

Theatre by the Lake logo, featuring the words 'THEATRE by the LAKE' in a serif font, with 'by the' in a smaller, italicized font, all contained within a black, curved banner.

THEATRE  
*by the*  
LAKE

A photograph of the Theatre by the Lake building, a two-story stone structure with large windows and a covered entrance. Several people are walking on the paved area in front of the building. The scene is set outdoors with large trees and a clear blue sky.

**EXECUTIVE  
DIRECTOR**  
CANDIDATE INFORMATION PACK  
September 2022



'Excellent blend of  
light and shade'  
TOM'S MIDNIGHT GARDEN  
- THE STAGE

# WELCOME

**Thank you for your interest in this tremendous opportunity to become Executive Director at Theatre by the Lake.**

James Cobbold, our current Executive Director, has decided to stand down after 22 years at the theatre. In this time, he has played a crucial role in the theatre's development and he leaves with our thanks and good wishes.

We are now seeking an outstanding Executive Director to work alongside Liz Stevenson, our Artistic Director, in a joint leadership role, as we drive forward to fulfil our ambitions for the next stage in the life of the theatre and company.

The opportunity for the new Executive Director is huge and exciting. We have a gloriously-located building with two stages and ancillary café, and we want to take full advantage of all that these facilities can offer. We want to develop our building as a thriving hub, with activities reaching out into communities across the region. We are committed to putting community engagement at the heart of what we do, to developing local stories and talent, and to sharing the very best of theatre and live arts with Cumbrian audiences. And we want to develop and extend our audiences - including visitors to the region - not least through developing our reputation for excellent theatre on a national stage.

We want to hear from candidates who will thrive on the challenges of realising this opportunity. It will require someone who is entrepreneurial and can build relationships and partnerships to help us to meet our aims, who can think and work both strategically and at a detailed level to bring a structured approach to our decision-making, and above all, who can work with the team to create an environment where creativity and innovation can flourish.

This application pack tells you more about our theatre, our programme of work, the journey we have been on, the challenges and opportunities that we face, the approach that we are taking, and more information about what we want from our new Executive Director.

We look forward to receiving your application.

**Charles Carter**

Chair, on behalf of the Trustees of Cumbria Theatre Trust



'wonderfully enigmatic'  
THE CLIMBERS - THE REVIEWS HUB

# THE THEATRE

As the only professional, Arts Council England-funded, producing theatre in Cumbria, Theatre by the Lake (TBTL) plays an important role in the cultural scene of the region and is one of the UK's leading regional theatres. It delivers an annual programme of home-produced and visiting work and has established itself as a major attraction for both Cumbrian residents and visitors to the Lake District.

TBTL is situated in the heart of the northern Lake District, on the shore of Derwentwater, Keswick, which now enjoys UNESCO World Heritage status. The Theatre opened in 1999 after a long fundraising campaign led by the community, and with support from the National Lottery. A midscale producing theatre, it has two auditoria: the Main House with 389 - 424 seats, and a smaller, flexible Studio with around 100 seats. An adjacent café was built and opened seven years ago offering enhanced services for theatre customers and visitors and helping to support the theatre's long-term resilience.

TBTL is an essential creative hub in an area of comparatively limited cultural provision. We operate in England's second largest and second least populated county with 70% of settlements comprising under 200 people. As a producing theatre, the work we create, commission and share is critical to levelling up access to high quality arts for rural and isolated communities, particularly children and young people, and developing local talent.

## Our VISION is:

Theatre enriches the lives of everyone in Cumbria, and theatre made in Cumbria is celebrated on the national stage

## Our MISSION is:

In our venue and out across Cumbria, we make and share great theatre that tells stories, builds communities and celebrates our place

## Our VALUES are:

**Collaborative** - we are stronger when we work with others

**Bold** - we are brave and ambitious

**Inclusive** - we are accessible, welcoming and celebrate diversity

**Innovative** - we are creative and make our own opportunities

**Connected** - we are rooted in our place, our communities and our landscape



## THE PROGRAMME

The team at TBTL celebrate their role as theatre-specialists in Cumbria, and as a consequence, the programme of work has a theatre focus whilst also offering a range of cultural experiences.

