

Trustee Recruitment Pack

DECEMBER 2025

WELCOME

Thank you for your interest in Stratford East.

We are looking for at least two new Trustees to join our experienced and dynamic Board of Trustees. This is an exciting opportunity to help shape the future of one of London's most iconic theatres.

New Trustees will join the organisation at an exciting time of change and renewal, following the recent appointment of new Co-CEOs Lisa Spirling (Artistic Director) and Hanna Streeter (Executive Director), and new Chair of Trustees Bindi Karia.

We're looking for passionate and committed individuals who love theatre and believe in our work, who want to contribute to the community in Newham, and who want to play a part in our next chapter of growth.

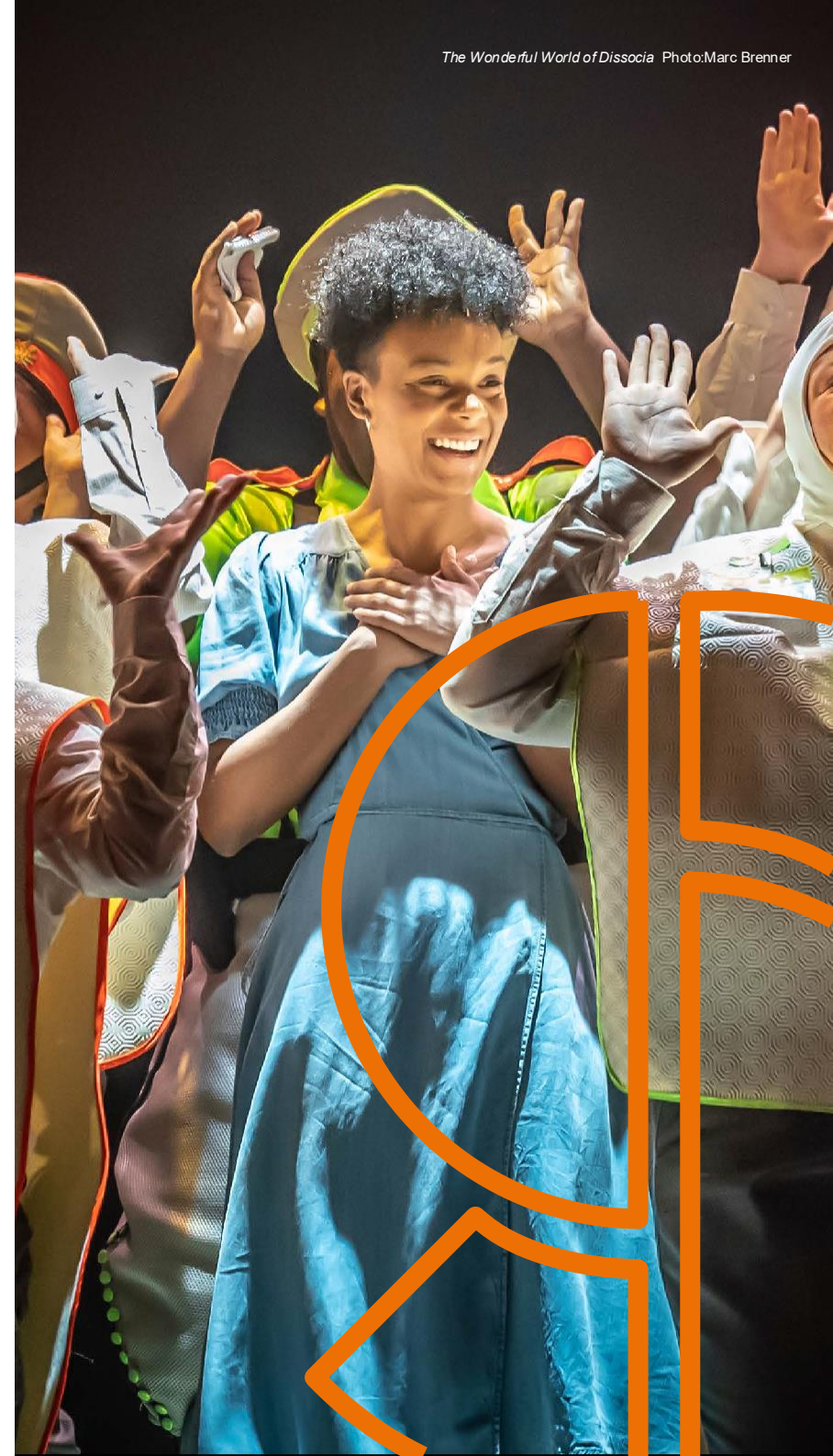
No previous theatre experience is required, and we will consider applications from all sectors, though we are particularly keen to hear from people with the following expertise:

