



The Higgins
BEDFORD

RECRUITMENT PACK

Chair of the Higgins Board



Bottom right: *Carnival Throne* oil on canvas, 200cm x 200cm - Quilla Constance, 2023. Image credit: Quilla Constance

SUMMARY

The Higgins Bedford is recruiting for a Chair for its new oversight and advisory group, the Higgins Board.

THE HIGGINS BEDFORD

The Higgins Bedford is a Bedford Borough Council cultural service that showcases wonderful and varied collections of fine and decorative arts and changing exhibitions drawn from the nationally significant collection of British watercolours, drawings and prints. Displays of archaeology, social history and ethnography tell the story of local people and how Bedford has developed over time. These collections inspire a programme of temporary exhibitions, active learning and events.

The Higgins Bedford is a National Portfolio Organisation (NPO) of Arts Council England (ACE), for the current investment period 2023-26.

THE HIGGINS BOARD

The Higgins Board is a new oversight and advisory group that has been created to support The Higgins Bedford in moving to its next stage of development. It supports the shared objectives, and is independent of, Bedford Borough Council and the Trustees of Cecil Higgins Art Gallery, to enable The Higgins Bedford to set and deliver against a more ambitious strategy and to improve its ability to generate income and raise funds. We want the membership of the Higgins Board to reflect the skills that will help us to deliver this strategy and the diversity of Bedford's communities.

The Higgins Board also has oversight responsibility for The Higgins Bedford's National Portfolio funding agreement with Arts Council England.

CHAIR OF THE HIGGINS BOARD

We are looking for someone with the right mix of experience, skills and enthusiasm to chair the Higgins Board.

The Chair's role is to lead the Board in ensuring that it fulfils its responsibilities as laid out in the Terms of Reference, and its objectives as laid down in approved strategies and plans. It is also to optimise the relationship between the Board, the Council, the Trustees and the staff, and to help maximise the impact of The Higgins Bedford for local residents and visitors to the Borough.

The Chair also acts as a mentor and adviser to the Manager for Culture & Heritage and as an ambassador and advocate for The Higgins Bedford across local and national networks.

THE HIGGINS BEDFORD

The Higgins Bedford's mission is to be a cultural facility for all people to enjoy, explore and learn from the visual and decorative arts, archaeology, social and natural history, through fresh and exciting programming and the development of our collections.

Our work encompasses:

- Showcasing and celebrating our local cultural heritage, with high quality displays and interpretation.
- A popular programme of exhibitions drawn from nationally significant collections.
- A well thought of engagement programme, with our community at the heart of what we do.
- Formal and informal learning programmes for people at all stages of their lives.
- Management of and encouraging access to the collections.
- Income generating activity including retail and venue hire.

Our focus during the ACE National Portfolio funding period is on: developing our schools learning and Early Years activity programmes to reach people in areas of lower cultural engagement; delivering exhibition and heritage interpretation projects that align our collections with effective community engagement, through working with community partners; and, developing our creative and wellbeing activity offer for adults.

