchored in ocean futures and sustainability, our exhibitions, projects and partnerships bring together artists, scientists, and communities to explore new creative frontiers – all within an award-winning building on the town's historic fishing beach.

Our Vision

Hastings Contemporary is a bold and ambitious home for inspiring **ART**.

Situated on the beach, our coastal gallery is rooted in Hastings and its heritage, a place where climate, culture and **COMMUNITY** intersect.

Together we are reimagining what a gallery with relevance and purpose can be, as we explore our connectedness to the **SEA** and the future of our oceans.

In order to help us achieve our strategic priorities, we are seeking to develop and grow our Board across a range of skills and backgrounds, from senior leadership across business and culture to community representation. As funding for the arts is squeezed across the UK, we are looking to build new income generation schemes and deepen engagement with our communities.

For our Trustee roles, it is not essential to have been in a formal governance role before or to have a detailed knowledge of the visual arts.

Please contact us if you need assistance with inclusive formats to the application process.

You can find out more about Hastings Contemporary, our team, and our current Board members on our [website](#).

Hastings Contemporary is a charity registered in England and Wales Charity no 1150383.

Background

Hastings Contemporary is an arts charity located directly on the seafront in one of the UK's most deprived towns (ranked third most deprived Local Authority District in the 2025 Indices of Deprivation). Our iconic, award-winning building designed by HAT Projects occupies a unique position directly on the beach in Hastings' historic Old Town, nestled between Grade II listed net huts and one of Europe's oldest and largest beach-launched fishing fleets.

Since becoming an independent charity in 2019, we have established ourselves as a leading cultural hub for the South East of England, recognised for our innovation, artistic excellence, and meaningful community engagement. Our reputation has been built through a distinctive programme of ambitious exhibitions, partnerships, and collaborations, earning the endorsement and continued support of Arts Council England as a National Portfolio Organisation, Hastings Borough Council and partners both locally and nationally.

Each year, we welcome over 45,000 visitors on-site and deliver three seasons of outstanding exhibitions, supported by a responsive and engaging public programme. Over the last year alone, we exhibited the work of 145 artists through thematic group exhibitions to solo presentations by established and emerging artists including Sophie Barber, Michael Landy and Isabel Rock. Our social media content generated 3.1 million views, significantly extending our reach.

Our initiatives provide valuable opportunities for children and young people in some of the town's most disadvantaged areas to develop new skills, build confidence, and raise aspirations, engaging 600+ pupils annually. We offer creative activities for local families, work in partnership with communities traditionally underrepresented in the arts (e.g. Hastings Fishermen's Protection Society, Project Art Works, Refugee Buddy Project) and deliver a thriving volunteer programme that enables participants to gain experience, re-enter the workforce, and make a meaningful contribution to their community. Through our *Access for All* free ticket scheme, we remove financial barriers to participation, ensuring that everyone – regardless of background or circumstance – can experience and benefit from our work.

Under the dynamic leadership of Kathleen Soriano, appointed as Director in January 2025, the organisation has undertaken a thorough review of its operations and developed an ambitious new vision and strategic plan, while forging new partnerships and collaborative projects. This new vision stems from a deep connection to 'place', and positions Hastings Contemporary as a bold and ambitious home for inspiring art, rooted in Hastings and its heritage, where climate, culture and community intersect.

Hastings Contemporary is sustained by a dedicated team of 10 executive staff supported by 10 Front of House staff and over 70 volunteers who are central to the organisation's day-to-day life and visitor experience. Alongside our artistic and learning programmes, the gallery is home to a thoughtfully selected shop offering beautiful ceramics crafted by local makers, limited-edition prints by exhibiting artists, and a hand-picked display of books, toys, jewellery and art materials, extending our commitment to creativity and local talent beyond the exhibitions themselves. Our café, *coquina*, further enhances the visitor experience: a Mediterranean-inspired restaurant with breathtaking sea views that also serves as a lively social space, hosting live music, guest chefs and wine-focused events that connect people with culture in new and welcoming ways. Together, these elements form a vibrant ecosystem that supports our mission, animates the building, and reflects who we are as a community-rooted cultural organisation.



Roles and Responsibilities

Both the Chair and the Board of Trustees have the same general legal responsibilities to the company as any other Director. They are collectively responsible for the success of Hastings Contemporary.

The Board has overall responsibility for the gallery and its activities and acts as its governing body. Members of the Board of Trustees are legally responsible for directing the affairs of the gallery, ensuring that it is solvent, well run, and delivering to its charitable objectives:

“..the advancement of the visual arts by supporting the exclusively charitable activities of Hastings Contemporary and such other charitable activities and causes as are associated with or complimentary to the activities of Hastings Contemporary.”