We produce high quality and accessible theatre of popular appeal that gives our audiences a great night out. We are committed to making new plays and telling stories with particular resonance to our local communities, as we develop our place-based artistic vision. We curate a full and diverse programme of visiting work and festivals across both of our auditoria and we exhibit work in our gallery spaces. In addition to our curated programme of professional work, we host a wide range of local community groups such as amateur theatre societies, Young Farmers and the Shakespeare Schools Festival.

## TBTL's recent presented productions include:

*Home I'm Darling* by Laura Wade, directed by Liz Stevenson, (a co-production between TBTL, The Octagon Theatre, Bolton and Stephen Joseph Theatre)

World premiere of *Jacaranda* by Lorna French, directed by Elle While (a co-production with Pentabus)

*Tom's Midnight Garden* directed by Liz Stevenson

*Kes* adapted by Laurence Till, directed by Atri Banerjee (a co-production with The Octagon)

World premiere of *The Climbers* by Carmen Nasr, directed by Guy Jones

*Swim*, by Liz Richardson, directed by Andy Routeledge (a co-production with Liz Richardson and imPOSSIBLE producing)

*One Man, Two Guvnors*, by Richard Bean, directed by Lotte Wakeham (a co-production with The Octagon, Liverpool Everyman)

## Productions for later this year include:

*Brief Encounter*, adapted by Emma Rice, directed by Paul Robinson (a co-production with Octagon Theatre, Stephen Joseph Theatre)

*The Beauty Queen of Leenane*, by Martin McDonagh, directed by Liz Stevenson

*The Borrowers*, adapted by Theresa Heskins, directed by Zoe Waterman

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

We have recently reinvigorated our approach to community engagement, putting it at the heart of all we do.

We have established a hub and spoke model: whilst our venue is a creative hub, we reach out to work with communities across Cumbria, in particular West Cumbria and Carlisle. Currently our Community Engagement Manager is leading on developing a schools partnership programme, a community advisory board, production-related engagement activity, and is about to relaunch our youth theatre.

## TALENT DEVELOPMENT

We have developed our approach in response to our rural location and by listening to local artists. In 2020 we launched 'Cumbrian Creatives' to find, develop and celebrate local talent.

Through the network, we share local and national opportunities and promote our own talent development activities, which has included social events, open auditions, skills workshops and commissions. This year we will partner with Graeae to deliver a playwriting course for Deaf and Disabled artists in Cumbria, deliver our annual scratch night 'Open Space', and provide space, seed funding and mentorship to local artists and companies.

We have recently appointed three associate artists who will contribute to the life and work of the theatre.

## DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

TBTL serves an area that is geographically, culturally and socially isolated and therefore the theatre has a particularly important role to play in championing diverse voices and experiences through the work we create and present, through our workforce and through our wider engagement and influence within the county of Cumbria and beyond. We are committed to making Theatre by the Lake a more inclusive and relevant organisation and believe this is to be achieved by listening and learning from our local communities. We have set objectives in our business plan to monitor progress, have established an Inclusivity and Relevance working group, and are working with pioneering artists and companies (e.g. Graeae) that champion inclusivity to make great theatre, involve underserved communities, develop talent and advocate for change.

## CLIMATE EMERGENCY

Cumbria has declared its ambition to be the UK's first net carbon neutral county by 2037. TBTL has publicly pledged our support for this goal and in 2021/22 we worked with Climate Meets Culture to create a policy setting out our plans to:

- Advocate for positive change through community engagement
- Explore our place and environment through our creative work
- Act as a local convenor
- and change our practice to reduce the impact of our activities and facilities

As a vital creative hub for the communities of Cumbria and beyond, we recognise that we are uniquely placed to increase awareness about climate change and take collective action, in addition to proactively reducing our own impact.

