

Trustee Recruitment Pack



Chair's welcome

We're delighted that you're considering volunteering your time to help shape the legacy of one of the world's oldest literary societies.

The Brontë Society is responsible for the Brontë Parsonage Museum in Haworth and the care of the largest collection of original Brontë items in the world. Though we're a small museum, we have a major reach.

Our exceptional Senior Leadership Team and passionate staff and volunteers work tirelessly to ensure the running of the Museum. As new Brontë items come to light, our curatorial team brings them home to the Parsonage, while showcasing and conserving our existing collection. Our social and digital media engages Brontë fans the world over, who listen to our podcast and enthusiastically share their thoughts in our comments sections. It's a pleasure to support this work.

For many of our trustees, it's their first time sitting on a board. The experience is invaluable for career development, building relationships between cultural organisations and working collaboratively with like-minded people. We welcome candidates from all backgrounds and value diverse lived experiences: we want to see the future of the Brontë Society through your eyes.

It's an incredibly exciting time for the Brontë Society as we embark on a major capital development project, so we're especially interested in hearing from anyone with experience in fundraising, legal compliance or involvement in the local area around Haworth and Bradford.

Most of all, we're looking for a commitment to promoting the legacy of the Brontës for generations to come. This is why we're all here: because over 175 years ago, three sisters wrote a collection of novels that had the power to change the literary world forever. It's now our job to keep their story alive.

Lucy Powrie

Chair of the Board of Trustees of the Brontë Society



Hello from the Director



Hello!

My name is Rebecca Yorke and I've had the pleasure and privilege of being the Director of the Brontë Parsonage Museum since 2022. I've been at the organisation for much longer though – I originally joined as Communications and Marketing Officer in 2015, just in time to celebrate the bicentenaries of the births of the Brontë siblings.

It is such an exciting time to join the Brontë Society, building on the successes of the last 18 months: a new website; a new CRM and ticketing system; the construction of accessible and inclusive visitor facilities and the acquisition of a cluster of historic buildings in Haworth, not to mention the excitement of being part of Bradford UK City of Culture 2025. We're looking forward to the year ahead and the road to our centenary celebrations in 2028.

The Brontë Society Board of Trustees plays a vital role in our success and I and the other members of the Senior Leadership Team feel extremely fortunate to benefit from the skills and lived experiences of this diverse group of people, who generously give their time to guide the organisation and ensure it remains true to our vision and mission.

Thank you for your interest in this opportunity. I hope you'll want to learn more about our achievements and ambitions and consider what part you might play in the next chapter of the Brontë Society's story.

Rebecca Yorke
Director of the Brontë Parsonage Museum



Who we are

The Brontë Society is an independent charity with a thriving worldwide membership. It was established back in 1893 to provide a permanent home for items belonging to the Brontë family.

The Society's first museum opened in 1895 on Main Street in Haworth. In 1928, the Brontës' former Parsonage home was gifted to the Society by Sir James Roberts and we've welcomed visitors to the Brontë Parsonage Museum ever since.

The Museum houses the world's largest collection of Brontë material, from furniture and clothes to precious manuscripts, which we share with visitors, researchers, and our live and online audiences.

Since 2018, the Brontë Society has been an Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation, and its world-class collection was awarded 'Designated as Outstanding' status in 2023. The Designation Scheme celebrates the collection as one which 'deepens our understanding of the world and what it means to be human'.

As a Society, we aim to continue championing this through our commitment to promoting the Brontë family's legacy.

What makes the Brontë Society so special?

We have an enthusiastic and growing membership of more than 1,500, joining us from near and far.

Every year, the Museum hosts the Brontë Women's Writing Festival, which has attracted the likes of Jacqueline Wilson, Tracy Chevalier and Emerald Fennell to Haworth.

The Society includes a dedicated membership for young people, encouraging 16 – 24-year-olds to get involved.

Our global partners include writers, documentary-makers and film directors bringing the Brontë legacy to life.

We nurture partnerships within our local communities, promoting access to the treasures on their doorsteps.



Our vision, mission and values



The Brontë Society's **vision** is to bring the Brontës to the world and the world to Yorkshire.

We do this not only through our internationally renowned museum, but through our creative programmes, digital offering and partnerships with other museums and literary houses.

Our **mission** statement is: 'To celebrate the lives and works of the Brontës, widening access to their legacy and sharing their contemporary significance with a global audience.'

We conserve, interpret, display and build creative engagement through our world-class collection and the landscape that inspired the Brontës.

We champion new writing today, particularly by women, and promote better understanding of the Brontës' lives and works.'

We're proud to uphold our **values** through our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion.

The Brontë Parsonage Museum is a safe space, where everyone is welcome, valued and respected. As such, the Society promotes a culture which celebrates difference, ensures fairness and challenges prejudice.

The Brontë Society strives to foster a positive working environment and wider membership community, where trustees, volunteers and members treat each other with dignity and respect at all times, and where bullying, harassment and discrimination are known to be unacceptable.

The role of our trustees

As a Brontë Society trustee, you'll work with the other trustees to:

- Provide the ultimate responsibility for directing the Museum's affairs, ensuring the Museum is solvent, well run and delivering its charitable objectives.
- Maintain compliancy with our legal and regulatory requirements, as well as our governing document.
- Apply your skills and lived experiences to act as a sounding board, providing guidance on new initiatives to help us shape the long-term direction of the Society.
- Work with the Director to set our goals and track progress against our priorities and business-plan objectives.
- Advocate for the charity and support its fundraising by attending events and helping to forge valuable connections amongst your professional and personal networks.

