



HARPUR
TRUST



Appointment of Finance Trustee

January 2026

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HERE FOR BEDFORD

SINCE 1566

Letter from the Chair of Trustees

Thank you for your interest in the role of trustee with the Harpur Trust.

This role is an important part of any charity's governance. Trustees ensure that the charity is compliant and act as 'critical friends', working in collaboration with staff to set the strategic direction.

The Harpur Trust has been a major contributor to Bedford life for more than four hundred and fifty years, promoting education and helping people in our community. We continuously seek ways to make ourselves more accessible and inclusive for the pupils, staff and communities we exist to support.

To do this we are seeking to expand the pool of people applying to become Trustees so that the broadest possible combination of voices can help us to achieve our vision of a community where everyone can thrive.

This information pack is designed to tell you more about The Harpur Trust and about the responsibilities and rewards of being a Trustee.

I hope you will enjoy finding out more and that this will help you decide whether joining us might be for you.

Warm regards,
Rhian Castell



An Introduction to The Harpur Trust



The Harpur Trust was founded over 450 years ago by Sir William Harpur, a local man born to humble beginnings who made his fortune as a merchant tailor and became Lord Mayor of London.

In 1566 Sir William and his wife Dame Alice created an endowment to support the education of disadvantaged children at what became Bedford School, and to meet the most urgent community needs of the time including dowries for 'poor maids' and the relief of poverty.

The original endowment was principally 13 acres of farmland in Holborn, then outside London. As London grew it became part of the city and much more valuable. Today, most of our assets are held in investments which are currently worth over £100m, and our turnover is around £60m per year.

By law we must preserve Sir William Harpur's endowment in perpetuity, but we use the return that it generates to fund work still inspired by his vision.

As the world has changed, our activities have evolved, but they all still support our three charitable objectives that Sir William would have recognised:

- The promotion of education.
- The relief of those in Bedford who are sick or in need, hardship or distress.
- The provision of recreational facilities in Bedford with a social welfare purpose.

If you look closely at our logo, you will notice a weave design within the H, signifying Sir William's origins as a tailor and our place as a part of the fabric of Bedford.

What We Do Today



Promoting Education

We educate over 3,000 pupils in four high-quality independent schools. Bedford School is a flourishing boys' boarding and day school from year three to sixth form. Combining 250-years of tradition with a modern outlook, Bedford Modern School is a co-educational school with outstanding educational results. Bedford Girls' School provides outstanding future-focused education for girls, and Pilgrims' Pre-Prep School provides first-class education from three months to Year Two.

Our transformational bursary programme is among the most generous in the country, enabling talented children from all backgrounds to access our schools.

We also sponsor HEART Academies Trust, which educates thousands more children in state schools across Bedford Borough.

We promote education in Bedford in a range of other ways, including university bursaries, supporting local schools, and sharing skills through training and volunteering programmes.

Supporting the Community

Our community-related objects are 'the relief of persons who are sick, or in need, hardship or distress', and 'the provision of facilities for recreation or other leisure-time occupation by inhabitants in the interest of social welfare with the object of improving their conditions of life'. We have provided over £11m in grants in the last 10 years to projects based in and around Bedford, to help local charities and individuals and improve lives in the local area. If we could give nationally at that level, we would be in the top 5 UK charities.

What We Do Today



Our strategic programmes for children & young people

Since our strategy was launched, we have created two major strategic programmes in Bedford.

Our **Accelerator Programme** aims to accelerate the academic progress of children aged 0-11 in low-income families, a group which faces particular challenges in Bedford.

We are building partnerships with primary schools and other organisations to support a range of activities that collectively aim to narrow the attainment gap. In its first three years, Bedford's attainment gap has narrowed at the second fastest rate in the country.



Bedford Giving is a group of passionate businesses, charities and other partners, who have come together to help create a brighter future for our next generation.

We believe everyone in Bedford has something to give – time, skills, knowledge, cash – and by working together, we can achieve more than we could on our own.

Bedford Giving is now one of the most successful place-based giving schemes in the UK, with projects including career mentoring, experience of the workplace, mental health, life skills and positive activities.