## PARTNERSHIPS

During the past two years, we have worked artistically in partnership with mid-scale producing theatres, independent artists and theatre companies of national repute, including Stephen Joseph Theatre, The Octagon Bolton, Stockroom, Pentabus and Graeae Theatre. We are currently developing co-productions with new partners, including Hull Truck, Watford Palace, Goblin and Polka Theatre.

Beyond artistic collaborations, TBTL is committed to developing strategic partnerships with regional organisations. We have ongoing and productive relationships with the University of Cumbria and Cumbria Action for Sustainability, and are an active player in the Cumbrian Arts and Culture Scene.



## IMPACT OF THE PANDEMIC

Covid hit the Theatre by the Lake particularly hard. We had just made substantial investment in our forthcoming summer season (our major source of revenue) when the theatre was closed, meaning we received no subsequent ticket income.

In 2020, we took strong and decisive action to reduce our cost base, reducing our staff team from 50 FTEs to 9 FTEs. This action, together with support funding from Arts Council England (ACE) and the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport ensured our survival. We have now rebuilt our permanent staff base, although with a smaller permanent staff and different roles and responsibilities to those that we had before Covid.

We reopened the theatre in Autumn 2021 with a programme of our own work in the main house and have been presenting work in both spaces since the start of this year. Once again, the theatre is returning to its position as one of the larger businesses in the northern Lake District.

## CHANGE OF MODEL

We recognise that our continued relevance, resilience and success require the theatre to challenge, renew and evolve. While the theatre was closed throughout the pandemic, we focused our efforts on developing our understanding of the needs of our local communities, forming new partnerships and creating a new business model that would increase our impact and make us more sustainable. As a result, we have moved from the repertory model which, while it stood us in good stead for many years, had become unsustainable both financially and artistically and, in particular, was preventing us from becoming more relevant and accessible to our communities.

We now have a more flexible model that depends on strategic partnerships with small to large-scale producers, creating work for diverse audiences from across Cumbria and the UK, in Keswick and on rural and national tours. We are a unifying force across the Cumbrian arts sector. We passionately share the commitment in Let's Create to removing geographic, economic and social barriers that prevent participation in cultural activity. Connecting with local government, the arts sector, and funded projects, we share knowledge, embrace innovation, and enable talent to thrive. We are committed to putting community engagement at the heart of what we do, to developing local stories and talent, and to sharing the very best of theatre and live arts with Cumbrian audiences. The new approach is immensely ambitious and exciting.



## FINANCES

Prior to Covid, ACE funding represented approximately 20% of our income, with the balance made up from ticket sales, ancillary trading and fundraising. As audiences are slow to return, we are forecasting turnover for 2022/23 of about £2million. Our current financial position is underpinned by reserves built through 2020-22. We are an ACE National Portfolio Organisation and have recently submitted our application to remain a member of the ACE National Portfolio for 2023-26.

Our most recent audited accounts can be downloaded here:

[www.theatrebythelake.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/Cumbria-Theatre-Trust-2021.pdf](http://www.theatrebythelake.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/Cumbria-Theatre-Trust-2021.pdf)