- Finance (to become Finance Committee Chair later in 2026)
- Fundraising and philanthropy
- Legal

“This is a truly exciting and pivotal time for Theatre Royal Stratford East. With new Co-CEOs and a bold vision for the future, we’re building on our rich heritage to create theatre that reflects and serves East London. As Chair, I’m proud to lead a Board committed to growth, creativity, inclusion, and meaningful social impact. We’re looking for trustees who bring experience, curiosity, and sound judgement alongside a genuine commitment to the communities we serve. This is an opportunity to play a vital role in shaping the next chapter of this iconic theatre. If you believe in the power of the arts to transform lives and feel you can contribute to the team, we’d love to hear from you.” — Bindi Karia, Chair of Trustees

“Good theatre draws the energies out of the place where it is and gives it back”- Joan Littlewood

The Wonderful World of Dissocia Photo: Marc Brenner



ABOUT STRATFORD EAST

Stratford East is here to make truly great theatre in an atmosphere that welcomes all, with extraordinary shows that are affordable for all in the beating heart of East London.

Stratford East is a producing theatre, built in 1884, in the London Borough of Newham, situated a short walk from Stratford station. We have a proud history and face an exciting and challenging future. Our culturally and socially diverse community are represented in the work we make, the people we employ, the audiences we attract and the participants in our learning programmes. We tell stories that are current, political and representative of the people in our part of London.

From 1953 – 1979 the theatre was the home of Joan Littlewood's legendary Theatre Workshop Company. The Company received international recognition with their acclaimed productions of shows like *Oh, What a Lovely War!* and *A Taste of Honey*. Recent shows programmed in our 140th anniversary season that have received 4 and 5 star reviews include *The Harder They Come*, *Mama Goose*, *Animal Farm*, *The Women of Llanrumney* and *Lovestuck: A New Comedy Musical*. Many leading actors, writers and directors have been part of the Stratford East family including Meera Syal, Barbara Windsor, Don Warrington, Sheila Hancock, Indhu Rubasingham, Tanika Gupta, Roy Williams and Cynthia Erivo.

Stratford East has a 455 seat auditorium, a vibrant bar, and a rehearsal space. In 2024-25 we welcomed over 67,275 audience members over 217 performances.

Our community is vital, and Arts Council England has identified Newham as one of only four London boroughs that they classify as Priority Places. The regeneration in the Olympic Park, alongside huge investment and development across the borough, makes Newham a place with a growing population and offers new and stimulating opportunities which we can grasp as the much-loved theatre in the borough.

OUR VISION:

We believe that brilliant quality theatre should be available to everyone

OUR MISSION:

We make theatre both for, and inspired by, our community in Newham, East London. We continue the political and revolutionary ethos of our founder Joan Littlewood as a leading London theatre and civic hub for East London. We are driven by our art, which is inclusive and bold. We tell stories that provoke discourse about the world we live in and our place within it.

