Chair of the Board of Trustees Candidate Brief

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Welcome to the National Centre for Writing
1. Introduction

The National Centre for Writing (NCW) was constituted in September 2004 as New Writing Partnership and in 2009 as Writers’ Centre Norwich. Under the leadership of Chris Gribble, the organisation moved to the Grade 1 Listed Dragon Hall in Norwich in 2015 and the organisation re-launched as the National Centre for Writing in June 2018 following a major capital development.

The National Centre for Writing is a physical and virtual space for writers, literary translators and those working in the world of literature to meet, learn and collaborate. We focus on developing the artform, creating learning opportunities and building a sense of place.

The National Centre for Writing is a new venture for our sector and art form. It is backed by a skilled and committed Board and staff, a robust set of stakeholder partnerships and a track record of artistic and funding success. The opening of the NCW at Dragon Hall was a pivotal point in the development and story of our organisation – The Next Chapter. For more information please see www.nationalcentreforwriting.org.uk

Opening as the National Centre for Writing at Dragon Hall in June 2019 was an exciting moment and a crucial point in our organisational journey – a journey that is far from over. We've remained firm partners with the key stakeholders who founded us in 2003 and attracted many more along the way; grown our staff from 2.5 to 18 and grown the range and depth of our programmes; achieved the designation of England's first UNESCO City of Literature in 2012; took part in the Nobel summit between JM Coetzee and Mo Yan in 2013 in Beijing and took on the role of Chair of the International Cities of Refuge Network in 2016. At the heart of everything we've done and achieved is a passion for the transformative power of creative writing, reading and literary translation and it's this engine that will drive us further in the coming years to work with more people, attract bigger and more diverse audiences and see our work deliver greater impact in every area. We're looking for a new Chair to help us achieve these aims.

‘Norwich has turned itself into a world hub for literature.’
— Ian McEwan, UNESCO City of Literature bid announcement, Norwich

Amy Vaughan, Director, Arts Council England Cambridge & Touring:

‘The National Centre for Writing has secured National Portfolio Organisation status from Arts Council England across 2018-2022. As a key stakeholder, we are pleased to support the organisation in its ambitious plans to promote excellence in literature through developing talent, supporting established writers and providing an extensive range of engagement activities for audiences and communities in Norfolk and beyond. We have also awarded the organisation National Lottery funding for its capital development at the iconic Dragon Hall in collaboration with local stakeholders. This development has helped to consolidate Norwich's UNESCO City of Literature status as well as cementing the organisation's reputation for literature excellence on a regional, national and international stage. We look forward to continuing to work with Chris Gribble and his highly effective team, with strong support from a diverse and experienced board.’

Nikki Rotsos, Executive Head of Communications and Customer Service, Norwich City Council:

‘Norwich City Council is a key stakeholder and founding partner of the National Centre for Writing and has worked with it closely over the past fifteen years. We have funded NCW and supported its move into the City Council owned Dragon Hall as part of our wider belief in the transformative power of culture and the arts. From education and engagement to tourism development, place making and economic impact, NCW plays an important role in the Norwich cultural ecology, a fact demonstrated by Norwich’s designation in 2012 as England’s first UNESCO City of Literature. Culture is a crucial part of the Norwich 2040 Vision and we’re
looking forward to working further with NCW to deliver tangible benefits for everyone who lives in, works in and visits Norwich over the coming years.’

Professor Sarah Barrow, Pro Vice Chancellor, University of East Anglia Faculty of Arts and Humanities:

‘As a key stakeholder, regular funder and founding partner of the National Centre for Writing, the University of East Anglia is committed to working in partnership to deliver NCW’s ambitious vision for creative writing and literary translation. The partnership with NCW makes a significant contribution to UEA’s priorities, student employability and student experience. This is demonstrated through a range of collaborative activity - online creative writing courses ‘Creative Writing Online’; the annual crime writing festival ‘Noirwich’; promoting literary translation with the British Centre for Literary Translation based at UEA; delivering a range of public engagement programmes and offering undergraduate placement opportunities. We are very excited about our future relationship with the National Centre for Writing and look forward to developing more engagement and research opportunities for creative writing and literary translation in this UNESCO City of Literature’.

