

aspex
portsmouth



Co-Chair Recruitment Pack 2025

Join our committed team to make a difference to Portsmouth's rich cultural scene & the wider contemporary visual arts sector

Aspex brings new art and ideas to Portsmouth. Our mission is to cultivate art and creativity, rooted in community. We believe that in bringing joy, art broadens minds, facilitates learning, connects and nurtures our communities and stimulates radical imagining. As a Gallery of Sanctuary, we create opportunities for people of all ages and backgrounds to experience contemporary visual art – from looking and discussing, to making and curating.

We think this is an amazing opportunity to join us as one of our two first ever Co-Chairs. As the new Co-Chair you will work alongside Dr Leo Burtin – an artist and cultural management academic – who was recruited from within the current board membership and has served as a Trustee since March 2023.

Our Co-Chairs will contribute to our effort in living up to our values as a **communal, open-hearted** and **radical** organisation. By distributing leadership in this way, we seek to open ourselves up to new perspectives, while creating a sustainable and supportive environment for both Co-Chairs to thrive as they enable the board, executive and staff team to deliver Aspex's mission. This opportunity has come about as a result of our current Chair having served her two terms in the role and follows careful reflection from the board and the team as to the most appropriate board structure going forward.

Outgoing Chair Dr Dawn Langley said of the role: 'Aspex is an extraordinarily dynamic organisation, built on a brilliant energy and fabulous ambition for the city. I know whoever comes next will find the role of Co-Chair invigorating, stimulating and rewarding – do consider giving it a go!'

Incoming Co-Chair Dr Leo Burtin stated: 'I am looking forward to working with a Co-Chair with as distinct a set of lived and professional experiences from my own as possible. Our current trustees are a fantastic group of people with profound connections to Portsmouth and made up of cultural professionals, business experts, artists who share a passion for the difference engagement in contemporary visual art can make to people's lives. A new Co-Chair will ideally bring a national (or indeed international) perspective, and I look forward to sharing the role with someone who will regularly challenge my views!'

About Aspex



Our Vision: Provoke joy through art in a more equitable society

Our Values:

- Communal
- Open-hearted
- Radical

Background

Established in 1981, we have a 40+ year track record of supporting artists at a critical point in their career to make new work which reflects the world today and connects with communities to make a social impact. Through our ambitious and experimental programmes, we enable people to learn new skills, take part in activities which increase confidence and self esteem, and bring communities together through meaningful creative experiences.

We support and develop the contemporary visual arts ecology on a sub-regional, national and international level, working with artists in their early-to-mid careers to inspire people and help create a society that embraces community, diversity and inclusivity. Aspex takes a holistic approach to programming across exhibitions, creative engagement and artist support. We strive to make each project meaningful by fostering collaboration and

connection between artists, communities and organisations from the arts, education and other sectors.

In 2024 we were awarded Sanctuary in the Arts status, currently the only gallery in the south of England, in recognition of our long-term work with the refugee and asylum-seeking community and our commitment to supporting all people who need sanctuary. Building on this achievement, we embrace the opportunity to work with our civil society partners to make a real difference to peoples' lives.

Based in an historic former naval storehouse on the waterfront at Gunwharf Quays, a busy leisure and retail centre, our building provides an inspiring setting to welcome visitors to our creative hub/gallery base. From here we deliver an ambitious seasonal programme of exhibitions and events, while also reaching out across our City and region through offsite exhibitions, projects in the public realm and participation through our creative engagement programme and Mobile Art Studio.

Looking to the future

We are proud of Portsmouth, a City of Sanctuary for those most in need, proud of our diverse communities; and we are proud of the way Aspex Portsmouth (our staff, trustees, volunteers and artists) ensure that our communities are firmly embedded in every part of our work. Increasing international divisive rhetoric has encouraged us to lean more strongly into ensuring our programme is inclusive and representative of positive and hopeful narratives to connect and build community.

Marking Portsmouth's Centenary in 2026 will provide further opportunities to celebrate and reinforce positive narratives, proud of our working class culture and heritage, while earning a sense of pride in making Portsmouth a culturally exciting, diverse and inclusive place to be.

We will:

- Reflect the diversity of the people of Portsmouth in our programmes;
- Be inclusive, working with learning disabled artists, in partnership with associate company This New Ground for their take-over festival in 2026;
- Radically increase the creative opportunities for children & young people;
- Reduce our environmental footprint;
- Celebrate our cultural impact with our 50th anniversary in 2031.



Our Governance

Aspex Visual Arts Trust is a registered charity (1007620), and company limited by guarantee (2674597). It is governed by a diverse board of trustees with a broad range of expertise covering the visual arts, strategic planning, management, education and marketing disciplines. Trustees are responsible for the overall governance and strategic direction of the organisation. The trustees support the Director and staff team to deliver the charity's objectives, while upholding its values. The culture of Aspex is open and extremely consultative. Trustees are invited to share their skills, perspective and experience to support the development of Aspex.