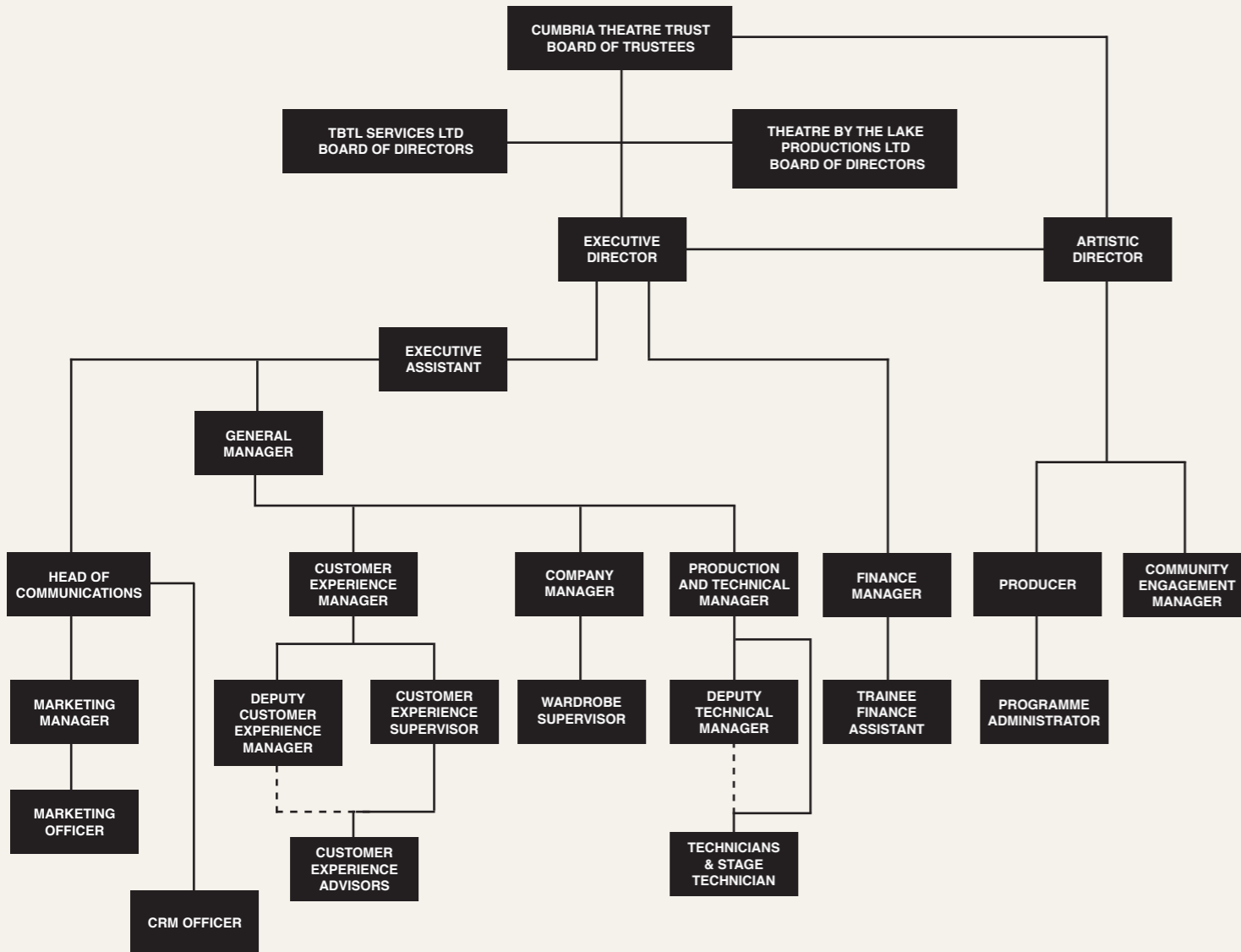
# SENIOR STAFF STRUCTURE

## STAFF AND GOVERNANCE

CTT is a registered charity and company limited by guarantee governed by a Board of voluntary Trustees. A new Chair and Vice Chair were appointed in 2019 and over the last four years the Board has been completely refreshed. The Trustees have been closely involved in and are strongly supportive of the theatre's direction and recognise the opportunities and challenges it presents.

## ORGANISATION TREE

The structure is based on line management only.



# LIVING HERE



## Towns and villages in Cumbria appear regularly in the Sunday Times Best Places to Live list.

Keswick today is a bustling market town of 4,800 people. It is the most northerly of the Lake District's towns and only 20 minutes from the M6.

The town sits at the head of Derwentwater at the northern end of the Lake District National Park, which has recently been awarded UNESCO World Heritage Site status. It's surrounded by large fells including Skiddaw and Blencathra, two of the most popular among walkers, and perfectly situated to explore the valleys of Borrowdale and Buttermere and some of the Lake District's best-known towns and villages including Grasmere and Ambleside.

At Keswick's heart is a fine historic square with its distinctive Moot Hall, the scene of markets on Thursdays and Saturdays and annual community gatherings.

