**Thank you for your interest in joining the board of Oldham Coliseum Theatre.**

We are looking for people with either previous board experience or operational experience at a senior level who are passionate about theatre. This is a great opportunity to work with us to achieve our future objectives.

If you are excited about the prospect of supporting Oldham Coliseum Theatre then we would be delighted to hear from you. Please email your CV and a covering letter explaining why the role appeals to you and what particular skills you could bring to the board.

The Coliseum welcomes applications from all sections of the community in order to represent our diverse audiences.

If you would like more information on applying or an informal chat to discuss any aspect of your application or the role please don’t hesitate to email [recruitment@coliseum.org.uk](mailto:recruitment@coliseum.org.uk)**.**

Gail Richards

Chair

**Recruitment to the Oldham Coliseum Theatre Board**

**The History**

The ‘accidental’ beginnings of the Oldham Coliseum Theatre date back to 1885 when a Mr Myers contracted local carpenter Thomas Whittaker to build a Grand American Theatre in the heart of Oldham. Unfortunately Mr. Myers found himself without the funds to pay for the completion of the theatre and, following a court case, Thomas Whittaker found himself adding theatre owner to his list of titles.

The Colosseum, as it was originally titled opened on Fairbottom Street, Oldham on the site of old mine workings. Originally a circus, the building has undergone a number of changes of use in the intervening years including a music hall, cinema and theatre. In 1932, the Colosseum was closed. In 1939 The Oldham Repertory Theatre Club leased the building; renaming it the Coliseum, they operated it as a private theatre club in order to overcome licensing restrictions. The building was purchased by the club in 1946 and continued to operate as a private club until 1977 when it was taken over by Oldham Council. Oldham Coliseum Theatre Ltd was set up and a charitable trust established to manage the Company.

Building on this rich history, we are now entering a new phase in which we plan for the future in which Oldham Coliseum Theatre flourishes as a key contributor to the community of Oldham and its economy.

**Our Vision and Mission**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Vision | Oldham Coliseum Theatre’s vision is to enhance and enrich the lives and life chances of the people of Oldham and to inspire a new generation of artists. |
| Mission | Our mission is to occupy a pivotal position in Oldham by engaging diverse audiences, artists and participants through theatre, other art forms, community engagement and participation which may otherwise be inaccessible.  We will be recognised as one of the leaders in regional theatre, driving cultural development, social cohesion and economic regeneration. |
| Values | In support of artistic excellence, we commit to the following values:   * Innovation: embracing new ways of working to achieve positive change * Creativity: enabling imaginative ideas to flourish * Inclusiveness: involving people who might otherwise be marginalised and with a focus on supporting black and minority ethnic and working class communities * Community: promoting a strong ethos of service to the public, based on teamwork and mutual respect * Collaboration: working with a wide range of stakeholders and partners |
| Aims | 1. Commission, produce and present exceptional work relevant to our communities 2. Support new and emerging talent, widening access to artists who have protected characteristics 3. Provide a range of accessible participatory projects and establish a centre of educational excellence for theatre 4. Develop new arts audiences for the future 5. Ensure a sustainable and well-managed company, defined by good governance, inclusive leadership and effective financial stewardship |

**Our work**

We currently welcome to our stage a rich mix of dramas, comedies, musicals, adaptations and modern classics, as well as a hugely-popular traditional pantomime.

Some of our productions are made in Oldham, for and with the people of Oldham. Others are produced jointly with theatres across the UK, and some are made elsewhere and welcomed here to ensure that the Coliseum contributes fully to the cultural life of the town and that the organisation is embedded in its community.

We have a commitment to developing new plays and supporting emerging and established playwrights and artists.

Alongside the main auditorium, Oldham Coliseum Theatre’s current building also has a small studio theatre which can seat up to 60 people. It’s used to develop a programme of work from visiting companies of interest including work for families and children.

The work we put on stage is complemented by an extensive programme of learning and development. Our activity reaches across all communities within and beyond the borough. We encourage young and old people alike to embark on artistic journeys, developing and sharing creative skills.

Participatory work at the Coliseum is central to the strategy of the company. All members of staff contribute to its delivery and it is an essential tool to promote involvement in the arts within an area of traditionally low engagement. It contributes to the position and reputation of the Coliseum as one of the key vehicles of cultural production within the borough and a means of supporting community cohesion. It is also a valuable tool to promote audience development.

**Our Context**

Oldham Coliseum Theatre is seeking new trustees to share this exciting and challenging time, as we begin the next phase in the Coliseum’s 134-year history.

We are looking for applicants interested in working with other trustees to be active members of a dynamic and ambitious team, taking forward the strategic development of the theatre.

The current board members have a diverse range of experience and skills and serve alongside councillors nominated by Oldham Council and the Greater Manchester Combined Authority. The Coliseum is jointly led by our interim Chief Executive and our acting Artistic Director, with support from the Senior Management Team.

The Coliseum is currently embarked on a programme of major change. We are looking carefully at every aspect of our operation as we seek to secure the company’s future.

