

Walworth Town Hall community space

Description of role:
Independent chair of board

WALWORTH TOWN HALL COMMUNITY SPACE

DESCRIPTION OF ROLE: INDEPENDENT CHAIR OF BOARD

This is an exciting opportunity to chair the management board of a dynamic new community space on the Walworth Road. This new hub will help bring the former Walworth Town Hall and Newington Library back into active use for the local community.

The board's main task will be to appoint and oversee a third-party operator for the new community hub. This will include recruiting an operator to run the space, and working with the appointed operator to establish a business plan. The business plan should ensure the space offers a dynamic programme of activities and opportunities for all members of the community and is financially sustainable.

It will be the Chair's role to lead the board through this process.

ABOUT THE MANAGEMENT BOARD

The management board is being recruited by an independent consultant, appointed by Southwark Council.

Board make up

1x independent Chairperson

2x community members

2x youth members (16-25)

2x Council members (ward Councillor and Cabinet member)

2x developer representatives (General Projects)

The primary role of the management board will be to appoint a third-party operator who will programme and manage the space on a day-to-day basis once it is opened. After this, the board will oversee the operator to ensure the space continues to meet the needs of the whole community and is managed in a way that is financially stable.

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ROLE OF THE BOARD

- Collectively draw up a constitution governing the structure and proceedings of the board
- Promote, select and appoint a full-time operator who will be employed to manage the space on a day-to-day basis
- Collectively draw up a brief for the operator, setting out the vision for the space and responsibilities
- Deliver an effective recruitment and shortlisting process for appointing a preferred operator
- Collectively represent the views and needs of the whole community. The board can also gather and include wider community input into the operator brief or vision through further community consultation or specialist input as required
- Work with the appointed operator to agree an annual business plan to deliver a programme of community, arts, cultural and social uses that is financially sustainable and addresses the diverse needs of the whole Walworth community and the wider borough
- Monitor the operator's performance to ensure they deliver a programme of community, arts, cultural and social uses that is financially sustainable and addresses the diverse needs of the whole Walworth community and the wider borough.

Community and youth board members, including the chair, will be compensated for their time in line with the London Living Wage and, where applicable, offered a babysitting / dependent care allowance for evening meetings (subject to conditions).

In order to achieve the collective role of the board and recruit the operator, it is anticipated that all board members may need to carry out a small amount of additional work on top of the meetings. The allocation of specific tasks to different members of the board will depend on the respective skill sets of the appointed board members.

Part of the Chair's role will be to manage this. Some administrative support will be provided. In addition, community and youth representatives will receive some skills training and support where applicable.

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TIMESCALES

1. The deadline for expressions of interest is **Monday 1 November 2021**.
2. Expressions of interest will be read by the independent consultant (Social Life) and shortlisted according to the skills and experience criteria set out in the description of the role (see below).
3. Interviews are expected to take place during the weeks commencing **29 November and 6 December 2021**
4. We hope to appoint members of the board before Christmas, with the first board meeting expected to take place in **January 2022**.
5. Meetings will take place monthly for the first year, until the operator is in place, and quarterly thereafter. The time and format of the board meetings may be guided by the make up of the board, but it is envisaged meetings will be held in the early evening.

The initial cohort of members will serve a fixed term of three years to allow time to recruit the operator and establish the new community space when it opens.

WHO WE ARE LOOKING FOR

We are looking for an independent chairperson who has the skills to run meetings, manage the operator recruitment process, get the best out of the board members, and ensure that the new community hub meets the needs of the diverse local community and is financially sustainable.

ROLE OF THE CHAIR

- To be impartial and objective and ensure that discussions are effective with all members having the opportunity for input
- Lead the board in collectively drawing up a constitution governing the structure and proceedings of the board
- Lead the board to collectively draw up a brief for the operator, setting out the vision for the space and responsibilities
- Lead the board in the process of recruitment, selection and appointment of a full-time operator who will be employed to manage the space on a day-to-day basis

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- Ensure the board collectively represents the views and needs of the whole community
- Ensure ongoing review of board members' performance
- Lead the board to work with the appointed operator to agree an annual business plan to deliver a programme of community, arts, cultural and social uses that is financially sustainable and addresses the diverse needs of the whole Walworth community and the wider borough
- Lead the board to monitor the operator's performance to ensure they deliver a programme of community, arts, cultural and social uses that is financially sustainable and addresses the diverse needs of the whole Walworth community and the wider borough.

SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE

- Experience in mediation and team leadership
- Experience in budgeting
- Experience in project management
- Experience as a member of a board, local forum or management committee
- Business acumen to ensure the community space will be financially sustainable
- Commitment to creating a community space that is inclusive to all
- Understanding of dynamic and diverse programming that caters for the whole community
- Knowledge of the local community, its needs and aspirations
- Ability to connect and engage with a wide range of groups, organisations and individuals across the community to encourage their support and participation
- Passion for improving the wellbeing of local people and communities.

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ABOUT THE NEW COMMUNITY SPACE

The new community space will offer a range of activities and opportunities for all Southwark residents and community groups, regardless of age, gender, race, religion, disability, or situation.

It should:

- Focus on community over commercial use
- Attract a wide range of users and beneficiaries from across Southwark
- Offer a wide range of activities and events that appeal to a diverse range of people
- Provide a community facility for local groups and organisations to carry out their own programmes and activities
- Make everyone welcome, regardless of age, race, religion, gender, disability or situation
- Have an open and transparent management process
- Promote Southwark history and culture
- Be financially sustainable.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Walworth Town Hall and Newington Library is at 151-155 Walworth Road London Southwark SE17 1RS.

The Town Hall complex sits at the top of the Walworth Road, next to the new Elephant Park neighbourhood. The building has been at the heart of the Walworth and Elephant & Castle communities since it was built in the 19th century and is Grade II listed for its architectural and heritage merit.

The Town Hall (built in 1865) is being brought back to life as a prominent community hub following a major fire in 2013; the library (built in 1892) is currently used by The Art Academy. The new complex will house flexible new cultural, community and workspace with a cafe on the ground floor, commercial studio workspaces and co-working spaces for the creative industries and independent local businesses will feature on upper floors.

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Construction is due to start on site in January 2022, and is expected to take 18 to 20 months, with the aim of opening the centre to the public in summer 2023.

The redevelopment of the complex is being undertaken by General Projects, who were selected by the Council via a two-stage open bid process in 2018-19; it was granted planning permission at the end of 2020. General Projects are working with Peckham-based architects Feix&Merlin.

The building has been leased under a 150 year lease. Southwark Council will remain the freeholder, and the community space is secure if the ownership changes. The Council has agreed a sum of £50k (equivalent to the annual ground rent) to support the running costs of the centre for its first three years.

In developing the designs to date, General Projects has undertaken extensive community engagement, including round tables with representatives from local community groups and organisations, and a community forum informing the design.

In response to feedback, General Projects and Feix&Merlin have taken a light-touch approach to restoration, respecting heritage features and ensuring that the building is accessible. People taking part in the engagement also stressed the importance of providing diverse uses within the community centre, and to address the needs of the whole local community.

The full planning application (ref 20/AP/1649), including the statement of community involvement, can be viewed here: <https://planning.southwark.gov.uk/online-applications/simpleSearchResults.do?action=firstPage>

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The 246 sq m community space is accessed from Walworth Road. The suggested layout is below.



FOR MORE INFORMATION

If you would like more information, or a paper version of the application form, contact Social Life:

- telephone: **0207 703 9630**
- email: **hello@social-life.co**
- project website: <http://www.social-life.co/news/post/wth/>

Online Q&A sessions

We will be holding open online Q&A sessions for anyone interested in becoming a board member, or becoming the chair, from 6-7pm on Tuesday 19 and Wednesday 20 October 2021.

Sign up here:

For the first Q&A on 19th September <https://bit.ly/3lI3RZo>

For the second Q&A on 20th September <https://bit.ly/3AkYnSD>