The town has a rich heritage and lively cultural scene. The Alhambra is a delightful 105-year-old, 246-seat cinema which shows new films and National Theatre Live productions as well as opera and ballet screenings. Along with the theatre, the cinema hosts the annual Keswick Film Festival - just one of many outdoor and cultural festivals held in the area.

Keswick is a Fairtrade town. Many of its shops, pubs, cafes and restaurants are independently owned and run. There are two supermarkets, including Booths, a northern chain noted for the quality of its food.

Although Keswick welcomes thousands of tourists each year who come to tour, walk and climb, it manages to maintain a vibrant community life. People know each other, work together and relax together and there are a number of groups and societies for adults and young people including tennis, rugby, football, croquet, cricket, badminton, bowls, golf and archery clubs.

The Lake District, a National Park and now a World Heritage Site, is recognised as one of the most important cultural landscapes in the world.

Cumbria is England's second largest county in size but with a resident population of just 500,000. It's a landscape for adventure and imagination, with a deep heritage of culture expressed in traditions and a rich calendar of events and performance which attracts over 47 million visitors each year.

## RECREATION

The northern lakes area provides some of the finest walking and climbing country in Britain.

The 3,000ft peaks of Skiddaw and Helvellyn are close by. Catbells, more modest in height, on the west side of the lake is the first many local and visiting children climb and features in the famed stories of Beatrix Potter. Derwentwater is a popular lake for sailing, canoeing, kayaking, windsurfing, paddle boarding - and even swimming (TBTL has a keen group of wild swimmers!).

As well as its lakes and mountains Cumbria is also well known and visited for its many cultural attractions. From iconic cultural figures of the past, to contemporary and cutting-edge artists, culture in Cumbria has a lot to offer.

## TRANSPORT AND CONNECTIONS

Train connections link Cumbria directly with a host of the major cities including London, Birmingham, Manchester, Liverpool and Newcastle.

London is only three hours and Manchester, Glasgow or Edinburgh are within 1h 45m by rail from Penrith, which is on the main West Coast rail line.

The M6 at Penrith provides a route south to Manchester and Liverpool and north to the Scottish Border, Highlands, Glasgow and Edinburgh.

Cumbria offers some of the most scenic commuting in the country.

Keswick to Penrith is 20 minutes by car and 40 minutes by hourly bus.

Buses serve neighbouring villages, the towns of the west coast (Maryport, Workington, Whitehaven) and Carlisle. The famous 555 service from Keswick to Lancaster calls at Grasmere, Ambleside, Windermere (for trains to the West Coast main line at Oxenholme) and Kendal.

Further information on Theatre by the Lake can be found on our website: [www.theatrebythelake.com](http://www.theatrebythelake.com)

Information on Keswick and Cumbria can be found at: [www.keswick.org](http://www.keswick.org) and [www.visitcumbria.com](http://www.visitcumbria.com)

# JOB DESCRIPTION



## THE ROLE

The Executive Director is based locally and works in a joint leadership position with the Artistic Director, both of whom report to the Chair of Trustees and the Board. Together, they are responsible for the company's success, ensuring that it meets its objectives effectively and efficiently, that plans and programmes are delivered to the highest professional standards, whilst adopting good working practices, and that risk is managed appropriately.

The Executive Director is responsible for leading Theatre by the Lake's strategic business planning, income generation and administration and, together with the Artistic Director, will be an advocate for the Company promoting its vision, mission and values.

The role oversees and has line-management for the areas of Planning, Finance, Marketing and Communications, Development and Fundraising, HR, Administration, Health and Safety.

## OVERALL PURPOSE

- To develop and lead, in partnership with the Artistic Director and Board of Trustees, the overall strategic direction of TBTL
- To help create the conditions under which artistic activity can develop and flourish
- To lead income generation
- To act as an ambassador for TBTL and to promote its vision, mission, ethos and values in all matters.

## KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

### Strategic Business Planning and Operations

- With the Artistic Director, develop the business model and financial plan to ensure that the organisation remains sustainable into the future and delivers on its vision, mission and values.
- Support the Artistic Director in her development of a strong, clear, imaginative and consistently high-quality programme of activity within resources.
- Lead all administration and facilities tasks to ensure the smooth and safe running of the building and other properties owned or leased by TBTL, and the organisation as a whole.

