

# STORYHOUSE



## Appointment of Chief Executive

April 2023 | Reference: EBDNB

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# Welcome from the Chair

Thank you for your interest in the role of Chief Executive.

Storyhouse is one of the UK's foremost cultural charities; its home in Chester incorporates a library, theatres and a cinema and is one of the country's most successful arts buildings. It is also an acclaimed theatre producer and runs the country's most successful regional open-air theatre, in the city's Grosvenor Park, as well as the innovative Moonlight Flicks open-air cinema each year.

Storyhouse plays an important part of cultural life in Chester and continues to be a beacon of inspiration for many other cities and towns for the role it has played in social and economic regeneration, its successful and unique integration of world-class theatre, cinema and library facilities, as well as its bold, exciting, diverse, and award-winning programming.

Andrew Bentley BEM, founding Chief Executive of Storyhouse, recently stepped down after 17 years and we're now in search for an exceptional individual to lead our next chapter.

Our next Chief Executive will be an experienced and inspiring leader, and they will ensure artistic excellence, financial stability and long-term viability for the organisation through outstanding strategic leadership, business acumen, innovation and confident and inspired leadership.

Thank you for taking the time to consider this opportunity, and I look forward to receiving your application.

David Watson  
Chair, Storyhouse





## Our Story

You can find a bit about who we are on our [website](#). In this case study by [Arts Council England](#), you can also find out about our innovative home and how it came to be, and about our renowned library in the blog by [DCMS](#)'s library team.

Above all, Storyhouse is a creative community. A diverse cultural organisation, our home is one of the country's most successful cultural buildings housing a cinema, theatres and a library. Last year we welcomed 735,000 people through our doors. We are a community hub and combined arts producer.

Our library attracts international recognition, known for seamless integration, and boasts the longest opening hours of any UK public library.

In 2022, we supported 5,465 young people to connect and create, ran 200 free Rhyme Time sessions, created 499 magical performances indoors and outdoors, sold 101,461 theatre tickets and had 1031 cinema screenings.

Visits are roughly split a third each between event attendances, library users, and participation. We enjoyed the support of over 14k volunteer hours and 1,328 different individuals were involved in making our work. Grosvenor Park Open Air Theatre, which we founded in 2010, is the UK's largest regional open-air theatre, welcoming over 25,000 visitors every summer.

We have become an essential part of the region's cultural landscape and a place of safety and support, especially for young people; somewhere they can reimagine their place in the world. Over 40 community groups use us as a base for creative activity each month, including LGBTQIA+, disability groups, refugee integration, mental health support, and groups combatting social exclusion by age. We work extensively with young people and provide a youth theatre, young company, young leaders programme, schools and education programmes, young programmers and many more working alongside local partners to ensure we are reaching the people that have the least opportunity to participate.

Across everything we do, we work to give people the power to build their own creative communities, through inspiring stories and shared creative experiences: this house is your house. As we blend theatre, library, restaurant and cinema services, we share inspiring stories and stage creative events which empower people to nurture their creativity and connect communities. We create belonging. Through our work, we hope to build a more connected, inclusive, creative community of communities.

The more open we are to the true and rich diversity of our communities, the more vividly we will fulfil our purpose. More engagement by more of our communities will make more of Storyhouse.

We are committed to creating a team which is representative of our communities and to bringing together those with a variety of skills and experiences to help shape what we do and how we work.

**Storyhouse is about to enter an exciting new phase in its evolution as it looks to develop and grow its programmes based on a new strategic plan to deliver even more for our communities.**



## Young Storyhouse

Young Storyhouse supports young people to connect, create, gain skills and build confidence through a handful of schemes and programmes:

### Young Leaders

Young Leaders is for young people aged 14-25 with limited opportunities to connect with others, discover their passion and gain work skills. We've worked with young people to find out what they want and need, and as part of Young Leaders they will receive mentoring, training and given practical opportunities to help them develop, create and grow both professionally and personally.

### Young Company

Young Company is for young people aged 14-25 interested in theatre. Young Company members get real-life experience in a range of different aspects of the theatre, from acting, lighting, sound and backstage to organising events, marketing and more. They gain job skills and the opportunity to create, stage or perform in their own production on the Storyhouse stage.

### Youth Theatre

Youth Theatre uses drama techniques with 5-13 year olds to build social skills, confidence and teamwork.

Young Storyhouse



## Our resources

Storyhouse is a medium-sized charity with approximately 140 staff and gross revenue of over £6 million per year.

