



Hello!

Watershed is looking to appoint up to five new trustees to join our board. As we journey towards our 40th birthday (next June) it is an exciting time for the organisation and we would like to bring in new people to work with us on how we reinvent Watershed for the next 40 years.

This is Watershed's first open call for trustees and this pack details what it is like to be on our board, what being a trustee involves and a bit of information about Watershed.

We welcome questions from anyone who is interested. Please email me at [clare.r@watershed.co.uk](mailto:clare.r@watershed.co.uk) to arrange a chat.

The application process is detailed at the end of this document.

## **About Watershed**

Watershed produces accessible and inclusive cultural experiences that fire up the imagination and bring people together.

We are a leading cross-art form organisation in the UK, demonstrating a track record of innovation and risk taking over 39 years.

Watershed is recognised internationally as a leading centre for film culture, for its distinctive talent development and innovation programmes and as Bristol's cultural meeting place of choice. Our Café and Bar provides a welcoming city centre hospitality offer with a thoughtfully sourced menu and an emphasis on vegetarian and vegan dishes.

We are a world-leader in art and technology practice. We established the Pervasive Media Studio in 2008 and its ethos of collaborative innovation has grown an international reputation and network. We gift space to over 164 residents and have a rich network of over 450 creatives.

The next generation of creative talent is developing its voice through our ground-breaking engagement programmes such as Rife Magazine, Bristol's youth-led online platform.

## **About the Board**

Watershed currently has 10 Trustees, drawn from a range of sectors and backgrounds including publishing, design, finance, media, law and business. The board is chaired by James Touzel.

**Balance and Belonging** - our [staff and board survey](#) - shows the demographics of all of Watershed's current teams – the board is detailed on page 16.

There is a Finance Sub group made up of four trustees that looks at our financial performance in detail, and two trustees belong to our organisational inclusion group.

## **Board Meetings**

Board meetings currently take place online, though we will be looking to move to a mix of digital and physical participation as people prefer. We meet four to five times a year to discuss performance, business planning and opportunity. Meetings currently last for around three hours.

We are exploring how we can use more engaged facilitation with the board. We LOVE questions - we ask for trustees to give us honest feedback, to make it clear when something has not been communicated clearly and to ask ALL the questions - big and small.

We will adjust our current practice to support access requirements.

Board papers are sent out a week in advance - we currently rely heavily on the written word but recognise this format might not suit everyone.

We are happy to meet in advance to talk through board papers and finances, and welcome email feedback and questions at any time We take minutes of every meeting - so you can catch up with what was said and what decisions have been made.

## **Being a Watershed Trustee**

Our Trustees have the overall legal responsibility for Watershed - which is a registered charity. The Board ensures Watershed has a clear strategy, and that our work and goals are in line with our charitable purpose. Our board is not engaged with the day-to-day running of the charity, which is led by Watershed's Executive team.

The Board provide governance and insight and have headline responsibility for ensuring we are run safely and sustainably and that we comply with:

- company law
- employment law
- health and safety legislation
- equal opportunities
- laws around working with children and young people

The Board also has collective responsibility to ensure we remain solvent and we are making best use of our funds, our building, and other assets like our reputation.

In line with charity law and best practice, we ask all trustees to let us know about other interests, associations and roles, to ensure there is no conflict of interest. We sometimes work with trustees in a paid capacity or a partnership / collaboration, and we ensure this is done transparently and appropriately and with the full knowledge of the rest of the board.

In line with charity law, we are not able to pay trustees for their time but we can cover reasonable expenses to attend meetings including travel, access and childcare costs.

Our board members work with us for an initial term of three years. After which they may wish to step down, or be voted back onto the board.

### **What is it like to be on Watershed's Board?**

*'Watershed cares about you, how you feel and how you wish to be treated and cared for. Watershed also recognises that it has to undergo change in order to live up to its values. That may include teaching and learning, developing and flourishing. All these things bring about a clientele that feel that sense of belonging. I am a trustee because the people make the place, and Watershed is for the people'. Sherrie Eugene-Hart*

*"I am a Watershed trustee because things that are vitally important to the richness and diversity of life are often the most fragile and warrant passionate care and attention. The culture at Watershed is special and it is the soil within which all of the organisations activities and ambition is rooted in. If you care about the arts as a mainspring of humanity and believe in the possibilities when people of very different backgrounds and skills align to achieve something exceptional then Watershed will feed you as you feed it*

*with your experience, interests, talent and values.”* Stephen  
Gatfield

*“Watershed plays a pivotal role in the cultural life and energy of  
Bristol - it's the place to discover new and imaginative things,  
whether that's amazing cinema, creative technology or new  
thinking from a wide range of people. It's been a great journey over  
the years, helping shape and support the organisation - fully  
informed, never overburdened with responsibility, and always  
listened to.”* Paul Appleby

### **What are we looking for?**

We are looking for Trustees who are excited about our work but also happy to challenge us in order to help us grow. We would like trustees who can contribute to our thinking, strategy and business planning and align themselves to our values.