Bedford Giving is independent of The Harpur Trust but is hosted by us.

Our Year in Numbers

£128,153,000 of endowed funds

£72,951,000 turnover

1,134 paid employees

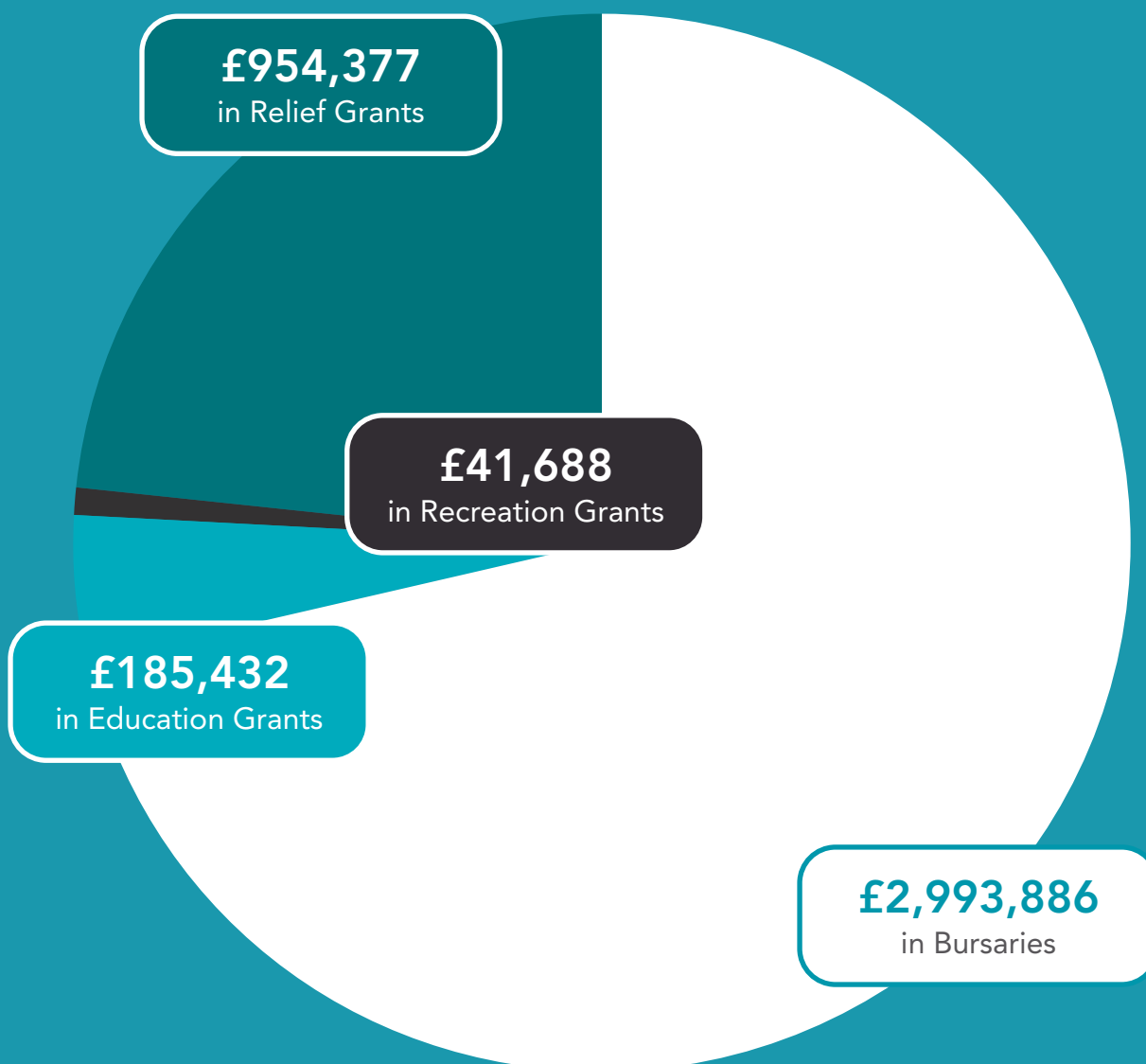
3,000+ children educated in our schools

177 pupils benefitting from bursary awards

69 grants made to community groups & individuals

25 local primary schools supported through the Accelerator Programme

£4,175,383 committed to supporting the community:



Our Strategy: Together for Bedford



Our vision is a community where everyone can thrive.

