



Patron: HRH The Duchess of Cornwall  
President: HRH The Duchess of Gloucester



## **RECRUITMENT OF A NEW CHAIR FOR THE ROYAL SCHOOL OF NEEDLEWORK**

The Royal School of Needlework is looking for a new Chair to take over from the current Chair when their appointment comes to an end in the first half of 2022.

### **Royal School of Needlework - Background**

Established in 1872, the RSN aims to ensure the future of hand embroidery through education, practice and promotion. The RSN is the international centre of excellence for the art of hand embroidery, representing tradition, quality and innovation. We offer courses from Degree level (the only degree programme solely focused on hand embroidery), technical courses at Certificate and Diploma level, the Future Tutor programme, which is the route to becoming a RSN Tutor, through to leisure short courses. We operate an Embroidery Studio which undertakes commissions for conservation, restoration and the creation of new pieces for individuals, places of worship, fashion houses, the military and the Royal Family. The RSN has a physical shop at Hampton Court Palace as well as selling through its Online Shop, supplying stitching accoutrements, books and kits.

The RSN also has an extensive Textile Collection and Archive, which form the basis of exhibitions and talks. Since 2020, we have pivoted the organisation to offer courses and talks online, reaching a worldwide audience. Last summer, the RSN held its first Online International Summer School reaching 273 people from 17 countries across three time zones.

Graduates of the Degree and Future Tutor courses have gone on to be featured in awards, publications and exhibitions internationally including winners of the prestigious Hand and Lock Award for Textile Art in 2017, 2018, 2020 and 2021.

Although a heritage brand, the RSN is forward looking and seeking to build new opportunities and links in 2022, its 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary year. We have a comparatively small staff team who are hugely dedicated to the cause.

The Council comprises:

The Chairman

The Hon Treasurer

Up to 12 Council members

The Council meets six times a year usually in February, April, June, July/Aug, October and December.

As well as the Council there is a Finance and Investment Committee which comprises the Hon Treasurer, the Chairman and up to three members of Council.

In addition to being a registered charity, the RSN is also a company limited by shares and all trustees are shareholders. There are a maximum of 29 shareholders at any time. The payment is £10; this is not returned. There is no financial benefit of share ownership to the individual.

As part of good governance, we undertake a skills audit every two to three years to ensure that the charity has on board the skill support it will need going forward.

The Chairman meets with each trustee individually every two years to ensure they have a chance to review their contribution.

Each year all trustees are asked to contribute to the evaluation of the Chairman and the Chief Executive.

This is a voluntary role and trustees receive no remuneration. Reasonable expenses can be claimed, based on the pertaining expenses policy, for attendance at board meetings and other events necessary for the fulfilment of their trustee's duties.

The current annual report and annual review can be found on the RSN website <https://royal-needlework.org.uk/about/annual-report>. Those for 2020-21 will be posted in late February. To enquire further about the role of RSN Chairman, please contact Deborah Lamb, Trustee, through Claire Worrell at the email address below.

To apply, please send a CV and covering letter by the end of February 2022, explaining what you could bring to this role and why you would like to be the RSN Chairman, to Claire Worrell: [Claire.Worrell@royal-needlework.org.uk](mailto:Claire.Worrell@royal-needlework.org.uk)

### **Timetable for appointment**

Closing date for applications: 28 February 2022

Interviews: March/April. These will be either at Hampton Court Palace, where the RSN is based, or online, depending on circumstances at the time. We hope to offer candidates reaching the interview stage the opportunity to tour the RSN site and to meet staff before their interview.

Starting date: We expect a new Chair to be in post from May/June 2022 but we have some flexibility on this as the current Chair has agreed to extend his term for a few months to enable a smooth transition.

## **CHAIR OF THE ROYAL SCHOOL OF NEEDLEWORK**

### Responsibilities

In addition to the general responsibilities of a trustee and being an ambassador for the RSN, the duties of the Chair include:

#### Governance:

- lead the board of trustees (the Council) by chairing meetings to get the best out of all members
- focus on delivery of the RSN's charitable objectives and oversight of risk management
- develop the board of trustees including recruitment and appraisal

#### Strategic Vision:

- ensure that the RSN continues to learn and grow, balancing tradition with 21<sup>st</sup> century challenges and opportunities

#### Relationship with the Chief Executive:

- get the best out of the Chief Executive by setting annual objectives and provide formal performance appraisal
- build a relationship of trust and openness with the Chief Executive, provide support, counsel and challenge

### Person Specification

- enthusiasm for the RSN's work and its different activities and an understanding of how these support the RSN's charitable objectives
- financial literacy and understanding of the financial and legislative framework governing charities
- able to identify the data and information trustees need to monitor the RSN's performance
- understanding of the role of non-exec trustees and their relationship with paid employees
- experience of chairing meetings and ability to work collegiately and get the best out of a diverse group of people
- commitment to increasing the diversity of the board of trustees
- experience of encouraging and supporting change
- ability to look to the future and think creatively while remaining focused and realistic about the capacity of a small organisation
- appreciation of commercial, digital and fundraising opportunities
- approachable with strong people skills
- impartiality, fairness and the ability to respect confidences

### Time Commitment

- six Council meetings per year plus four Finance and Investment Committee meetings
- regular contact with the Chief Executive
- attendance at RSN events and representation of the RSN at third party events where necessary, around one day per month.
- The term of appointment is five years.