

People's History Museum

Board of Trustees

Recruitment Pack

Note from the Chair of Trustees

Thank you very much for showing an interest in becoming a Trustee at **People's History Museum (PHM)**, the **national museum of democracy** and the home of **ideas worth fighting for**. It is an exciting time to join us when the story of our democracy and our struggle for rights becomes more relevant by the day.

The museum tells the story of extraordinary, ordinary people who, through their collective campaigning and fights for justice, helped shape and create a better world for all of us. We have the largest trade union banner collection in the world; and our collection includes everything from the table on which Thomas Paine wrote *Rights of Man* (1791), to a cane held by a demonstrator at Peterloo; from the historic Manchester suffragette banner, to recent banners and campaign literature on climate change, LGBTQIA+ rights, the Grunwick strike and more; we hold the archives of the Labour Party, from the very first meeting held by Keir Hardie to the latest minutes of NEC meetings held by Sir Keir Starmer.

It's a real privilege to be the custodians, interpreters, and storytellers of people who fought for the rights we enjoy now and who worked for the greater good.

As we recover from the pandemic, we are living in a different world than before, shaped by growing inequality, environmental crisis, war, and increased migration. We want to play our part in energising and supporting people to understand, engage with, and respond to these issues. Museums are increasingly adopting a more civic role, and audiences and visitors are expecting something different from us and from the sector. Our role in this work led us to being shortlisted for Art Fund's Museum of the Year award in 2022.

We are realistic about the economic climate in which we operate and the pressures on public funding. We've been reflecting on how museums like ours can adapt, grow and better meet the needs of our communities, and ensure that how we work and operate is financially sustainable, including through generating more income from our cafe, retail, events, and venue hire, as well as fundraising. The role of the Board of Trustees will be crucial in this.

PHM is based in Manchester, a dynamic and growing city and one that is being transformed by ideas and investment, including in the cultural sector. PHM can capitalise on this by continuing to connect and collaborate with our visitors, community partners, and other stakeholders and to develop new relationships with businesses, growing our reputation locally, nationally, and internationally.

We are looking for Trustees who will make us think about what we do in a fresh and different light; challenge us to be better and share their expertise and insights with us; supporting and working alongside our team of brilliant staff to create a business model that enables PHM to thrive; and using our collection and spaces to deliver exciting programmes of activity that will engage a growing and more diverse audience.

I've been Chair of Trustees since November 2021 and have been a Trustee since 2018. I love this place and I love what it stands for. What we do in the community, online, and in partnership with others is every bit as important to us as what we hold in our collection.

PHM is committed to being a place that is respectful and inclusive and delivers equal experience for everyone.

I welcome you to help us to build on our existing excellent work, be more ambitious, and continue to push the boundaries.

Bernard Donoghue
Chair of Trustees

About People's History Museum

People's History Museum (PHM) is the **national museum of democracy**, telling the story of its development in Britain: past, present, and future. Explore the radical stories of people coming together to champion **ideas worth fighting for**, and be empowered by the past to make a change for the future. **We are all together in the fight for a fairer world.**

PHM is an independent museum, charitable trust, and company limited by guarantee, with a Board of Trustees, a Trading Company Board, and an Audit and Risk Committee.

PHM has an annual turnover of around £1.5 million, employs over 30 members of staff and has a team of freelance staff and volunteers. PHM is funded by Arts Council England (ACE) as a National Portfolio Organisation (NPO) and by Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) Culture and Social Impact Fund.

Our values

People's History Museum is about creating a fairer world for everyone, and we represent those working to achieve this.

The museum is a welcoming organisation, committed to standing in solidarity with people who face persecution and discrimination. Examples of this include but are not limited to dismantling racism, championing trans inclusion, standing with sanctuary seekers, and embedding the social model of disability.

The collection and stories are curated to show a wide range of authentic narratives. Content is bold, brave, and challenging, but shared with care, compassion and hope for a better future.

The Board of Trustees plays a crucial role in ensuring we demonstrate and deliver on these commitments:

- Exploring ideas, creativity, voices, and actions of the past to empower change for the future
- Promoting empathy and compassion
- Recognising people have different boundaries, experiences, and challenges in their lives
- Acknowledging the impact of power imbalances in our lives today

The role

The role of the Board of Trustees is to assist the Chair in offering guidance and expertise, working alongside the staff team on PHM's current Business Plan and its practical and pragmatic implementation.

