

HAY CASTLE

Chair of Trustees

Recruitment Pack



CONTENTS

1. Welcome
2. Our Mission
3. Our Board and Committees
4. Notes for the next Chair: My Experience by Sue Malthouse
5. What's Involved
6. What We are Looking For
7. Eligibility
8. How to Apply

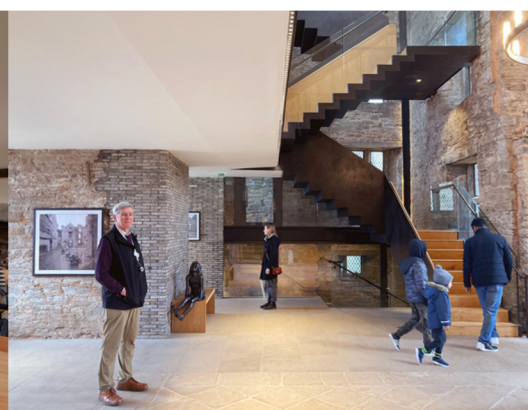
WELCOME

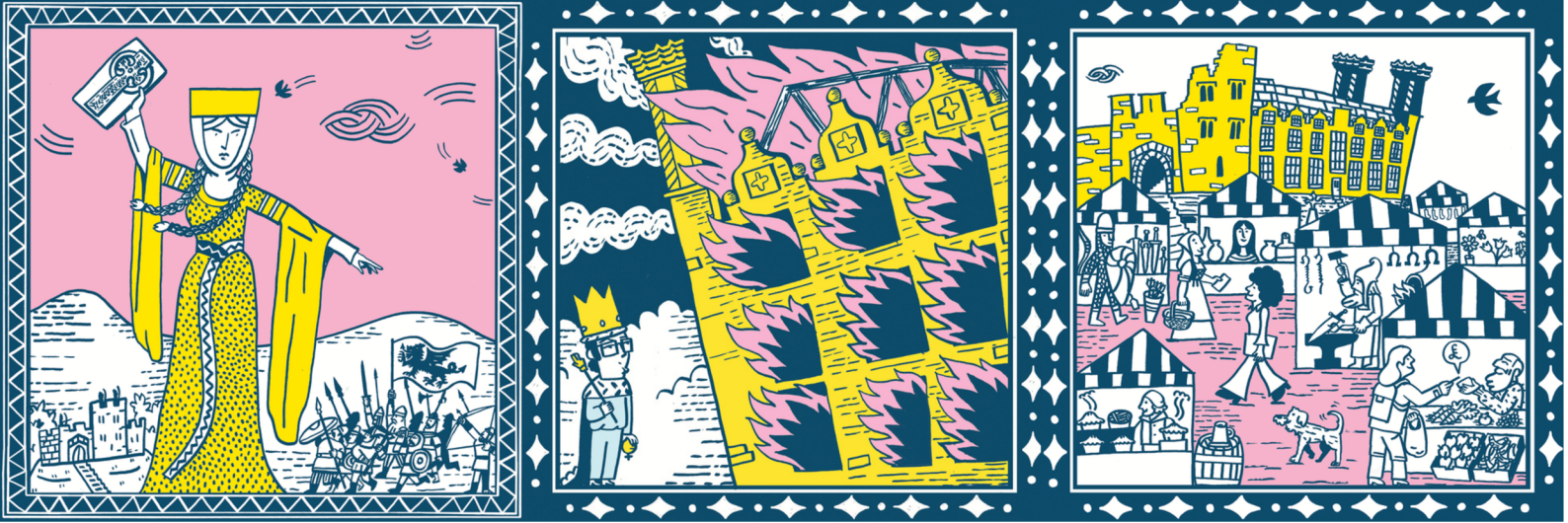


Welcome to Hay Castle. Border fortress, mansion, contemporary art space, learning centre, meeting place - and very special visitor destination.

It's a castle of surprises. Outside it's a medieval, Jacobean and Victorian building - all at once. One that sends mixed signals of forbidding walls and welcoming windows above a ziggurat of topiaried terraces to the town it belongs to.

