



An Roinn Ealaíon, Oidhreachta,  
Gnóthaí Réigiúnacha, Tuaithe agus Gaeltachta

Department of Arts, Heritage,  
Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs

**Appointment of a Chairperson to the Board of the Abbey Theatre - Amharclann na Mainistreach**

**Closing Date: 3pm on 13<sup>th</sup> of March 2017**

The Minister for Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs is seeking to appoint a suitably qualified candidate as Chair of the Abbey Theatre Board. Interested candidates should ensure they meet the criteria under section 3 below, and should email a current curriculum vitae, along with a cover letter outlining the specific expertise they would bring to the role of Chair, to the Public Appointments Service at: [stateboards@publicjobs.ie](mailto:stateboards@publicjobs.ie).  
Shortlisting on the basis of written applications will apply.

## **Membership of State Boards**

Although the Abbey Theatre is not a State Board, it has taken the decision to formally adopt the contents of the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies, in order to ensure adherence to best practice.

High standards of corporate governance in all State Agencies, whether in the commercial or non-commercial sphere, are critical to ensuring a positive contribution to the State's overall social and economic development.

Members of State Boards are appointed to act on behalf of the citizen to oversee the running of the affairs of state bodies. State bodies must serve the interests of the taxpayer, pursue value for money in their endeavours (including managing risk appropriately), and act transparently as public entities. Members of State Boards, and the relevant management team, are accountable for the proper management of the organisation.

Board members should act on a fully informed basis, in good faith, with due diligence and care, and in the best interest of the State body, subject to the objectives set by Government.

The [Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies 2016](#) (the Code) provides a framework for the application of best practice in corporate governance by both commercial and non-commercial State bodies.

In order to be an effective contributor on a State Board it is recommended that members should:

- bring independent and objective scrutiny to the oversight of the organisation;
- be prepared to be challenging when necessary while being supportive to the delivery of organisational strategy and objectives;
- be equipped to offer considered advice on the basis of sound judgement and experience;
- be prepared to make a time commitment to their work commensurate with their role.

## Appointment of a Chairperson to the Board of the Abbey Theatre

<b>Location:</b>	Abbey Theatre or other locations in Dublin
<b>Number of Vacancies:</b>	1 Chairperson
<b>Remuneration:</b>	Nil. Travel and subsistence are payable at the appropriate civil service rate.
<b>Time Requirements:</b>	Approximately 2 days per month plus 7 half day meetings per annum.  3-4 days per month will also be required for attending events, tours and other meetings outside of the meetings of the Board and sub-committees.
<b>Term:</b>	5 years

### 1. Background

The Abbey Theatre is Ireland's National Theatre. Inspired by the revolutionary ideals of its founders and its rich canon of Irish dramatic writing, the Abbey Theatre's mission is to imaginatively engage with all of Irish society through the production of ambitious, courageous and new theatre in all its forms. The Abbey Theatre commits to lead in the telling of the whole Irish story, in English and in Irish, and affirms that it is a theatre for the entire island of Ireland and for all its people. In every endeavour, the Abbey Theatre promotes inclusiveness, diversity and equality.

The Abbey Theatre produces an ambitious annual programme of Irish and international theatre across its two stages and on tour in Ireland and internationally, having recently toured to Belfast, Edinburgh, London, New York, Toronto and Sydney.

In July 2016, two new Directors/CEOs, Graham McLaren and Neil Murray, were appointed to reposition the Abbey Theatre at the heart of Irish cultural life. The Abbey's programme for 2017, recently announced, points to a new inclusive and collaborative approach to the Company's work. Inviting partner companies and artists in to the Abbey building, as well as Abbey productions originating and touring outside the Abbey building are two features of the new approach.

Over the years, the Abbey Theatre has premiered the work of major Irish playwrights such as J.M. Synge, Sean O'Casey and Teresa Deevy, as well as contemporary classics from Sebastian Barry, Marina Carr, Brian Friel, Thomas Kilroy, Frank McGuinness, Tom Murphy and Mark O'Rowe. In recent years Irish and international audiences have enjoyed the plays of a new generation of playwrights: Stacey Gregg, Nancy Harris, David Ireland, Owen McCafferty, Phillip McMahon, Elaine Murphy, Michael West and Carmel Winters.

To secure the long-term future of the organisation, the Abbey Theatre is currently investigating the feasibility of a major capital redevelopment on the site of the existing building.

More information can be found on the Abbey Theatre's website here [Abbey Theatre - Amharclann na Mainistreach](#).

The Abbey Theatre Amharclann na Mainistreach is a company registered under the Companies Act. More information can be found here [Company Details](#).