Our mission is to nurture potential and improve people's lives.

Our focus is Bedford Borough, while our impact flows far beyond.

Our 15-year goals:

- More children and young people facing disadvantage achieve their potential.
- High-quality, distinctive and financially sustainable education.
- High value, impactful bursaries to support children to access our schools.

- Maximum impact on community needs.
- A more effective, efficient, resilient organisation greater than the sum of its parts.

Our ambition for Bedford:

Our strategy, *Together for Bedford*, sees us build on our rich heritage in education and grant giving by working to transform young lives, right across our community.

Our Strategy: Together for Bedford



We have set a long-term strategic goal: to invest in people's futures.

We aim to work for a generation across our whole community, to help tackle the cyclical relationship between disadvantage, lack of opportunities, poor educational outcomes and future poverty.

We have launched the Accelerator Programme and Bedford Giving; two innovative and collaborative community programmes supporting children and young people. We are now working to strengthen this network and ultimately to mobilise the whole community in Bedford behind this common cause.

To succeed we are becoming more outward-facing, collaborative and inclusive. We are also

becoming a knowledge engine, gathering evidence and insights and sharing with everyone who supports our mission, so the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.

Our continuing commitment to high quality education and a generous bursary programme both support this goal, as does our grants programme, which aims to have the greatest impact we can for the people who need our help most.

Together we can build a community where everyone can thrive.

Governance



The Board of Trustees holds ultimate legal responsibility for governing the charity and directing how it is managed and run. Some Trustees have special roles such as Chair; however, all Trustees remain jointly responsible for the charity.

The Board has around 15 Trustees, each of whom is a member of around two committees in addition to their Board role. The Trust's committees are as follows:

- Schools Committee
- Finance Committee
- Community Committee
- Audit Committee
- Endowment Committee
- Governance Committee
- Remuneration Committee

While the Trust is a single legal entity, the Board's role is primarily strategic. There is significant delegation, including to four School Governing Bodies, subcommittees of the Schools Committee which undertake most school governance activities on behalf of the Board.

A Scheme of Delegation and Management ensures that decisions are delegated to the greatest extent possible, while facilitating strong risk management and accountability to the Board who remain legally responsible.

Governance



The Trustees place considerable emphasis on training. Staff and Trustees attend seminars and workshops on a variety of issues including strategic policy, financial management, investment, governance, performance management, safeguarding, grant-making and communications.

There is a comprehensive, mandatory induction programme for new Trustees and non-trustee committees members, which senior staff also attend. The Trust has a comprehensive Governance Training Directory offering ongoing developmental opportunities.

Term of Office

All terms of office are for three years, with most Trustees expected to serve at least two terms (up to a maximum of three, four in exceptional circumstances).

Meetings are generally held at the Trust's premises at The Pilgrim Centre, Princeton Court, Brickhill Drive, Bedford, MK41 7PZ, or online.

There are also excellent hybrid meeting facilities, although the majority of meetings require attendance in person.

Role Description



The Trustees share collective responsibility for the effective governance of The Harpur Trust. The key tasks, behaviours and person specification are as follows:

Key Tasks

To participate in the governance of the charity and contribute to its regular development.

To ensure that our mission, vision and values, strategic direction, policies and objectives are clearly established and that the charity's performance is aligned to these.

To consider the whole charity and its beneficiaries in all discussion of strategic direction, planning and activity.

To oversee our finances and ensure that all risks are managed effectively including financial, safeguarding and compliance.

To develop positive, constructive working relationships with the Chief Executive and senior staff, acting as an objective, critical friend.

To serve on specific committees or working groups as needed, leveraging your expertise and skills to advance our objectives.