Our current Trustees are: Dr Dawn Langley & Dr Leo Burtin (Co-Chairs), Dr Adrian Hull, Victoria Ingles, Loredana McCay, Dr Panagiota Papadimitri, Charlotte Phillips, Martyn Reah, Clarke Reynolds, Victoria Turner (Treasurer). Denise Barlow, Max Craft and Dawn Langley (Co-Chair) will stand down at the AGM in November having completed their permitted terms of office.

Board development

Our board is constantly developing. Trustees serve for one term of 3 years with the opportunity to renew for a second 3 year term. This ensures healthy turnover, diversity and the contribution of fresh perspectives, ideas and knowledge.

We are particularly looking to appoint a new Trustee/Co-chair with experience and or expertise in one of the following areas:

- **Leadership**
- **Community Development**
- **Marketing & Communications**
- **Business skills**
- **Environment, particularly climate change**
- **Digital**
- **Artist** – with a critically engaged practice and national/international experience/perspective.

The role

As Co-Chair, you will need to have the energy, commitment and enthusiasm to take Aspex Portsmouth into its next period of development. You will have responsibility for ensuring Aspex is living its values and achieving its vision.

Aspex has a distributed governance model where board members are engaged in chairing different committees meaning the governance leadership role is shared. The board chair/s have overall responsibility for drawing together insights from all chairs to inform strategic direction and support the team.

Time commitment

Approximately eight hours per month (board meetings, events, and regular engagement with the Co-chair, Director and team). This will vary across the governance timetable and may require more or less in given months.

The board meets six times a year for 1.5 hours, alternating between business-focused meetings and strategic meetings to enable wider discussion of key topics and issues between trustees and staff. Where possible meetings are held in person at Aspex, but we take a hybrid approach, with Trustees regularly joining via Zoom.

Trustees are also asked to join small sub-groups to consider specific matters in more detail, these include:

- Governance Sub-Committee
- Staffing Sub-Group (to support HR)
- Fundraising Sub-Group
- Marketing Sub-Group
- Justice, Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Action Group
- Green Action Group

The groups meet quarterly or biannually for 1-2 hours. Trustees are also invited to attend events at the gallery and within the community.

What you can expect of us

If you ask any Board members present or past, they will all tell you that being an Aspex Board member is an energising and worthwhile role. It offers the chance to work with a dedicated, resourceful and professional team (staff, Board and advisers) in a creative and challenging environment. In becoming Co-chair, you will have the opportunity to use your skills, experience and attributes to:

- Make a real difference to the future of Aspex Portsmouth;
- Help develop meaningful opportunities for our communities and creative practitioners;
- Support access to art and creativity that challenges perceptions and pushes boundaries;
- Actively engage with the strategic decisions and planning necessary to ensure Aspex thrives;
- Gain understanding of different life experiences, social backgrounds and cultures.

As a new Board member you will receive a thorough induction to Aspex, ongoing training as appropriate and the support of your other Board members and our staff team.

What we will expect of you

- Providing leadership to the Board, chairing meetings and facilitating Board business;
- Setting high governance standards and overseeing the performance of the Board and its members;
- Providing direction in setting strategy, policy and decision-making;
- Ensuring the Board understands its responsibilities in relation to risk and compliance;
- Modelling openness, inclusivity, impartiality and confidentiality;
- Facilitating a supportive and positive approach alongside robust scrutiny and challenge;
- Line managing and supporting the Director, including objective setting and annual appraisal;
- Oversee Board recruitment and induction;
- Acting as an ambassador for Aspex, representing the organisation and its work externally.

Person specification

Essential:

- Demonstrated leadership experience in governance, strategic planning, or charity management.
- Strong understanding of charity governance, legal duties and financial oversight.
- Excellent communication, facilitation, and interpersonal skills.
- A natural collaborator, comfortable with divergence and consensus building
- Extensive contacts and networks.
- Commitment to justice, equality, diversity and inclusion.
- Passionate about the charity's mission and committed to its values.

Desirable:

- External representation and stakeholder engagement.
- Governance or committee level experience.
- Experience in chairing meetings and facilitating discussion.
- Demonstrated experience of implementing business/strategic plans including financial management.
- Experience in managing risk, liability and compliance.
- Ability to act with impartiality, authority, credibility and influence.
- Advocacy and ambassadorial experience.

Terms of appointment

The Co-chair is appointed for a three-year term, which is renewable once. This role is unpaid, but reasonable, pre-agreed travel expenses will be reimbursed on receipt of an evidenced claim and in accordance with Aspex's expenses policy.