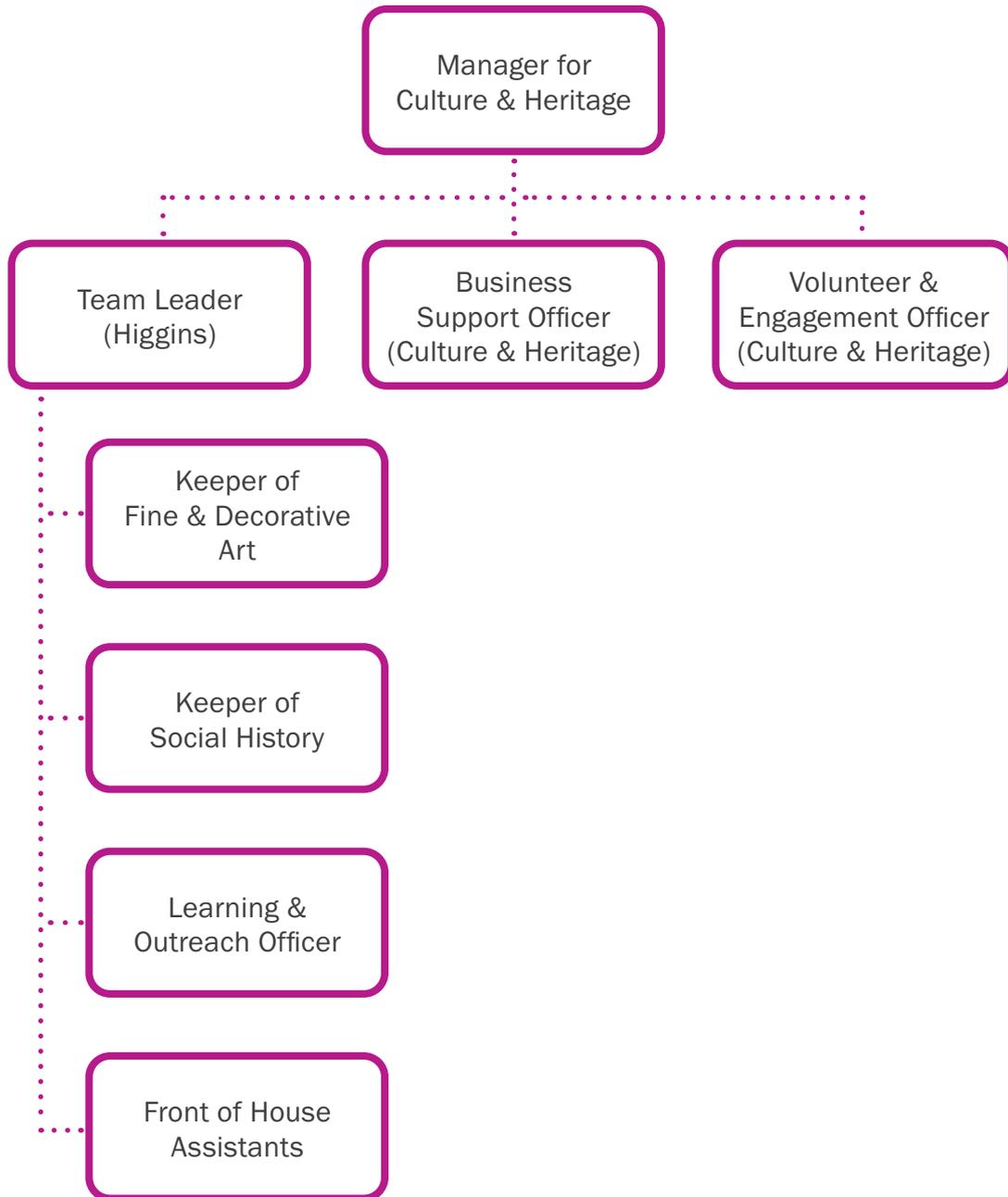
The Higgins Bedford is housed in historic buildings that bring together three formerly separate facilities following a major redevelopment in 2013. Our work since then has seen us focus on working with and for our local communities. We have developed valuable place-based partnerships and developed links with our community that have had a demonstrable impact on our programming, progressing towards our vision of being a cultural hub working in partnership with Bedford's diverse communities.



Bottom right: *Carnival Throne* oil on canvas, 200cm x 200cm - Quilla Constance, 2023. Image credit: Quilla Constance

OUR TEAM

The Higgins Bedford is a small team under the management of the Bedford Borough Council Manager for Culture & Heritage, whose role extends to other cultural services including Libraries and Archives & Records Management. It sits within the Regulatory Services & Culture division of the Council's Environment Directorate.



GOVERNANCE

The Higgins Board has been established through a Memorandum of Understanding between Bedford Borough Council (the Council) and the Trustees of Cecil Higgins Art Gallery (the Trustees) in recognition of and to advance their shared objectives for The Higgins Bedford.