The Board

- Provides leadership of Hastings Contemporary with a framework of controls which enable risk to be assessed and managed
- Approves the gallery’s strategic aims and ensures that the necessary financial and human resources are in place to meet its objectives
- Approves the gallery’s values and standards and ensures its obligations are understood and met

The Chair

- Maintains a high profile and takes a leading role in the public representation of, and advocacy for, Hastings Contemporary
- Ensures that the Board functions effectively
- Ensures that the Trustees undertake their responsibilities diligently
- Ensures that Hastings Contemporary meets its strategic aims and objectives
- Advises and line manages the Director

Trustees

- Constructively contribute to the overall strategic direction, policy, objective and targets
- Take an active role in the preparation and approval of the gallery’s business plan
- Observe the Hastings Contemporary Board’s articles of association, charity and company law and relevant regulatory requirements
- Collectively act as the employer of the Director
- Comply with the EDI, Code of Conduct and other relevant policies
- Ensure that the gallery’s operations are evaluated effectively
- Safeguard the gallery’s financial stability and approve the annual accounts and budget
- Provide challenge and support in equal measure to ensure Hastings Contemporary continues to deliver for its communities and to its mission and vision
- Actively bring their areas of expertise and experience to the work of the Board and staff
- Advocate for, champion and support the work of the gallery

Desirable Skills and Experience: *(applicants do not need to demonstrate all these skills – we are seeking to create a balance of these across the Board of Trustees)*

- Sound independent and strategic judgement, as well as the ability to be diplomatic and act as an ambassador for the charity
- Ability to think creatively and work effectively as a member of a team and to take decisions for the good of Hastings Contemporary
- Willingness to learn, and passion for the work of Hastings Contemporary
- Residents of Hastings and Rother with strong local knowledge and experience of working in and with representative Hastings and Rother communities
- Knowledge and understanding of the challenges and opportunities in Hastings and surrounding areas

More specifically:

- Experience of working in ocean futures, marine biology and sustainability
- Younger people from Hastings and its surrounding areas - aged 18 to 35
- Lived experience with disability
- Expertise in audience development and strategy
- Expertise in AI, digital and new technologies
- Knowledge and understanding of regeneration, and experience working within property management and development
- Philanthropy
- Entrepreneurial skills across business and culture, particularly in relation to creative and innovative income streams
- Knowledge and understanding of finance and accountancy
- Knowledge and understanding of HR
- Expertise in PR, marketing and communications
- Contemporary art practitioner and/or individual with experience in the cultural sector with broad networks and an understanding of cultural strategy development and implementation

Time Commitment and Terms

Time commitment is generally less than a day a month, although more may be required from time to time. This includes four Board meetings a year (held at the gallery or online) at which regular attendance is expected, and other sub-committee meetings as necessary. In addition, time will be needed to study papers and attend private views, bi-annual membership parties, and other advocacy events. This is an unremunerated role, though reasonable expenses may be reimbursed.

Sub-committees include a Finance & Business Committee that meets on average 6 times a year, which all Board members are encouraged to attend, as well as a Nominations Committee that meets as required. In addition a Development Group, on which some Board members are expected to sit, meets 3-4 times a year in support of fundraising activities for Hastings Contemporary.

Board members are invited to serve a single 3-year term, with the option of renewal for a second term should all parties agree.

A phased enrolment of new Board members is planned, with some joining in late 2026 and others in Spring 2027. This is in order to manage term lengths and planned retirements.

Eligibility

The law places certain restrictions on becoming a charity trustee. If you are in any doubt regarding your eligibility, please see this guidance from [The Charity Commission](#). Although this is not a public appointment, the [principles of public life as defined by the Nolan Commission](#) are applicable to this role.

Applications

If you would like to express your interest, please send the following documents via email to kathleen@hastingscontemporary.org

- A covering letter (no more than one page) identifying your relevant skills and experience and how you feel they would benefit Hastings Contemporary
- A full CV
- The names and contact details of two referees (we will request references with your prior agreement and only if you are invited for interview)

As an alternative to a cover letter and CV, you can submit a short (less than five minutes) video or voice recording highlighting your skills and telling us why you think you would be a good Board Member. Please email your full contact details and video/voice recording to the above email.

If you have any additional access requirements that we can support, please let us know by email ahead of submitting your application.

The closing date for expressions of interest is **Monday 28 September 2026** and interviews are planned to take place on week commencing 5 October 2026.

We would welcome advance informal conversations with those considering applying. Please contact our Chair of Trustees, Andrew Corbett Nolan (andrew.corbett-nolan@good-governance.org.uk) or Director, Kathleen Soriano (kathleen@hastingscontemporary.org) If you would like to talk to another of our Trustees about their experience of being on the Board, we will happily connect you.

Equal Opportunities

Hastings Contemporary is committed to equality of opportunity in all its activities and employment practices. We actively encourage people from a variety of backgrounds with different experiences, skills, and stories to join us and influence and develop our working practice.

It would be helpful if you could complete a separate Equality & Diversity Monitoring Questionnaire, which can be downloaded from our [website](#). Your answers will be treated in confidence and used for monitoring purposes only and will not form part of your application.

