



*'Tall Stories sets the benchmark for
children's theatre' Sunday Times*



**Chair of the Board of Trustees
Recruitment Pack**

Introduction

Thank you for your interest in Tall Stories and in the role of Chair of the Board. Following a transformational tenure, our current Chair Penelope Daly steps down in 2026 and we are seeking a dynamic, strategic and creative individual to work with the Executive team and Board of Trustees to guide the organisation into its next exciting chapter.

The Chair will oversee the governance and strategic direction of the organisation. They will lead the Board of Trustees and support the Executive team to realise our vision to create and share stories that broaden horizons, inspire generations and bring joy to children and families.

Under the leadership of Artistic Director and Co-Founder Toby Mitchell and Executive Director Tara Wilkinson, Tall Stories is a leading theatre company touring the UK and the world with our exciting blend of storytelling theatre, catchy music, innovative puppetry and lots of laughs. Throughout our almost 30-year history, we have welcomed (and continue to welcome) audiences in venues of every size and scale, ranging from the West End to Broadway, the Sydney Opera House, Soweto, and at our own base in Islington.

We are currently undergoing a strategic review to ensure the stability and growth of Tall Stories within a complex cultural landscape. The review will inform Tall Stories' 5-year strategy and explores the artistic programme, touring model and partnerships needed to widen our reach and deepen our impact.

Our new Chair will be someone who can lead and support the Executive and fellow Trustees to refine and deliver the 5-year strategy. Crucially you will be someone who can support us to realise the true potential of Tall Stories' next stage and work with us to truly maximise the impact of our wonderful work on audiences across the world and in our local community.

About Tall Stories

Tall Stories is a registered charity that tours the UK and internationally with award-winning shows for family audiences. We bring great stories to life and are internationally recognised for our exciting blend of storytelling theatre, original music, innovative puppetry and lots of laughter.

We create opportunities for everyone to get involved with theatre and offer accessible performances (including but not limited to integrated BSL, audio descriptions and in relaxed environments). We also provide free shows and experiences as part of our commitment to removing barriers that might otherwise prevent children and families from experiencing live theatre.

We are based at the Tall Stories Studio, an accessible 80 seat space situated in the Central Library in Islington, London. As well as being our administrative home, the space also plays host to preview performances. To increase our impact in the sector, we also run artist development programmes and deliver wider community activities to complement our programme of on-stage work.

Explore more on our website - <https://tallstories.org.uk/>

Our Brand Promises

- We keep it simple, do try this at home
- We put a pause on life to transport you into another world
- Everything we do is in technicolour
- We invite people (big and small) to feel and talk
- We encourage play and silliness
- We open up the magic of Tall Stories for all children
- We value and care for one another



Strategic Objectives

2027 marks 30 years of Tall Stories. In readiness for this landmark we are in the process of conducting a full strategic review, led by our current Chair and Board of Trustees. This will inform the future strategy of the organisation in order to ensure our growth and stability for the next decade or more. We are focusing on four key priority areas:

1. **ARTISTIC PROGRAMME:** an exciting artistic programme which builds on the success of the existing programme and supports development of new work
2. **TOURING AND PARTNERSHIPS:** building on our existing touring relationships and creating new national partnerships to deepen our impact with communities in touring locations
3. **AUDIENCES AND ACCESS:** enabling greater access for audiences - widening our reach and deepening our impact
4. **IMPACT:** increasing our impact in the world of family theatre at local, national and policy level

Finances

Tall Stories is a registered charity and company limited by guarantee with a turnover of approximately £2.25m per annum. Income comes primarily from production activity through ticket sales.

We invite you to review our most recent annual accounts [here](#).



Governance at Tall Stories

As a registered charity, Tall Stories is governed by a Board of up to 8 Trustees, led by the Chair. All Trustees (including the Chair) are appointed for an initial 3-year term and can be reappointed up to a maximum of two terms. Trustees bring a wealth of knowledge and skills to the Board including experience from both within and outside of the cultural sector.

There are two sub-committees made up of members of the wider Board. The Finance Committee led by the Treasurer and reporting to the Board on all finance issues. There is also a recently established Inclusion Committee. The Chair does not sit on these Committees but oversees them as part of normal Board duties.

As well as being a registered charity, Tall Stories is also a Limited Company through which its trading activities are delivered. Members of the Board act as both a Trustee of the registered charity and as Directors of the Limited Company during their tenure.

The Board delegate day to day management of the organisation to the Artistic Director and Co-Founder, Toby Mitchell, and Executive Director, Tara Wilkinson.

Current Trustees

Penelope Daly (Chair)
Stacie Bond
Philippa Garland
Will Mauchline
Zaylie-Dawn Wilson

We are currently recruiting for a new Treasurer who will join us in summer 2025.



The role of the Chair

As Chair, you will lead the Board of Trustees to ensure exemplary and inspirational governance of Tall Stories. You will have responsibility – alongside other Trustees – to ensure the company delivers on its charitable objectives, remains solvent, is effectively managed and is compliant with all necessary legislation and governance.

As Chair, you will lead the Board in driving strategy and overseeing the delivery of Tall Stories' work, ensuring long-term sustainability. You will support the Executive team to refine and execute our 5-year strategic plan, ensuring we all uphold Tall Stories' vision and brand promises as well as delivering on our aims and objectives.

