



coram's
fields



APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR OF TRUSTEES

JANUARY 2020

INTRODUCTION FROM DEIRDRE CATY VICE CHAIR

Thank you for your interest in the Chair of Trustees position at Coram's Fields.

Founded in 1936, Coram's Fields has a long and proud history of providing a safe haven and a green oasis for children in the centre of London. Based on the site of the former Foundling Hospital, the work of this unique children and young people's charity now extends far beyond a safe green space and includes an extensive programme of community services, supporting the development and welfare of young people from birth through to early adulthood. Our services include a full time Nursery, under 5s Drop In, Out of School Club and Sports and Youth Programme. Our work improves the quality of life for local children, young people and their families, many of whom are from low income backgrounds. During the last few years our services have continued to expand, reaching more young people than ever before and delivering targeted support to those that need it most. Our park attracts tens of thousands of visitors each year, whilst our services work with over 150 young people every single day.

This is a pivotal point in Coram's Fields history. Last year, our extraordinary former Chair, Rt Hon Frank Dobson, stepped down from the role due to ill health and in November, Frank's passing, brought to an end decades of unerring support and commitment. He, in common with the other Trustees, recognised the increasing importance of sustaining and enhancing local safe, green spaces for children to play, meet and learn, particularly in the urban and densely populated area of Bloomsbury in which we are located.

The last couple of years have seen considerable change for us, with a drastic reduction in local authority funding, our focus has been on establishing new and sustainable funding models to enable us to maintain and develop this exceptional space. Whilst we have made good progress, like most small charities developing a sustainable funding pipeline will continue to be a key challenge for our Board in the coming years. Foremost to this will be the need to balance short term investment in the maintenance of our buildings with longer term plans to sustain and develop a space that is fit for the 21st Century, and one that enables us to grow our reputation as one of the safest and most loved spaces for children in London.

In order to achieve everything that we hope to achieve we are seeking an experienced Chair who can lead the Trustees and CEO through this new phase in the life of Coram's Fields. We recognise the importance of embracing diversity in its broadest possible context; many of our current Trustees are local residents and we welcome applications from all sections of the community.

You will have the opportunity to work with an engaged Board and a strong team of committed staff, all of whom are committed to ensuring the charity's excellent work goes from strength to strength.

Yours sincerely
Deirdre Carty

ABOUT US



Coram's Fields is a pioneering children and young people's charity, based in central London.

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Founded in 1936 we place a great emphasis on providing a safe and secure space for children, with adults only allowed into the park if they are accompanied by a child.

Our core aim is to improve the lives of local children and young people through the provision of open space, recreational facilities and a wide range of community programmes. Our services provide critical support to children and young people at key junctures in their lives, from the delivery of Early Years services for parents of children under five years to the provision of youth employment support for young people making the often difficult transition into the working world. More recently, our pioneering work in delivery support to young people involved in violent crime has seen us win numerous awards and our commitment to delivering support to those children, young people and families who need it most, will continue to drive much of our work over the coming years.

Currently we achieve an income of c.£1.8 million, and have a complement of approx. 50 staff. Our focus is on delivering high quality services to the local community. We aspire to be outstanding in everything we do and appoint staff and Board Members who can contribute to us achieving this ambition.

OUR SERVICES

Early Years' Services

Our Early-Years' service, comprising of a Nursery and Under 5s Drop In provides essential support to parents of children under five, the former through the provision of high quality full time childcare and the latter, through a range of engaging activity programmes for children and parents, acting as a social hub through which, parents can access a range of advice, guidance and support.

Our Nursery, registered 'Good' by Ofsted in our 2018 inspection, is a hugely popular resource and our children benefit significantly from the seven acres of open space available to them, with regular trips to our wildlife garden, chicken area and growing spaces offering a range of opportunities to support their physical, social and educational development. Our Nursery is part of the government childcare subsidy scheme, offering up to 30hrs of free childcare for 3 and 4 year olds and 2 year olds from low income backgrounds.

Play Service (Out of School Club)

Coram's Fields Out of School Club provides after school and holiday childcare for children aged 4 -12 years and has, since being taken over from the Council in 2012, established itself as one of the largest and most well regarded play services in the borough.

Attracting 45 children per day after school (collected from four local primary schools) and up to 70 children per day during the school holidays, the service provides a diverse programme of activities for young people from sports and fitness to performing arts.



