

## RECRUITMENT PACK CHAIR OF TRUSTEES 2026

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## Welcome to the Bush

### Producing ground-breaking work as diverse as our audiences

**Thank you so much for your interest in applying to become the next Chair of the Bush Theatre.** For over 50 years the Bush has been championing new writing from its home in one of the most culturally diverse areas of London. Its support for marginalised voices has contributed to the development of the theatre industry and the life of the local community. And its work, and the talent nurtured and developed through it, is now nationally and internationally renowned. The plays produced by the Bush have won numerous awards in recent years and our Young Company has gone from strength to strength with some of its members now making work for our main stage and creating change in the broader sector.

We are now looking for a successful and inspirational Chair to succeed Uzma Hasan, who is stepping down in Spring 2026 after five years. During that time, she steered the Bush through the challenges of the COVID pandemic and helped build the

environment to support the successful creative programme developed by our former Artistic Director, Lynette Linton. As our new Chair, you will be arriving as the Bush moves into an exciting new chapter under the leadership of its current Artistic Director, Taio Lawson, and Executive Director, Angela Wachner.

The Board goes into this recruitment with an open mind, hoping to attract applicants who bring a wide range of experience and contacts, and are as diverse as our audiences and creative teams. You do not have to come from the theatre sector but you will have relevant experience in the creative industries, the experience to head a Board of Trustees, a good understanding of our work, and a commitment to our values and to being part of an equal, diverse and inclusive organisation. You will also have the professional and personal skills to chair an organisation whose mission is to take creative risk while working in a financial environment that is often challenging.

An understanding of good governance, along with an accessible and flexible style will be particularly important at a time when the Board and Executive are actively exploring new ways to ensure the Bush's long-term sustainability whilst building its reputation for artistic excellence, attracting local and national audiences, and continuing to support the writers and theatre practitioners who will shape the future of theatre.

If you'd like a confidential conversation before applying, please email our executive search consultant Todd Heppenstall at [todd@th-consulting.uk](mailto:todd@th-consulting.uk).

## **Kim Evans, Vice Chair of the Board of Trustees**

### **A note from our Artistic and Executive Directors**

As joint leaders of the Bush, we are committed to this being a place where artists and audiences gather to experience daring and enduring new work that encourages us to explore what it means to live in a world that is simultaneously bold, brutal and beautiful.

Our aim is to maintain the theatre as a space where artists who are presently and historically suppressed or marginalised have licence to explore the big questions of today, exploding the concept of what theatre is and who goes to it. We also want to inspire the next generation of theatre-makers and we offer career-changing opportunities through our talent development programmes to our communities of writers, creatives, locals, young people and staff.

We are now looking for a new Chair who supports the Bush's mission, has the skills to maintain a strong working relationship between Chair, Board and Executive, and is excited by the challenge of balancing creative risk and financial realities.

You will be joining us at a time when we are actively exploring new business models and new ways of using our building in Shepherd's

Bush. It is a special space where we want our community to feel able to be loud and proud and wholly themselves, and where there is an ongoing dialogue between theatre-makers, audiences and local people.

We look forward to talking to you about the work we could do together.

**Taio Lawson, Artistic Director, and Angela Wachner, Executive Director**

## **Bush Story**

**The Bush began in a small room above a pub on the corner of Shepherd's Bush Green in 1972.** Since then it has produced more than 500 plays, nurturing writers such as Simon Stephens, Temi Wilkey, James Graham, Lucy Kirkwood, Arinzé Kene and Jack Thorne, and working with actors such as Alan Rickman, Victoria Wood, Andrew Scott and Phoebe Waller-Bridge early in their careers.

Over the past five years productions have included Richard Gadd's *Baby Reindeer*, now a successful Netflix series, Waleed Akhtar's *The P Word*, and Matilda Feyişayọ Ibini's *Sleepova*, each of which won the Olivier Award for 'Outstanding Production in an Affiliate Theatre'. In 2023, its fiftieth birthday year, the Bush was joint

winner of The Stage's 'Theatre of the Year' and had a record-breaking box office success with Lenny Henry's August In England.