## 2. Functions of the Board

Matters reserved for the Board include

1. Significant acquisitions, disposals, and retirement of assets of the company. Applies to assets with values of €125,000 (excluding Value Added Tax) or more
2. Approval of terms of major contracts. Applies to contracts worth €125,000 (excluding Value Added Tax) or more
3. Major investments and capital projects where value is €125,000 (excluding Value Added Tax) or more
4. Delegated authority levels, treasury policy and risk management
5. Policy on determination of remuneration of senior management
6. Approval of annual budgets, corporate and strategic plans
7. Production of annual reports and accounts
8. Appointment, remuneration and assessment of the performance of the Chief Executive (Theatre Director)
9. Significant amendments to the pension of the Chief Executive and staff
10. Succession planning for the Chief Executive
11. Approval in advance of engagement in novel or contentious acts or in advance of the commitment of funds to novel or contentious purposes

The Board is assisted in the discharge of its responsibilities by a number of sub-committees which include Audit and Development. Depending on the successful candidates' specific area of expertise, he/she will be expected to sit on one or more of these sub-committees. (Please see the following link for information on Audit and Risk Committee guidance <http://www.per.gov.ie/en/revised-code-of-practice-for-the-governance-of-state-bodies/> )

### Current board of the Abbey Theatre

Board Member Names
Mark Ryan
Deirdre Kinahan
Sheelagh O'Neill
Jane Brennan
Niamh Lunny
Loretta Dignam
Sarah Durcan
James McNally
Dónall Curtin

This campaign is being held to fill the vacancy at Chair level on the board of the Abbey. Expressions of interest are now invited from applicants who believe that they possess the skills and experience necessary to join the Board of Abbey Theatre - Amharclann na Mainistreach as Chair and contribute to the delivery of its strategic objectives. Term of appointment is 5 years. Successful candidates may serve a maximum of two terms.

### 3. Person Specification

The Minister for Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs is seeking to appoint a suitably qualified candidate as Chair of the Abbey Theatre Board.

The Minister welcomes applications representative of the diversity of the Irish population, particularly reflecting gender, geography and cultural interests.

It is desirable that candidates demonstrate the following:

- Previous experience of board membership and ideally experience chairing a board
- An ability to support the newly appointed Chief Executives
- A strong interest in theatre
- A strong understanding of Irish culture and the Irish arts
- Sound knowledge of the arts and contemporary arts environment
- Experience of public speaking
- Previous experience in supporting fundraising activity
- The capacity to make the very significant time commitment this role requires

Attention is drawn to the general details of the role of Chairperson as set out on page 19 of the Code which can be found [here](#). The Principle states-

- The Chairperson is responsible for leadership of the Board and ensuring its effectiveness on all aspects of its role.
- The Chairperson should display high standards of integrity and probity and set expectations regarding culture, values, and behaviours for the State body and for the tone of discussions at Board level.

### 4. Term of Appointment

Appointments to the Council will be for an initial period of 5 years, with an option to extend the term of engagement for a second term of 5 years, subject to:

- The Minister may at any time terminate the appointment of the Chair.
- The roles and responsibilities of Board Members are described in the Revised Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies 2016 which is available on the website of the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform. ([Revised code of practice for the governance of state bodies](#)).
- Appointment to the Board is subject to the Memorandum and Articles of Association of the Abbey Theatre Amharclann na Mainistreach.

### 5. Submitting your Expression of Interest

Your submission should be made by email to [stateboards@publicjobs.ie](mailto:stateboards@publicjobs.ie) together with your **Curriculum Vitae** and a **cover letter** outlining, with reference to criteria at 3 above, the specific expertise you would bring to the role of Chair.

## **IMPORTANT NOTE**

Please take care when submitting your expression of interest. As the Assessment Panel will generally make its recommendation(s) based on consideration of the documentation which you submit, it is most important that you *ensure your cover letter (and supporting CV) clearly specifies how your particular background and experience meets the requirements of the Board position specified in this booklet.*

This will help ensure that the Assessment Panel is as informed as possible as to the basis for your candidature and why you believe you are a person who could potentially be appointed to this Board.

### **6. Assessment Process**

An Assessment Panel will be convened by the Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs to consider and assess the expressions of interest received by PAS.

The panel will:

- review and discuss the expressions of interest received against the specific appointment criteria for the role, as advertised in this Information Booklet;
- assess potential candidates further once they meet the specified appointment criteria by undertaking any or all of the following steps:
  - Consideration of the written applications; and/or
  - Meeting/conference call; and/or
  - Referee checks; and/or
  - Any other selection or verification method deemed appropriate (this may include the Department requiring statutory declarations from shortlisted applicants as to the bona fides of the qualifications and experience contained in their applications).
- arrive at a shortlist of suitable candidates to be sent forward for consideration by the Minister.

### **7. Confidentiality**

Subject to the provisions of the Freedom of Information Acts, 2014, applications will be treated in strict confidence. All enquires, applications and all aspects of the proceedings are treated as strictly confidential and are not disclosed to anyone, outside those directly involved in that aspect of the process. Certain items of information, not specific to any individual, are extracted from computer records for general statistical purposes.

### **8. Data Protection Acts 1988 & 2003**

Please note that your cover letter and curriculum vitae will be forwarded to the Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs and may be retained for up to one year.