Location

Aspex is based in Gunwharf Quays, Portsmouth. Board meetings are currently held in-person and online with other board responsibilities held in a hybrid format.

Eligibility

Candidates should be over 16 years of age.

You should not have been disqualified under the Charities Act for:

- Having an unspent conviction for an offence involving dishonesty or deception (such as fraud)

- Being bankrupt or entering into the formal arrangement (e.g. an individual voluntary arrangement with a creditor)
- Having been removed as a company director of charity trustee because of wrongdoing.

Equality and diversity

Aspex Portsmouth is an equal opportunities employer and we are committed to promoting a diverse and inclusive workplace for all our staff and volunteers. We are keen to ensure that opportunities to collaborate with us are open to everyone and we welcome applications from people of all backgrounds. We are particularly keen to increase representation from groups and communities that are currently under-represented on our Board, particularly people from the global majority.

The Equality Act 2010 requires us to ensure that we do not unlawfully discriminate against applicants. By completing the Equality and Diversity Monitoring form, you will help us check that we have complied with the law and improve our efforts to diversify our workforce. The form will not be shared by anyone involved with assessing the applications.

The answers you give will be held as anonymous and confidential data. The information from the forms we receive will be combined and reviewed in aggregate (so that you cannot be identified) and retained for no more than six months after the end of the recruitment process.

Find out more

If your curiosity has been sparked and you are interested in joining Aspex as a Co-chair of our board of trustees and have further questions, please email Joanne Bushnell, Director jo@aspex.org.uk.

Or if you cannot attend but would like to arrange a chat, we may be able to offer an alternative time and date online.

Aspex is committed to equality of opportunity in all of our activities and practices. We aim to ensure the board is representative of our local community and continues to be diverse in relation to protected characteristics and socio-economic background. We would be particularly interested in receiving applications from people of colour and people from the global majority.

To apply

Please submit a short cover letter (no more than 2 sides of A4), and a CV, outlining why you would like to be Co-chair of Aspex Portsmouth, and what knowledge or experience you can contribute to Joanne Bushnell at jo@aspex.org.uk by Monday 1 September 2025.

All applicants will need to complete an Equal Opportunities Form via the link [here](#)

Applicants will be notified by Thursday 4 September 2025 if they have been selected for an interview, which will take place on Sunday 7 September at Aspex Portsmouth.

Accessibility

At Aspex Portsmouth, we are committed to being responsive to and supporting the specific needs of the creative community we serve. If you require this information in an alternative format such as large print or if there is another way you'd prefer to apply to the open call, please contact us via phone on **02392778080** or email info@aspex.org.uk and we will be happy to support you.

Aspex Portsmouth Co-Chair Role Description

Role Title:	Co-Chair, Board of Trustees
Reports To:	Board of Trustees
Term:	Maximum of 2 x 3 Years

Purpose of the Role

The Co-Chair plays a key leadership role in ensuring effective governance. Working collaboratively with the other Co-Chair, they provide strategic direction, oversee Board functions, and support the Director and staff team in achieving Aspex's mission and objectives.

Key Responsibilities

1. Strategic Leadership

- o Providing leadership and direction to the Board of Trustees, ensuring it fulfils its responsibilities for governance and oversight.
- o Working in partnership with the Director and staff team to set the strategic direction of the charity.
- o Ensuring Aspex operates in compliance with its mission, vision, values, and governing documents.

2. Governance and Compliance

- o Ensuring that Aspex complies with all legal and regulatory requirements.
- o Leading on good governance practices, ensuring effective decision-making and Board performance.
- o Overseeing risk management strategies and ensure appropriate policies are in place.

3. Board Development and Collaboration

- o Working collaboratively with the other Co-Chair to provide a balanced and inclusive leadership approach.
- o Agreeing areas of responsibility with the other Co-Chair to ensure that both Chairs best utilise their experience and expertise.

- Facilitating constructive discussions and effective decision-making within the Board.
- Supporting the recruitment, induction, and development of trustees to ensure a diverse and high-performing Board.

4. Stakeholder Engagement

- Representing the charity at key meetings, events, and with external stakeholders as required.
- Acting as an ambassador for the organisation, advocating for its mission and impact.
- Building and maintaining positive relationships with funders, partners, and beneficiaries.

5. Support to the Director and staff team

- Providing guidance and support to the Director, acting as a sounding board on strategic and operational matters.
- Ensuring appropriate performance management structures are in place for the Director.
- Maintaining a strong and collaborative relationship with the staff team while respecting its operational autonomy.

This role description serves as a framework for the responsibilities and expectations of the Co-Chair. Adjustments may be made based on the evolving needs of Aspex.