Mary Muir, Arts Development Manager, Norfolk County Council:

‘Norfolk County Council helped found the organisation that is now the National Centre for Writing nearly fifteen years ago and remains a committed stakeholder, funder and supporter. We care about Norfolk and its people and want to help make Norfolk a place where people can live productive, independent lives, safely and in good health, for as long as they can. Culture plays an important role in this ambition and we are committed to making the most of our shared heritage, culture and environment. The National Centre for Writing has a real role to play in our efforts, from working with and engaging communities and young people through to partnership development and investment, and we're looking forward to working with the organisation, its staff and partners to realise a shared vision for Norfolk.’
2. Key achievements

• In 2012 Writers’ Centre Norwich led a successful bid for Norwich to become England’s first UNESCO City of Literature. The accreditation brings together a wide range of city and county-based partners across the arts, tourism, business development and industry. The accreditation means that Norwich joins an elite group of twenty-eight cities worldwide whose literary heritage and commitment to social, economic and cultural growth through the literary arts are recognised as world leading. The creation and development of the National Centre for Writing is the centrepiece of that accreditation.

• Between 2015 – 2018 we fundraised for, and completed, a £2m capital project to extend and refurbish Dragon Hall. We built a new south wing for education activity, office space, and a new reception area; updated the Great Hall’s IT/AV to improve visitor and audience experience; restored the C14th Hall House areas; renovated an attached Victorian cottage as a writer in residence space. The project was completed on time and on budget. We opened in June 2018 as the National Centre for Writing.

Key artistic developments

• In 2012, NCW led on the development of the International Literature Showcase in partnership with Arts Council England and the British Council, which is still running today. This project showcases the best of contemporary British literature and has so far brought together an online community of over 200 writers with over 75 literature professionals to form partnerships and develop new projects nationally and internationally.

• East Out is a three-year programme 2018-2021 that sees NCW bring together regional, national and international partners to commission, create and tour new work from the East, celebrate the new generation of outstanding literary publishers, connect our leading centre of excellence to national and international markets. Building on the International Literature Showcase, we will deliver six digital showcases and one physical showcase; a series of digital commissions; and commission Associate Artists to develop new work and deliver a series of writers in residence as part of the UNESCO Creative Cities network.

• The City of Literature for Young People Local Cultural Education Partnership (LCEP) was a partnership co-founded by NCW and the Norfolk & Norwich Festival Bridge to support area-specific needs in education in Norwich. In 2017-18 we supported shared activity around creative writing, reading and performance for young people in schools across the city, undertaking activity in 43 schools and engaging with over 20 partner organisations to assess needs, and delivered sessions focused on socio-economically marginalised and disabled groups.

• In 2016, in partnership with the University of East Anglia, we developed Creative Writing Online – high quality online poetry and prose courses. Currently running 20 courses per year with a take up of 85%.

• Engage! This project is in partnership with Creative Europe and with partner cities Barcelona, Krakow and Växjö. The Festival in a Day will offer ten Norwich students from areas of low engagement the opportunity to programme their own literary festival (as part of Norfolk & Norwich Festival May 2019), to develop professional skills and communicate their experiences within their school and peer communities.

• Talking Statues Norwich. In celebration of Norwich’s UNESCO City of Literature status, cultural and tourism organisations across Norwich have collaborated to commission some of Norwich’s most celebrated writers and actors, alongside emerging local talent to bring Norwich’s statues to life using imaginative content and digital location technology. Writers and actors include Stephen Fry, Olivia Coleman and Sarah Perry.
3. Key challenges over next three years

NCW has operated successfully over the past 14 years as a non-venue-based organisation. In 2015 we were granted an 80-year lease on Dragon Hall with the aim of turning it into the National Centre for Writing. The capital development has ensured that we now have a building which is fully accessible, in good structural order and is better suited to the needs of the organisation to develop the cultural programme and to develop commercial activities to generate further revenue.

