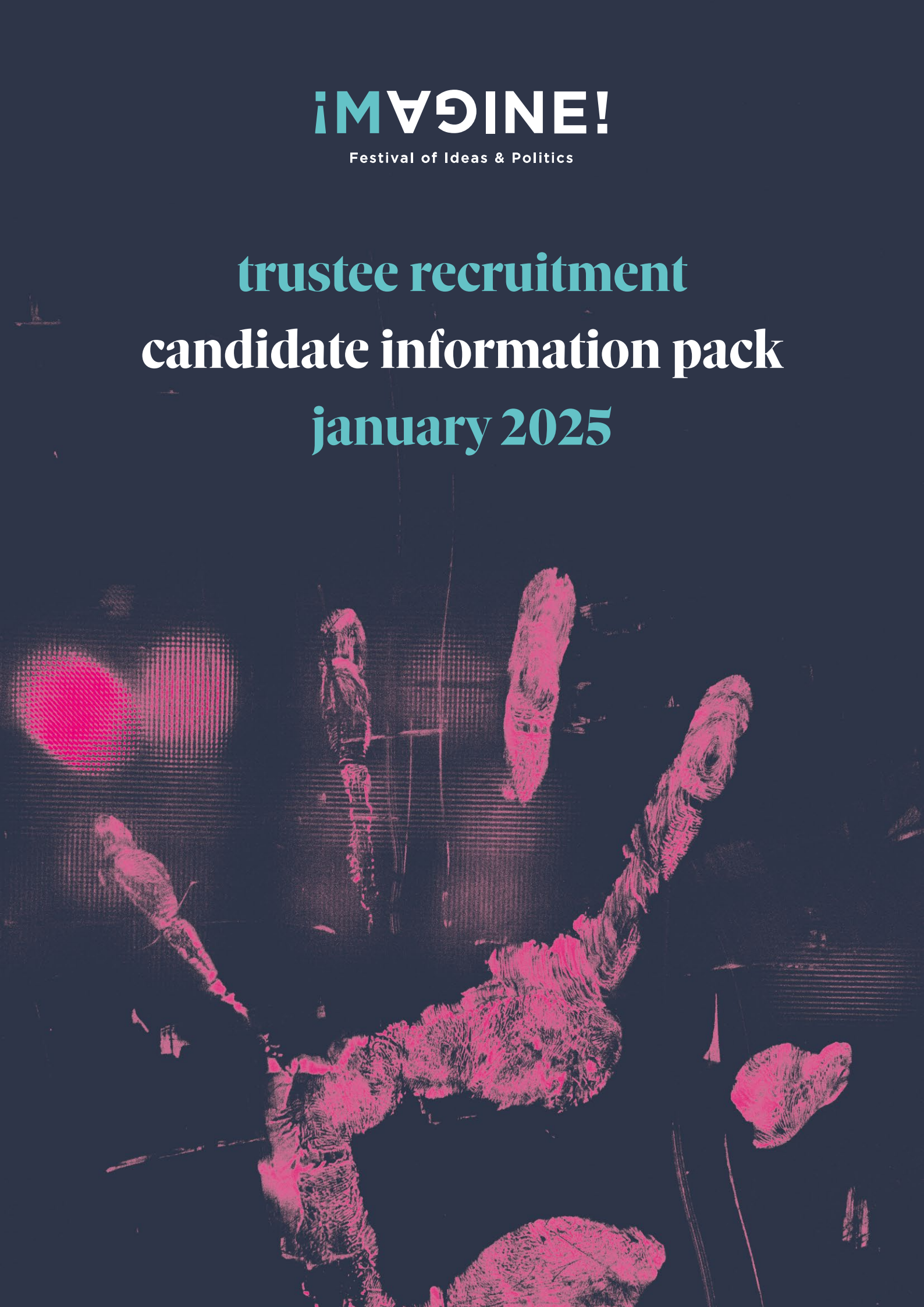


!MAGINE!

Festival of Ideas & Politics

trustee recruitment
candidate information pack
january 2025



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1. Welcome

Thank you for your interest in joining the Board of Trustees for Imagine Belfast. I hope this document will provide the information you need to make an informed decision to apply to join us. If invited, you will be joining the Board at a pivotal moment in the Imagine Festival's evolution. Now in our 11th year, we are keen to refresh our longstanding Board and include new perspectives to support our new Festival Director to deliver our ambitious plans.

