

## AIM November/December Heritage Trustee Newsletter – **EXTRACTS**

### **Cultural Governance Alliance launches**

AIM is a founder member of the Cultural Governance Alliance, a new group of organisations which all support boards and trustees in the cultural sector. The Alliance was launched during Trustee Week at a conference in London on 13<sup>th</sup> November and its website already includes useful resources and reports from across the cultural sector, with more being added over the next few months. The website features an online version of the Clore Leadership Programme's Practical Guide to Governance, in a user-friendly format which is easy to navigate.

[culturalgovernancealliance.org/](http://culturalgovernancealliance.org/)

### **New Museum Accreditation Standard**

The new Accreditation standard was launched on 1<sup>st</sup> November. The refreshed standard gives a higher profile to the importance of good governance and includes a clearer requirement to have agreed the roles and responsibilities of staff, trustees and volunteers. The standard is designed to be more streamlined and easier to use; in particular the requirements for the forward plan are shorter and more focused, which should make it easier for boards to use their Accreditation Forward plan as their working document.

[www.artscouncil.org.uk/accreditation-scheme/about-accreditation](http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/accreditation-scheme/about-accreditation)

### **NCVO launches new governance assessment tool**

During Trustees Week, NCVO relaunched its popular Governance Wheel tool, which offers a framework for reviewing your board. The tool has been redeveloped to reflect the current Charity Governance Code. The Governance Wheel could help boards who have already used the AIM Hallmarks to dig deeper in reflecting on their own performance.

[knowhownonprofit.org/tools-resources/board-basics/tools-and-guidance/governance-wheel](http://knowhownonprofit.org/tools-resources/board-basics/tools-and-guidance/governance-wheel)

### **New guidance from the Charity Commission**

The Charity Commission has updated its guidance on reporting serious incidents, which include significant loss to a charity's assets (so museums should consider reporting major collections damage or substantial theft as a serious incident).

[www.gov.uk/guidance/how-to-report-a-serious-incident-in-your-charity](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/how-to-report-a-serious-incident-in-your-charity)

And the Charity Commission has also issued new guidance on reporting reserves, following a survey which found that many charities are reporting their reserves incorrectly.

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/charity-reserves-policies-demonstrating-and-building-resilience](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/charity-reserves-policies-demonstrating-and-building-resilience)

### **Financial Strategy and Governance for Trustees: places available on final workshop**

We've had great feedback on our new series workshops for trustees this autumn, presented by Caron Bradshaw, CEO of the Charity Finance Group and organised in partnership with colleagues in Museum Development. This is the course mentioned by Charlotte Fischer in this month's profile. There is one remaining workshop:

*Thu 7 February 2019, 10:30 – 15:00, Lancashire Conservation Studios, Preston.  
Hosted by Museum Development North West.*

The workshop focuses on what it means to provide effective financial leadership for your organisation. All trustees – not just treasurers – share responsibility for the financial health of their charity. This session is designed to offer a refresher in basic financial management skills, as well as the opportunity to develop higher level skills in financial strategy and financial leadership. Trustees will have opportunity to network and share experiences with other heritage trustees. The workshop will cover:

- \*The financial challenges facing the sector

- \*Financial strategy and governance

- \*Risk management and financial policies

Book your place:

[www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/financial-strategy-and-governance-workshop-tickets-47945629669](http://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/financial-strategy-and-governance-workshop-tickets-47945629669)

### **In focus: reviewing trustees' contribution**

*In each issue of the AIM Heritage Trustee Newsletter, we offer some quick fire tips on a challenging issue. This month we look at the question of board review, written for AIM by Alex Lindley*

Of all the questions I'm asked in my job, the one that comes up most frequently is this: how can we put in place performance management for our board when everyone gives their time freely as a volunteer? It's not an easy one to answer, but my reply usually goes something like this...

Firstly, I don't think performance management is a hugely helpful term – it has too many punitive overtones. Rather, 'board review' sounds much more like it might be both achievable and appropriate for the voluntary context of a board's work. Secondly, as long as you're clear from the outset that regular reviews are part of how your board operates, it is absolutely appropriate to expect trustees to participate, not least because the process can be of great benefit both to the museum and to individual trustees themselves.

So how can we review trustees' individual contributions appropriately, to help them get the most out of their trusteeship? To my mind, there's no better way than a good conversation, so including annual 1:1s for the chair and individual trustees in your board's annual activity plan is a good place to start. They don't have to be formal – a chat and a coffee can give both chair and trustee the chance to recognise the trustee's contribution to the board, address any concerns, and identify how trustees can continue to contribute as the board and museum develops over time.

What's more, much of what makes board reviews successful also comes from conversations that take place *outside* the annual review cycle, so here are my two top tips for making reviews easy and effective:

- \***Discuss a Code of Conduct for your board**, which clearly outlines the expectations of trustees in your museum, whether it be coming along to a certain number of museum events per year, reading board papers in advance or taking an active role in one of your board's sub-committees. This can be a really useful document to refer to, both when you're recruiting new trustees and in managing your board's performance. It's much easier to raise a problem with an individual trustee – such as lack of meeting preparation – if you have a clear set of standards you can refer to.

- \***Keep informal channels of communication open.** Taking the time to socialise together as a board regularly can increase trustees' engagement and contribution,

as well as build the sorts of trusting relationships that can make difficult performance conversations easier to manage.

Werner Erhard once noted, "*a problem only exists in the absence of the right conversation.*" In the question of board reviews, I think I'm inclined to agree.