How we work

All trustees are expected to act in line with our code of conduct, including our values of Integrity, Inclusion, Respect, Kindness, Ambition and the following behaviours:

- Openness to colleagues, confidentiality and collective responsibility.
- Preparedness, reading papers and raising major questions or points in advance.
- Constructiveness and mutual respect in debate and challenge.
- Curiosity and open-mindedness, listening to build understanding and making decisions fairly.
- Self-reflection and self-development.

Knowledge, Skills & Experience

Bedford Borough benefits from rich diversity and we want our Board to reflect the communities we support. This is important because it creates more effective decision-making and increases our openness, credibility and impact.

As an organisation we seek to work in ways designed to ensure that all our stakeholders feel safe, respected, trusted, valued, have a sense of belonging, and therefore feel able to contribute.

Bedford Borough benefits from rich ethnic and cultural diversity and we want our Board to reflect the communities we support. We therefore particularly welcome applications from residents of Bedford Borough as well as those from further afield.

The knowledge, skills and experience trustees are expected to contribute include:

- Demonstrable leadership and interpersonal skills.
 - Proven ability to communicate and explain complex information.
 - Strong analytical and evaluation skills, with strategic thinking and independent judgement in decision-making.
 - An understanding of accountability and governance, and of the legal duties, responsibilities and liabilities of trusteeship.
 - Willingness and ability to consistently act in line with 'how we work' above.
 - Experience in team-based problem solving and change management.
 - Ability to attend 12-15 meetings per year, many in person, in Bedford.
- We are currently looking for a trustee specifically with skills and experience in strategic finance.
 - Experience as a Finance Director in a commercial organisation or in a senior consulting/advisory role in an accounting firm would be particularly helpful.
 - An understanding of finance in a charity setting, and/or experience as a non-executive director, finance committee chair or trustee are desirable.



How you will benefit



The role of trustee is voluntary and unpaid, but if you become a trustee, in return for your time and commitment we want the experience to be valuable for you.

The Harpur Trust is committed to ensuring that you have opportunities to learn and develop, and to giving you the support you need to help you carry out your role effectively, including:

- A tailored induction programme to give you the knowledge and skills to carry out your duties.
- An on-going personalised training programme delivered by senior staff and external providers.

- Good facilities to attend hybrid meetings if necessary.
- iPads are provided to enable Trustees to access papers, emails and hybrid meetings.
- Reasonable travel expenses to attend physical meetings can be reimbursed.
- Opportunities to network with senior professionals and counterparts in charities, schools and sector organisations.

There are huge benefits and rewards in being a trustee and for many people it can be a life changing experience, or the route to a new career path.

Next Steps

The Harpur Trust is committed to an open process for recruiting for trustee roles. The Trust aims to identify a wide and diverse field of suitable candidates and to assess of candidates against the requirements for the role.

Candidates should submit a full Curriculum Vitae (including comprehensive details of key achievements and responsibilities) and a covering letter addressed to the Chair, Rhian Castell, which fully addresses the competencies outlined in the job description and person specification.

Completed applications should be emailed to info@harpurtrust.org.uk. The closing date for applications is Monday 23rd February 2026, 9am.

Once a shortlist of candidates has been created, shortlisted candidates will be invited to The Harpur Trust Office for informal discussions about the charity and the role, followed by final interviews in March with a group of trustees.

The Harpur Trust is committed to being more reflective of the communities that we serve, and we would therefore particularly welcome interest from those who would increase the diversity of our Board.

The Harpur Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and the Board expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. The successful candidates must be willing to undergo child protection screening appropriate to the post.

If you require any reasonable adjustments to assist you in the selection process, please advise us of these so that we can make appropriate arrangements.

Data Protection & Privacy

Protecting your personal data is of the utmost importance to the Harpur Trust and we take this responsibility very seriously. Any information we obtain is held and processed in accordance with the relevant data protection legislation. The data you provide is securely stored and will be used for the purposes of considering your suitability for a role in our governance.

For more information about this, your rights, and our approach to Data Protection and Privacy, please visit our website:

<https://www.harpurtrust.org.uk/>





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The Pilgrim Centre
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Registered Charity No: 1066861
Company Number: 3475202