OUR VALUES:

- Revolutionary – we are confident in leading change
- Inclusive – our doors are open to all
- Bold – we are willing to take risks
- Excellent – we strive to make everything of outstanding quality
- Relevant – the work we do is relevant to the place we are in, and the times in which we live
- Eclectic – we are informed by a wide range of thoughts, styles, tastes

OUR PRODUCTIONS

Stratford East continues to build on its legacy of bold, inclusive, and ambitious theatre with an exciting new chapter under Artistic Director Lisa Spirling, Executive Director Hanna Streeter and Associate Artistic Director Jade Lewis. Their inaugural 2026 season champions formally inventive work, new writing, and underrepresented voices, marking a renewed commitment to nurturing fresh talent and reflecting the diversity of our audiences.

This follows our milestone 140th Anniversary Season, which featured productions including *Animal Farm*, *The Women of Llanrumney*, *Lovestuck*, *Romeo & Juliet*, and *The Harder They Come*.

Throughout recent years, Stratford East has produced or co-produced four to five mainstage productions annually, alongside a vibrant programme of touring work, one-night events, and our much-loved annual pantomime - most recently *Mama Goose*.

The theatre has also presented reimagined classics, timely revivals, and ground-breaking new work, including *Now, I See* by Lanre Malalou, and landmark revivals like *The Big Life* and *Beautiful Thing*.

Lisa, Hanna and Jade's 2026 season signals the next bold step for Stratford East, one that celebrates experimentation, fresh perspectives, and the vital role of theatre in public life today.

★★★★★ ***“Unique, challenging
and oh-so necessary”*** - The Guardian

Tambo & Bones Photo: The Other Richard



Our full programme of work – past and future - can be found on our website. Our produced and co-produced work from the past few years include:

2025

Mama Goose
The Harder They Come
Lovestuck
Tambo & Bones
The Women of Llanrumney
Animal Farm

2023

Jack and the Beanstalk
Beautiful Thing
Tambo & Bones
Village Idiot

2021

Red Riding Hood
Shining City
Extinct
The Sun, The Moon and the Stars
Press Play Here (online only)

2024

Pinocchio
Abigail's Party
Now, I See
The Big Life

2022

Cinderella
The Wonderful World of Dissocia
Burn It Down
After the End

2020

No Masks (film)
846 Live
846 (online only)



The Big Life Photo: Mark Senior

★★★★★ *“Infectious,
heart-rendering and...
achingly resonant”* - Time Out

LEARNING & PARTICIPATION

Alongside our work on stage, we run a Learning & Participation programme that is accessible and inclusive to all. Our range of programmes creates a lasting impact for our local community and aims to:

- Provide routes into the industry, across all theatre departments, with a particular focus on diversifying those coming into the workplace, ensuring the theatre workplace of the future is a diverse and skilled one
- Provide opportunities to people of all ages to develop their creative talents and engage with the work of the theatre, ensuring that there is a creative outlet open to the widest possible constituency

Key projects include:

Junior Youth Theatre (11-15 year olds) and Youth Theatre (16-21 year olds): A year-round programme for young people to develop their acting and creativity.

Young Company: A 10-month programme for 18-25 years who are interested in developing their acting skills. Working with a range of industry freelancers, and led by a professional director, the programme culminates in a full production on the Stratford East stage.

Young Techs: A short course to develop the technical theatre skills of 18-25 year olds. The course leads to paid work experience, and potentially paid work as a technician at Stratford East or elsewhere.

Adult Drama: A termly course for any Newham adult above 26, to develop their acting and creative skills in a friendly environment.

Schools Programme: A programme specifically for Newham Secondary Schools. This includes technical theatre insight days, as well as bespoke programmes

Community Ambassadors: A volunteer programme, supporting volunteers to work with groups in the community to introduce them to the theatre, as well as to run heritage tours of the theatre.

Community Socials: Regular light touch events to introduce local people and community groups to the theatre.

Freelance Royalty Scheme: A free membership scheme to support all theatre freelancers living or working in East London. Membership includes access to space, free tickets, workshops, networking and surgery events.