2024 saw the transfer of Tyrell Williams' Red Pitch and Benedict Lombe's Shifters into the West End. In 2025 our programme included successes such as Speed by Mohamed-Zain Dada; Not Your Superwoman by Emma Dennis-Edwards, starring Letitia Wright and Golda Rosheuvel; and After Sunday by Sophia Griffin, a co-production with the Belgrade Theatre in Coventry.

Talent development is a vital part of what we do. During the Covid lockdown, the Bush Young Company was created to fulfil a need in the area and to help introduce new talent into the industry. This work has resulted in nine Young Company productions being performed on our main stage as an integral part of the theatre's programming and has set a series of writers and performers on a path into the arts.

**For more information on our work, [visit our website](#).**

## DIVERSITY

We are champions of diversity, and diversity of voices, influence and practice is at the heart of everything we do. This is reflected in the wide range of artists and partners we collaborate with, and the plays we produce.

It also informs our internal culture and how we work together. We believe that diversity of thinking and equality of opportunity are vital for a company to develop and refresh itself. We strive to

create an internal culture that welcomes different perspectives and experiences and regularly review how we uphold this principle. We are also committed to continuing to influence policy makers and the theatre industry to ensure that our sector is richer, more equitable and more reflective of our communities.

## OUR HOME

We are proud to be a significant part of the offer for arts and culture in the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham. In 2011 we moved from our original home on Shepherd's Bush Green into the former library on Uxbridge Road. Following a £4.3m renovation led by architects Haworth Thompkins, our building now hosts two performance spaces: the Holloway Theatre, our flexible main house with 220 seats, and the intimate Studio for up to 70 people; and our Attic rehearsal space and Writers' Room.

Public spaces include a vibrant bar, garden terrace and the Gianni and Michel Alen-Buckley Script Library, which is the largest public theatre reference library in the United Kingdom.

**You can see more about our building and location [on our website](#).**

## GOVERNANCE

The Bush Theatre is the trading name of The Alternative Theatre Company, a Registered Charity and a Company Limited by Guarantee. There are two subsidiary trading companies, Bush Theatre Trading Limited and Bush Theatre Productions Limited.

We are overseen by a dynamic and diverse Board of Trustees currently chaired by Uzma Hasan, who will be stepping down in May 2026. The Board delegates day-to-day management of the theatre and its artistic programme to its Co-Chief Executives: the Artistic Director (Taio Lawson) and Executive Director (Angela Wachner), who report to the Board. They lead our talented and dedicated team of 26 permanent staff, and employ numerous freelance artists, practitioners and casual staff to deliver our artistic programme and augment the team operationally.

The Board has ultimate responsibility for the strategic direction, development and governance of the organisation. Trustees offer guidance, expertise, support and challenge to the Executive Team to whom the day-to-day management of the organisation is delegated.

The Board is currently made up of 11 individuals from across the commercial, charity and arts sectors who give their time and expertise voluntarily to help the Bush achieve its aims.

Representation is important and our Board is currently 45% female, and 45% from the global majority.