The charity is financially stable, with a number of steady revenue streams, including a 20 year lease and contract for services with the local authority, Cheshire West and Chester, and NPO funding from Arts Council England for 2023 to 2026.

Revenue from commercial activities is essential to the charity's financial stability, over 57% of its revenue is earned. Storyhouse runs two wholly owned commercial trading subsidiaries, Storyhouse Production Company Limited, creating and staging Storyhouse Originals theatre productions and Storyhouse Catering Company Limited, which provides a range of catering, retail, cinema, receiving theatre and commercial services.

Despite our financial stability, like all other charities, our resources are being eroded by rising costs due to inflation and energy prices and as a result of the continued cost of living crisis, demand for free to access services (such as being a warm space) is increasing.

You can read the most recent and previous annual reports [here](#).



Chester Disability Pride Parade 2022

# Our Work

On stage, in our cinema, events, activities, groups; below is a snapshot of what's been happening recently and what's coming up. [Read more here.](#)



## FAUSTUS: THAT DAMNED WOMAN

A Storyhouse Originals co-production of Chris Bush's gripping and radical retelling of the Faustus myth.

February 2023

## STORYHOUSE QUEER WEEKEND

A space to come together, to feel safe, to celebrate each other, to feel joy.

February 2023



## THE TRIALS

A searing and timely play by award-winning playwright Dawn King.

Performed by Storyhouse Young Company (SYC).

June 2023 in the Garret Theatre.

## GROSVENOR PARK OPEN AIR THEATRE

Magical outdoor theatre-in-the-round.

*The Great Gatsby* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, July and August 2023.

[grosvenorparkopenairtheatre.co.uk](http://grosvenorparkopenairtheatre.co.uk)

**GROSVENOR PARK  
OPEN AIR THEATRE  
— 2023**



## STORYHOUSE WOMEN

A festival celebrating women and girls and exploring issues which are important to them.

March 2023



# Our Building

Storyhouse is Chester's multi award-winning £37 million cultural centre. The original parts of the building were constructed as an art deco Odeon cinema in 1936, and have now been restored, extended and renovated into a library, two state of the art theatres, a cinema, restaurant and two bars.

The larger theatre is an 800-seat proscenium arch stage. With state-of-the-art facilities, its auditorium spreads across three tiers: stalls, circle and gallery. This same theatre converts into a 500-seat thrust stage (with the audience wrapping around three sides of the stage). In this format, the auditorium spreads across two tiers with intimate seating putting the audience right in amongst the action.

On top of the building sits the Garret Theatre and Bar. This 150-seat black-box theatre is a flexible, fully-equipped performance, rehearsal or workshop space. The Garret is designed to be full of work local creative companies, individuals and organisations make. The Garret sits next to a stunning, glass-fronted bar with views across the city.

The 100-seat boutique cinema is designed to honour the original Odeon's history as a cinema in 1936. With plush red velvet, and soft, sunken seating, it is a beautiful event space.

The library spreads right through the building, with family-friendly library activity happening across all Storyhouse's spaces. Extensive book-stock covers the walls throughout the old Odeon and a new children's area offers opportunities for wet-play, arts and crafts activity and storytelling. New study areas offer opportunities for studying, learning and research.





Storyhouse Theatre (in thrust format)



Grosvenor Park Open Air Theatre



# The Role

Reporting to: Chair and Board of Trustees  
Responsible for: Creative Director  
Director of Operations  
Director of Finance  
Director of Development

The Chief Executive will lead the organisation both operationally and strategically, working with the Leadership Team and Board to develop and implement a strategic plan for the organisation to achieve artistic excellence, with unrivalled opportunities to nurture and develop artists and practitioners of the future, create quality and plentiful engagement opportunities with our wider communities spanning theatre, film and literature, all whilst ensuring an exciting and sustainable future for the organisation.

Reporting to the Chair and Board of Trustees, the Chief Executive has responsibility for circa 141 salaried and casual staff and 170 volunteers. The ideal candidate will have an exceptional blend of cultural leadership, business management, operational, entrepreneurial and commercial skills, and a sound understanding and tangible passion for the arts.