The Chair challenges and supports the Executive team to consider our strategic and commercial positioning and facilitate robust and constructive conversations with the Board to push Tall Stories forward.

This is an opportunity for you to lead and champion theatre for all, and to make a significant difference to the international theatre landscape by supporting us to further our impact and reach in the coming years.

Main duties of the role

Governance

- Provide leadership to the Board of Trustees and enable them to deliver their role
- Ensure the Board is working collaboratively
- Chair Board meetings ensuring business is conducted efficiently
- Ensure organisational resilience through regular monitoring of policies, financial position and risk management
- Ensure that the Board consists of the appropriate blend of skills, lived experience and diversity to ensure Tall Stories to deliver on its objectives
- Conduct annual appraisals of each Board member to ensure sustainability

Leadership and Strategy

- Play a key role in refining, implementing and evolving Tall Stories' strategic 5-year plan, ensuring sound management with a focus on long-term sustainability and impact and ensuring the organisation develops in line with its mission and charitable objectives
- Work closely with and provide collaborative and critical support to the Artistic Director and Executive Director (Executive team)
- Proactively champion Tall Stories and our brand promises
- Safeguard the reputation of Tall Stories
- Work with the Executive team and Board to consider long-term succession planning for the Artistic Director and Executive Director positions to ensure sustainability
- Conduct the annual appraisals of the Artistic Director and Executive Director

Advocacy and Stakeholder Engagement

- Exemplify the brand promises of the organisation by attending performances and events and representing the organisation with key stakeholders, funders and partners

Person Specification

We are looking for someone with a dynamic, strategic and commercially driven approach to governance, who would enjoy the opportunity to contribute to the cultural sector by leading Tall Stories into its next phase. You will be empathetic and will be passionate about the role theatre can play in people's lives as well as bringing a commercial acumen to organisational development.

Your experience and knowledge will include an understanding of running or growing businesses in service and/or product driven sectors. You will have experience of leadership or senior management and a particular skill for bringing people together and leading groups to work in a collaborative way. You will understand the nuances of a charity board from experience as a Trustee.

You do not need to work specifically in the arts or cultural sector or have held an equivalent Chair role already. However, a Trustee position or equivalent subcommittee Chair role on a charity board of some kind is important.



Experience and Knowledge

- An understanding and acceptance of the legal duties, responsibilities and liabilities of trusteeship as outlined by the Charity Commission.
- A genuine passion and interest for theatre (either family theatre or in general) and a commitment to Tall Stories' brand promises
- A strategic and commercial approach to organisational development with the ability to support the Executive to deliver on the strategic plan
- Good, independent judgement
- Financially literate
- An ability to lead a team and facilitate constructive conversations

We are eager to hear from interested individuals with a broad range of backgrounds and expertise. Particular areas of experience that are of interest are:

- Experience of running and scaling businesses from a range of sectors and at a range of scales
- Experience of developing new income streams and business models within any sector

Terms and Conditions

Time Commitment

Varies but on average the expected commitment equates to around 22.5 days per annum (see estimated breakdown below)

Location

The Tall Stories team are based day to day in Islington, London but our work tours all over the UK and the world. Board meetings and sub-committee meetings take place both online and in person. Regular engagement with the team at our London offices is expected but it is envisaged that the postholder can be based in other locations across the UK.

Remuneration

This is a voluntary position, but reasonable expenses will be reimbursed including travel, additional childcare, etc, in consultation with the Executive.

Estimated Time Commitment

Activity	Time Commitment	Detail
Chairing Board Meetings x 4	4 days per year	1 day per Board meeting to include meeting and prep time
Board Away Day	2 days per year	2 days per year to include full day session and prep and follow up time
Board Management including annual Board one to ones	2 days per year	Including meetings, prep time and ad hoc engagement with Board members
Executive Team Check Ins	9 days per year	Assumes an average of 0.75 day per month
Artistic & Executive Director Appraisals	1 day per year	0.5 day per year per Exec team member to include meeting and prep time
Performance and events	1.5 days per year	Includes travel time and attendance
Other advocacy and company management	3 days per year	Includes meetings and prep time

Please note the above is a breakdown of an average year and actual time spent on each activity may vary year on year. We will work with the Chair to ensure activity is scheduled and managed in line with your other commitments as needed.





How to apply

To apply for the position of Chair of Tall Stories, please submit a CV (of no more than 2 pages) along with a Cover Letter (of no more than 2 pages) telling us about yourself, your interest in Tall Stories, why you want to lead the organisation at this time and how you meet the person specification.

Please email your documents to recruits@achates.org.uk ahead of the deadline on Monday 22 September at 10am.

Tall Stories is committed to being as welcoming, inclusive and accessible as possible ensuring we include everyone and therefore excite everyone's imaginations universally. This applies not only to our performances but to the way we work and who we work with. As such we are keen to ensure our Board represents a broad range of voices and lived experience. We encourage applicants from all backgrounds.

If you have any access requirements at this stage of the process, please do let us know by contacting Vicki at Achates on vicki@achates.org.uk.

If you would like an informal and confidential conversation about this role, please contact Vicki Grace, Director of Recruitment and Organisational Change at Achates who is supporting with this process. You can reach Vicki by email on vicki@achates.org.uk.

First Round Interviews will take place on Tuesday 30 September and Wednesday 1 October 2025 online with the second round on Monday 13 October 2025 in person at our Islington home.