“Our children aren’t able to afford theatre trips so this was particularly important for us. I loved the diversity in the cast also. It allowed the students to see themselves.”

- Newham Primary School Teacher



Young Company in SCREAM FIRE. Photo: Greta Zabulyte

REPRESENTATION, JUSTICE AND BELONGING

We want Stratford East to reflect the community in which we work and the programming on our stage to speak to the people who come to our theatre. We want everyone who works with us to feel empowered and supported, and we want our theatre to feel accessible to anyone, no matter what their background. Stratford East's programme of work has always championed a diversity of stories, so that any audience member might see their story on our stage. We are committed to our anti-racism and anti-ablism work as a continuous journey of change and progression. This work is spearheaded by ClosingTheGap, our anti-racism working group, which leads on policy, training and accountability across the organisation.

For seven years Stratford East was part of the first Ramps on the Moon consortium, a group of theatres working to increase D/deaf, disabled and neurodivergent representation. We worked with five other theatres around the country, elevating the presence of D/deaf, disabled and neurodivergent people on and off stage to enrich the stories told by them and the way they are told. Whilst the official consortium has ended, we are committed to continuing this work. We now carry the momentum forward through RADAR, our disability and accessibility working group, which guides inclusive practice and ensures barrier-free experiences for artists, staff and audiences alike.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

We need and aspire to be an environmentally sustainable organisation and are embedding our environmental work across all departments. We want to reduce our carbon footprint by ensuring that our buildings and processes are as efficient and sustainable as possible. We are in the process of updating our environmental policy in alignment with our values and with the Theatre Green Book and have a short-term and long-term set of KPIs which we are working to achieve. We are also updating our Capital Maintenance and Renewal Schedule, which has identified some key areas for renewal over the next five years and are looking at how we can do this to further our sustainability ambitions.

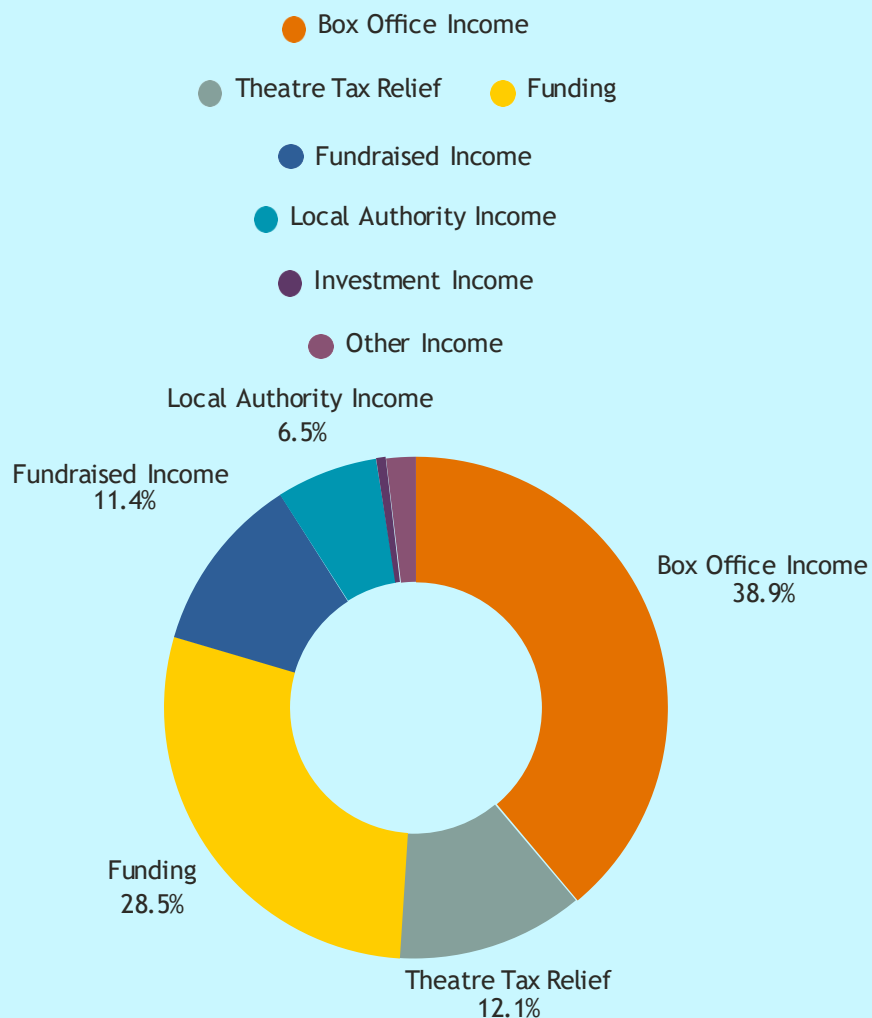
★★★★★ *"As timeless
as ever"* - Evening Standard