**Meet the Bush staff team and Board of Trustees.**

## **OUR IMPACT IN 2024-2025**

**→ 156 freelancer employed**

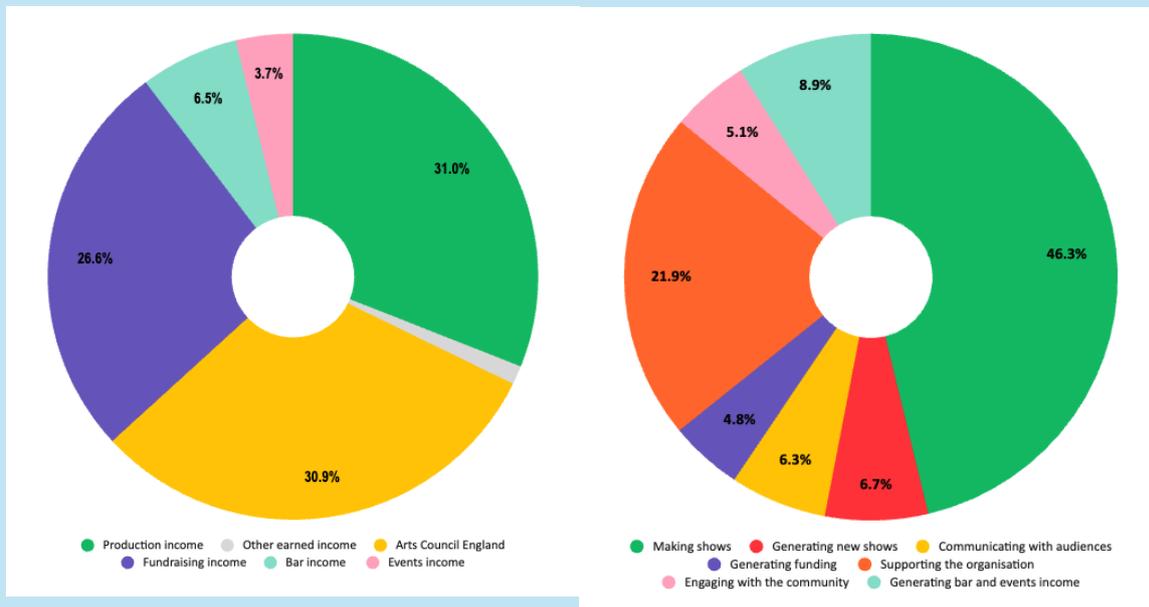
**→ 413 performances**

**→ 33,960 audience**

- 40% new audiences
- 146k social media followers
- 950 unsolicited scripts read
- 15 allotments and commissions
- 12 Emerging Writer and Bloom Bursary members
- 2627 tickets given to young people and community networks
- 40 members of our Young Companies

## OUR FINANCES

Our annual turnover is approximately £2.4m. We are an Arts Council National Portfolio Organisation and received an uplift as part of our current funding agreement, which runs until 2027. Our other sources of income are from trusts, foundations and generous individual donors; box office income; and other earned income including from our bars, catering and events.



## *Sources of income for*

**2024/25**

**Expenditure for 2024/25**

## The Role

**We are looking for a successful and astute leader to chair our Board of Trustees.** The Chair provides strategic leadership to the Board, working with and guiding the Co-CEOs and ensuring that, collectively, they deliver the organisation's charitable objects, vision and mission.

A key part of your role will be as an ambassador for the Bush. We hope to hear from people who are willing and able to help the Bush in making an effective case for support. There are, of course, many ways in which you could do this. We are particularly keen to hear from those who have a track record in supporting and facilitating fundraising in a similar context, either through partnership opportunities, activating a network, or experience of maximising the income opportunities offered in building-based organisations.

## Responsibilities

- Bring leadership to the Board and provide support to the Executive, ensuring that the Bush Theatre achieves its strategic aims and meets the needs of its audience and its charitable objectives.
- Work closely with the Co-CEOs so that Board meetings are well planned and address all matters that fall within the remit of the Board; plan the annual cycle of meetings, agree

agendas; and ensure the Board receives appropriate and timely papers.

- Work with the Board to review risk and ensure systems are in place to identify and manage risk as well as to take advantage of opportunities.
- Chair Board meetings openly, effectively and impartially, ensuring Trustees work collaboratively to make decisions in the best interests of the Bush and in accordance with its governing documents.
- Conduct regular reviews of Board effectiveness and the skillset of Board members to ensure skills align with the organisation's evolving needs.
- Provide support and challenge to the Co-CEOs and maintain close and regular communication, developing a good working relationship, and conducting individual annual appraisals.
- Engage proactively with the theatre's strategy for fundraising and income generation, acting as an external ambassador and advocate for the organisation.
- Foster good relationships with existing stakeholders and funders and, in particular, the principal grant funder, Arts Council England.
- Attend as an ex-officio member the Finance and Audit Committee and, when appropriate, the Nominations Committee.