While carrying out these duties, we expect our trustees to uphold the seven 'Nolan Principles' of public life: selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership.

The minimum commitment of the role is to take part in approximately six board meetings a year, plus the Annual General Meeting.

We also ask trustees to attend an end-of-year Strategic Planning Day with the Museum's Senior Leadership Team, where we set and review our objectives.

This commitment realistically equates to around a day or two each month. Board meetings are usually held online in the evenings and, where possible, are arranged around the availability of trustees. We appreciate that our trustees are giving their time, so we endeavour to offer as much flexibility and support as possible to suit their circumstances.

We also recognise that there are many barriers to people becoming trustees and we strongly encourage nominations from members of all backgrounds, roles and circumstances. We currently have a vibrant and diverse board, and a good track record of attracting trustees with a wide range of skills and life experiences.

The role of trustee is unremunerated, which means we cannot pay you for your time. However, we can reimburse you for reasonable, out-of-pocket expenses such as travel costs. We can also cover childcare expenses incurred whilst attending meetings or events.

The length of term for a trustee is three years and trustees can serve up to three terms before retirement. Appointment is subject to a vote by members of the Society.





About the Board

Board members are trustees of the Brontë Society as a charity, who also act as directors of the organisation as a company. They're accountable to those who hold the assets of the organisation 'in trust'. The Board's role is to set strategy, ensure clarity of purpose and oversee the management of the Society's assets.

Our board is made up of a maximum of twelve trustees, bringing a wide range of skills and perspectives. We also welcome co-opted members and occasionally invite our representative from Arts Council England to observe a meeting.

The management of the charity and the Museum is carried out by the Director, who is supported by the Senior Leadership Team. This comprises a Principal Curator, a Head of Finance and a Head of HR and Operations, who provide advice and support to facilitate the Board's decision making.

The Director and Senior Leadership Team are aided by some forty paid members of staff across several departments, as well as a team of around thirty front-of-house, learning and gardening volunteers.

The Board currently operates a Finance, Risk and Audit Committee, and may from time to time establish additional committees to deliver our business-plan objectives. These working groups bring together trustees, staff and external advisers, meeting regularly to develop recommendations to the full Board.



what are we looking for?

Previous experience of serving on a board, acting as a trustee or working within a heritage environment is not essential. However, what we are looking for are individuals with an enthusiastic interest in our work and a commitment to helping us fulfil our mission and charitable objectives.

We're happy to provide training and support to those new to trusteeship and we're interested in hearing from anyone who sees the role as beneficial to their own development, while believing that they could actively contribute to our business success.

Now is an especially exciting time to join the Board. In 2025, the Brontë Society purchased a cluster of historic properties close to the Brontë Parsonage Museum. The next few years will be busy as we raise the funds to restore these buildings, expanding the Museum's offering and providing much needed accommodation for our collections and staff in readiness for the Museum's centenary in 2028.

To support us during this ambitious period, we're particularly keen to hear from candidates with skills and experience in the following areas:

- Capital development
- Strategic development

- Commercial or business development
- Fundraising (eg. via philanthropy and trusts and foundations)
- Risk management and compliance

To learn a little more about our current board of trustees, view our Articles of Association or download our latest Annual Review and summary accounts booklet, please [visit our website here](#).

Eligibility

In order to become a trustee, according to Charity Commission rules, you must be aged 18 and over and you must not:

- Have any unspent convictions for offences of dishonesty or deception.
- Be currently declared bankrupt or subject to bankruptcy restrictions or an interim order.
- Be subject to a debt relief order, a debt relief restrictions order or interim order.
- Be disqualified from being a company director.
- Have previously been disqualified or removed as a trustee, charity officer, agent, or employee by the Commission or the High Court due to misconduct or mismanagement.



How to apply

We're committed to inclusive working practices and know there may be barriers to considering an opportunity like this, so we want to make the process as accessible as possible. If you're interested in applying for a trustee role, but feel there are things that may prevent you from getting involved, please let us know how we can support you.

To express your interest in joining the Board, please contact trustees@bronte.org.uk to arrange an initial conversation with either the Chair of the Board of Trustees or the Director.

Kindly note that, as we are a membership organisation, all applicants must be a member of the Brontë Society at the time of their nomination on the ballot paper or direct appointment.

To apply, please complete the 'BS Trustee Application Form' which can be downloaded from the [website's Opportunities page here](#).

Completed forms should be emailed to trustees@bronte.org.uk by the specified closing date, or posted using the mailing details on the application form.

We aim to process applications in ways that limit unconscious bias around gender and race. This includes removing your name from your application form prior to forwarding to the Brontë Society Nominations Committee, who will assess all applications and recommend a shortlist to the Board.

Applicants agreed by the Brontë Society Board of Trustees will then either be co-opted, directly appointed or placed on a ballot paper to be voted on by the Society membership.

Want to learn more about trusteeship?

If you'd like an in-depth look at the role of a trustee, please explore the following links:

- [A copy of 'The Essential Trustee: What you need to know' can be accessed here](#).
- [The Association of Independent Museums' guide, 'Successful Governance for Museums: A guide for trustees', can be accessed here](#).
- [Further information about the responsibilities of directors can be found here](#).

Thank you
and good luck!

We look forward to hearing from you.