Beautiful Thing Photo: The Other Richard

FINANCES

Stratford East Income Year Ended 31 March 2025

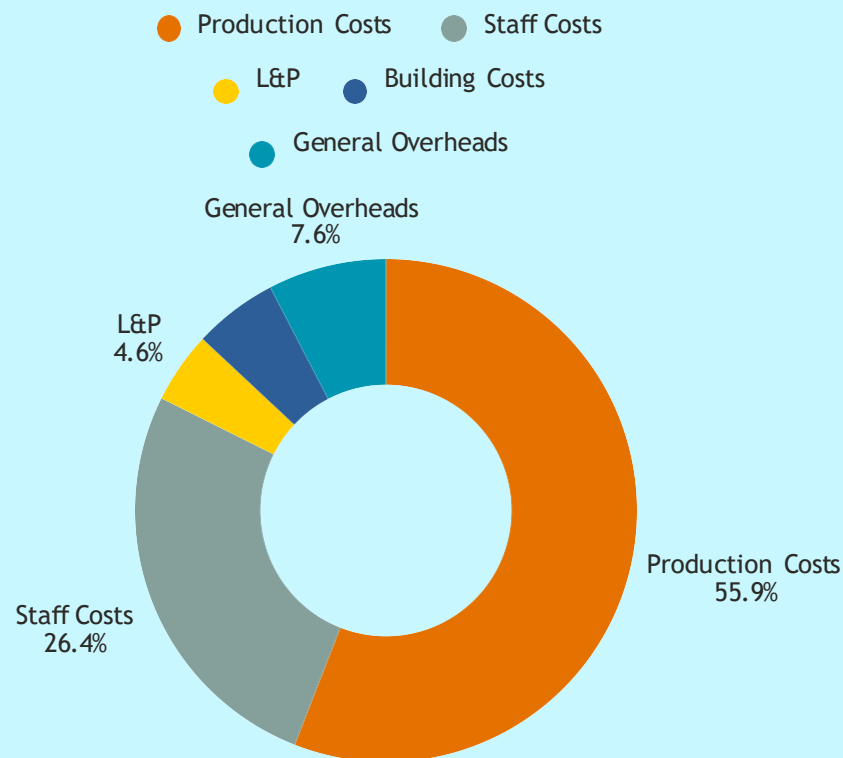


Our annual turnover is just over £4m. We successfully secured Arts Council England National Portfolio Funding for the 2023-2027 period. Additional income comes from ticket sales, fundraising, Theatre Tax Relief and other revenue sources.

At year end March 2025 our general reserves stood at £787,472, plus designated funds of £670,000 (two funds for three months' operating costs plus capital building maintenance).

We raise around £500k each year from fundraising from Trusts and Foundation grants, some major donor relationships and a small but growing membership base.