### Financial and Legal

- Take accountability for the sound financial management of TBTL, ensuring that expenditure is made within available resources and that risk is managed.
- Develop operating and capital budgets, ensuring departmental targets and outcomes are accurately set and monitored, and management accounts and cashflow are reviewed.
- Keep up-to-date with financial, administrative and operational best practice together with legal and tax changes (e.g. VAT changes, Theatre Tax Relief) seeking to maximise their advantage for the organisation.
- Hold overall responsibility for compliance with all legal obligations and statutory requirements, including Companies' Act, Charity Law, Insurance, Employment Law, Data Protection, Health & Safety, Equal Opportunities, etc.
- Work closely with TBTL's Board of Trustees to ensure that the Board is informed and able to fulfil its legal responsibilities. Service and attend board meetings.

### Income generation and development

- Develop, maintain and oversee fundraising and development strategies, actively seeking to broaden the company's sources of contributed and earned income.
- Maximise the company's box office/ticket income, encompassing the creation of effective marketing and pricing strategies to build and diversify audiences.

- Identify opportunities for further exploitation of all areas of the company's artistic work through co-productions, tours and transfers.
- Maximise income streams from trading, in particular bars and catering, merchandising, conferences, and other commercial opportunities.

### Strategic Relations and Representation

- Represent and promote TBTL's presence, identity, vision and interests as a champion and advocate for the company to the general public.
- Oversee the development and maintenance of strong and productive relationships with existing and potential partners, sponsors, donors and stakeholders.
- Develop relationships with key people and organisations locally and nationally who will further TBTL's interests and success.
- Lead and own the relationship with Arts Council England, preparing and submitting business plans and funding applications as needed.
- Lead and own relationships with any other statutory funders, including Cumberland Council and Keswick Town Council.

### Marketing and Communications

- Develop and oversee delivery of an audience development plan, ensuring the theatre's artistic mission is supported by a dynamic approach to audience growth and diversification.
- Develop an effective communications strategy for all aspects of the theatre's work, including online, internally, and with external partners.
- Ensure an imaginative and effective approach to marketing, brand management and sales.
- Ensure a high-quality experience audiences, artists and other visitors, extending a world-class welcome and promoting best practice in customer service with all staff.

## Human Resources

- Together with the Artistic Director, provide dynamic and inspirational leadership for the organisation.
- Take overall responsibility for personnel and HR, ensuring that TBTL adheres to all statutory requirements and good practice, including inclusion, diversity and access.
- Work with the Artistic Director to determine operational staffing structures that are aligned to deliver the theatre's artistic and operational objectives.
- Oversee annual appraisals, staff training and Continuous Professional Development.



# PERSON SPECIFICATION

The ideal candidate will bring a passion for theatre, together with proven leadership experience in the arts, or creative industries. They will be a respected leader and manager with entrepreneurial flair, strategic and financial planning skills, a proven track record in generating income from multiple sources, and the ability to work across a number of different areas to create an environment where high-quality theatre can flourish.

The successful candidate will have the following experience, skills, knowledge and qualities:

## Experience

- Proven successful leadership in a senior strategic role in the arts, creative industries or allied sectors, in an organisation of comparable scale to TBTL.
- Experience of leading a team and stakeholders successfully through substantial change.
- Experience of long term, strategic planning, including for capital development.
- Experience of structuring and leading complex contract negotiations.
- A track record of growing sustainable revenue streams from multiple sources and developing innovative approaches to generating revenues in new ways.
- Experience of leading annual and operating budgeting activities, and running appropriate monitoring and control mechanisms.
- Experience of balancing creative risk and ambition with sound financial management.
- Experience of initiating and maintaining effective relationships with multiple external stakeholders and building strong networks and partnerships that bring mutual benefit.
- Experience in advocating and lobbying for an organisation successfully.
- Venue management experience (desirable)
- Experience of working with a non-executive Board of Trustees (desirable)

## Skills

- Empathetic and collaborative, with proven ability to work effectively with creative individuals and enable artistic excellence to flourish.
- Highly developed interpersonal skills, with the ability to inspire, motivate and manage a team and win the confidence and respect of colleagues and external contacts.