We are committed to providing childcare support for families from a range of backgrounds and with a particular focus on supporting low income families. Our service offers a number of subsidised and free childcare places, alongside the provision of specialist support for children with Special Educational Needs (SEN).

Sports

Following the renewal of support from our biggest individual supporter, the Oak Foundation in 2017, our sports programme set out its ambitions for the years ahead - to use the power of sport to deliver transformational change for local children and young people from 4-19 years. Since this point, the successful expansion of the programme has seen us deliver increasingly targeted support to local young people.

A focus on increasing female participation has seen us more than double the number of young women accessing the programme, whilst the development of new partnerships have led to the delivery of increasingly accessible sporting opportunities for young people with disabilities. The next couple of years will see us continue to grow these programmes of work, whilst also using sport to deliver early intervention for high risk young people, through a programme of school and estate based outreach.



Youth Programme

Delivered from our state of the art youth centre over five nights a week, our award winning youth programme delivers a wide range of support for young people aged 8-19 years. Alongside our core programme, the delivery of targeted support for girls and young women has led to girls making up a remarkable 40% of our cohort, whilst our youth employment programme provides vital support in preparing young people for the world of work.

In addition to this, our pioneering partnership with the Camden and Islington NHS Trust has seen us deliver life changing outcomes for many young people involved in violent crime over recent years. We achieve this through the delivery of a trauma informed approach that brings mental health services together with conventional youth work practice. In 2018 and 2019, young people and staff from our youth programme received local and national recognition for their work, including winning the London Youth Award for 'Best Social Action Project' for their efforts in delivering support to London's young homeless community.

EVENTS

As a social hub for local families, we deliver a range of events across the year in order to celebrate the diverse community that we serve. Our annual Play Day, delivered in partnership with play providers from across the borough celebrates the importance of play in childhood development and promotes community cohesion, whilst our annual fireworks display sees over 4000 people descend on Coram's Fields for what is now the only free fireworks display in Central London.



FINANCES

Like many small charities Coram's Fields continues to rely on a diverse pool of funding sources as statutory funding in the form of grants and payments for commissioned services has decreased. Over the last two years, significant work has been done to diversify the funding streams coming into the charity and progress so far has been strong. However, as costs continue to rise and competition for all forms of fundraised income becomes more competitive, there remains much work to be done.

The successful launch of our major giving programme in summer 2019 enabled us to bring in some new and significant support for the Charity. The growth of this programme alongside our continued efforts to increase fundraising through corporate partnerships, individual giving, events and the more conventional Trust and Foundation support will be critical over the coming years, if we are to sustain and build our impact.

Although we are continuing to expand our fundraising activities, at the moment we remain reliant on the significant income that we generate through the hire of the park for a winter marquee and the letting of our football pitches to adults. Delivering a sustainable financial footing for the charity, whilst ensuring that we don't compromise on our commitment to local children and young people, will be a key priority for Trustees over the coming years.



THE FUTURE

The last 12 months have seen us revisit our plans to re-develop much of our seven-acre site. The next year will be a defining period for this work as we look to move towards the formal stages of the architectural planning process. Trustees will have a key role to play in both shaping the development of the plans and in developing a capital fundraising strategy that enables us to deliver on our ambitions for the site.

In 2014 we incorporated the charity as a Company Limited by Guarantee (Coram's Fields Company Trustee Ltd Co. No.: 9001024) and all Board Members are Non-Executive Directors of the Company.

All aspects of the charity's services are thriving but as a community we recognise the enormous opportunity of welcoming a new Chair to contribute to our strategic vision and develop and deliver our strategic plan for the future.

ROLE PROFILE

Job title: Chair, Board of Trustees

Location: Coram's Fields, 93 Guilford Street, London, WC1N 1DN

This is a voluntary role. If you would like to make a difference in our world, this is a great opportunity to bring your skills, knowledge and experience to help us deliver on our mission.

The Chair will be appointed for an initial 4-year term with the opportunity to extend for a further 3-year period subject to board performance reviews.

The time commitment is approximately 12-15 days a year, comprising 5 Board meetings (currently held in the early evening), and other strategy and committee meetings. There are always opportunities to become more involved with specific projects if desired.

Reasonable travel expenses directly incurred in your role as a Board Member on official business are reimbursed.

