

TOWNER

Trustee Recruitment Pack
2024



TOWNER

Our Vision

Transforming lives and communities through the arts.

Our Mission

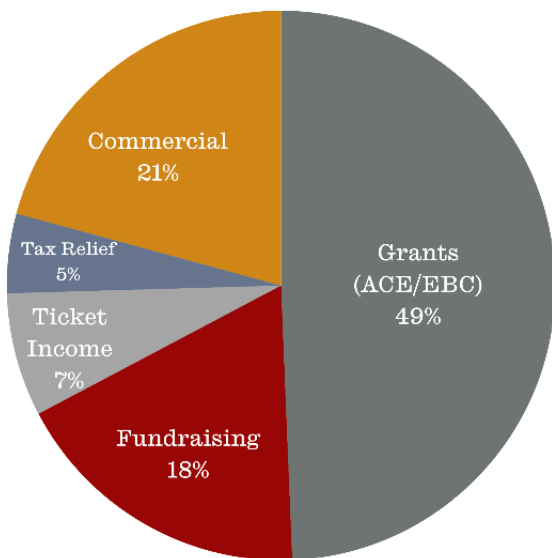
Proud of our unique place in Eastbourne where the coast and South Downs meet, we create space for experiences that connect, challenge and inspire.

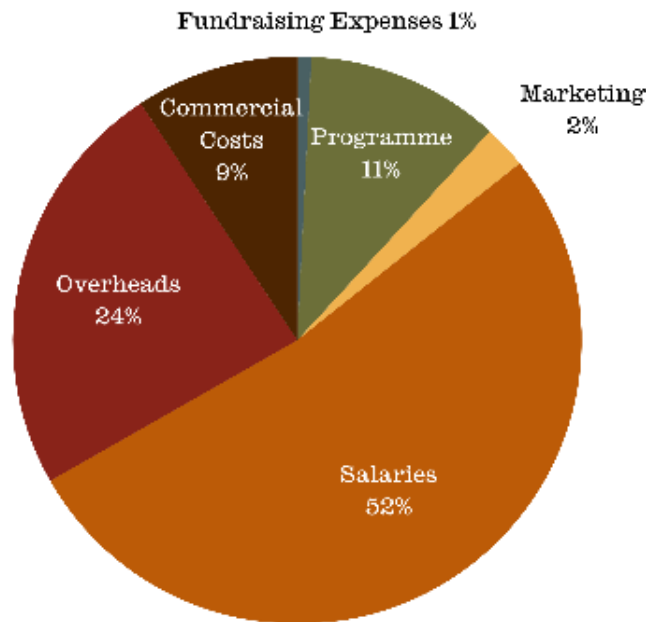
Towner has been collecting and exhibiting contemporary art for 100 years. It is the largest gallery on the South East coast and presents an ambitious programme of temporary and collection-based exhibitions, events and engagement activities for 200,000 visitors each year. A winner of Art Fund's Museum of the Year 2020, Towner is recognised for balancing its programme with being a free and open community resource. Founded in 1923 by Alderman Towner to create 'an art gallery for the people', this founding ethos remains at the heart of its mission.

Through its 100 year history, Towner's Collection has recorded the artistic voice of the gallery, Sussex and the wider national/international art community and defined the Sussex story through some of the 20th/21st centuries' key artistic movements including arts & crafts, abstraction and more recently moving image, installation and performance. It reflects artists' evolving interests and concerns around landscape and the environment, including current issues of identity, contested borders, migration and climate. Best known for its modern British art - including the largest and most significant body of work by Eric Ravilious - it also has a growing collection of international contemporary art.

The Learning and Engagement Programme, 'Making Together', works with individuals and groups, providing artist-led opportunities for exploring creativity and supporting health & wellbeing for families, children and young people, both directly and through schools and community partners. Activities focus on creative process to encourage exploration and ideas generation to build imagination and confidence which can bring benefit to all areas of life.