Enter from its tranquil bailey with its beehives and rookery, and you're into a sleek, striking interior volume with five floors of cantilevered levels. With a vaulted gallery where fresh planed oak meets ancient hammer beamed roof, to an outside-in Hall, a lookout platform atop the tower, rock-walled dungeons beneath - and a destination café in between.





Opened by the King in 2022, and nominated Wales' 'building of the year 2024', Hay Castle's luminous and serene interior belies a chaotic history that began over 900 years ago when Matilda, a seven-foot giantess, built it (overnight, according to legend) and very nearly ended when six-foot iconoclast and inventor of Hay-as-book-town, Richard Booth, snoozily let the whole place catch fire in 1977.

Rescued from ruin through a £7.5m restoration, the castle now thrives as a cultural hub for visitors from Borders and beyond, powered by a small team of dedicated professionals and volunteers, and guided by a board of charity trustees.

We're currently seeking a new Chair of these trustees. Someone who will lead the castle into the next, perhaps most exciting - and hopefully less turbulent - chapter in its history.



OUR MISSION: 'Not the Same Old'

As you may gather from the above, Hay Castle is not your usual heritage attraction. Which creates a practical problem for us.

How do you describe - and more importantly, shape - a place that combines a long and unruly history, with a constantly changing mix of events and exhibitions, and a central place in one of Britain's most distinctive towns?

It can't be held together by a neat description, nor by a glib mission statement. What will hold a far more complex mix of 900 years' history, often disputed and mostly disorderly; a programme that ranges from exhibitions to events to the simple experience of being here; and a role within a town that is itself vibrant, independent and hard to define?

To make sense of all this - and to keep it moving in the same direction - we work to a single organising idea, that in a pleasingly contrarian way defines what we are not.



HAY CASTLE. Not the Same Old

At Hay Castle, we may be steeped in history, but we're not stuck in it.

We care for, protect and continue to investigate this remarkable building, but as a living landmark, never a relic.

So, we celebrate our years in ways that are sometimes playful, always surprising, thoroughly contemporary and often joyously offbeat.

This castle is more than lovingly restored old stuff. It's a stage for ideas. A playground for the curious. In the dungeon, it's a vault for our history. In the Clore Space, a showroom for learning. And on the top floor, an oasis for quiet enquiry.

From dungeon to tower top, diversions, animations, marble runs, costumes and automata bring stories and learning tumbling to life.

Our all-year arts programme includes fairs and festivals, music, theatre, opera, outdoor cinema, circus and pyrotechnics, as well as the unexpected.



We stage major exhibitions with partners from the Tate to eminent illustrators and crafts people, bringing global excellence to our border communities.

We conduct creative workshops that help people in and try their hand.