You don't have to have worked with an organisation like Watershed before. We welcome trustees from inside and outside the culture sector and would love to hear about your transferable skills.

Successful applicants will be curious and generous in their thinking, committed to inclusion and social justice and as good at listening as they are at sharing their thoughts. They will understand the tensions and challenges of balancing creative ambition with operational reality and fixed resources.

We are hoping to appoint four to five new trustees. We will welcome all applications, and you do not need a specific area of specialism to apply, but we are particularly hoping to hear from people with expertise and experience in:

- Cultural cinema
- Hospitality
- Environmental sustainability
- Finance/Business development
- Inclusion and social impact

We believe our work will be stronger with greater board diversity and welcome applications from those who bring balance to our current trustee team. Page 16 of Balance and Belonging - our [staff and board survey](#) shows the current demographics of our board



We are particularly hoping to appoint a trustee with lived experience of being Deaf and/or Disabled to increase representation in this area.

Whilst we hope that trustees will feel comfortable to bring their whole self to their work with us, we expect all members of our Board to consider inclusion in all aspects of what we do, and do not expect individuals to represent specific groups or demographics.

## **Applications**

If you are interested in becoming a Watershed Trustee [please complete this application form](#).

Candidates will be scored against their ability to demonstrate Watershed's values within their current practice, working life or interests. These are Inclusive, Open and Honest, Make Things Happen, Entrepreneurial, Celebratory.

Please also complete the online [equal opportunities monitoring form which is anonymous](#), will not be shared with the shortlisting panel and will only ever be reported in summary form.

**The closing date for all applicants is 09:00 on Thu 9 Dec. We will contact all candidates by the Mon 13 Dec to let them know if they have been long-listed.**

Watershed will work with candidates to ensure their access needs are met during the recruitment process and will ensure access requirements do not factor in decision making.

We welcome questions from anyone who is interested, and would like to know more before they apply or would appreciate support with understanding how their transferable skills might apply to Watershed.

Please email me at [clare.r@watershed.co.uk](mailto:clare.r@watershed.co.uk)

We are also happy to send our business plan if you would like to know more. We will share our business plan and financial statement with all longlisted applicants before we meet.

### **Assessment**

A staff team will longlist candidates. We will longlist everyone from a background that is underrepresented in the culture sector (for example if you are from a community that experiences racism or you are a disabled person, or you did not go to University or had free school meals as a

child), so please make this clear in your form, if you would like us to know this about you.

**We will hold shortlisting interviews by video with staff on Thu 16 and Fri 17 Dec.**

**Interviews will take place on Thu 6 and Fri 7 Jan 2022.**

A mixed staff team will meet with everyone on the longlist and then recommend a shortlist for a formal interview with Trustees. All interview questions will be shared with candidates in advance.

### **Our current operating position**

Watershed was thriving before lockdown. Every part of our business was growing, with cinema sales in February 2020 the highest ever on record. We had begun a capital expansion programme to meet rising demand and capitalise on financial opportunity. In 20/21 we experienced a 47% drop in group income (mitigated to 22% by Cultural Recovery Fund and the Job retention Scheme). To remain solvent we furloughed staff, undertook a redundancy process and restructuring, paused our capital developments and cut all expenses that were considered non-essential.

Throughout the pandemic we continued delivering a high quality online programme to audiences, as well as championing events and opportunities in the wider ecology. Our research and talent development programmes continued online and we increased our support for our creative communities with funding, business development and community engagement.

*“Whilst my experience of the studio has so far been 99% online I’ve been blown away by all of the staff’s commitment and efforts during the past months. It’s really commendable that you can still support the residents in such a comprehensive and compassionate way.”* Joe Hill.

The Watershed building re-opened in September and December 2020 and in May 2021, with reduced cinema capacity due to social distancing requirements and reduced hours in order to minimise financial risk. In October and April Watershed secured Culture Recovery Grants which enabled us to reinflate our reserves and invest in key areas of business development.

