



THE HOME OF CREATIVE WRITING

**Arvon is looking
for new trustees.
Could one of them be you?**

...of a regular day
...at night and
...moments have the earth
...the sandstone for the earth
...of the earth within you
...writing
...Believe

Dear applicant,

Arvon is the UK's home of creative writing. Our programme, led by highly acclaimed and diverse writers, spans poetry to playwriting, song to screenplay, fact to fiction, and starting to finishing.

Arvon was founded 56 years ago on a belief in the power of the imagination and the benefits of creative writing. If you share our conviction that these benefits should be available to everyone then you could be an Arvon Trustee. The challenges of our age make Arvon's work more essential than ever, and you will be joining us during a period of exciting transformation, as we work towards creating greater equality of access and opportunity in all our work – and complete an ambitious project to redevelop our Northern writing house, Lumb Bank.

We hope to hear from a diverse range of candidates who share Arvon's vision. You do not need to have been a Trustee before. We know that, for so many people in our society, equality has not yet been realised, and we strongly believe that as a Trustee your lived experience enhances what you bring to a professional setting.

To help Arvon achieve its ambitions we are recruiting up to three new Board members. We are keen to recruit Trustees who will bring fresh insights and perspectives, and we especially welcome applications from those who have experience as a practising writer or with buildings expertise, whether through a heritage, architectural or maintenance lens.

We believe the Trustee role is a really rewarding one and is an opportunity to gain or consolidate valuable leadership and governance skills. We offer support and training to all Trustees as required, and we hope that you will consider applying.

Yours sincerely,



Patricia Cumper
Chair of Trustees

"Something magical happens at an Arvon writers' house. You arrive, perhaps feeling a little shy, uncertain and hopeful.

You leave amazed at the progress you have made, encouraged by a sense of fellowship, a shot of inspiration and the determination to keep writing."

This pack includes information about Arvon, the role of Arvon Trustees, and details of how to apply. There is more general information on our [website](#).

OUR VISION

We believe creative writing can change lives for the better.

Creative writing allows us to harness our imagination and find our voice. It creates new possibilities, new ideas, new futures. It unlocks our potential, our empathy and our hope. And we're keen to share this opportunity for transformation with as many people as possible.

OUR VALUES

Inclusive: Everyone is creative. We make spaces that are open to all, where anyone, regardless of previous writing experience or background, feels welcome and included as part of a community of writers.

Inspiring: Step away from the routine, be inspired by writers and our beautiful places and release your imaginative potential. Arvon is a place for contemplation, challenge and going beyond what you thought you were capable of achieving.

Supportive: Creative writing is a craft that can be learnt, through guidance from experts, and through the peer support that comes from creative friendships with fellow writers. At Arvon, writers teach writers, and everyone encourages each other to become a better writer.

Transformative: Immersing yourself in creative writing nourishes the imagination, can deepen the connection to self and to the world, and can lead to dramatic change and progress.

BEING AN ARVON TRUSTEE

Supporting Arvon for the past 7+ years as a trustee has, simply put, been a pleasure. Joining as a young Arvon Trustee, with only a limited understanding of the demands and responsibilities of the role, Arvon afforded me a supportive space to grow and develop, so I could best support and nurture the aims of the charity. I am fervent in my belief that few organisations would achieve this in such a collaborative, inspiring, and friendly way.

My fellow Board members are all extremely experienced and knowledgeable in their respective fields, from a diverse range of backgrounds, and they are united in their passion for the work that Arvon does. While in my role as Chair of the Properties Committee we can cover anything from bats to boilers, knowing that these otherwise mundane discussions ultimately support the houses in continuing to grow their impact and reach is nothing but a joy. The magic Arvon brings to all those it works with is so often a catalyst for positive change and has been the foundation for so many writers. Being able to play a part in that story is something that I would recommend anyone interested in becoming an Arvon Trustee considers.

Lee Bilson, Trustee since 2017

We have three writing houses, a virtual house, and a co-working space at Somerset House, London.

TOTLEIGH BARTON

Totleigh Barton, our writing house in Devon, became the first dedicated Arvon writing house in 1970. It was originally purchased by our co-founder, John Moat, and his wife Antoinette.



THE HURST

The Hurst in Shropshire is the former home of the playwright John Osborne and became the third Arvon house in 2002. Alongside it is The Clockhouse, our dedicated writers' retreat.



LUMB BANK

Lumb Bank in West Yorkshire once belonged to the poet Ted Hughes and has been an Arvon writing house since 1975. It is closed for a major £2.2 million redevelopment project and will reopen in late spring 2025 as a creative hub for the North.



ARVON AT HOME

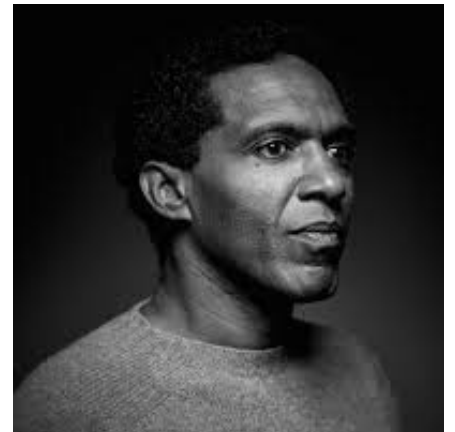
In April 2020, under the leadership of our Chief Executive, Andrew Kidd, the team at Arvon built a fourth, 'virtual house' in response to the pandemic, when our three physical houses were closed. It has now been permanently embedded in Arvon's offer and has vastly increased our reach, making Arvon more accessible than ever before.