Stratford East Expenditure



GOVERNANCE

Stratford East is registered as Pioneer Theatres Limited with Companies House (Company number: 556251) and with the Charity Commission (Charity Number: 233801). The Charity is led by a highly experienced Board of Trustees. The Board includes skilled individuals from the world of arts, local government, finance and communications. We have two Young Trustees who have come through our Learning & Participation programmes.

We have a trading subsidiary, Stratford East (Trading) Limited which operates our bar. We also have a Development Board, which has no formal role in governance, but supports our fundraising, and is chaired by one of our Board Members.

Bindi Karia was announced as Chair of the Board in September 2025.

PEOPLE

Senior Management Team

Stratford East is led by the Artistic Director and Executive Director, reporting to the Board. They are supported by the Senior Management team of nine including the Learning & Participation Director, Associate Artistic Director, Finance Director, Operations Director, Director of Producing, Head of Production, Head of Marketing & Communications, Development Director and General Manager.

Staff Base

We have a 40-strong central staff base and a customer facing casual team of 60 working across front of house, bar and box office. We also engage a large number of freelancers to work on and off stage in our productions, as well as casual technicians.



FACTS AND FIGURES FOR THE 2024-25 FINANCIAL YEAR



209

FREELANCERS ENGAGED

217

PERFORMANCES

11

PRODUCTIONS

1 GREAT
THEATRE

1500

MEMBERS OF OUR

 FREELANCE
ROYALTY
SCHEME

67,275

AUDIENCE MEMBERS

10,104

YOUNG PEOPLE
ENGAGED WITH US

55,394

AVERAGE MONTHLY WEBSITE VISITORS

25 ONE OFF
NIGHTS

9 COMMUNITY
AMBASSADORS

ROLE

Job Title: Trustee

Reporting to: Chair

Start Date: Wednesday 18 March

Main Purpose of Post

As a Trustee of Theatre Royal Stratford East, you will play a vital role in ensuring the organisation's success, sustainability, and alignment with its mission to create bold, relevant, and diverse theatre. Trustees share collective responsibility for governance and strategic oversight.

INFORMATION

Stratford East is committed to a policy of equal opportunities embracing diversity in all areas of activity and positively welcomes applications from disabled people and people of all ethnicities.

HOW TO APPLY

To apply, please send a CV (of no more than 2 pages) and a covering letter (of no more than 2 pages) setting out why you want to work with us and how you meet the person specification. Please send your application to recruitment@stratfordeast.com.

Deadline to apply is 12pm on Friday 30 January 2026.

Interviews are provisionally scheduled to take place on Thursday 12 February.

CORE RESPONSIBILITIES

Governance and Compliance

- Ensure the organisation complies with its governing document, charity law, and other relevant legislation
- Uphold the highest standards of integrity and transparency in all activities

Strategic Leadership

- Contribute to setting and reviewing the theatre's strategy
- Provide constructive challenge and support to the Executive team in delivering the strategy

Financial Oversight

- Monitor financial performance and ensure resources are managed responsibly
- Approve budgets and annual accounts, safeguarding the charity's assets

Risk Management

- Identify and assess risks affecting the organisation and ensure appropriate mitigation strategies are in place

Advocacy and Ambassadorship

- Act as an ambassador for Stratford East, promoting its work and values
- Support fundraising efforts and help build networks with stakeholders, donors, and partners

Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion

- Champion diversity and inclusion across governance and programming
- Ensure the organisation reflects and serves its local community and wider audiences

Performance and Accountability

- Regularly review the performance of the organisation and the Board
- Commit to ongoing learning and development as a Trustee

Commitment and Engagement

- Attend Board meetings (typically 4–6 per year) and participate in sub-committees as required
- Prepare thoroughly for meetings and contribute actively to discussions and decision-making

★★★★★ *"Powerful, emotional intimacy"* - The Stage

STRATFORD
EAST



stratfordeast.com

020 8534 7374

Now, / See. Photo: Camilla Greenwell