Vision

To be a centre for national and international literary exchange in a world class UNESCO City of Literature

Mission

To establish the National Centre for Writing at Dragon Hall as a creatively distinctive, nationally networked and financially resilient centre of excellence that delivers benefits to writers, literary translators, the literature sector and our physical and digital communities from an outstanding Grade 1 Listed campus in the heart of Norwich, England’s first UNESCO City of Literature

In order to achieve the vision and mission, NCW’s business plan for 2018-22 ‘The Next Chapter’ identifies the following key challenges:

a. To cultivate a more clearly audience-focused approach to the full range of our artistic and learning programmes and to demonstrate our national remit.

b. To support through our Board, staff and volunteers our organisational transition into heritage venue management that is a Grade 1 listed heritage asset with specific fundraising, development and operational needs.

c. To create a commercial strategy that generates increased levels of unrestricted revenue from the building and artistic programme.

4. Company information

NCW is a Company Limited by Guarantee (5242876) and a Registered Charity (1110725). The organisation had an annual turnover of £1.67m and available reserves of £366,000 in 2017/18. NCW is an Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation, its other key stakeholders being the University of East Anglia, Norwich City Council and Norfolk County Council. The organisation currently employs 16 full time equivalent staff.
5. Patrons of the National Centre for Writing

**Margaret Atwood CH** is a poet, novelist, story writer, essayist, and environmental activist and is regarded as one of Canada’s finest living writers.

**John Boyne** is a *New York Times* bestselling author whose novel, *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas*, was made into a Miramax feature film.

**JM Coetzee** is twice winner of the Booker Prize and was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 2003.

**Anthony Horowitz OBE** has written over 40 books and was awarded an OBE for his services to literature in 2014.

**Jon McGregor** is a novelist and short story writer, IMPAC Prize winner and twice longlisted author for the Booker Prize.

**Kei Miller FRSL** is a Forward Prize-winning Jamaican poet, novelist, essayist and teacher of creative writing.

**Sarah Perry FRSL** is the author of three novels, including the bestselling *The Essex Serpent* (*Waterstones Book of the Year 2016*).

**Elif Shafak** is an award-winning novelist and the most widely-read female writer in Turkey. She is also a women’s rights, minority rights and LGBT rights advocate.

**Ali Smith CBE** is a novelist whose work has won a number of prizes, including the Baileys Prize, the Encore Award, and the Whitbread Novel Award, and has been shortlisted for the Orange and Booker Prizes.

**Rose Tremain CBE** is the author of eleven novels, four collections of short stories, one book for children and plays for radio and television, and a Whitbread Novel of the Year Award and Orange Prize winner.
6. Current Trustees

The Board of Trustees is made up of the following members:

**Prof Sarah Barrow** is Pro Vice Chancellor of the Faculty of Arts and Humanities at the University of East Anglia.

**Helen Dawson** has a background in Criminal Justice, as a prison governor and previously as CEO of an offender resettlement charity.

**Isobel Dixon** is a poet and Head of Books at the Blake Friedmann Literary Agency.

**Chris Gribble** is CEO of the National Centre for Writing, Chair of the International Cities of Refuge Network (ICORN) and Board member of Carcanet Press and Modern Poetry in Translation.

**Pam Henderson** (interim Chair) is a psychotherapist working in Cambridge. Before this she had a twenty year career in the arts.

**James Slinger** is a Partner in the law firm Taylor Vinters.

**George Szirtes** is a poet and translator.

**Alan Waters** (Vice Chair) is Leader of Norwich City Council. He sits on New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership and the South East Area Arts Council.

**Helen Wilson** was previously Managing Editor BBC Radio 4 and then Controller BBC Radio 4. She is currently Chair of the New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership Cultural Board and Chair of the HLF East of England Committee.

**Andrew Yuill** is a Chartered Accountant.
7. Senior Management Team

Chris Gribble is the Chief Executive of National Centre for Writing. After completing a PhD in German Poetry and Philosophy at the University of Manchester, Chris worked in publishing, then the cultural sector and was the Director of Manchester Poetry Festival and the Manchester Literature Festival. He is Chair of ICORN (the International Cities of Refuge Network) and sits on the Board of Carcanet Press and Modern Poetry in Translation.

