



CHAIR OF TRUSTEES RECRUITMENT PACK

FRIENDS OF THE HARRIS
REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER: 503726



Friends of the Harris Overview

Friends of the Harris is a registered charity (503726) that supports the work of The Harris Museum, Art Gallery & Library.

Based in Preston, Lancashire, The Harris is a magnificent Grade I Listed Museum, Art Gallery & Library which first opened to the public in 1893 and celebrated its 130th birthday this year.

The Friends of the Harris have been supporting the work of the Harris since 1974 through fundraising activities and advocacy.

In recent years, the Friends have funded a range of exhibitions, conservation and community-focussed work, and have generously contributed over £800,000 towards Harris Your Place, a major capital project taking place now to re-invigorate the Harris for future generations.

There are currently over 300 members of the Friends, with plans to increase the number of members once the Harris reopens in 2025 with an attractive membership scheme that provides a range of benefits for members. The Friends' income is made up from membership subscriptions, online and visitor donations, ticketed events and activities, and income generated from investing reserves.

Trustees manage the Friends' organisation strategically and work closely with staff at The Harris to develop a Friends fundraising strategy that can support the Harris' exhibitions, projects and acquisitions.

With the reopening of the new Harris in 2025 and an aspiration to increase fundraising, it is an exciting time to join Friends of the Harris as the Chair of Trustees.

You can find the Friends' Charity Commission entry and annual returns on the [Charity Commission website](#).



The Harris Overview

The Harris is a leading museum, library, and contemporary art venue in the North West. Located in the city-centre, the Harris is more than a monumental building: it is a centre for Preston's cultural and civic life, a source of inspiration, pride, creativity, and enjoyment for our communities. For 130 years, the Harris has been a landmark, welcoming both local people and visitors.

The Harris is owned and managed by Preston City Council, in partnership with Lancashire County council and with support from a wide range of partners including Friends of The Harris.

Our collections consist of paintings, drawings, prints, sculpture, glass, ceramics, costume and textiles, history, photography and digital art.

Many of the works of art and historical objects are of regional, national and international significance.

The annual visitor figures prior to March 2020 reached 360,000 per year on average.



Harris Your Place Overview

The Harris is currently closed for major refurbishment and the Harris team are temporarily working from offices in The Guild Hall, Preston until 2025.

The Harris is Preston's cultural hub. For over a century, The Harris has served as a cherished space where communities unite and where world-class culture thrives.

Recently, the Harris embarked on an ambitious reimagining journey for The Harris Your Place project. Thanks to generous donations from funders and supporters including Friends of the Harris, this £16 million project has enabled the Harris to be restored and reimagined for the 21st-century audience, transforming into a dynamic community, cultural, and learning space. When the Harris reopens our visitor numbers will increase and we will welcome 450,000 visitors per year.

The Harris transformation has been guided by the ideas and feedback of local communities. We strive to make the Harris more inclusive, carving out new spaces for creativity, play, learning, socialising, and volunteering, including dedicated areas tailored for young people.

Through collaborative efforts with local communities, we aim to ensure that The Harris tells the story of Preston's diverse history and culture — a place where local people can truly see themselves and have their voices heard.



Chair of Trustees Role Summary

The Chair leads the Friends Board of Trustees meetings and is the public face of the Friends of the Harris. The Chair ensures that the Trustees abide by the constitution and that responsibilities such as sending in the annual Charity Commission return are carried out. The Chair works closely with staff at the Harris to develop fundraising, strategies, campaigns and applications, support Harris projects, helping the Harris to deliver its ambitious programme of exhibitions and events, care for its collections and provide the best possible experience for visitors.



Core Responsibilities

Leadership

- Be willing and able to lead the Friends of the Harris, ensuring maximum impact for its beneficiaries.
- Ensure that the Friends of the Harris is well governed and that it operates in line with its charitable objects and within charity law.

Clarity of Purpose

- Ensure decisions made advance the purpose and values of the Friends of the Harris.