### Watershed Priorities (from Business plan 21 - 23)

Value	Action	Happening Now or Next?
Inclusive	<p>1. Departmental plans</p> <p>We will work with all staff to support them to embed and deliver departmental inclusion plans, ensuring everyone understands the how their role contributes.</p>	Now
	<p>2. Training</p> <p>We will commission staff training around neurodiversity and gender identities, which have been identified as needs in our inclusion work to date.</p>	Next
	<p>3. All Gender Toilets</p>	Next

	Complete capital upgrade of All Gender toilets to ensure they are welcoming, accessible and fit for purpose	
	<p>4. Partnerships Producer</p> <p>We will seek to employ a Partnerships Producer to re-build our relationships with partner organisations, putting our assets in service to them and growing our audiences.</p>	Next
Open and Honest	<p>5. People Strategy</p> <p>We will complete a new people strategy encompassing all aspects of HR, training and management. We will action feedback from the Balance and Belonging staff survey and stage open discussions around pay transparency and decision-making.</p>	Now

<p>Make Things Happen</p>	<p>6. Hybrid Production</p> <p>Manage, produce and facilitate an R&amp;D pilot that address three areas: 1) the best ways to produce events where global audiences can truly participate 2) pricing, communication and sales models for a new business unit that sells hybrid events and, 3) the best ways of fore-fronting access in 1 and 2</p>	<p>Next</p>
	<p>7. Board recruitment and governance review</p> <p>Board recruitment for trustees</p>	<p>Now</p>
	<p>8. IT review</p> <p>We are undertaking a thorough review of our IT vision and department. Highlighted by covid, and accelerated by the departure of our Head of IT of twenty years in June 2022, we will consider the shape and structure of the</p>	<p>Now</p>

	<p>department and what our needs and direction of travel are going forward.</p>	
	<p>9.        Systems Review and upgrade</p> <p>We had begun a period of planning and fundraising to resource the necessary systems change, but that was stalled by the pandemic. Now over this coming period we will urgently continue this development work and be implementing as much as funding and capacity will allow.</p> <p>The approach to this work will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>·            An update to the 2019 systems review to encompasses workflows associated with hybrid working</li> <li>·            Focus on finance – systems, processes and control</li> </ul>	<p>Now and Next</p>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Identification of the funding to develop and implement new software and systems</li> <li>· Iterative development and implementation of new systems and workflows to improve efficiency and user experience across key business areas identified through the review.</li> </ul>	
	<p>10. International.</p> <p>Review of Watershed’s international work and development of a local-global-local strategy</p>	<p>Now</p>

<p>Entrepreneurial</p>	<p>11. Climate Justice</p> <p>After a period of significant desk and community research, Watershed’s Environmental Emergencies Action Researcher has begun to create a new methodology which addresses the pre-conditions and identified roadblocks needed for deep organisational change when developing an environmental strategy. We have drafted a set of priorities for Watershed to achieve its goals around climate justice, and a plan to work with our community to understand and support their change.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Secure partnerships and funding for R&amp;D around industry standards for climate justice (linking sustainability and inclusion)</li> <li>- Carbon Literacy Training for staff</li> </ul>	<p>Now and Next</p>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Buildings - develop plan for review and lobbying around listed building status and possible environmental improvements.</li> <li>- Development of procurement policy and review of pension provider</li> <li>- Focus impact on making change with our community - Begin pilot study with micro business/freelancers from studio community to understand needs, experimenting with different/flexible options for planning/policies and draw out a sustainability methodology.</li> </ul>	
	<p>12. Increase income</p> <p>We will look for new ways to raise more money and to re-grow our business, alongside finding new ways to work (rather than simply adding more staff).</p> <p>The will specifically include:</p>	<p>Now</p>

	Fundraising: draft strategy shared and actioned	
	<p>13. Membership scheme:</p> <p>We will benchmark and design a paid-for scheme for Watershed audiences to bring in new revenue, without compromising inclusion.</p>	Next
	<p>14. Technology leadership:</p> <p>We will undertake a review of our creative technology work, horizon scanning and interrogation of what our distinctive offer is.</p>	Next

<p>Celebratory</p>	<p>15. Watershed 40</p> <p>Through Watershed 40 we will ask open questions about our past, present and future, inviting others in to help us explore our relevance and design what will come next. We will seek to create safe and equitable spaces to make, feel and disagree. Building on the methodology and learnings of Equitable Futures<sup>[1]</sup> (our lottery funded exploration of how to undertake community-engaged futures-thinking), Watershed 40 will be a cross-departmental exploration of our relevance, vision and values leading up to our birthday on June 2022, when we would like to re-launch Watershed for the next 40 years. Programme strands will be designed with board and staff to inform learning and possibility. Initial strands are:</p>	<p>Now and Next</p>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Community – Models of co-production – who can programme our spaces and how might we work differently with them?</li> <li>· Conflict – what is the role of culture in creating safe spaces for difference and disagreement?</li> <li>· Watershed in the world – international collaboration and environmental sustainability</li> <li>· Watershed in Bristol – what should our role in the local ecology be? How might the city centre change and what role should we play in re-animating it? What kinds of physical spaces might people need post pandemic and how might Watershed change to accommodate this?</li> </ul>	
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<sup>[1]</sup> <https://www.watershed.co.uk/studio/projects/towards-equitable-futures>

Thank you to MAYK – whose call for Trustees formed the basis of this document (with permission).