THE COUNCIL

The Council is responsible, and provides core revenue funding, for the operational management of The Higgins Bedford, including staffing. It owns and is responsible for the buildings housing the museum and art gallery, and the Council-owned museum collections.

THE TRUSTEES

The Trustees own the Cecil Higgins Collection of fine and decorative art, and loan the Collection to the Council for the purposes of providing a museum. The Trustees have authority over elements of the management and use of the Collection, and are able to apply the income of the Trust Fund for specific Collection-related purposes.

THE CECIL HIGGINS ART GALLERY BOARD

The governance arrangements surrounding the Cecil Higgins Collection allow for the provision of an Art Gallery Board, whose role is to give their consent and approval to specific matters relating to the management of the Collection.

THE HIGGINS BOARD

The role of the Higgins Board is to:

- Advise the Council on the strategic direction and operation of The Higgins Bedford, enabling it to fulfil its potential as a cultural attraction.
- Support the achievement of The Higgins Bedford's strategic aims through an effective fundraising strategy that reduces its dependence on the Council.
- Fulfil the role of oversight group in relation to The Higgins Bedford's National Portfolio Funding Agreement 2023-26 with Arts Council England.



Image © Russell Cobb

CHAIR OF THE HIGGINS BOARD – ROLE PROFILE

OVERVIEW

The Chair's role is to lead the Board in ensuring that it fulfils its responsibilities as laid out in the Terms of Reference, and its objectives as laid down in approved strategies and plans. It is also to optimise the relationship between the Board, the Council, the Trustees and the staff, and to help maximise the impact of The Higgins Bedford for local residents and visitors to the Borough. The Chair also acts as a mentor and adviser to the Manager for Culture & Heritage, and as an ambassador for The Higgins Bedford across local and national networks.

The oversight and advisory group is a new entity and the Chair will play a key role in helping to set the agenda for its development and in recruitment to the wider membership.

ROLE DESCRIPTION

Oversight of Board and Effectiveness

- With the Manager for Culture & Heritage, to lead the recruitment and retention of membership of the Board, so that it reflects an appropriate diversity of interests to reflect stakeholders, local communities and a wide range of perspectives and judgement. Recruitment of Board members will seek to reflect the diversity of Bedford's communities and will be matched to the skills and experience requirements identified in the Board's Terms of Reference.
- To ensure a continual process of review and performance assessment of the Board, including that the skills of Board members are regularly audited.
- Encourage Board members to be accessible to all stakeholder communities, especially staff, visitors, and community partners, and to maintain a sound awareness of their needs.
- Provide feedback to Board members on their individual and collective contribution to The Higgins Board.

Chairing the Board

- Within the Terms of Reference, to agree with the Board the key matters to be discussed and decided by the Board.
- Establish agendas for each Board meeting with the Manager for Culture & Heritage, to cover strategic and relevant operational topics.
- Agree the strategic plan for The Higgins Bedford and ensure that comprehensive forward planning is in place to implement the strategy, and that this is reviewed periodically as appropriate by the Board and any committees it forms.
- Ensure that the Board's business is conducted efficiently through defined delegation of responsibilities, and clear definition and follow-up of the decisions and actions to be taken from each Board meeting.
- Chair meetings in an effective manner that enables and encourages Board members to participate, while synthesising views and summarising decisions, recommendations and direction of travel.
- Through ongoing review, help to ensure that The Higgins Bedford is focussed on delivering services and financial performance that are of good quality and sustainable.

Other Duties

- Provide guidance and support to the Manager for Culture & Heritage.
- Promote and be fully aware of the range of services that The Higgins Bedford offers, as well as its partnership projects and engagement activities.
- Represent and promote The Higgins Bedford at appropriate external events such as working groups, conferences, committees and partnership bodies, and through networking.
- Ensure the Board fulfils its role as oversight group for The Higgins Bedford's National Portfolio Funding Agreement 2023-26, as set out in the Funding Agreement with Arts Council England. It is the responsibility of the Board to monitor and report on the progress being made to achieve the targets and success measures on which the Funding Agreement is based. This includes meeting and communicating with Arts Council England directly, if required.
- Ensure the Board takes an active role in ensuring that the four Arts Council England Investment Principles are embedded in the culture and working practices of The Higgins Bedford, including setting and reviewing targets and success measures to monitor progress over the period of the National Portfolio Funding Agreement.

