

Join our board! - Chair



We're Red Ladder Theatre Company, a Leeds-based theatre company that produces theatre shows which aim to make people think and feel differently about the big things that matter to us all. We believe that theatre, being creative and feeling part of the community should be for everyone. We want people from all backgrounds, communities, and experiences to be part of Red Ladder, both in terms of how the company is run and in the stories that we tell.

As our current Chair Tessa is looking to step down after six years, Red Ladder are looking for someone in particular to take over this key role, to co-ordinate and lead decision-making on behalf of the Board at this crucial and exciting time. Our new chair will work closely with our Senior Management team (Rod – our Artistic Director, and Chris our Executive Producer) who are responsible for the overall day-to-day management of the company, and our existing Board of Trustees: a group of individuals with a range of personal and professional skills and experience who meet regularly to support the strategic direction of the company. We believe that this breadth of perspectives and experience is key to ensuring that Red Ladder continues to be a resilient, inclusive and vibrant organisation that creates theatre for everyone, and so our recruitment for new board members will prioritise building a board that is more diverse and representative of our audiences and the communities we work with.

We have put together this pack to give you a little more information on what's involved, and what we're looking for – but if there is anything you think is missing, or if you have any additional questions, – then please get in touch, even if you just want to chat it through in person in a little more detail about the role, or how it all works.

You can find out more about the company by browsing our [website](#) (including our [governance pages](#) to hear more about our existing board members) and by following the company on social media – [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#).

We look forward to hearing from you!

Red Ladder's Board & Staff Team

**Watch this short film
to see what we're
about:**



https://youtu.be/t_kAuege6WU

**If you have any
questions about
what's included in
this pack, or need it
in an accessible
format – then email
chris@redladder.co.uk**

**In addition to a Chair, we
are also looking to recruit
board members (who may
not need experience of
being on a board). We've
produced a separate
information pack for
anyone interested in
joining our board.**

Chair role

Our current chair Tessa, is looking step down from the role after 6 years at the helm (but she may stay on as a board member). We are therefore on the lookout for a Chair of the board. This role will most likely require someone with more experience of being on a board of a charity and/or arts company, due to the increased responsibility and time. However we are happy to hear from anyone who is interested in taking on the Chair role, and are committed to providing training opportunities (such as this [course](#) with AFP recently advertised) to ensure that you feel supported throughout, regardless of prior experience.

The Chair usually:

- helps plan and run trustee meetings (4 times a year)
- takes the lead on ensuring that meetings are properly run, chaired and recorded
- takes the lead on ensuring that trustees comply with their duties and the charity is well governed
- may act as a spokesperson for the charity and advocate for the work of the company
- acts as a link between trustees and staff
- line manages the Artistic Director and Senior Producer roles on behalf of the trustees
- work with the staff team and board to liaise with the Arts Council and other strategic partners when needed

Additionally, the Red Ladder team identified some skills and qualities that a potential Chair *may* have. **We don't expect one person to have experience in all of them!**

- Experience of senior management and/or governance roles in the arts – either as a member of staff, and/or past experience of being on a board of a charitable organisation
- A strategic overview and understanding of the industry
- Experience of fundraising
- Someone who has spare capacity – there is a little more input and planning needed on top of the usual Trustee role
- Someone who is happy to coordinate and lead decision-making on behalf of the board, with the ability to make informed judgements clearly and quickly when needed
- An ability to understand and interrogate company finances in the context of Red Ladder's business model (e.g. company accounts, production budgets, cash flow)
- Ability to chair meetings and motivate the rest of the Board
- Experience of managing diverse stakeholders
- A good listener and action-taker

“

The six years I have been Chair of the Board of Red Ladder has been an amazing journey when the company confronted critical challenges, faced the future with courage and made some of its most powerful work. The role of Chair involves working closely with Rod and Chris and with fellow trustees, supporting and interrogating their vision and ambition for the company. I love the range and scale of Red Ladder's work and working collaboratively to ensure the creative and political values shine through in every project.