Constructive Relationships

- Maintain an open and supportive relationship within the Friends Board of Trustees where each Trustee can speak openly about concerns, worries and challenges.
- Develop a positive, effective and constructive working relationship with the Senior Leadership Team at the Harris.
- Act as a spokesperson for the Friends of the Harris when appropriate.
- Act as an ambassador for the work of the Harris.
- Represent the Friends of the Harris at external meetings and events where appropriate.
- Maintain close relationships with key decision makers at local, regional and national level.
- Considered Decision Making
- Lead the Friends Board of Trustees in identifying the key governance decisions to be made.
- Ensure well rounded and carefully considered strategic decision making.
- Manage potential conflicts of interest and ensure that there is appropriate transparency.



Cohesive Committee

- Approve the annual cycle of the Friends Board of Trustees meetings and agendas.
- Chair and facilitate Friends Committee meetings, monitor decisions taken and ensure they are implemented.
- Liaise regularly with the Treasurer to maintain a clear grasp of the Friends Board of Trustees financial position and ensure full and timely financial transparency and information is disclosed to the Friends Board of Trustees.
- Ensure that all Trustees are fully engaged, contribute to meetings and support the work of the Friends of the Harris and the Harris.
- Support the recruitment, selection and appointment of Trustees to the Friends Committee, ensuring that the development and training of Trustees is appropriate and effective.
- Encourage positive change, where appropriate, and address and resolve any conflicts within the Friends Board of Trustees.
- Foster and maintain constructive relationships with and between Trustees.
- Work closely with the Senior Leadership Team of the Harris to give direction to Friends Board of Trustees fundraising.
- Ensure that Friends Board of Trustees decisions are taken in the best, long-term interests of the Friends of the Harris.

Considered Decision Making

- Lead the Friends Board of Trustees in identifying the key governance decisions to be made.
- Ensure well rounded and carefully considered strategic decision making.
- Manage potential conflicts of interest and that there is appropriate transparency.



Person Specification

Essential

- Commitment to the Friends of the Harris charity objects and willingness to devote time to carry out responsibilities.
- Experience of Committee/Trustee work and an understanding of the legal responsibilities and liabilities of a Trustee
- Experience of identifying and engaging stakeholders, e.g. local councilors, funding groups etc.
- An enthusiasm for the work of the Harris, its programmes and collections.
- Able to think strategically and focus on key issues
- A general background in strategy, governance, finance, HR, fundraising
- Financial acumen, able to understand financial reports
- Good communication and interpersonal skills
- Ability to build on existing networks and act as an ambassador for the work of the Harris

Desirable

- Prior experience of Trustee role
- Experience of charity finance
- Experience of charity fundraising
- Leadership experience through a period of change
- An understanding of the challenges facing the culture sector and charities.
- Confident in general use of IT and digital processes.

Time commitment

- The Board of Trustees meet 4 times per year with meetings taking place during early evenings to help make sure all Trustees can attend as many meetings as possible.
- The Annual General Meeting usually takes place in April.
- In addition to Committee meetings, other contact – usually by email or telephone – will be necessary.



Terms of Office

- Trustees are appointed for a 3-year term of office, with renewals for 2 further terms to a maximum of 9 years.
- This is a voluntary position, but reasonable expenses can be reimbursed by the charity.
- Trustees are required to be members of the Friends of the Harris throughout their term of office.

Application Process

Applications will be reviewed by a panel comprising Friends of the Harris trustees and staff at the Harris.

If you are interested in applying for the Chair of Trustees position, please contact Timothy Joel, Head of Culture for Preston City Council for an informal discussion: t.joel@preston.gov.uk

Applicants should submit an up-to-date CV along with a supporting letter outlining their skills and experience in relation to the role description and their reasons for being interested in the post to harrisadmin@preston.gov.uk no later than 5pm on Friday 1st December 2023.

Successful appointments are made following an interview and standard DBS check.



Social Media

#HARRISYOURPLACE



@Harris Museum, Art Gallery & Library



@harris_museum



@HarrisPreston



@HarrisMuseumandArtGallery

THEHARRIS@PRESTON.GOV.UK
WWW.THEHARRIS.ORG.UK