

About Milton Keynes Arts Centre

Milton Keynes Arts Centre (MKAC) was established by Milton Keynes Corporation in 1974 and incorporated as a limited company (No. 02618453) in 1991. A registered charity (No. 1007409), MKAC's legal purpose is to provide opportunities for people in Milton Keynes to work with artists, to experience and participate in art activities, with the object of improving people's quality of life, to promote social equality and to advance education.

As one of the earliest arts organisations to be formed in the then-new city of Milton Keynes, for almost 50 years, from its base in the historic 18th century grounds of Great Linford Manor Park, MKAC has provided artist studio spaces and specialist production facilities - including in ceramics, silversmithing and woodworking. Here, we have offered multiple entry points for diverse communities to become involved with our work, to learn life-enhancing skills through working with professional artists, to meet new people and to feel part of a creative and inclusive community. We are also one of the largest employers of artists in MK.

Since its establishment, the city MKAC was created to serve has changed radically. Today, MK is one of the fastest growing towns and the third most successful economy in the UK. 12 areas in the city are amongst the country's 10% most affluent. Yet, 9 are amongst the 10% most deprived and MK has been given the dubious moniker of 'the capital of youth homelessness'. Increasingly, MKAC's work has focussed on supporting people who are left feeling marginalised or vulnerable in this rapidly changing city. Working in partnership with artists, community groups and other cross-sector organisations in the city, we specialise in co-developing projects that are designed to address, through creativity, the local and global issues affecting people's lives: from climate change to poverty, loneliness and social mobility; and through this to support environmental responsibility, social cohesion, wellbeing and skills development.

In 2018, MKAC's work was rewarded when we were invited into Arts Council England's National Portfolio of Organisations and were offered an annual grant towards our programmes of activity. In 2022 we successfully applied for a continuation of this funding, which is in place until 31 March 2026.

This funding comes at an exciting period in MKAC's evolution. For the past two years, we have been revisioning and restructuring our organisation in order to:

- Focus our resources on the organisation's core charitable purpose: ensuring that our work prioritises MK communities in greatest need of support.
- Ensure that MKAC is a key agent in MK Council's ambition to 'harness the transformational power of culture' in addressing future challenges – locally and globally.

- Develop more ambitious, higher quality projects with artists and communities, which leave a lasting positive legacy on people's lives.
- Enable us to go out to MK communities, rather than relying on them coming to us, so helping to overcome geographic, economic and social barriers to cultural engagement and ensuring that our work is relevant and fully reflects the diversity of MK.
- Reduce our carbon imprint through an innovative reinterpretation of what an arts centre is and can be.
- Make MKAC more resilient and sustainable for years to come.

We recognise the value of the specialist facilities we have on our Great Linford site, and the pleasure they bring to the many people who attend our courses. But we recognise too that the courses are a drain on the organisation's limited human and fiscal resources; and that their beneficiaries do not reflect our priority users. With poor transport links across MK, many of the communities we work with tell us they cannot reach us, and those that do cannot afford to pay the course fees we are compelled to charge towards their costs. Meanwhile, most of our heritage site is inaccessible to people with restricted mobility and preconceptions of the site and its associations with white privilege can be a barrier.

From 1 April, MKAC will end its course provision and close the building in which they currently take place. We have then reduced and restructured our staff team in order to develop fewer but better resourced artist projects in collaboration with, and sited within, the communities we seek to serve rather than relying upon them coming to us.

Projects currently in development include 'Home', led by the artist Maddi Nicholson, working in collaboration with residents of Beanhill and Netherfield; 'I Live Here' led by the Czech artist Katerina Seda, who is developing with residents of Eaglestone a new navigation system; 'Calling the Body to Attention' : a dance project led by Yewande YoYo Odunudi through working with people of African and Caribbean heritage; and art and nature programmes specifically developed to support adults and young people experiencing poor mental health.

Our vision is of an Arts Centre not bound by buildings or geographical location; but one that is future-looking, dynamic and fleet-footed: able to respond to need across MK and to invest its resources where they have greatest impact whilst reducing our own negative imprint upon the environment.

