



WAINSGATE TRUSTEE PACK

The unexpected chapel

Welcome

Wainsgate is at a pivotal moment. After several years of building a distinctive programme and preparing for the transfer of the chapel into charitable ownership, we are now taking on full stewardship of this remarkable Grade II* listed building.

We are seeking new Trustees to join us as we move into this next phase — people who can bring experience, care, perspective and belief to help Wainsgate grow in a way that is responsible, imaginative and rooted in community.

This pack explains who we are, how we understand our charitable purpose, and what we are looking for in new trustees.





About Wainsgate

Wainsgate Chapel is a Grade II* listed former Baptist chapel in the South Pennines that has grown into a nationally recognised centre for creative and cultural life.

The organisation delivers a year-round programme spanning dance, music, visual arts, spoken word, heritage and community gatherings, known for a distinctive mix of warmth, rigour, experimentation and welcome.

Wainsgate is guided by an artist-led programme and vision, shaped and sustained by a wider community of volunteers, partners and participants. It brings internationally recognised artists into dialogue with local communities, while remaining deeply rooted in place.

We understand heritage as something lived and continually renewed. Alongside performances and gatherings, we engage with the chapel's history through projects such as the Wainsgate Graveyard Project, photographic and oral-history archives, and other forms of community research — recognising that the significance of the building is encountered through many routes rather than a single narrative.

Wainsgate is also a place of practice and learning — somewhere work can be tested, tried out and met on its way to becoming something more formed. Research, experimentation and conversation sit at the heart of how we develop everything we do.

“a wellspring of creativity” The Guardian





Our Charitable Purpose in Practice

Our object is to advance the education of the public in the historical and cultural significance of Wainsgate Chapel.

We fulfil this by:

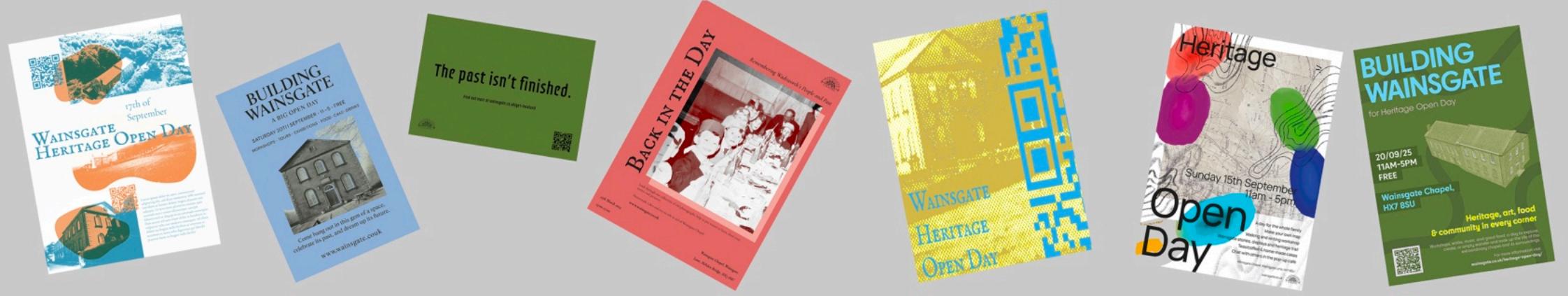
- animating the building through artistic, musical and community activity
- enabling people to encounter the chapel's history through meaningful lived experience

"The juxtaposition of contemporary conversations in a heritage context is mindblowing... blazing a bright trail to our corner of Calderdale." Helen Meller - Arvon

- caring for the fabric of the building through active, sustainable use, widening access so new voices can shape its future
- demonstrating that conservation can happen through life, not only preservation

The physical care of the building is sustained through artistic, heritage and community activity, alongside fundraising and donations.

Our model understands programming and conservation as inseparable: a thriving creative life is the most effective way to protect the chapel for future generations, while we continue to diversify income streams to strengthen long-term resilience.





The Role of Trustees at Wainsgate

Trustees share collective responsibility for the governance of Wainsgate Chapel CIO.

They ensure that the charity:

- operates in line with its charitable purposes
- complies with legal and regulatory duties
- manages resources responsibly
- delivers clear public benefit

Wainsgate is guided by an artist-led programme.