Main responsibilities

- Provide effective governance and strategic oversight of the charity and uphold its values
- Ensure that the charity complies with its governing document, acts within the law and relevant regulations
- Regularly review the charity's mission and purpose so it remains up to date and relevant to the needs of its beneficiaries
- Work with the Executive Director (CEO) to develop and agree strategic plans, and to assess whether the management's strategy to achieve them is reasonable in relation to the risks involved, the resources required and the benefits to be achieved
- Provide appropriate support and challenge to the CEO and other senior officers of the charity
- Monitor the charity's progress towards the achievement of its strategic goals and objectives and monitor the impact of its activities on its beneficiaries
- Define the parameters on which the budget will be based, agree the budget and monitor financial performance
- Work with the Executive Director to implement an effective risk identification and management process, ensuring internal controls are fit for purpose
- Establish and, as necessary, review a clear framework for delegation to committees and hold Committees accountable for the authority that has been delegated to them
- Act as an ambassador for the charity, protecting the charity's ethos, its good name and values
- Represent the Board's position when speaking publicly;
- Review the Board's own performance periodically and build an effective team spirit across the Board and management.

Chair's specific responsibilities

- Chair board meetings
- Work with the CEO to ensure that agendas for board meetings, including supporting papers, enable the Board to discharge its responsibilities efficiently and effectively
- Identify emerging governance issues and, with the CEO, decide the approach to be taken
- Review and approve draft minutes of board meetings
- Act on behalf of the Board between meetings on routine matters and matters specifically delegated by the Board and responding to requests for action in cases of urgency
- Communicate with key stakeholders, where it is appropriate for the Chair rather than the CEO to do this
- Attend and participate in meetings of any committees of the Board of which the Chair is a member (appointed or ex officio).
- With the CEO, ensure that individual directors are appropriately developed and supported and that their performance is assessed on an ongoing basis
- Jointly with another director appointed by the Board, set annual performance targets for the CEO, reviewing the performance of the CEO and considering his or her development needs
- As and when necessary oversee the appointment of a CEO/Executive Director and Board Members, and in the case of the CEO, agree remuneration package

Person Specification

- Experience of strategic leadership, in a paid or unpaid capacity
- Strong experience of chairing meetings and leading diverse groups
- Knowledge of charity governance, regulation and compliance
- Commitment and motivation for the mission, values and objectives of Coram's Fields
- The ability to think innovatively, critically, independently and strategically, and with a proven track record of translating strategy into operational plans
- A healthy and demonstrable understanding of risk, its benefits and the confidence to take calculated risks, where this supports the work of the Charity
- Excellent communication skills with both the ability to harness the enthusiasm of fellow Directors and to effectively manage Board discussion to reach appropriate decisions
- Demonstrable consultative, strategic and supportive style
- Ability to demonstrate Nolan's seven principles of public life, namely: selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership.

"Coram's Fields is committed to equality and diversity and welcomes applications from all sections of the community.

Coram's Fields is committed to safeguarding and protecting the welfare of all children and young people. All those applying for a role with the charity, are subject to robust safeguarding checks and will need to demonstrate clearly, their commitment to safeguarding. All appointments are subject to a satisfactory enhanced DBS check and all post holders are required to register with the DBS update service"

HOW TO APPLY

To apply for this position, please forward a comprehensive CV together with a supporting statement explaining why you would like to take on the role and the specific skills that you would bring.

It would be helpful to provide names, organisations and contact details of 2 referees, relevant to this role, although references will only be taken once your express permission has been granted.

We would also be grateful if you could let us know if you will require any special provision as a result of any disability, should you be called for interview.

Finally, please ensure that you have included mobile, work and home telephone numbers, as well as any dates when you will not be available for interview.

All applications should be returned to Laure Liarcou (Administrator) by **gam on the 24th February 2020**. Applications are accepted by e-mail or in hard copy and should be submitted in the following way:

By e-mail: Laure Liarcou (Administrator) – laure@coramsfields.org.uk

By post: Laure Liarcou (Administrator), Coram's Fields, 93 Guilford Street, London, WC1N 1DN

Questions

If you have any queries on any aspect of the appointment process, need additional information or wish to have an informal discussion, please contact Stuart Woods via email at stuart@coramsfields.org.uk

Equal opportunities

Coram's Fields is committed to equality and diversity and welcomes applications from all sections of the community.