



CHAIR OF THE SUFFOLK CRAFT SOCIETY

Job Description

The Organisation

The Suffolk Craft Society established in 1970 promotes high quality, contemporary designer craft-making and draws its members from Suffolk and the surrounding counties. Its core funding is through the membership's annual subscriptions. Additional and necessary income is generated mainly through mounting exhibitions at which makers' work is sold. Current membership stands at around 80 including a number of Honorary non-paying members. The current subscription for 2021/22 stands at £50 p.a. which is a significant reduction on the fees of £100 p.a. up to 2019/20 when the pandemic hit and a one-year subscription holiday was adopted.

The Society's current objectives are to promote good design and fine workmanship in craft, recruit new members who demonstrate excellence in their craft, promote the education and training of craftworkers and to inform and educate the public about craft-making.

The Chair is elected, either from within the membership i.e., a craft-maker or from outside on the recommendation of the SCS Committee.

The Society has no paid employees though an honorarium is paid to the Hon. Secretary and the Hon. Treasurer.

Recent and current initiatives

The pandemic posed challenges to which the Committee rose. The SCS website was completely re-designed to make it more attractive, intuitive and mobile-friendly. An online shopping pilot was launched, as well as various schemes for makers in need of technical or other forms of support. An ongoing initiative called "Re-Imagining the Suffolk Craft Society" was launched at the 2020 AGM, This invited new thinking and ideas, and promoted new ways of working through themed sub-groups linked back to the Committee.

Role of the Chair

The Chair offers leadership to the Society, ensuring its reputation for excellence in craft-making is maintained through the quality of the makers admitted, and for probity through careful management of its finances. The success of the Society is reliant in large part to its maintaining a visible profile and good relationships within the local community.

The postholder chairs the elected SCS Committee and the AGM, liaising in particular with the Hon. Secretary and the Hon. Treasurer to ensure proper governance of the Society. Committee meetings have been held on Zoom since the start of the pandemic. These ensure efficient use of everyone's time instead of travelling across this large county, but live meetings may well resume on some occasions. Meetings are usually monthly but can be flexed according to need. The Chair is expected to provide strategic leadership, to represent the Society to a range of external stakeholder, but also to have a degree of hands-on responsibility, according to his/her particular strengths and skills.

Experience

The Chair should have some experience in a leadership and decision-making role, ideally but not exclusively in a not-for-profit, charitable or artistic organisation. Experience of Committee work and an appetite for that is highly desirable. Sound management of finances and good organisational skills are required.

Personal qualities

Strong interpersonal and good motivational skills, and an enthusiasm for arts and crafts are highly desirable. An in-depth practical knowledge of craft-making is not essential but a willingness to engage with the craft community is. A positive drive to engage with both the makers and the public will help to keep the Craft Society alive and relevant in the 21st century.

Time Commitment

The amount of time the Chair commits to the role is partly their choice. Preparation for, and management of the business (currently monthly via Zoom) Committee meetings and the AGMs is the core use of time.

Communications with makers and liaison with external contacts can ebb and flow, according to the levels of proposed and planned activity. The Vice Chair and Committee see to much of the day-to-day business of running the Society. The Chair can to some extent choose those areas in which they are interested and to which they feel best able to contribute.

Contact Sarah Thane, Chair SCS

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