## Person Specification

The ideal candidate will bring all or most of the following:

### PERSONAL

- A demonstrable passion for and commitment to theatre and to the Bush's mission, vision and values.
- Strong communication and interpersonal skills with the ability to represent the theatre, act as an ambassador, build positive relationships and develop networks over time.
- An excitement about the challenge of balancing financial and non-financial metrics for success, giving proper consideration to both artistic ambition and long-term fiscal responsibility.
- A willingness to bring your own networks into play for the benefit of the Bush and create new ones.
- Have the time to attend shows at the Bush and elsewhere and be present at key meetings with stakeholders and donors.
- A commitment to maximising the talents of the senior team and supporting them to achieve their goals.
- A commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion across all the theatre's activities.

### SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE

- An understanding of charity governance and in particular an understanding of the balance between governance and management.
- Excellent leadership skills and the ability to think strategically.

- The ability to evaluate, analyse, scrutinise and where appropriate challenge information relating to the Bush.
- A broad understanding of financial operations and, in particular, to have or to quickly acquire a grasp of charity finances and funding.

## **Terms of appointment and time commitment**

**The Chair is appointed by the Board of Trustees for an initial term of four years.**

There are many different ways of being an effective Chair. The expectation is that the role will require a commitment of around two days a month on average, with more time during 2026 as the new Chair familiarises themselves with the Bush and how it works.

We hold four Board meetings a year and an annual strategy day. The expectation is that Trustees, particularly the Chair, attend in person. However, we facilitate hybrid meetings when necessary.

The Chair has a particular role in nurturing and developing partnerships with our key donors and funders and potential funders. They are the main point of contact between the Board and Arts Council England.

**This is an unremunerated role. However, reasonable expenses may be claimed.**

## How to apply

1. Send your CV and application letter to **our executive search consultant Todd Heppenstall at [todd@th-consulting.uk](mailto:todd@th-consulting.uk)**.

Please state 'Bush Chair Application' in the subject line. We encourage you to tell us:

- Why you want this role
- How your experience, both professional and lived, has positioned you to succeed in the position
- What you believe you could contribute

2. Complete our **Equal Opportunities Monitoring form**, this information will not be shared with the recruitment panel. This helps us to better understand if our recruitment practices are accessible and equitable to all.

3. For a confidential conversation about the role, email Todd at **[todd@th-consulting.uk](mailto:todd@th-consulting.uk)**

## KEY DATES

- Deadline for applications: **16 February 2026 at 10am**
- First Interviews (ideally in person in London): **2 March 2026**
- Second Interviews: **16 March 2026**

## APPOINTMENT PROCESS

The appointment of the Chair is made by the Board of Trustees.

The interview panel is made up of a number of Trustees with the Co-CEOs in attendance as observers. The panel makes a

recommendation on the preferred candidate to the full Board of Trustees.

We hope to be in a position to announce our new Chair's appointment at the beginning of April 2026. There would then be a short handover period before the new Chair takes over formally at the end of our Board meeting in mid-May 2026.

## **EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES**

If you are excited about this role and the work we do, we want to hear from you even if you don't meet every criteria.

We are particularly keen to receive applications from marginalised groups such as people of North African, Sub-Saharan African, West Asian, East Asian, Southeast Asian, South Asian, Pacific Islander and Indigenous backgrounds, Migrants, LGBTQIA+ people and those who are from a low socio-economic background, disabled or neurodiverse.

## **AN INCLUSIVE PROCESS**

Bush Theatre is committed to being an equal opportunity employer and seeks to be open and accessible to all regardless of background.

All applications will be reviewed by a diverse shortlisting panel of Trustees. We commit to having interview panels who represent our community and our workforce.

We aim to ensure all disabled and neurodiverse applicants have equitable access to our recruitment process. If you need an

adjustment for the application or interview process, just let us know.

**Please go to our website here for this pack in the alternative formats.**

## **DATA POLICY**

Your application and any associated personal information will be stored and processed in accordance with our Data Policy and destroyed after six months. We will keep your equal opportunities form for a period of up to six months, after which point the data will be anonymised and aggregated for monitoring purposes.

If you are engaged by us, the information you supply will be kept securely and form part of your record with us.