

AMANDA JONES – PERSONAL STATEMENT

Having served as a Trustee for the past six years and as the Society's Chair for the past five, I am standing for election for a final term. I am a life member of the Society and strongly believe in its ability to play a leading role in the social and economic well-being of our amazing county.

As an experienced Board member and senior director, I have specialised in the Arts, Heritage and Charity sectors for over 30 years. A KPMG alumnus and a Fellow of the Institute of Chartered Accountants, I have been passionate throughout my career about helping arts and heritage organisations achieve long-term financial sustainability and deliver real impact, and in promoting the role of culture and heritage as central to our wellbeing and to a thriving economy.

I hold a first-class honours degree in Accounting with Computing from the University of Ulster together with a postgraduate diploma in Professional Accounting and an MSc in Innovation, Leadership and Management from the University of York. I am currently undertaking a Doctorate in Business Administration with the University of Dundee.

I believe I bring particular experience of delivering organisational change through extensive modernisation programmes and have led several major capital redevelopment and regeneration projects. Before moving to Sussex from my native Northern Ireland, I was Director of Finance & Planning for National Museums Northern Ireland where I was also the Finance Director for the £19m redevelopment of the Ulster Museum, winner of the prestigious Art Fund Prize. More recently I led development of a Masterplan for the Royal Pavilion Estate in Brighton which has recently celebrated the re-opening of the Grade 1 listed Corn Exchange and Studio Theatre after substantial restoration.

Upon becoming a Trustee back in 2019, I took on the role of chairing the Society's Finance Committee and believe I was instrumental in helping it survive the worst of the Covid pandemic – working tirelessly to help secure over £2m in emergency and cultural recovery funding. I am delighted that the Strategic Action Plan subsequently developed by Trustees in the spring of 2023 has delivered on its objectives – to successfully modernise the Society's financial operating model and place it in a sustainable position for the future - now working confidently towards a small surplus for the 2025-26 financial year.

In addition to my role at the Society I am Trustee and Honorary Treasurer of the Council for British Archaeology, a Director and the Interim Chair of Coast to Capital; Chair of the volunteering and wellbeing initiative Good Space and Director of Ulster Sports Legacy – working with Lady Mary Peters to deliver a new sports legacy movement for Northern Ireland.

I now wish to see the Society enter the growth stage of its Strategic Action Plan – establishing a refreshed vision and purpose, and the strategy to achieve it. I am keen to see a renewed focus on strategic partnership working, on improvements to the interpretation of our heritage properties and collections, delivery of an increasingly vibrant learning & participation offer and a successful fundraising strategy. I hope you will support me in leading these ambitions.

Mrs Amanda Jones BA(Hons) PGDip MSc FCA