Towner Income and Expenditure Profile 2023/24





Recent Achievements

During 2023, the gallery celebrated its centenary with Towner 100, a year long of exhibitions and events that looked forward to its next 100 years as well as celebrating this important milestone. Exhibitions included *Unseen* of recently acquired collection works and *The Living Collection* which considered Towner’s broad and varied history of collecting and exhibiting. *Barbara Hepworth: Life and Art* saw a major survey of the artist’s most celebrated sculptures and rarely seen drawings and designs.

As the centrepiece of the centenary programme, Towner hosted the Turner Prize 2023, the world’s leading prize for contemporary art. The exhibition was supported by Eastbourne ALIVE, a celebratory community programme focussed on engaging young people in public art, dance, music and community events in collaboration with partners. The first of Arts Council England’s Place Partnerships, it commissioned 14 public art works from diverse emerging artists and established artists. Over 3000 pupils and over 2000 Year 9 students visited Turner Prize and attended artist-led workshops in schools to promote confidence in engaging with contemporary art and develop creative skills.

2024 Programme

From May until September 2024, following Turner Prize, the first large-scale exhibition of printmaker Emma Stibbon’s work, *Melting Ice / Rising Tides*, explores the impact on the Arctic and Antarctica from climate change and the direct consequences for Sussex’s eroding coastline through Stibbon’s beautiful drawings, prints and sculptural installations.

Artist Maria Amidu's commissioned artwork *26,778,780 minutes*, a new paper and text-based installation will be acquired for the collection as part of a partnership with Iniva (Institute of International Visual Arts) which aims to diversify gallery collections and workforces.

Into the winter, a major show *Drawing the Unspeakable* will include major loaned works and those from Towner Collection which is curated by David Dimbleby, Towner's outgoing chair, and his daughter Liza Dimbleby, senior faculty & board member of the Royal Drawing School.

The Learning & Engagement programme continues its gallery-based programme of creative sessions for children and families, schools and adults living with mental health conditions. It is expanding activities in Hampden Park with a new project for 12-18 year olds to promote positive mental health.

Towner is continuing to support Newhaven Enterprise Zone, helping to deliver a cultural strategy and action plan towards Newhaven's 25 year sustainable development plan.

Looking Ahead

During this strategy period up to 2027, we aim to continue growing Towner's leadership role in driving cultural place-making in and around Eastbourne: supporting sustainable economic growth and providing tangible benefit for diverse people and places across Sussex and the south coast.

The organisation is entering a period of growth, enabling it to better support its communities through commissioning and other artist opportunities, skills development



initiatives and creative engagement activities for children and adults; especially those from Eastbourne's most disadvantaged communities.

Our Goals

1. Build a legacy of Towner 100 and the Turner Prize 2023 to continue changing perceptions of Eastbourne, build audiences and raise aspirations of its communities
2. Bring broader voices to our board, workforce and volunteers to strengthen organisational culture to broaden access to inclusive cultural experiences and provide an inclusive public space and workplace.
3. Engage with diverse groups, including disabled, the global majority and socio-economically disadvantaged, to increase access to creativity, provide skills & training & deliver health & wellbeing benefits
4. Promote dynamic business modelling for financial sustainability through partnership, commercial innovation and fundraising and developing new ways of working
5. Embed a commitment to sustainable practices across the organisation

Black Robin Farm

Working with Eastbourne Borough Council as its lead cultural partner, we will deliver a new culture & education centre at Black Robin Farm set in the South Downs National Park close to Towner, significantly increasing access to art & culture for all audiences from 2025/26. With initial investment of £12m from the Levelling Up Fund, the farm will connect 100,000 visitors & community participants each year with outstanding nature, landscape and culture. It will link Eastbourne, the Downland and coastal sites of Beachy Head, Birling Gap and Cuckmere Haven, creating a new Eastern gateway to the national park. Drawing on the 1m+ national/international visitors to the Seven Sisters cliffs, it will offer access to public realm artworks, artist commissions/residencies, exhibitions and events, creative activities and courses, skills and training and artist/maker events.



