

Cement Fields

New Art North Kent



Chair of the Board of Trustees

Recruitment Pack - Large Print

July 2024

Deadline for expressions of interest: 9am Monday 9 September 2024

Introduction

Cement Fields is looking to recruit a new Chair of the Board of Trustees to lead the organisation, for an initial term of three years.

This is an exciting time for Cement Fields as we continue to transition away from a biennale model to work more deeply and exploratively, responding to local needs and contexts across North Kent. As we develop our organisational culture and ways of working, we are borrowing ideas from permaculture, creating a different sort of relationship with our communities and artists; a non-extractive, generous cultural ecology rooted in trust, mutual care and support, that truly embraces the spirit of experimentation.

We are seeking a new Chair to work with our existing board and staff to lead this work, supporting us to deliver our transformative artistic programme along the Thames Estuary.

About Cement Fields

Cement Fields is a visual art organisation working collaboratively with artists and communities to create ambitious new art along the Thames Estuary in North Kent.

Our programme is an exploration of place and process, defined by the multiple shifting landscapes that stretch along the Thames from Dartford to Whitstable. It's a place where boundaries blur, where busy urban centres sit alongside industrial sites, where waters slow

in marshes and wetlands, and the major arteries of rivers and roads connect rural areas and seaside towns.

We invite artists, participants and audiences to use North Kent's unique contexts to ask radical questions and explore new ideas. Through this interaction we create experimental new art and develop imagination, skills and pathways in creative careers.

Our organisational values are:

- Generosity – providing a warm welcome to all, ensuring all aspects of our work are inclusive and accessible.
- Experimentation – committed to supporting the creation of experimental, ambitious work; encouraging artists, participants and audiences to explore new ideas and take risks.
- Complexity – embracing challenge and difference; committed to conveying the complexity of artworks and ideas in accessible ways without losing nuance.
- Generative – committed to moving away from traditional extractive models, towards longer term ways of working which embody care and respect and develop over time.
- Exchange – encouraging and enabling collaboration between colleagues, artists, communities and partners; valuing and respecting expertise, welcoming different points of view.

Cement Fields is part of Arts Council England's National Portfolio (NPO), with core confirmed funding in place from 2023-2026.

Our Team

Full details about our staff and Trustees can be found [on our website](#).

Becoming Our Chair

The role of our Trustees is to provide governance to the organisation, ensuring that we achieve our ambitions and vision, and undertake best practice in all areas of our business activities. This includes a move to embed the same slow, regenerative approaches of our curatorial practice within our organisational culture.

The Chair provides strategic leadership to Cement Fields' Board of Trustees, ensuring that it governs the charity effectively, and delivers our identified vision and mission. Our Director reports directly to the Chair and they oversee the governance and financial management of the company, ensuring good practice in fulfilling its charitable aims and financial sustainability.

Our current Chair is looking to stand down in September so we are hoping to appoint as soon as possible in order to facilitate an appropriate handover.

The role includes:

- Supporting the development of the vision and mission of Cement Fields
- Leading the board, ensuring that it fulfils its responsibilities for the governance of the organisation.

- Supporting planning and chairing quarterly board meetings and annual Away Days.
- Ensuring that all members of the board are actively involved in decision making, and optimising the relationship between the board, staff, and other stakeholders.
- Acting as a spokesperson and figurehead for Cement Fields, when necessary.
- Supporting Cement Fields in its relationships with key funders, in particular Arts Council England.
- Attending public and stakeholder events in the region on behalf of Cement Fields.
- Maintaining an awareness of Arts Council's expectations of NPOs in relation to good governance. Actively engaging with and understanding Arts Council England's Investment Principles and Outcomes, setting and monitoring targets with Cement Fields' Director and Deputy Director.
- Providing leadership and pastoral support to Cement Fields staff, where suitable and necessary.

What we're looking for:

- Experience of being a trustee (you don't need to have been a Chair before).
- A good understanding of Cement Fields artistic practice and our strategic purpose.
- A strong knowledge and understanding of, and networks within, North Kent.
- A strong personal commitment to social justice, championing equality, diversity, inclusion, and belonging.
- An inclusive leadership style, being able to inspire and support everyone to participate on an equal footing.

- An ability to listen and engage effectively, being comfortable with challenge and debate, able to encourage that in others whilst fostering a collaborative board environment.
- An appetite for change and for shaping the organisation through a period of transition and exploration.
- An ability to champion Cement Fields' work in person, through personal networks, both locally and nationally.
- An ability to be responsive when advice, support or authorisation are needed.
- Ability to understand and contribute to financial reporting, supported by our current board and treasurer.

The board meets at least four times a year, usually in the afternoon on weekdays. Board meetings are normally conducted online via video conferencing, however one board meeting a year will be in person, held alongside a Team Away Day.

As a Board Member you agree to the following:

- Attend meetings, in person or online.
- Be fully up to date with the business of the company.
- Be well prepared for each Board meeting.
- Offer timely feedback and responses when requested.
- Attend Cement Fields public programme, where possible.
- Advocate for the organisation where and when appropriate.
- Undertake a term of office for an initial period of three years.

Remunerations and Rewards

By becoming a Cement Fields Trustee you are supporting our small team to create ambitious new art along the Thames Estuary, enabling lasting impact for North Kent. We believe the role is rich and rewarding and offers significant professional development opportunities.

Our Trustees contribute their time as volunteers and therefore do not receive a fee. However we provide reasonable expenses to cover all in person board meetings and Away Days.

We continually consider how we invest in our board, and are collectively exploring and developing an empowering progressive leadership model, which the Chair has a key role in enacting.

If there are any barriers to you becoming Chair, we would welcome a conversation to discuss how we might mitigate these.

Next Steps

If you are interested in becoming our Chair, please email John Hartley at johnh@cementfields.org. John is on hand to answer any questions you may have.

To apply for the role, please send the following to johnh@cementfields.org:

- A current CV
- A short expression of interest (no more than one side of A4) telling us what you can contribute to the board, how your skills

and experience equip you for the role of Chair, why you'd like to join, and what you'd like to get out of the opportunity

- A completed equal opportunities form ([download here](#))

Expressions of interest may also be made via video or audio.

Please record your responses to the application questions and send the file to johnh@cementfields.org.

Closing date for expressions of interest is 9am Monday 9 September 2024

Informal interviews will be held with shortlisted candidates in the week commencing 16 September. The successful candidate will be informed by Friday 27 September 2024.

Cement Fields is an equal opportunities employer. We acknowledge the structural exclusion in the arts, and are committed to equality of opportunity for all, and are actively striving to make our organisation more inclusive. We actively encourage expressions of interest from those who face barriers to employment in the arts. We guarantee to interview anyone with a disability whose application meets the person specification. We welcome flexible working arrangements, including flexible working hours and job shares.

Access

This recruitment pack is also available in large print and as an audio version at cementfields.org.

If you need this information in any further formats, or if you need to submit your information in a different format to be able to apply, or

require us to make any other reasonable adjustments to assist you in the recruitment process, please contact John at johnh@cementfields.org.

Image: Hannah Rennie & Shepherd Manyika, *Which Way Is Up?*
(workshop at Highsted Grammar School), 2024. Photo: Sam
Wainwright

Cement Fields

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Charity Number: 1122498

Company Number: 6272178

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