## Key responsibilities

- Work with the Chair and Board of Trustees to set, develop and oversee the ongoing direction for Storyhouse and lead the organisation to achieve its key strategic aims, embodying and promoting Storyhouse's values;
- Provide clear vision and direction, translate strategy into effective operational planning, and lead the organisation successfully through continuous change, embedding an inclusive culture where all can thrive, inspiring staff and volunteers with a vision of future direction;
- Work collaboratively with the Creative Director to develop and deliver the best possible artistic and engagement programme which is ambitious, bold, relevant, and reflective of our commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion;
- Ensure the development and delivery of commercial opportunities across all areas of the operation, including but not limited to food and beverage, retail, co-productions, touring, and fundraising etc;
- Ensure a first-class visitor journey and experience;
- Actively support the development of fundraising income streams and, where appropriate, take the lead in key donor/sponsor relationships, attending events as required;
- Ensure the implementation of highly imaginative and effective approaches to audience development, the promotion of all activities and generating revenue from public and private sources;
- Ensure efficient, effective and professional management of all resources, driving the business planning and budgetary process to deliver a future-proofed and sustainable business model;
- Ensure the effective and efficient operation of the organisation as a viable charity, and of its trading subsidiaries, including sound financial, risk management and corporate governance practices;
- Create, maintain and develop effective relationships with stakeholders across local and central government, local business, the arts and cultural sector as well as a wide range of funding bodies and supporters, including Arts Council England and Cheshire West & Chester Council;
- Act as a spokesperson for Storyhouse, including advocating and raising the profile of Storyhouse and representing our aims and objectives to our audiences, artists, the media and external organisations;
- Ensure that all policies and legal procedures governing people at work are regularly reviewed and updated and reflect best practice.



## Person Specification

The role requires an inspiring, enterprising, confident and experienced leader, with the vision, commitment, people skills and resilience to lead a highly-regarded, significant and multi-faceted arts organisation.

### Experience & Knowledge

- Substantial experience and track record of successful senior leadership, in the arts, cultural, heritage or wider creative industries;
- Experience of strategic business-planning, effective implementation and on-going management in multi-faceted environments;
- Experience of successfully working closely or collaborating with creative specialists, ideally an Artistic or Creative Director;
- Experience of managing significant budgets, providing financial oversight and effective risk management;

- Experience of advocating and networking at the highest levels, and a track record of successful and varied stakeholder management;
- Strong experience, knowledge and commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion in the workplace;
- Understanding of the political dimension within which we operate, including knowledge of decision-making processes of government, local authority, and the work of other strategic bodies;
- Excellent ability to build, manage and maintain relationships with colleagues, agencies, and a wide range of regional, national and international stakeholders;
- Awareness and knowledge of relevant legislation that impacts our day to day operation, including health and safety, data protection, safeguarding, diversity and inclusion and charitable governance.

## **Skills & Personal Qualities**

- Strong leadership and interpersonal skills;
- Passion with a proven ability to enthuse others, and to inspire and motivate teams;
- Excellent entrepreneurial and communication skills, able to communicate vision in a credible way with a broad range of stakeholders, including public speaking;
- The ability to maintain oversight and control of a multistranded operation across the short, medium, and long-term;
- Ability to think both strategically and pragmatically, to develop and implement our vision, and to turn aspirations into reality, balancing artistic, creative, commercial and financial objectives;
- Ability to work successfully with the Chair and Board of Trustees in a strong and collegial environment;
- Demonstrable integrity and respect for others, proven values-driven leadership style and ability to model our values in practice.

# Terms of Appointment

Salary: £85,000pa (with possible flexibility for outstanding candidates)

Contract: Permanent, Full-Time

Hours: 37.5 hrs per week, with additional evening and weekends, as required.

Probation: 6 months

Place of Work: Storyhouse, Hunter St, Chester CH1 2AR

Travel: Local, national and international travel, as required.

## Employee Benefits

- 30 days annual leave per year including bank holidays.
- A defined matched contribution Pension Scheme
- Medicash Health Plan (including flu jabs and Employee Assistance Programme)
- Cycle to work & travel to work schemes
- Discounted gym membership with Brio Leisure
- Complimentary tickets and discounts on food and drink
- 8 weeks company sick pay available after 12-month service

Rhyme Time at Storyhouse, 2021



# How to apply

Saxton Bampfylde Ltd is acting as an employment agency advisor to UK Storyhouse Ltd on this appointment.

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

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

The closing date for applications is noon on **Monday 15<sup>th</sup> May 2023**.

## Process timetable:

STAGE	DATE	LOCATION
Closing date for applications	Noon, Monday 15 <sup>th</sup> May 2023	N/A
Preliminary interviews with Saxton Bampfylde	W/C 22 <sup>nd</sup> May W/C 29 <sup>th</sup> May W/C 5 <sup>th</sup> June	Online
Informal 1:1 conversations	W/C 12 <sup>th</sup> June	Online
Final panel interviews	W/C 19 <sup>th</sup> June	Storyhouse, Chester

## 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

# STORYHOUSE

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