Key areas include:

- Improvements to how we deliver to our visitors and stakeholders, ensuring that we continue to consider everyone's needs at the start of our decision making, using an empathic and inquisitive approach to deliver experiences that will engage more people
- Improvements to how we operate as an employer, ensuring that staff all have a sense of purpose in their role, are developing their skills and knowledge and the work is achievable and rewarding
- Improvements to how we operate as a business, ensuring that we can manage risks, change for the better, develop financial resilience, and have the right people and systems in place to seize opportunities for new investment

The Board of Trustees are also responsible for meeting the requirements of museum funders, the Charity Commission, and Companies House.

In addition to the main Board of Trustees, there is a separate Trading Company Board and an Audit and Risk Committee:

Trading Company

PHM's Trading Company is a wholly owned subsidiary, governed by a Board of Directors, which gifts its profits back to the charity. The Board of Directors provides governance over the commercial activity that supports the museum's charitable aims and financial sustainability. The Board of Directors provides scrutiny and oversight of commercial strategy, considers new business and opportunities, and considers how the Trading Company can support and inform the strategy set by the Board of Trustees.

Audit and Risk

A key sub-committee of the main Board of Trustees, which provides enhanced assurance and rigorous oversight of the museum's financial performance and overall risk management.

Time commitment

Trustees are required to contribute a total time commitment of up to ten days per year.

Trustees are required to attend the four Board meetings held each year; two meetings per year are held at PHM in Manchester and two meetings per year are held at a central venue in London. There is an annual general meeting (AGM) alongside an ordinary Board meeting each year. It is expected that Trustees attend meetings at the museum in person, and meetings in London in person or online. Reasonable expenses will be reimbursed.

To be effective, Trustees need to commit the necessary time to read and respond to relevant papers in advance of meetings. In addition, Trustees may be asked to take on specific tasks and activities, or to join or lead a subgroup on issues where they have expertise. Trustees may also be asked to undertake training, either to align with PHM's organisational priorities or to develop relevant skills and knowledge required to fulfil the role.

Person specification

We need a Board of Trustees with **varied and diverse backgrounds, experiences, and skill sets**, who are committed to ensuring that the organisation can deliver on its vision, mission and aims. Applications are welcome from everyone who matches the essential criteria.

We are always looking to recruit new members to our Board of Trustees with a broad spectrum of skills to support the general work of the museum. We particularly welcome applications from people with lived experience that is reflective of our diverse audience, collection, and programme of activity, including disabled people, people from a global majority background, and young people under the age of 25.

Essential

- Knowledge/understanding of PHM and its work, and ability to demonstrate or empathise with its mission and values
- Ability to think strategically and/or creatively to help drive innovation and change
- Knowledge of museums and/or cultural venues, the context in which they operate, and the challenges they are currently facing
- Good knowledge of relevant networks in Manchester/North West England
- An understanding of both the role cultural venues can play and the potential opportunities for delivering economic growth to the region
- Demonstrable commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion
- An understanding of the purpose and role of a Board of Trustees and an ability to work constructively with fellow Trustees and wider stakeholders
- Ability to act as a visible ambassador and advocate for PHM, including confidence in supporting fundraising events, and engaging with major partners, donors, and supporters

We will also be looking for Trustees with skills to support specific areas of the museum's work; [check out the latest opportunities](#).

Terms of appointment

Terms of appointment are based on three year terms, up to a maximum of three terms (nine years in total).

Application

If you would like to apply, please return the following information by email to hr@phm.org.uk:

- CV
- Supporting statement of no more than two sides of A4, setting out how you meet the person specification criteria

Each application will be assessed against the criteria outlined in this document.

There is no fixed deadline for applications, we will review applications as they are received and aim to respond to potential candidates within four weeks of receipt of your application. Interviews will be held in person where possible.

To arrange an informal chat with either a Trustee or a member of our Senior Leadership Team, please contact hr@phm.org.uk.