The Board's role is to support the conditions in which that vision can thrive — through good governance, strategic thinking and long-term stewardship, rather than through directing artistic content.

“Wainsgate is the perfect combination of local and international.” Seke Chimutengwende - Artist

Trustees contribute by:

- safeguarding the organisation's values and public purpose
- providing independent judgement and constructive challenge
- supporting financial sustainability and income diversification
- helping guide organisational development and change
- acting as ambassadors and opening doors to networks and partnerships

Trustees also offer a perspective that is less enmeshed in day-to-day delivery.

We welcome people who will ask good questions, help us articulate our values and ambitions more clearly, and keep the organisation on its toes. Challenge and support are equally important to us.

Our strength lies in a dual relationship: deep, invested connection to local communities alongside active exchange with artists, organisations and ideas from far beyond the valley.



What We Need Now

As we take ownership of the building, we are particularly seeking trustees who can bring experience in one or more of the following areas:

Priority skills

- Finance, audit and risk oversight
- Fundraising and income diversification
- Strategic planning and change management
- Legal or governance expertise
- Property/heritage management

Also valuable

- Marketing, communications or digital strategy
- Arts or cultural sector leadership
- Community development and engagement
- Business development or social enterprise

You do not need previous board experience. We are interested in people with relevant professional or lived experience who are willing to learn and contribute.

Person Specification

(some essential, some desirable — we are interested in the whole person)

We aim to build a Board with a mix of skills, perspectives and backgrounds. No one person is expected to meet every point below.

Experience and perspectives

- Understanding of the responsibilities of trusteeship or willingness to learn
- Ability to engage with strategy while remaining grounded in practice
- Confidence with financial information and risk (or readiness to develop this)
- Experience of organisational development or managing change
- Interest in heritage as a living, community-shaped practice
- Commitment to equality, access and inclusion in real terms

Personal qualities

- Integrity, care and good judgement
- Strong listening and collaborative working
- Ability to offer thoughtful challenge
- Respect for artist-led ways of working
- Belief that governance should enable bold, imaginative work

“a vibrant, generous and necessary place.”
Dame Siobhan Davies



Diversity, Inclusion and Our Way of Working

Wainsgate is committed to widening who feels this place belongs to. We understand diversity as relational and ongoing, shaped by socio-economic background, neurodiversity, disability, ethnicity, age, gender, sexuality and class — and by the particular rural context in which we work.

Over recent years the demographic of people engaging with Wainsgate has been slowly changing. New communities are finding their way here, and we are learning alongside them. Our approach is not to borrow generic language, but to build authentic structures from the ground up — through conversation, partnership and practice.

We are looking for trustees who will join this learning process: people willing to help us ask difficult questions, meet new partners, and ensure that inclusion is lived rather than declared. We recognise this takes time and care, but we are committed to action now, not postponement.

We actively welcome interest from people currently under-represented on charity boards, including younger adults, people from the Global Majority, disabled and neurodivergent people, and those with lived experience relevant to our communities.

Modern and Accessible Governance

We are committed to:

- open and transparent recruitment beyond personal networks
- flexible meeting formats where possible
- clear induction and mentoring for new trustees
- succession planning and shared leadership
- demonstrating the value trustees gain: skills, networks and purpose

“I live alone, 15 minutes walk from the Chapel. Open Practice is so important for physical and mental health support within our local community. Wainsgate Dances has developed into a fantastic community resource.”

Julia Maybury 84 yr old local resident



Time Commitment

Around 6–8 Board meetings per year

Participation in working groups as appropriate

Engagement with events and performances where possible

Why Join?

Wainsgate is:

- artist-led and professionally ambitious
- deeply rooted locally and internationally connected
- informal in feel, serious in intent
- a place where community, imagination and quality encounter matter

Wainsgate punches above its weight, working with leading artists and organisations nationally and internationally and attracting attention from major cultural partners and press.

It is a hopeful, constructive project that is already making waves — and there is much more to do. Trustees joining now will help shape the next chapter with confidence and care.

How to Apply

*Please send a short expression of interest and CV to:
jo.cubbon@wainsgate.co.uk*

Applications are on a rolling basis with the first interviews taking place in April

If you would like an informal conversation before applying, we would be delighted to arrange this.