Alison McFarlane is Executive Director at National Centre for Writing. Alison spent six years as senior lecturer in the Department of Arts and Humanities at the University of London Goldsmiths’ College. This was followed by ten years at Arts Council England East based in Cambridge as Head of Arts. On leaving the Arts Council, Alison worked as CEO of a voluntary organisation in Norwich before being appointed as Executive Director of the Norfolk & Norwich Festival where she stayed until September 2012. Alison was made a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts in 2006.

Peggy Hughes is Programme Director. She was previously Director of Literary Dundee (University of Dundee) where she was responsible for the Dundee Literary Festival and the Dundee International Book Prize. She is also chair of the Board of Literature Alliance Scotland.

Alice Kent is Director of Communications. Since completing a Masters in Journalism at Cardiff University she has specialised in marketing in the cultural sector. Before joining NCW she worked as Communications Manager for The Poetry Trust which ran the Aldeburgh International Poetry Festival and as Marketing Manager for Norwich University of the Arts.

David Barrass is Head of Finance. An accountant with several years’ experience of financial management in the cultural sector, he was previously at Cambridge Arts Theatre where he was Head of Finance for 10 years.
8. Organisational structure

Chief Executive

- Chris Gribble (1 FTE)

Executive Director

- Alison McFarlane (1 FTE)

Programme Director

- Peggy Hughes (1 FTE)

Programme Manager

- Laura Simson (1 FTE)

Programme Manager (L&P)

- Hannah Garrard (1 FTE)

Programme Manager

- Hamish Garrod (1 FTE)

Programme Officer

- Rob Reynolds (1 FTE)

Programme Director

- Kate Grifin (0.8 FTE)

Programme Manager

- Simon Jones (0.4 FTE)

Programme Assistant

- Vicki Maitland (1 FTE)

Programme Assistant

- Lillie Coles (1 FTE)

Programme Assistant

- Rodin Batty (1 FTE)

Programme Assistant

- Maggie Ludlow (0.8 FTE)

Senior Management Team

- David Barross (0.8 FTE)

Digital Marketing Manager

- Steph McKenna (1 FTE)

Communications Director

- Alice Kent (1 FTE)

Communications Director

- Alison McFarlane (1 FTE)

Development Manager

- Meg Rumbelow Hemsley (1 FTE)

General Manager

Operations

- Freya Gallagher-Jones (0.6 FTE)

Senior Finance Officer

- Maggie Ludlow (0.8 FTE)

Associate Programme Director

- Kate Grifin (0.8 FTE)

Communications Assistant

- Roisin Batty (1 FTE)
The role of Chair
NCW is now looking for an outstanding candidate to appoint as Chair of the Board. This is an exciting moment to be involved in shaping and implementing the NCW's long term vision The Next Chapter.

**Primary purpose**

To provide leadership and direction to the board of Trustees, ensuring that it fulfils its responsibilities relating to governance, finance and strategic direction. The Chair will ensure that the organisation complies with its governing document, charity law, company law and any other legislation or regulations. The Chair will work in partnership with the CEO, helping him to achieve the aims of NCW and to optimise the relationship between the board of trustees and the staff. They will act as an ambassador and the public face of NCW, in partnership with the CEO and Vice Chair.

**Principal responsibilities**

**Strategic leadership**

- Provide leadership to NCW and its Board, ensuring that it has maximum impact for its beneficiaries
- Ensure that Trustees fulfil their duties and responsibilities for the effective governance of NCW
- Ensure that the Board operates within its charitable objectives, and provides a clear strategic direction for NCW
- 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 NCW, with systems in place to ensure financial accountability

**Governance**

- Ensure that the governance arrangements are working in the most effective way for NCW
- Develop the knowledge and capability of the Board of Trustees
- Encourage positive change and where appropriate address and resolve any conflicts within the Board
- Help appraise the performance of the Trustees and the Board on an annual basis
- Ensure that the Board of Trustees is regularly refreshed and incorporates the right balance of skills, knowledge and experience needed to govern and lead NCW effectively, and that it also reflects the wider population
- Work within any agreed policies adopted by NCW
External Relations

- Act as an ambassador for NCW
- Act as a spokesperson for NCW when appropriate
- Represent NCW at external functions, meetings and events
- Facilitate change and address any potential conflict with external stakeholders