- The ability to interpret and analyse financial/other information to set a course of action.
- The ability to balance investment and risk to deliver sustainable growth.
- Excellent communication and presentation skills to include sound written skills, articulate and coherent public speaking and good listening and consulting skills.
- Excellent negotiating and persuasion skills.
- Ability to prioritise, with the mental dexterity and resilience to handle multiple projects.

## Knowledge

- Wide range of contacts and networks in the arts and cultural sectors.
- Good knowledge of the principles of employment law, Equal Opportunities and Health and Safety legislation and policy, etc.
- Knowledge and experience of Arts funding systems (desirable).
- Knowledge of producing and presenting theatre (desirable).

## Personal qualities

- Vision, imagination, ambition and passion for the role and for theatre
- Committed to equality of opportunity, diversity and inclusion, and to the value of theatre in fostering well-being.
- Entrepreneurial, with a natural inclination to explore and test new ways of doing things to maximise the commercial benefit
- Willingness to work with the organisation's emerging direction, providing sensible challenge where appropriate
- Experience and willingness to deal with sensitive issues with the media and/or stakeholders
- Understanding of the challenges and opportunities presented through working in the remote county of Cumbria
- A positive attitude: proactive, organised and with a high level of self-motivation and initiative
- Clear thinker and excellent decision-maker
- Diplomatic, politically astute
- Flexible, pragmatic and open-minded

# TERMS OF APPOINTMENT

**Salary:** A package appropriate to the level of this position will be negotiated with the successful candidate

**Contract:** Permanent, full-time

**Probationary period:** Six months, with one month's notice on both sides

**Notice period:** Six months on both sides

**Pension:** 3% employer contribution, 5% employee

**Annual leave:** 31 days including statutory Bank Holiday

**Working hours:** The role will require the postholder to work flexible hours, including evenings and weekends. It is not expected that they will work more than an average of 48 hours per week across the year in line with the Working Time Regulations.

**Location:** The job is based in Keswick and the postholder will be expected to live within commutable distance of the theatre.

**Relocation:** A contribution towards relocation costs will be available.

Any offer of employment will be subject to receipt of:

- References that are satisfactory to the Cumbria Theatre Trust's Board
- Evidence of right to work in the UK as defined by the Home Office
- Disclosure Barring Service certificate

# HOW TO APPLY

Theatre by the Lake is being supported in this recruitment by AEM International, Arts, Entertainment & Media Executive Search. To apply, please send your CV and a letter of application, addressing how your experience and skills match the Job Description and Person Specification, to Heather Newill, Director, AEM International by email: [hnewill@aeminternational.co.uk](mailto:hnewill@aeminternational.co.uk). The letter of application should be no longer than three sides of A4.

We would also ask that you complete our Equality Monitoring Form to help us assess this recruitment process. This can be obtained from our website: [www.theatrebythelake.com/about-us/work-with-us/](http://www.theatrebythelake.com/about-us/work-with-us/). The form will be kept separate from your application and will not be seen by the recruitment panel or form any part of the assessment of your application.

All applications will be acknowledged.

For a confidential and informal conversation about the role, please call **Heather Newill on 01728 660026**.

**Deadline for Applications: 5pm, Friday 14th October 2022**

It is anticipated that interviews for shortlisted candidates will be held in person in Keswick on **Friday 18th and Saturday 19th November**.

Theatre by the Lake embraces inclusivity, diversity and equity across our organisation, creating an atmosphere of trust, integrity and collaboration for our artists, staff and audiences. We are an equal opportunities employer and we welcome applications from all suitably qualified persons regardless of their race, sex, disability, religion/belief, sexual orientation or age.





**‘The most beautifully  
located and friendly  
theatre in Britain’**

The Independent