

Role description for Chair of the Board of Trustees, American Museum & Gardens

American Museum & Gardens

The mission of the American Museum & Gardens (AM&G) is to educate, stimulate, and inspire its visitors to further the understanding of American history and culture. The Museum carries out this mission through the presentation of its historic rooms, its decorative art and folk-art collections, and its special exhibitions, learning programmes, and gardens. Our organisation is the only one of its kind outside the boundaries of the United States. We welcomed over 70,000 visitors last year, most of them British.

It is an exciting time to join AM&G as we are going through a significant period of growth – with increased visitor numbers, revenue, and deeper engagement with our audiences. We are looking to continue to grow in the coming years and this role will play an important part in helping to achieve our goals.

About the role

The role of the Chair is to provide leadership and direction to the Board of Trustees of The American Museum & Gardens. The Chair will hold the Board and the Director to account for AM&G's mission and vision, providing inclusive leadership to the Board of Trustees, ensuring each Trustee fulfils their duties and responsibilities for the effective governance of AM&G.

The Chair will ensure that the organisation complies with its governing document, charity law, company law and any other relevant legislation or regulations and to make sure that the organisation pursues its objects as defined in its governing document.

The Chair's role is also to monitor and, where appropriate, challenge the leadership of AM&G, ensuring that the Board functions as a unit and works closely to achieve agreed objectives. The person appointed will work in partnership with the Trustees, Director and Leadership Team to support AM&G's employees and volunteers, optimising the relationship between the Board of Trustees and the team.

The new Chair will be responsible for leading the recruitment of a new Director to ensure a smooth succession when the incumbent (as Executive Chair, and always envisaged as a relatively short-term appointment) steps down at the end of 2025.

The key elements of the role are:

Strategic Leadership

- Provide leadership to AM&G and its Board, ensuring that AM&G has maximum impact for its beneficiaries.
- Ensure that Trustees fulfil their duties and responsibilities for the effective governance of AM&G.
- Ensure that the Board operates within its objectives and provides a clear strategic direction for AM&G.
- Ensure that the Board is able to regularly review major risks and associated opportunities and satisfy itself that systems are in place to take advantage of opportunities and manage and mitigate the risks.

- Ensure that the Board fulfils its duties to ensure sound financial health of the charity, with systems in place to ensure financial accountability.

Governance

- Ensure that the governance arrangements are working in the most effective way for AM&G.
- Develop the knowledge and capability of the Board of Trustees.
- Encourage positive change where appropriate, address and resolve any conflicts within the Board.
- Lead a 360-degree appraisal of the performance of the Trustees and the Board on an annual basis.
- Ensure that succession plans for Chair and the wider Board of Trustees are in place; that the Board is regularly refreshed and incorporates the right balance of skills, knowledge and experience needed to govern and lead AM&G effectively; and also reflects the wider population.
- Work within any agreed policies adopted by AM&G.

External Relations

- Act as an ambassador for AM&G.
- Maintain close relationships with key stakeholders in both the UK and US.
- Furthering the relationship and connection with the Halcyon Board to mutual benefit.
- Act as a spokesperson for AM&G when appropriate.

Efficiency and effectiveness

- Chair meetings of the Board of Trustees effectively and efficiently, bringing impartiality and objectivity to the decision-making process.
- Ensure that Trustees are fully engaged and that decisions are taken in the best, long-term interests of AM&G and that the Board takes collective ownership.
- Foster, maintain and ensure that constructive relationships exist with and between the Trustees.
- Work closely with the Director and Leadership Team to give direction to Board policymaking and to ensure that meetings are well planned, meaningful and reflect the responsibilities of Trustees.
- Monitor decisions taken at meetings and ensure implementation.

Relationship with the Director and the wider Leadership Team

- Ensure regular contact with the Director and Leadership Team to develop and maintain an open and supportive relationship within which each can speak openly about concerns, worries and challenges.
- Establish and build a strong, effective and a constructive working relationship with the Director, ensuring they are held to account for achieving agreed strategic objectives.
- Support the Director and Leadership Team, whilst respecting the boundaries which exist between the roles.
- Conduct an annual appraisal and performance review for the Director in consultation with other Trustees.
- Ensure that the Director and Leadership Team have the opportunity for professional development and have appropriate external professional support.

Time Commitment

- The Board of Trustees meets four times a year in Bath.
- The next phase of organisational development will be one of considerable organisational change, and it is important that the Chair is available to the Director and AM&G's stakeholders on a regular basis.

- The Chair will visit AM&G alongside other Trustees and will attend a range of events and activities.
- A time input of approximately 20 days per annum is envisaged.
- The initial length of term is three years renewable for a further two three-year terms (nine years in total).

Remuneration

This position is not remunerated but reasonable out of pocket expenses incurred fulfilling the duties of the role are reimbursed.

Person specification

Personal qualities

- Commitment to the American Museum & Gardens vision and mission.
- Strategic vision and independent judgement.
- Strong facilitation and communication skills with stakeholders at all levels.
- A willingness to devote the necessary time and effort to their duties as Chair and Trustee.
- A willingness to serve for two x three-year terms.

Essential knowledge and experience

- Experience of leading organisational change.
- Understanding and experience of the legal responsibilities and liabilities of a Trustee.
- Experience of negotiating with a wide range of stakeholder interests.
- Experience and understanding of EDI (Equity, Diversity and Inclusion) in the workplace.

Desirable knowledge and experience

- Experience of chairing a charitable organisation.
- Knowledge of and contact with networks in Bath/the Southwest.
- Understanding of the cultural sector.
- Business/entrepreneurial skills and knowledge.
- Knowledge of the UK heritage industry.
- Understanding of the creative industries and their wider networks.

Other information

The American Museum & Gardens is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people, and vulnerable adults, and expects all staff members to share this commitment. This role may be subject to a basic Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check. The American Museum & Gardens is an equal opportunities employer.

To apply

To apply please send a **CV and covering letter** outlining how you meet requirements of the role, together with a completed **Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form** (accessed via americanmuseum.org/join-support/current-vacancies/) to joy.hutchinson@americanmuseum.org or by post to The American Museum & Gardens, Claverton Manor, Bath BA2 7BD. Please email as above if you require any further information.

Closing date for applications: Tuesday 31st December 2024 at 5pm.