Efficiency and effectiveness

- Chair meetings of the Board of Trustees effectively and efficiently, bringing impartiality and objectivity to the decision-making process
- Work with the CEO to develop agendas and papers for meetings
- Ensure that Trustees are fully engaged and that decisions are taken in the best, long-term interests of NCW and that the Board takes collective ownership
- Foster, maintain and ensure that constructive relationships exist with and between the Trustees
- Work closely with the CEO to give direction to Board policy-making and to ensure that meetings are well planned, meaningful and reflect the responsibilities of Trustees
- Monitor that decisions taken at meetings are implemented

Relationship with the Chief Executive and the wider management team

- Establish and build a strong, effective and a constructive working relationship with the CEO, ensuring he is held to account for achieving agreed strategic objectives
- Support the CEO, whilst respecting the boundaries which exist between the two roles
- Ensure regular contact with the CEO and develop and maintain an open and supportive relationship within which each can speak openly about concerns, worries and challenges
- Liaise with the CEO to maintain an overview of NCW's affairs, providing support as necessary
- Conduct an annual appraisal and remuneration review for the CEO in consultation with other Trustees
- Ensure that the ChEO has the opportunity for professional development and has appropriate external professional support
The person

- Working knowledge of the not-for-profit sector
- Demonstrable interest in literature
- Commitment to the organisation
- Willingness to devote the necessary time and effort
- Strategic vision
- Good, independent judgement
- Ability to think creatively
- Willingness to speak their mind
- Understanding and acceptance of the legal duties, responsibilities and liabilities of directorship
- Ability to work effectively as a member of a team
- Tact and diplomacy
- Good communication and interpersonal skills
- Impartiality, fairness and the ability to respect confidences

Desirable experience

- Experience of working in the voluntary sector
- Experience of working in the cultural sector
- Prior experience of committee/trustee work
- Knowledge of the work undertaken by the organisation
- A wider involvement with the voluntary sector
Terms of appointment

• The Chair is asked to commit to a three-year term on the Board and serve for a maximum of two terms

• The Chair is a voluntary position and is not remunerated, although reasonable expenses will be reimbursed

Time commitment

• The Board meets quarterly and meetings are held at the NCW offices at Dragon Hall or in London. Attendance at Board Sub groups may be required as appropriate

• In addition to the formal Board meetings, it is expected that the Chair is able to visit the offices of NCW at Dragon Hall in Norwich or meet elsewhere with the CEO on a regular basis. This is usually in the region of 4-8 hours every month

• From time to time, the Chair should be available to attend and represent NCW at events, meetings or functions in the day and evening

Data protection

• On appointment, personal details will be requested in order to register the appointment of new Trustees with the Charities Commission and Companies House. This information is covered by the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and will not be divulged to third parties.
How to apply

To register your interest in this opportunity, you are asked to submit:

- A copy of your CV or biographical details
- A statement of interest (up to 2 pages) indicating why you are interested in the role and what you are able to bring to the organisation
- Please also complete the Equal Opportunities form and attach it to your application

The National Centre for Writing is committed to both the principle and the practice of Equal Opportunities and we welcome applications from all parts of the community regardless of gender, physical ability, nationality, race, religion, or sexual orientation. We are keen to receive applications from any candidate with relevant skills and qualifications and will shortlist those who meet the criteria of the role of Chair.

Please send to Pam Henderson (interim Chair) by 5pm on Thursday 18 April 2019 at National Centre for Writing, Dragon Hall, 115 - 123 King Street, Norwich, NR1 1QE marked confidential. Or email to pam@nationalcentreforwriting.org.uk.

If you would like a confidential discussion with Pam Henderson or CEO Chris Gribble please contact them on pam@nationalcentreforwriting.org.uk or chris@nationalcentreforwriting.org.uk.

Interviews will be held on Wednesday 5 June 2019 at the National Centre for Writing at Dragon Hall.

Data protection

All personal data submitted to the National Centre for Writing is used for recruitment purposes and equal opportunities reporting only. By submitting your personal details, you consent to the National Centre for Writing retaining your personal data for these purposes. All information is anonymised before use. In accordance with GDPR, all information submitted by unsuccessful applicants will be deleted within six months.

Please see nationalcentreforwriting.org.uk/privacy-policy/