

# POLKA

Where Theatre Begins



Appointment brief  
Appointment of Trustee and  
Chair of Finance Working  
Group  
September 2022

# The Quick Summary

Polka is a wonderful and important charity based in Wimbledon and dedicated exclusively to children. Our newly refurbished building houses two theatres, both indoor and outdoor playing areas, a café, and a shop.

We are now looking for a new Trustee who will have specific responsibility for overseeing our Finance and Governance. Working with the rest of the Board they will help ensure that we have a clear vision and that we achieve our charitable aims in a prudent way.

The role is crucial, rewarding and fun. The Finance Chair will be a key member of a collaborative Board and work alongside a relatively new and highly motivated executive team.



# Introduction

Polka is a pioneering national theatre for children based in Wimbledon, South-West London. The first UK venue to be created exclusively for young audiences, the theatre celebrated its 40th anniversary in 2019 and remains one of just a handful of dedicated children's venues in the UK. Presenting a year-round programme of new work made at the theatre, visiting shows, and Creative Learning activities for 0–12-year-olds, Polka continues to pioneer developments in children's theatre, nurture artistic talent, and maintain an international reputation while serving local communities.

Polka is a charity and Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation. Its mission is to empower children to navigate their world through inspirational theatre and creative experiences. Since opening its Wimbledon home in 1979, over 3.5 million children, parents, teachers, and carers have been through its doors. Over 100,000 people visit the theatre each year and a further 18,000+ take part in creative learning and community activities. Polka involves children at every stage of the creative process and leads the way in Early Years theatre for under 6s, including as part of the EU funded Mapping programme.

Inclusivity is and always has been an integral part of the company's offer. The theatre reaches a wide geographic audience and offers opportunities for all children and families regardless of age, ability, culture, or background, to engage in theatre. In 2007, Polka pioneered relaxed performances for children on the autistic spectrum, a model which has been replicated across the cultural sector. Polka's free ticketing scheme enables children from deprived areas to experience live theatre, and there are a range of initiatives to provide opportunities for children with particular access needs or who live in challenging circumstances to participate in its activities.

This is an exciting time to be joining Polka. In 2021 Polka reopened after a major redevelopment. Polka has re-imagined what a dedicated children's theatre could and should be for young audiences and their families. The organisation's state-of-the-art building now serves as a vibrant hub for future generations, right at the heart of its community.



# Vision and Values

Polka's mission is to 'empower children to navigate their world through inspirational theatre and creative experiences.' We are looking for people who are conscientious, proactive, and reliable in their approach to work with a willingness to learn and ability to adapt to changes and share Polka's vision:

*Improving children's lives, bringing communities together,  
creating ground-breaking theatre.*

Polka's values are:

**Child-centred:** placing children at the heart of everything Polka does

**Community:** engaging our diverse communities of children, families, educationalists, and artists

**Excellent:** pioneering, adventurous, offering the highest quality

**Memorable:** creating magical, meaningful experiences

**Inclusive:** welcoming, accessible, nurturing, supportive, representative

For more information about Polka Theatre and our work, please visit

[www.polkatheatre.com](http://www.polkatheatre.com)

Polka is funded by Arts Council England, London.

Registered charity number 256979





# The role

## PURPOSE OF THE ROLE

The Chair of the Finance Working Group's role is to maintain an overview of Polka's financial affairs, ensure its financial viability and sustainability and see that the charity maintains proper financial records and procedures in line with accepted accounting practice. The Chair of the Finance Working Group with other Trustees, must also hold the charity "in trust" for current and future generations by ensuring that Polka has a clear vision, mission and strategic direction and is focused on achieving these.

As with all Polka's governance roles, the term of office for the Chair of the Finance Working Group is three years and tenure is usually up to six years, with an option to extend this on an annual basis for up to a further three years.