SKILLS AND QUALITIES

Essential

- Demonstrable leadership experience at a senior organisational level.
- A demonstrable record of adaptability within professional life, as illustrated by some variety in senior experience of organisations or sectors.
- Experience of managing Board level discussions to reach rounded decisions and agreement for action.
- An interest in, and commitment to, the arts and culture.
- A high level of interpersonal skills including tact, diplomacy and enabling contributions from all. The ability to engage with and influence a wide range of stakeholders.
- Experience of working with a range of organisations.
- The ability to think strategically and to link to strategic aims and objects to deliverable action planning.
- Impartiality, fairness and ability to respect confidences.
- Evidence of actively promoting a more representative, forward-looking, inclusive approach in a professional or voluntary context.

Desirable

- Leadership experience in the voluntary or public sectors.
- Knowledge of the social demographics, economy and environment of Bedford and surrounding area.
- Experience of strategic fundraising and of leading and managing fundraising campaigns.

TERMS OF APPOINTMENT

- Chairs should expect to serve for no more than two terms of three years.
- Chairs are required to attend scheduled meetings and some ad hoc meetings.
- It is anticipated that the time commitment should be no more than two days per month but there could be occasions when extra time will be required.

HOW TO APPLY

1. Speak to us

If you would like to apply for the role of Chair of the Higgins Board, please contact Tom Perrett, Manager for Culture & Heritage, by telephone on 01234 276313 or at tom.perrett@bedford.gov.uk for an informal discussion.

2. Make an application

Following this discussion, if you wish to apply, please send a CV and short covering letter outlining why you are interested in, and how you meet the requirements of, the role to tom.perrett@bedford.gov.uk.

Please ensure your CV contains:

- Your contact details
- Dated work experience history (job titles, duties and name of employer)
- Details of your education and relevant training/qualifications and skills
- Names of two professional referees (referees will not be approached before selection without your permission).

3. Attend an interview

If we feel that your application meets the requirements of the role of Chair, you will be invited to an interview at a time to suit you so that we can get to know you better. This will be with the Manager for Culture & Heritage, the Interim Chair, and an external advisory partner. This interview will be scored against a set series of questions designed to understand your suitability and enthusiasm for the role.

4. Join the Board

If you are successful, we will begin the induction process once we have completed the necessary checks and paperwork. Following this, you will be invited to attend the next Board meeting as an observer, where you will be formally elected. You will receive support from the Interim Chair and Manager for Culture & Heritage during the induction process.

Thank you for your interest in this role and joining the Higgins Board.

Privacy Notice

In order to deliver services to the citizens and communities in Bedford Borough, it is necessary for the Council to collect, gather and process personal data about residents, staff and other individuals. Bedford Borough Council is committed to protecting your personal data when you use its services and/or correspond with it. The Council has registered as a Data Controller with the Information Commissioner's Office (Registration Number Z5916725).

As a Data Controller, the Council sets out the purposes and methods for processing information and ensures safeguards over any personal and special category information it processes. In relation to applying for a role on the Higgins Board, Bedford Borough Council will process the personal data provided by you for the purpose of processing the application, on the Lawful Basis of consent of the data subject.

Your data will be shared with the selection panel, which includes third parties, for the purpose of reviewing applications and undertaking interviews. We may also share your data with third parties for example to obtain references.

All application data from unsuccessful applicants will be destroyed. Personal data from successful applicants will be held by the Council within the UK or the EU, for the term of the individual's membership of the Higgins Board only, and subsequently destroyed.

Equal Opportunities

Bedford Borough Council is an Equal Opportunities Employer and positively welcomes applications from all members of the community irrespective of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation. Selection is on merit alone. We are committed to the fair treatment of employees, applicants and all service users.