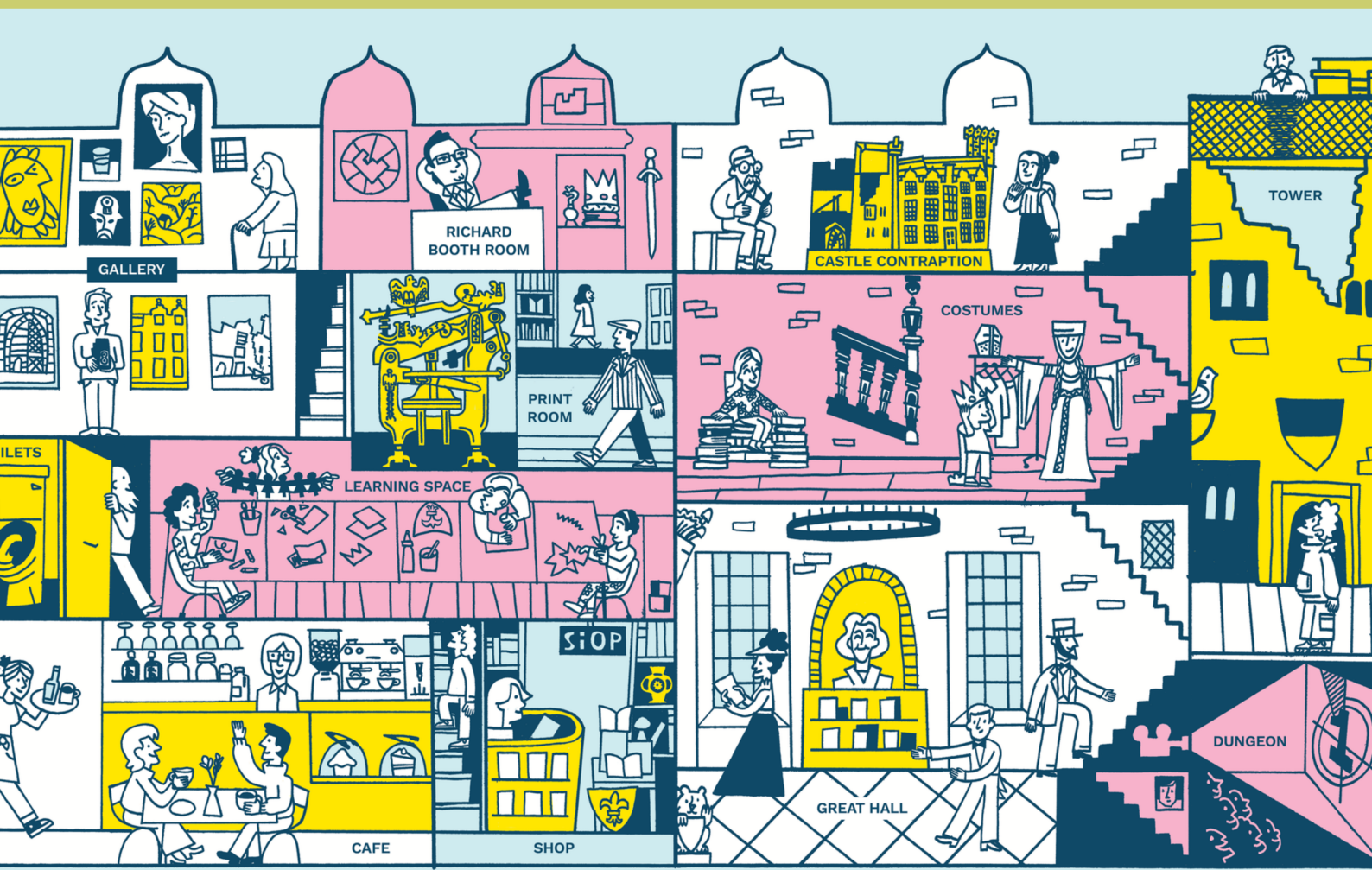
And we get the young stuck into things that will stay with them. Stone working. Printing. Even money smarts. Real experiences that build valuable skills.

And all this in an inspiring space that's always evolving, room by room, idea by idea.

Rescued, restored and renewed, Hay Castle is where heritage meets imagination, invention, idiosyncrasy and irreverence.

We're not bound by tradition, but shaped by it - to be forever fresh, always original, alive to the present; and excited by what we may become.

If all this sounds like something you'd like to lead, you may well be the person we're looking for!



OUR BOARD & COMMITTEES

We're a small, committed board of eight volunteer trustees with professional backgrounds. Most local. All active. Board members are both charity trustees and company directors.

Current Board members

Alison Bevan – Senior museums sector leader with extensive management experience across the South West. Assists with fundraising strategy and the development of new initiatives.

Robert Collingwood – Architect with experience in London and Prague across new build, adaptation and conservation. Former trustee of St John's Smith Square. Now helping shape new capital projects within the castle estate.

Ed Fox – Communications strategist with 25 years in the heritage and environment sectors. Leads on media, partnerships and aspects of the castle's artistic and communications strategy, and plays a key role in the Fungi Town festival.

Chris Fyles – Former KPMG partner and tax specialist, with deep expertise in VAT. Oversees financial performance and ensures the castle maximises available tax advantages.

Fiona Howard – Former Mayor of Hay and latterly Head of Hay Primary School. Supports the recruitment and wellbeing of the castle's volunteer community.

Sue Malthouse – Outgoing Chair and former commercial solicitor specialising in education, charities and the public sector. At the castle, she supports commercial partnerships, oversees recruitment and remuneration, and advises on IT.