While the role of Trustee is unpaid, the return on the investment of your time (around 6-8 meetings per year) is immense. The Imagine Festival is unique on these islands, providing a showcase for stimulating and challenging discussions of contemporary issues affecting us all. The insights provided are invaluable and, as a result, the Festival has grown exponentially in importance to the greater Belfast cultural scene.

While obviously desirable, previous board or committee experience is not necessary; all we ask is that you have a passion for this place and its people.

As an arts festival that focuses on contemporary political and societal issues, our focus in the coming years is the presentation of new ideas on culture and activism with a focus on diversity and inclusion, so we would love to hear from anyone who has experience in this area. Furthermore, with some Trustees due to step down from the Board, we are keen to maintain and even increase our own diversity. We would therefore welcome applications from young people, disabled people, people from a minority ethnic background, and women.

Lastly, you will see in this pack that we are ideally also looking for some specific expertise in human resources, legal issues, financial / business management and fundraising, although this is not an exhaustive list.

We look forward to receiving your application.

Don Leeson

Chair, Imagine! Belfast Ltd.

2. Overview of Imagine! Belfast Ltd.

2.1 Overview, Vision and Mission

Imagine! Belfast Ltd. is a not for profit, limited company (company number NI 614137, charity number NIC 101004).

Our festival takes place in Belfast every March and presents a unique way of imagining the future of this great city – and the wider world. We present high-quality showcases for the discussion of contemporary political and societal issues including new ideas on politics, culture and activism from some of the world's leading contemporary thinkers.

But it's not all brain-melting policy discussions: there's something for everyone in the form of exhibitions, humour, family events, music, theatre, tours, workshops and film and whatever else we can find to fire your imagination.

The festival employs a mixture of curated and distributed programming models and supports partner organisations to deliver a range of performances, screenings, exhibitions, tours, workshops, conferences, debates and discussions.

The **mission** of the festival is to provide high-quality showcases for the discussion of contemporary political and societal issues including new ideas on politics, culture and activism.

Our **vision** is to see the role of the citizen in the cultural and political life of Belfast celebrated and supported. By engaging people in political/cultural discussion and debate in the broadest sense, people not normally involved in politics will be encouraged to participate. The festival is not aligned with any political party or particular interest group.

Now in its 11th year, the festival is organising over 100 events and a number of special projects during 24-30 March 2025.

2.2 Aims

Imagine! Belfast aims to:

- Organise an inspiring annual programme of performance, discussion and debate.
- Encourage the participation of under-represented groups in political/cultural debate and discussion.
- Stimulate reflection and discussion on difficult and controversial issues.
- Promote free speech, good relations, cultural diversity and equality.

2.3 Values

Alongside the principles adopted from the NI Charity Commission Code of Good Governance there are a number of other principles which Imagine! Belfast Ltd. value highly and which we seek to apply through all of our work:

- We value the active participation of people in our work.
- We will work in partnership and collaboration with like-minded individuals, agencies and other interests.
- We will be accessible and ensure participation from all sections of the community in our activities.
- Our festival will be affordable and will include the programming of free events.
- We will strive to challenge, inspire and inform by programming a variety of innovative events.
- We will promote the ideas of free speech, cultural diversity, equality, openness, dialogue, curiosity, internationalism, critical inquiry and aesthetic public culture.
- We will strive to minimise our impact on the environment and promote biodiversity.
- We will support and nurture home grown artists and contributors and the participation of under-represented sections of our community.
- We will promote the value and authenticity of our heritage and cultural traditions.

3. The role of the Imagine! Belfast Board

3.1 Context

Imagine! Belfast Ltd. is an independent, non-profit, registered charity (NIC 101004) and Company Limited by Guarantee recognised by the Charity Commission for NI and HM Revenue and Customs with minimal administrative costs and no offices.

The festival is governed by a voluntary Board of Trustees. The company is managed on a day-to-day basis by a Director, who is appointed by the Board of Trustees. The Director, with the assistance of a part-time Executive Producer, manages the day-to-day activities of the company. The Director reports to the Chairperson and the Board and is line-managed by the Treasurer of Imagine! Belfast Ltd.

Our funders include Belfast City Council, The Arts Council of Northern Ireland, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade's Reconciliation Fund, National Lottery Community Fund, VSB Foundation, Queen's University Belfast, Ulster University, Community Relations Council, Linen Quarter BID and Future Screens NI. Additional income is raised through ticket sales and sponsorship.