[Our current Chair Tessa]

”

If you have any questions about what's included in this pack, or need it in an accessible format – then email chris@redladder.co.uk

Our governance strategy

We expect the chair to play a key role, with support of the entire board and staff team, to take the steps necessary to continue to build a board that is more diverse and representative of our audiences and the communities we work with. We believe the best work happens when passionate people from different backgrounds, communities and experiences come together with a shared goal. This is what we want for everything Red Ladder does, including our board of Trustees.

We want to hear from anyone who shares our values and believes in our mission for real social change.

In addition we have also identified some skills and experience that we think would enrich the diversity of our board: **we definitely don't expect one person to have experience in all of these!**

- **experience in working in or creating disability-led arts**
- **skills in developing and running arts projects** that are designed to welcome people who are often prevented from taking part
- **experience working with young people**
- experience in empowering communities and bringing people together
- **expertise in running or managing a (small) business**
- **broad professional networks in Leeds / Yorkshire** – (*this might be in a specific area such as community arts, or local businesses*)
- **experience supporting the development of artistic talent** of (young) people or of those in the wider community
- **experience working in the theatre sector, the arts sector, or the cultural sector** more broadly
- **never having worked in the theatre, arts or cultural sector**

While the most important thing is that you share our passion for social change and global justice, **there are also some vital voices, viewpoints and experiences of our society** that we would like to increase on our current board of trustees throughout this process:

- People **who identify as disabled**
- People of **South Asian heritage**
- People of **African or Caribbean heritage**
- People **who identify as LGBTQ+**

Read more about our existing board members on our website [here](#).

“

As an independent theatre maker I don't take part in many strategic conversations. It's nice to feel part of a team and feel like I have a perspective that brings contributions to that team. I'm always learning and it feels like a partnership – that we're part of a common endeavour towards a shared goal. [Existing board member Dan]

I have always loved storytelling and Red Ladder is a huge storytelling voice from within the city of Leeds that uses theatre to stir conversations about social equalities and social injustice. Whilst I lack experience in the arts and the creative world; having come from the world of sport, I see much of what I can bring to Red Ladder being in joining the dots (people) and bringing them together locally. [Existing board member Jamie]

”

If you have any questions about what's included in this pack, or need it in an accessible format – then email chris@redladder.co.uk

Our current board members

Our board is currently made up of 9 individuals from a range of personal and professional backgrounds in arts, culture and the community from a professional sportsman (**Jamie Jones-Buchanan**) to an independent theatre maker (**Daniel Bye**), from a community liaison specialist (**Lucinda Yeadon**) to an HR consultant (**Martyn Potter**), from an audience researcher (**Emma McDowell**) to CEO of a local electrical company (**Craig Jefferies**), from a theatre producer (**Ben Rothera**) to a theatre director (**Amy Leach**), and a poet, producer and performer (**Tessa Gordziejko**). They all have one thing in common – they are passionate about the work of Red Ladder Theatre Company.

What do board members do?

We need to be clear here – being a board member is a commitment of time and energy – but as you can see from the quotes opposite by our existing board, it can be an incredibly rewarding and valuable experience. The Charity Commission set out, broadly speaking, what they see as the 6 main duties for a trustee of a charity. We've tried to explain what they mean in the context of Red Ladder:

- **Ensuring the charity is carrying out its purposes for public benefit** - *this could be things like asking the important questions that make sure we're doing the things that really matter for our audiences, communities and the people who work with us*
- **Complying with the charity's governing document and the law** - *as it sounds... making sure we don't break the law*
- **Acting in the charity's best interests** – *using your judgement, experience, instinct and ideas to make sure that together we make the right decisions to get to where we want to be and make the change we want to see.*
- **Ensuring the charity is accountable** – *in a financial sense, but also that we stay true to our mission and objectives for the 'public good' as a charitable organisation*
- **Managing the charity's resources responsibly** - *being part of making sure our money is looked after and managed properly. You don't necessarily have to have a financial background or experience, we try and make this information as clear as possible and you are encouraged to ask for support in helping you understand it if needed. Of course, if you are a financial expert, that's great too, our Exec Producer Chris loves having people to talk numbers with!*
- **Acting with reasonable care and skill** – *individual people have different skills, experience and interests that they bring to*

We asked board & staff members how they would describe Red Ladder...