Alice Sherwood – Writer with a background in academia, business and broadcasting. Former trustee of the London Library and Hay Festival Foundation. Oversees audience and stakeholder engagement, and shapes the annual Weekend of Mistakes symposium.

Karen Usher DL – Former HR entrepreneur with extensive not-for-profit and start-up experience. Trustee of Dorstone Relief in Need and The Spectris Foundation and Founder/Ambassador for NMITE, Britain's newest university. Supports strategic development and provides HR guidance.

The Board meets quarterly, with much of its work carried out through three committees, each meeting every two months. These are:

Finance, Operations & Estates (FOE)

Acts as the Audit committee, overseeing financial controls, monitoring performance and ensuring resources are deployed effectively.

Governance

Ensures the Board has the right skills and that governance is strong. Also oversees pay and benefits for staff.

Creative, Communications & Fundraising (CCF)

Keeps the castle's programme fresh and engaging, oversees its communications and ensures fundraising remains effective and sustainable.

Our Executive Director, Tom True, attends Board and Committee meetings.

Other Working Groups

Board members also meet with staff on a semi-formal basis to progress specific initiatives.

Trading Company

Like many charities with a commercial operation, Hay Castle has an associated trading company whose profits are covenanted to the charity. The trading company is run by a board of two directors who are also trustees.



NOTES FOR THE NEXT CHAIR

My Experience by Sue Malthouse



The role of the Chair is not prescribed by the charity's governing document so to a large degree it will be yours to shape.

That said, there are certain core competencies and skills required (set out in the later sections of this brief) but I'd say, one absolute is the ability – no, talent or indeed genius – to work well with others.

I became Chair in 2021 with the restoration in full swing. Historically, my legal background was what was needed to negotiate with contractors, architects, and planners. With some fabulous colleagues, battle-hardened with restoration project experience, we came through with what you see now and what will be yours: a world-class institution fit for its future.

We have also built our team, identifying and forging talented individuals to bring their talents and ideas together. Our team is a strong but still prudently slender thread. They work incredibly hard and every one of them is a key to the castle's success. Treasure them.

Governance was a necessary initial challenge, and we have set up processes and procedures appropriately for a charity of our size. The Chair's role now has shifted from running agendas to ensuring space for other trustees and staff to make an impact. We are in a good place, with the Trustees developing strategy and maintaining oversight whilst allowing and expecting the director and his team to have free rein implementing that strategy. Currently a high priority- and one which will fall squarely to you – is to continue developing and communicating a unique Hay Castle identity, culture and personality.

This has been without question a most demanding yet rewarding experience. Hay Castle is now superb, secure and solvent: well-positioned to take its rightful place as one of the nation's brightest and most distinctive cultural beacons.

I think I leave it in good shape for the person who follows – and do so with high expectations of what comes next.

Over to you!

Sue Malthouse

WHAT'S INVOLVED

The role of Chair comes with a meaningful time commitment. We are, effectively, beginning our third phase of operation (phase 1 being the initial restoration and phase 2, finishing now, a period of consolidation and development of operational understanding).

Our next phase will focus on:

Building our reputation regionally and nationally, including the development of our friends and patrons' programmes

Supporting and growing a resilient internal team of paid staff and volunteers

Enhancing our growing relationship with the town of Hay and its community

Continuing to protect our historic infrastructure

Maturing the financial operations of the castle to create a balanced portfolio of trading, charitable and statutory income

Our next Chair should come well-armed with the following skills and experience:

Leadership - required to conduct four (4) Board meetings a year and attend five (5) annual meetings for each of three committees and any sub-committees of which the Chair is a member

Preparation - for meetings so these are productive, informed and results-oriented;
Governance - experience ensuring and overseeing proper guidance, reporting, transparency, and accountability

Collaboration - skill in supporting close work with the Director, Office Manager, other Trustees, staff and volunteers to stay updated and connected

Troubleshooting and Problem-Solving - working with the Director on to identified challenges and new ones as and when they arise

Representation - leading and encouraging strong participation by Trustees and further participation by Friends of the castle, attending events and representing the Castle Trust and its work, encouraging and developing trustees as ambassadors, and sustaining relationships beyond the organisation by helping to connect Hay Castle to partners, collaborators and supporters whose involvement will advance its mission

The Chair, like all trustees, is both a trustee of the charity and a company director. The position is unpaid. Trustee indemnity insurance is provided.