We aim to end 2019/20 having delivered the following:

1. We will have reviewed every aspect of our operation and created a new operating model to take effect from 2020/21. We will have forged stronger relationships with existing partners and sought new partners with whom to work.
2. We will better understand our existing audiences and will have a clearer view of those audiences we seek to engage, entertain, reflect and challenge in the future. We will understand our strengths and ensure that we retain and build on the best of what we do, such as our work on learning and engagement with a wide range of participants.
3. Our work will not only serve to achieve our own vision but will be more closely aligned to those of our partners; we will work together to better meet the diverse needs of our communities. We will be better positioned to programme further in advance, work artistically with partners and contribute to a broader arts and cultural ecology.
4. We will be in a stronger financial position, with a clear vision of how to maximise income and be less reliant on public funding in future.
5. We will ensure that we are well managed and well governed, by a committed board of trustees with a broad range of skills and from a range of backgrounds
6. We will remain part of the fabric of Oldham; we will be closer to all of our diverse communities, welcoming our communities as audiences and participants in a way which entertains, engages and challenges them. We will have an agreed way forward for capital development.

**New Coliseum Theatre Project**

We are currently in discussion with partners including Oldham Council and Arts Council England about a new performance space in Oldham.

A series of workshops are currently taking place to determine priorities for the future, including finding a new ‘home’ for the Coliseum; its existing building is no longer fit for purpose and does not meet modern accessibility standards. The new project will address this together with the council’s key priorities for Oldham town centre.

**The Board’s role**

The board will be key to leading this period of change, achieving our ambitious artistic vision and ensuring the development and delivery of our business plan for the next five years and beyond.

All of our trustees are ambassadors for our work and our community. They give their time, energy and expertise and contribute to an innovative approach during a time of increasing pressure on funding for the arts.

**The Trustee Role**

The prime role of the trustees is to act as custodian, ensuring that Oldham Coliseum Theatre fulfils its charitable purpose for the public benefit.

Trustees have ultimate accountability for strategic direction, developed with the executive team. They ensure the Company remains cohesive, well-run and delivers the aims of the business plan. Trustees are advocates and ambassadors for the Company and act with integrity at all times.

**Key Duties of all Board Members**

A trustee will:

* oversee best practice and compliance with all statutory and legal responsibilities including charity law and any other relevant legislation or regulations
* work collaboratively with other trustees, management and staff to develop the Coliseum’s vision, mission statement and values; and approve strategic, artistic and business plans to achieve these
* actively participate in board-level discussions, and be accountable for the decisions of the board
* safeguard the good name and values of the Coliseum and promote its successes
* appoint the Chief Executive and Artistic Director, and oversee the recruitment of other senior management roles
* approve staff remuneration
* help to determine the organisation’s strategy
* monitor and manage the effective delivery of strategic plans and engage in an annual evaluation of the Company’s performance
* monitor the financial performance of the Company, approve audited accounts and take responsibility for maintaining the Company’s financial solvency and stability
* monitor the internal and external risks facing the Company and ensure measures are in place to mitigate risk wherever possible
* avoid conflicts of interest and declare where there may be conflict of interest so that they can be managed in line with Company policy
* attend and participate in agreed meetings of trustees
* keep up to date with the theatre’s activity by attending productions and other events

We are looking for individuals who can bring:

* An understanding of current issues facing the arts
* Knowledge of and interest in theatre and an appreciation of arts and culture generally
* An ability to think strategically and an understanding of the difference between the board’s role and that of the management team
* An ability to convey ideas and make decisions in a group environment
* Good networking and communication skills
* Impartiality, fairness and a commitment to equality and diversity
* Sound I.T. skills
* Previous board level experience or equivalent (desirable but not essential)
* Eligibility to act as a charity trustee (essential)

We would also like to hear from potential Board members who have a background in or experience of the following:

\* Finance \* Communication, press and / or marketing

\* Property/capital development \* Community engagement

\* Commercial/business  \* Regeneration \* Legal

**We are also keen to recruit individuals with the skills, experience and willingness to serve as Chair of the board.**

**The Commitment**

Trustees meet quarterly and at an annual away day. Board meetings are scheduled in advance to ensure maximum attendance. There are additional duties such as reading policy documents, briefings and meeting papers in advance. Trustees also contribute time and knowledge to our board sub-committees or working groups depending on their availability and areas of expertise; these meetings are organised to suit the preferences and availability of trustees.

The trustee role is voluntary and unpaid but travel and other appropriate expenses can be reimbursed.

Trustees also receive complimentary tickets for all Coliseum productions and events to enable them to keep abreast of our work. We actively encourage trustees to see our shows and to provide us with valuable feedback. Trustees are also invited to support our wider events and fundraising activities.

A trustee’s usual term is three years, with the possibility of extending by a further three years by mutual agreement.

**How to apply**

Please see our website for further information about the breadth of our current programme: [www.coliseum.org.uk](http://www.coliseum.org.uk). You can find our current season brochure here: <http://www.coliseum.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Online-Version.pdf>

If you have any questions or would like to know more about the role, please email us at [recruitment@coliseum.org.uk](mailto:recruitment@coliseum.org.uk). We actively encourage you to get in touch, and we would welcome an informal telephone conversation at a time to suit you.

If you are interested in joining our Board, please **email your CV and a covering letter** to [recruitment@coliseum.org.uk](mailto:recruitment@coliseum.org.uk), explaining why the role appeals to you and what particular skills and experience you could bring to the board.

The closing date for applications is **Friday August 9th**. We plan to hold informal interviews at the end of August/early September.