## TRUSTEE RESPONSIBILITIES

The Chair of the Finance Working Group will also contribute as a key member of the wider Board of Trustees to:

- Work closely with the two Chief Executives and members of the Senior Management Team to determine the charity's mission and vision and establish the strategic direction and business planning cycle.
- Enhance and protect the charity's reputation and profile.
- Ensure that Polka acts as a responsible employer.
- Promote and progress Polka's environmental, social and governance activities, including around equality, diversity, inclusion, and access within Polka.
- Act as an ambassador, advocate, and connector for Polka in its search for supporters, partners, and funders within the public and private sectors.
- Ensure that the charity's governance is of the highest possible standard.
- Ensure that Polka has a risk framework that allows it to identify major risks, make decisions on how to respond to those risks and make an appropriate statement regarding risk management in the annual report.
- Engage with Polka output e.g., occasionally attending productions and other events



## FINANCE CHAIR DUTIES

- Chair the Finance Working Group, reporting to the Board;
- Support the Board in ensuring their strategic decisions taken by Polka are informed by financial considerations and support our financial objectives
- Support the Board to act in a financially responsible way;
- Support the Board in ensuring Polka's financial viability and sustainability;
- Ensure Polka's financial position is transparently set out;
- Ensure that proper financial records and procedures are maintained.
- Lead the Board to ensure that Polka has an effective risk management framework;
- Support the Board in ensuring that the charity meets its governance requirements.



# Person specification

The Chair of the Finance Working Group should be trustworthy, impartial, collaborative and an effective communicator. They should also:

- Have an appropriate financial qualification or relevant senior level experience with strong financial analysis skills (e.g. working as a Finance Director or as an accountant);
- Have experience in budgeting and planning;
- Have an eye for detail and be able to ensure decisions are taken and followed up;
- Be available to be contacted for ad hoc advice.





# Terms of appointment

This is an unpaid role, though reasonable expenses may be claimed.

There are four Board meetings per year. This Trustee is expected to lead the Finance Working Group which would involve a further 4 meetings a year. It is estimated that time commitment will be on average the equivalent of 1 day per month.

Polka Theatre is committed to creating a workforce which is representative of our society and to bringing together those with a variety of skills and experiences to help shape what we do and how we work. We are particularly keen to hear from people with ethnically diverse backgrounds and those who identify as disabled. Applicants with disabilities who opt in are guaranteed interviews where they meet the essential requirements of the role as set out in the role description.

## Equal Opportunities

Polka's commitment as an equal opportunities employer means it is keen to encourage applications from people of colour, people across the gender spectrum and people who self-identify as disabled, who are under-represented in this sector.

Polka's newly redeveloped venue is accessible for wheelchair-users and prams/buggies; most spaces can be accessed step-free.

As a children's theatre Polka is generally open during the daytimes and weekends, rather than evenings, making it well suited to people who have families and/or other caring responsibilities.

As an important part of the local community in Wimbledon and the London borough of Merton, Polka is also well suited to people who live nearby and are looking for roles locally, rather than travel into or through central London.







# How to apply

Saxton Bampfylde Ltd is acting as an employment agency advisor to Polka Theatre on this appointment.

Candidates should apply for this role through our website at [www.saxbam.com/appointments](http://www.saxbam.com/appointments) using code **EZZDA**.

Click on the 'apply' button and follow the instructions to upload a CV and cover letter, and complete the online equal opportunities monitoring\* form.

The closing date for applications is noon on Friday 30th September **2022**.

For an informal conversation please reach out to Ed Bampfylde who is supporting this recruitment process at [ed.bampfylde@saxbam.com](mailto:ed.bampfylde@saxbam.com).

\* The equal opportunities monitoring online form will not be shared with anyone involved in assessing your application. Please complete as part of the application process.

## **GDPR personal data notice**

According to GDPR guidelines, we are only able to process your Sensitive Personal Data (racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs, trade union membership, genetic data, biometric data, health, sex life, or sexual orientation) with your express consent. You will be asked to complete a consent form when you apply and please do not include any Sensitive Personal Data within your CV (although this can be included in your covering letter if you wish to do so), remembering also not to include contact details for referees without their prior agreement.

# Saxton Bampfylde

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