The Board is responsible for ensuring that the strategic direction of Imagine! Belfast is consistent with its charitable aims and is pursued energetically, innovatively and effectively.

3.2 Charity Commission Trustee Duties

The Charity Commission has outlined six main duties for 'the Essential Trustee'.

1. Ensure your charity is carrying out its purposes for the public benefit
 - Knowing what your charity can and can't do within its purposes
 - Knowing how your charity is fulfilling its purposes and benefiting the public
 - Awareness of what difference your charity is really making
2. Comply with your charity's governing document and the law
 - Being familiar with your governing document
 - Being up to date with filing accounts, returns and any changes to your charity's registration details
 - Having awareness of other laws that apply to your charity
3. Act in your charity's best interests
 - Making balanced, informed decisions
 - Recognising & dealing with conflicts of interest
 - Ensuring trustee benefits are allowed
 - Being prepared to question and challenge
 - Accepting majority decisions
4. Ensure your charity is accountable
 - Managing risks, protecting assets (reputation) and people
 - Getting the resources your charity needs
 - Having and following appropriate controls and procedures
 - Dealing with land and buildings
 - Responsibility for, and to, staff and volunteers
5. Manage your charity's resources responsibly
 - Using your skills and experience
 - Deciding when you need advice
 - Preparing for meetings
 - Getting the information you need (financial, management)
 - Being prepared in case something does go wrong
6. Act with reasonable care and skill
 - Meeting legal accounting and reporting requirements
 - Being able to show that your charity complies with the law and is effective
 - Being accountable to members and others with an interest in the charity
 - Ensuring that staff and volunteers are accountable to the board
 - Welcoming accountability as an opportunity not a burden

3.3 Trustee Role and Responsibilities

The role and responsibilities of the Imagine! Board are:

- To determine the organisation's mission and strategic direction and ensure that the organisation stays within its remit and within the law, and to ensure that the strategic and operational plans that direct the work of the organisation are approved.
- To involve and take into account the views of all stakeholders of the organisation when arriving at board decisions.
- To ensure effective business planning takes place, and to monitor performance against these.
- To develop and approve clearly defined financial management, control and expenditure policies and procedures for the purposes of ensuring transparent and authorised utilisation of resources.
- To approve financial plans and commitment and ensure regular and timely financial reporting against budget occurs.
- To approve and ensure effective corporate governance arrangements for the organisation are in place, and that these are fit for purpose.
- To ensure that board members have the appropriate suite of skills to comprehend and utilise financial and governance information they are asked to review. To this end, the board should enable this through appropriate and effective induction processes.
- To review and assess the effectiveness and impact of governance arrangements in the organisation on an ongoing basis.
- To ensure that the organisation meets all of its statutory and legal requirements with regard to complying with company law obligations, and that it at all times acts in accordance with the relevant governing documents.
- To ensure that the organisation meets all of its statutory and legal requirements with regard to employment practices, equality obligations and that staff are supported in fulfilling their roles by means of effective staff development processes.
- To ensure that an effective audit by a professionally recognised auditor takes place, approve the annual accounts, and take on board the resulting recommendations of the management letter from the external auditors.
- To select and ensure good management of the Director.
- To ensure that adequate funding is in place, and that productive relationships are maintained with representatives of funding organisations, and that the organisation is represented in these settings through effective engagement with key stakeholders.

3.4 Expectations of Individual Trustees

Each Board Member has the following responsibilities:

- To read the board papers in advance of the meeting
- To attend and contribute to Board, committee and working group meetings, and be punctual or, where attendance is not possible, to submit apologies for non-attendance in advance.
- To prepare for and contribute to Board and working group meetings by suggesting issues for discussion in the agenda and adhering to the agenda at meetings.
- To maintain respect for the confidential nature of issues designated as such by the Chair at meetings.
- To question appropriately but to share collective responsibility for decisions.
- To be well informed about the organisation's purpose, services and strategies, and its operating environment.
- To challenge and support the Director.
- To undertake other functions as required (e.g.) selection panels, working groups.
- To represent the organisation and speak on its behalf when asked to do so.
- To ensure balance is maintained between strategic and operational management.
- To develop and maintain good relationships with key stakeholders of the organisation, in particular the staff and those who the Partnership serves.
- To act with due care and diligence in discharging all legal, regulatory and organisational duties required of a board member.
- To avoid even the appearance of a conflict of interest, and to disclose any possible conflicts to the Chair immediately.
- To uphold and promote the values of Imagine! Belfast Ltd.