We are now seeking new trustees who can support us in achieving this vision.

For further information, go to: miltonkeynesartscentre.org

JOB DESCRIPTION: Trustee (Voluntary)

Overall Purpose

The Board of Trustees are responsible for the overall governance and strategic direction of Milton Keynes Arts Centre, developing the organisation's aims, objectives and goals in accordance with the governing document, legal and regulatory guidelines.

Main Responsibilities

- Ensuring Milton Keynes Arts Centre complies with legislative and regulatory requirements, and acts within the confines of its governing document (its Articles of Association), charity law, company law and other relevant legislation or regulations.
- Maintaining sound financial management of Milton Keynes Arts Centre's resources, ensuring expenditure is in line with the organisation's objects, and investment activities meet accepted standards and policies.
- Contributing actively to the board of trustees' role in giving firm strategic direction to Milton Keynes Arts Centre, setting overall policy, defining goals and setting targets and evaluating performance against agreed targets
- Safeguarding the good name and values of Milton Keynes Arts Centre.
- Promoting and developing Milton Keynes Arts Centre in order for it to grow and maintain its relevance to society.
- Interviewing, appointing and monitoring the work and activities of the Executive Director.
- Ensuring the effective and efficient administration of the charity and its resources.
- Acting as a counter-signatory on charity cheques and any applications for funds, if required.
- Maintaining absolute confidentiality about all sensitive/confidential information received in the course of trustees' responsibilities to the charity.

In addition to the above statutory duties, each trustee should use any specific skills, knowledge or experience they have to help the board of trustees reach sound decisions. This may involve leading discussions, focusing on key issues, providing advice and guidance on new initiatives, evaluation or other issues in which the trustee has special expertise.

Minimum time commitment

Trustees are expected to attend all board meetings. Board meetings are held four times a year and usually take part in the evening from 6pm at Milton Keynes Arts Centre. Papers are distributed a minimum of one week in advance of the meeting.

In exceptional circumstances, trustees may be called to Extraordinary meetings. EGMs are held for the consideration of non-recurring business that requires approval by the board of trustees.

Trustees can claim out of pocket expenses incurred in travelling to meetings.

Accountable to

As the Board are responsible and liable for the governance and functioning of the charity, they are accountable in varying degrees to a variety of stakeholders, including: service users, members, funders, the Charity Commission, and Companies House. Close attention must be given to the governing document to ascertain the type of organisational structure and the range of interested parties.

For further information see: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-essential-trustee-what-you-need-to-know-cc3/the-essential-trustee-what-you-need-to-know-what-you-need-to-do>

How to Apply

Please send a CV and covering letter in the first instance to Milton Keynes Arts Centre's Director, Fiona Venables at fiona@miltonkeynesartscentre.org or, for further information, call 01908 608108.

PERSON SPECIFICATION: Trustee (Voluntary)

Milton Keynes Arts Centre's Board of Trustees is now seeking new Trustees with skills and experience in one or more of the following three areas:

- **Formal education sector**
In particular, we are seeking somebody with a good understanding of schools, the national curriculum and safeguarding.
- **Commercial Development**
We are seeking someone who is enterprising and entrepreneurial, able to support MKAC in developing new income-generating strands of work.
- **Art & Design Professional Practice**
We are seeking creative professional practitioners in Milton Keynes, with a good understanding of the specific opportunities and challenges of working as an artist in Milton Keynes.

We particularly encourage applications from individuals who are underrepresented in the cultural sector and who reflect the diversity of Milton Keynes communities with whom the Arts Centre works.

We also require:

- **a commitment to the mission of Milton Keynes Arts Centre**
- **a willingness to devote the necessary time and effort**
- **integrity**
- **strategic vision**
- **good, independent judgement**
- **an ability to think creatively**
- **a willingness to speak their mind**
- **an understanding and acceptance of the legal duties, responsibilities and liabilities of trusteeship**
- **an ability to work effectively as a member of a team and to take decisions for the good of Milton Keynes Arts Centre**