The Chair role offers a rewarding opportunity to lead and shape the Castle's future. The time commitment is flexible, with an average of around 30 hours per month (slightly over a full day a week), though some months may be quieter or busier than others.

WHAT WE ARE LOOKING FOR

We are looking for an experienced, inspiring and dedicated individual who shares our portfolio of passions for historic preservation, the arts, community engagement, and education.

Core Competencies:

Trustee Experience: Prior experience as a Trustee or in a similar leadership role in a not-for-profit environment

Strategic Leadership and Vision: Proven experience leading teams and the ability to look beyond immediate challenges to support and articulate a strategic vision that inspires board, staff and volunteers

Meeting Facilitation: Experience designing purposeful agendas and chairing meetings that are efficient, inclusive and outcome oriented

Governance: An understanding of not-for-profit legal and ethical standards and a commitment to accountability and transparency

Interpersonal & Communication Skills: Demonstrated ability to cultivate and deliver a trust-based "sounding board" relationship with Director. The ability to read people, manage conflicts and foster a positive and safe board culture

Ambassadorial Skills: Representing the organisation externally to donors, partners, and the community with credibility, authenticity and enthusiasm. Play a key outward-facing role, using networks and influence to bring people into the orbit of Hay Castle Trust – fostering partnerships, collaborations and alliances that enhance the Trust's reach, relevance and sustainability

Financial Literacy: The ability to interpret financial reports, oversee budgets, and ensure long-term fiscal health

Passion for the Arts: A strong interest in contemporary arts practice

Highly Desirable Skills and Experience:

Growth Management: Experience in performance management and guiding organisational growth

Fundraising Experience: Participation or leadership experience in the development and maturation of fundraising for organisational sustainability

Business Management Experience: Proven experience in running or managing a business, including oversight of operations, strategy, and finances

Historic Preservation and/or Arts and Education Advocacy: An appreciation for the unique mission and programmes at the castle.

ELIGIBILITY

The role of Chair of Hay Castle Trust carries great responsibility locally, and is of growing significance beyond in the region. It's a unique opportunity to contribute to the shaping of what aims to be one of the most distinctive cultural centres in Britain.

There are a few formal considerations before applying:

Legal Requirements:

- You must be at least 18 years old
- You must not be disqualified under the Company Director's Disqualification Act 1986
- You cannot have any unspent convictions for offences, including related to dishonesty or deception
- You cannot be an undischarged bankrupt

Upholding Public Trust:

While not a public appointment, the Chair should adhere to the Seven Principles of Public Life established by the Nolan Commission (Selflessness, Integrity, Objectivity, Accountability, Openness, Honesty, and Leadership). These principles are fundamental to good governance and ensure trust from the Hay Castle community.

This appointment will be subject to two satisfactory professional references.

If you align with these requirements and share our values, we wholeheartedly encourage you to apply and play a key role in shaping the future of Hay Castle.

Diversity & Inclusion:

At Hay Castle Trust, diversity and inclusion are core values. We believe that a diverse Board reflects the communities we serve and fuels our ability to contribute to the creative community we work with so closely. We encourage applications from all backgrounds and are committed to ensuring an inclusive application process. Please don't hesitate to contact Tom True or Karen Usher if you have any questions or require assistance in applying.



HOW TO APPLY

Please submit your CV along with a covering letter explaining why you believe you'd be a successful Chair for the Hay Castle Trust.

In your covering letter, please outline your relevant experience, skills, and motivation for applying, ensuring that you address the core competencies and leadership qualities we are seeking in this role.

Timetable:

- Applications open – May
- Interviews – Early June
- Decision – Early June
- Appointment – June

Submit your application by email:

- Applications should be sent to Karen Usher, Trustee, kusher@me.com titled *Chair Application* in the subject line please
- Informal questions can be forwarded to Karen at the address above or Tom True, Director, tom.true@haycastletrust.org
- Closing Date for Applications: Open until May 31, 2026, or until appointment made, as needed