The Trustee Role

It is ten years since Towner became an independent charity in 2014 during which time David Dimbleby, the Chair of the Board of Trustees, has overseen its transformation from a local gallery with 60,000 visitors per year to a significant cultural institution with a national and international profile which attracted over 200,000 visitors in 2023. He will be stepping down from the Board in September 2024.

This is an exciting time to join Towner's Board as the gallery enters a new phase in its history as a central player in the development of the story of Sussex. You will be part of a team of trustees who support Joe Hill, CEO and Director, and the Executive Team in shaping Towner's strategic direction.

We are committed to being a genuinely inclusive and accessible organisation by involving broader voices in our board and workforce from underrepresented groups, including disabled, the Global Majority and/or socio-economic disadvantaged. We have made considerable efforts over the past few years to work towards this goal through the strategic leadership of the Diversity Task Group, but we need to do more.

We are seeking individuals, including those with lived experience of disability (including d/Deaf, neurodiversity), to help us deliver our organisational priorities through a track record in, direct experience or a strong understanding of the following areas:

- Finance /accountancy particularly charity experience
- Legal
- Commercial innovation
- Property/estate management
- Organisational development
- Local grass roots /community involvement
- Practising artist

Trustee Responsibility

The key responsibility for board members is to advise and support the delivery of Towner's vision, mission and strategic goals through the following activities:

- Attend four regular board meetings a year
- Advise on, and help develop, organisational strategy and delivery, including policies that fall within their expertise

- Ensure compliance with governing documents and the law
- Ensure accountability to funders and stakeholders
- Advocate for Towner’s projects and open doors to potential supporters
- Maintain proper fiscal oversight, signing off and scrutinising reporting against budgets
- Oversee the management of risks to Towner’s governance, operations, funding, reputation, and external risks
- Stay up to date with current thinking and issues impacting the cultural sector to support best practice
- Exemplify Towner values through ways of working and interacting
- Maintain effective board performance (including appointing new board members)
- Effectively work with and respect the expertise of the Towner staff team.

Person Specification

We would like trustees to have the following skills and attributes:

- A commitment to Towner’s mission and willingness to take on an important ambassadorial role for Towner
- An ability to think strategically and creatively
- Good, independent judgement
- A willingness to speak confidently and openly
- An understanding of the legal duties, responsibilities and liabilities of trusteeship
- An ability to work as a team member and to take decisions for the good of Towner
- An understanding of safeguarding
- A willingness to undertake training
- A willingness to meet the minimum time requirement

Time Commitment

Board meetings are held at the gallery 4 times a year (in March, June, September and December), currently on Mondays 11am to 1pm (under review). Trustees are expected to attend in-person as far as possible. They may be asked to provide additional expertise and support, depending on their skills and responsibilities, to the Senior Management Team in specific areas, or to a particular work stream. Board papers and reports are circulated a week before the meeting. Typically, these can take 30 minutes to read.

How to Apply

Towner is committed to promoting a diverse and inclusive workplace where everyone can be themselves and succeed on merit. We strive to ensure that opportunities to work and develop at Towner are open to all. We treat all job applications equally, regardless of age, disability, gender identity or expression, race, ethnicity, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation or any other equality characteristic.

We particularly encourage applications from those who experience racism, disabled people or those from lower socio-economic backgrounds, as these groups are currently underrepresented in the cultural sector and within the organisation.

As a Disability Confident Committed Employer, we are committed to offering an interview to candidates with a disability who meet the essential criteria for the role.

If you would like an informal conversation about the position with a member of the Executive Team, please contact michele.monteith@townereastbourne.org.uk

Please send your application, by CV and a covering letter, by a voice recording or video, outlining how your skills, knowledge and experience link to the areas highlighted and how they will strengthen Towner's board, to michele.monteith@townereastbourne.org.uk

If you need this information in a different format, or need help with the application, please get in touch by email or call 01323 434667.

Application deadline: 11 August 2024



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