Arvon has had a deep and lasting influence on literature in the UK, and generations of writers have acknowledged the significance of Arvon to their careers.

Pat Barker, Hisham Matar, Bernardine Evaristo, Lemn Sissay, Maggie O'Farrell, Esther Freud and Caroline Bird are just a few of the writers who made their start at Arvon.

We celebrate the many writers who began or developed their skills at Arvon. However, professional literary success is not our primary focus. We believe that the benefits of creative writing should be available to everyone.



As well as our residential writing courses, we deliver residential weeks for schools and community groups, reaching over 600 young people and vulnerable adults every year.

We work with a range of partners on research projects in schools in disadvantaged communities, and we provide support for school teachers to encourage students to develop their confidence and writing skills. As part of our ongoing commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion, we have amplified our engagement with young people and vulnerable adult groups, both online and through local community outreach.

At Arvon, we seek to place diversity and inclusion at the heart of our strategy, our evaluation and our programming, underpinned by a determination that no barrier shall exist to the inclusion of all: that our houses, both physical and virtual, will be accessible and welcoming to everyone – spaces in which there will be no actual or perceived impediment to participation.

You can read our full statement on how Arvon is working to advance diversity and inclusion [here](#).

Our response is inevitably imperfect, and the work of refining and improving that response will never be complete. But we are in this for the long term, as we push ourselves further and accelerate processes of change.



In 2023, Arvon's total income was £2,572,089. This was made up of income from course sales, royalties and investments, and income from our fundraising activities, including £550,100 in restricted grants for the Lumb Bank redevelopment project. We are one of Arts Council England's National Portfolio Organisations.



In 2020 and 2021, Arvon was able to mitigate the significant losses resulting from the pandemic thanks to donations, local authority and central government grants, and through the income generated by our new 'virtual house' Arvon At Home. In autumn 2021, we resumed operating at full capacity, and the transition out of lockdown was challenging. However, in 2023 course sales substantially recovered, and Arvon had a record-breaking year on that front, even as the fundraising landscape remained tricky (our successful capital fundraising campaign notwithstanding).

In the first half of 2024, course sales were less consistent, as we felt the impact of the cost-of-living crisis, but they have since started to recover. The fundraising picture has also improved, and we are rebuilding our reserves.

Arvon's 35 staff (15 of those full time) are led by our outstanding Chief Executive Andrew Kidd. Our Chair is the writer, critic and director Patricia Cumper. Pat leads our diverse and committed Board of Trustees. The Board and the hardworking leadership team have been collaborative, constructive and dynamic in meeting the challenges of the last four years.

OUR TRUSTEES

The Board of Trustees, under the leadership of Patricia Cumper, brings a diverse range of lived experience, and professional skills and expertise, ranging from creative writing and education to finance and property management. All Trustees share Arvon’s belief in the power of the imagination and the benefits of creative writing, and seek to ensure that these benefits are made available to everyone, regardless of their background or circumstances. Most Trustees sit on one of the Board’s sub-committees – Finance, Properties, and Appointments and Remuneration – and a number are now involved in supporting the Lumb Bank redevelopment project, as well as Arvon’s EDI and environmental working groups. Meet the Board and staff teams [here](#).



Now, we are keen to add to Arvon’s existing strengths by bringing up to three new Trustees, with fresh skills and perspectives, onto our Board.

THE ROLE

- Contribute to the governance and strategic direction of Arvon, ensuring it achieves its mission and objectives
- Ensure, alongside your fellow Trustees, that the charity’s affairs are conducted to the highest standards and with appropriate governance and risk management procedures
- Act as an ambassador for the charity, spreading the word about Arvon and its work

PERSON SPECIFICATION

Our new Trustees may come from many walks of life, and we do not require prior board-level experience. Successful candidates will be able to demonstrate some of the following qualities:

- Sound judgement and strategic thinking ability balanced by an openness to listening to others and to new ideas
- Understanding or experience of the arts and/or education and a belief in the transformative power of self-expression
- An enthusiasm for Arvon’s work and a willingness to make the case for what we do
- Commitment to Arvon being an equal, diverse and inclusive organisation

At this time, we are particularly keen to hear from candidates who work as practising writers, or with buildings experience – whether through a heritage, architectural or maintenance lens – but we very much welcome applications from others as well.

All Trustees will be offered an induction, and the role offers the opportunity to learn about governance and what it takes to run an arts organisation and achieve its objectives.

All Trustees will have the opportunity to attend an Arvon writing week free of charge, so they can experience the Arvon magic first-hand.

TERMS OF APPOINTMENT

- This is a voluntary role and is unremunerated, although reasonable expenses can be claimed.
- Trustees are appointed by the Board on a four-year term with the option to renew for one further term.
- The Board meets 4-6 times a year; this includes an annual strategic planning event, and at least one meeting each year is held at one of the three Arvon writing houses.

HOW TO APPLY

Please submit your CV and a letter of not more than 750 words, telling us why you want to be an Arvon Trustee and how your professional skills or life experience will help us, to **trustees@arvon.org**.

If you prefer you can send a video of up to 3 minutes instead of the accompanying letter.

Please also complete the Equal Opportunities Form [here](#), which will be separated from your application before shortlisting.

KEY DATES

Closing date for applications:
Monday 14 October 2024 at 12pm

Interviews for shortlisted candidates:
Tuesday 29 or Wednesday 30 October 2024

CONTACT

If before applying you would like to talk to our Chief Executive Andrew Kidd or to one of our Trustees – or if you would like this pack in a different format – please email Andrew at **andrew.kidd@arvon.org**