“

*Entertaining Vital, Unique,
Inimitable Authentic
Ethical, Compassionate
Fierce, Fearless
Unpretentious
Honest, Frank, Raw Inspired,
Enriching Respected
Compelling, Relevant
Thought-provoking
Welcoming*

*The creative opportunities
the company offers to
people in all sorts of guises
- as local artists,
participants, or audience
members. / Opportunities
Red Ladder provides for
local individuals at all kinds
of levels to realise
their potential*
[Existing board member]

*A stoic, political voice that
provokes audiences into
thought, and fights the
corner of the underdog. /
Giving small voices a
platform from which to
shout*
[Staff member]

”

If you have any questions about what's included in this pack, or need it in an accessible format – then email chris@redladder.co.uk

the table. It's important that we show one another mutual respect and understanding, and to be open to having (sometimes difficult) conversations with sensitivity and compassion.

But we think there are so many other things that are part of being a Red Ladder trustee:

- **Coming along to see our shows and events** (you'll almost always get a free ticket for you and a guest)
- **Meeting new people and being part of a community** that shout about and encourage each others work outside their trustee role
- Thinking **big about our future** and what Red Ladder could and should be in another 50 years
- **Being a vital part of conversations about the theatre** that we make and why we make it – key to shaping the company
- **Using your particular expertise and experience** to provide mentoring or support to a fun, friendly and generally fantastic staff team

What sort of commitment is it?

There is a little more input and planning needed to fulfil the Chair role on top of the usual Trustee role, as we have detailed in the section above. However they will be fully supported by the Vice-Chair and the rest of the board and staff team, and will be encouraged to identify areas for support and training if and when needed.

In general, board members are expected to attend board meetings 4 times a year, making sure to read the papers in advance and ask for further information and clarification when deemed necessary. Our board meetings currently take place on video conferencing software. Due to COVID-19, we are in discussions how we might continue once social distancing guidelines change. We aim to be as flexible as possible with meeting times and locations to suit individuals' working patterns and commitments. It's also expected that board members will attend shows, and support the company and the staff team when needed.

Do board members get paid?

Board members of charities do not get paid to be on boards. However the company will reimburse any reasonable expenses (e.g. travel/childcare) incurred by (e.g.) attending board meetings and Red Ladder is committed to covering costs incurred by any additional (e.g. access) needs of prospective and current board members, such as BSL signing services.

We are committed to supporting access needs and welcome access documents from everyone – more info [here](#). More resources on what's involved with being part of our board of trustees can be found on our governance pages here: redladder.co.uk/about/governance

What next?

Register your interest

We do hope that you have found all the information you need to fully consider joining our Board. The next stage is for you to get in touch to register your interest. When you do, we would love you to consider these three questions:

- Who are you?
- Why does the role interest you?
- What relevant skills or experience do you have that you would bring to the board?

We would expect no more than a couple of sentences for each question. You can provide links to existing work/CV or social media profiles if that helps to introduce yourself and give us a sense of your past work and experience.

You can send these answers over by email to chris@redladder.co.uk. Or if you could prefer to record a video or audio file, or send your answers to these questions in any other format then just get in touch.

There is no official deadline for getting in touch – we are hoping to go through a ‘rolling’ process of recruitment from October 2020 – March 2021.

Next steps

Once you’ve got in touch, we’ll organise a short informal chat – 30 mins on video conferencing software at a time to suit all parties. This will be with a member of the existing board and/or staff team to hear a little more about what is involved, discuss the current priorities of the board and the role in more detail. If we feel like it’s the right fit for both parties, then we’ll invite you to come to a board meeting, so you can make sure you are happy before officially joining the board.

For more details on the induction process for new board members, visit our website:
redladder.co.uk/about/governance