N.B. The company will indemnify every Trustee against any liability incurred in successfully defending legal proceedings in that capacity, or in connection with any application in which relief is granted by the Court from liability for negligence, default, or breach of duty or breach of trust in relation to the company.

4. Commitment Required

Why become a Trustee?

Imagine! Belfast is a unique and innovative festival which inspires people in Northern Ireland to discuss and debate the big issues that impact on their lives and which can divide them.

We are seeking several passionate and experienced people to support our work in celebrating cultural diversity, reconciliation, equality of opportunity and the importance of Good Relations.

As a new Trustee you will join the existing board and be accountable for supporting the organisation to deliver its strategic plan, developing future strategic goals and leading the continued growth and profile of the organisation.

What Will We Ask from You?

- The Board meets every quarter for approximately 2 hours. Meetings are currently held on a Monday evening from 7pm – 9pm at a City Centre location. Dates are set for all Board meetings at least 21 days in advance.
- In addition, Board members will be offered to participate in a limited number of key activities in the Blueprint Programme, Arts & Business NI's financial resilience scheme, which has the ambition to help strengthen the arts sector in Northern Ireland for the future.
- The Board may set up ad hoc working groups to look at specific areas of work as required, for which you may be asked to volunteer.
- We aim to hold a strategic planning day (or overnight) in 2025/26 which you will be invited to attend.
- On occasions you may be invited to attend public events to represent the organisation.

5. What We Can offer You

As a Trustee we will offer you the opportunity to make a significant impact towards encouraging the participation of under-represented groups in political/cultural debate, discussion and creative activity in Belfast. From time to time there will also be training and development opportunities, and we will extend invitations to attend industry events and assist us with hosting some high-profile artists.

Becoming a Trustee will give you the potential to develop your own leadership and decision-making skills and to grow your professional networks.

The role of Trustee is unpaid, though reasonable travel and other expenses can be compensated for.

6. Board Recruitment Process

6.1 Person specification

We are committed to making all of our recruitment as accessible and inclusive as possible. We want to be open and transparent about what we are looking for from applicants and ask you to provide us with a short covering email and CV to apply for this role. To maintain and develop an effective Board, we regularly review the Board's membership to ensure there is a good balance of:

- Skills, knowledge and experience
- Perspectives and connections
- Diversity

We balance the need for continuity and renewal by having a maximum tenure of **six consecutive years** for Board members, with a review each year. Each Trustee will have a six-month trial period to see what being on our Board entails and ensure both the company and Trustee are benefitting from the relationship.

When reviewing the skills that are needed by the Board, we will refer to our Strategic Plan and decide what key challenges will face the Board in the foreseeable future. We also consider the kinds of people who are likely to make a valuable contribution to our work as a Board.

Based on our most recent analysis of the skills and expertise of the Board, we are keen to recruit candidates that can demonstrate a **passion for and commitment to cultural engagement and activism** and *ideally* hold at least one of the following skills:

- Knowledge and experience of Human Resources and/or legal expertise
- Financial management and business planning experience
- Fundraising

In addition to experience, we also look for candidates with specific personal attributes which are:

- The ability to challenge respectfully and at the right level.
- The ability to participate beyond your own experience.
- The ability to work effectively as a team member and for the good of Imagine! Belfast Ltd.
- The ability to think creatively.

Please address the above criteria in your covering email, or any other experience you feel is relevant, and attach a short CV (Word or PDF formats only) by way of application.

6.2 Process/How to Apply

The following is our process for recruitment of a new Board member:

- A covering email of no more than 500 words and CV to be emailed to director@imaginebelfast.com by **5pm on Friday 24 January 2025**.
- Shortlisting will be carried out by the Chair and Director on **Tuesday 28 January 2025**.
- Informal chats will take place on the week beginning **3 February 2025**.
- Newly appointed Trustees will be co-opted for a trial period onto the Imagine! Belfast Ltd. Board at the AGM on **17 February 2025**.

For further information about Imagine! Belfast and our forthcoming programme, please visit our website <https://imaginebelfast.com>

For further information about the role of Trustee, please contact:

Mags White-O’Kane, Director
director@imaginebelfast.com

Facebook: <https://imaginebelfast.com/fb>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/imaginebelfast/>

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/imagine-belfast/>