

## Nominations to the Scottish Poetry Library Board: A Guide

### Welcome

Thank you for your interest in the Board of the Scottish Poetry Library. We hope this information sheet provides an overview of the role of both the SPL and its Board, and answers some initial questions

### The Scottish Poetry Library: who we are

The Scottish Poetry Library is a voice for Scotland's poetry. We are the only independent poetry library in the UK and situated within a purpose-built building in the centre of Edinburgh. A small charity, we provide a unique virtual and physical resource, with a collection of over 45,000 items. We have online facilities and a free lending and a postal borrowing service, we offer a fully accessible space and extensive outreach programmes, and we have a national and international presence.

Our primary funding comes from Creative Scotland as one of its Regular Funded Organisations, within the current funding cycle 2018-2021. We currently employ 11 staff, and have 35 volunteers in addition to the volunteer Board.

Our web site contains more information about the organisation and our activities, and includes [our Operating Plan for 2019-20](#) which sets out what we are aiming to achieve and our priority tasks.

### Board membership

Board members are Directors of the company and are the charity trustees. Most Board members are required to join as Friends of the SPL. They can then be nominated, and then elected by Friends of the Scottish Poetry Library at the AGM in November. Board members usually serve for an initial period of three years and may stand for a further three-year term, after which they may not be immediately re-elected. Elected Board members must be Friends at the time of nomination. The Board can also co-opt for a period of up to one year. The Chair is elected by the Board from amongst the Board members.

The SPL has done a great deal, particularly over the last year, to develop and modernise our governance and the Board has formally endorsed the [Governance Code for the Third Sector](#). Our web site includes [summary minutes of Board meetings](#) which will give you an insight into some of the recent business of the Board.

The role of Board member is voluntary, although we reimburse travel and other reasonable costs, including carer costs. We have planned for ten meetings in 2020, including formal Board meetings, a Board and Staff Away Day, a Board strategy day, and the AGM, which is open to all Friends of the SPL. We do not currently have any committees but Board members occasionally undertake individual tasks (for example, working with staff on our Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion plan). Realistically, the time commitment is approximately two days per month, including time preparing for meetings and some correspondence.

We have successfully used telephone conference calls and also Zoom technology to allow virtual attendance at Board meetings, which makes it easier for Board members, given the location and timing of meetings aren't always ideal for everyone.

## What we are looking for

We are committed to a diverse Board in terms of skills, gender, geography, language and ability. We can have up to 12 elected members as well as co-opted members. Three current members are standing down at the AGM. The Board is ideally looking to recruit **4 new elected members**, to make a total of 10 elected members. Following the election process, we can consider co-opting if appropriate.

At the time of election, Board members include a librarian, a local councillor, a retired psychiatrist and a number of active poets, including both Gaelic and Scots language poets. With a focus on diversity and balance, we are particularly interested in new Board members with different skills – in **finance, strategic business planning, HR and fundraising**. We would particularly welcome women (who are under-represented) and members from outside the Central Belt.

Previous experience serving on a Board of a charity would be desirable, although we arrange an induction process and are considering focused Board training and development.

If you would be interested in becoming a Board member, please contact [chair@spl.org.uk](mailto:chair@spl.org.uk) for more information or to discuss on a confidential basis

**The deadline for nominations is Thursday, 31 October.**

## Chairing the SPL

We have introduced the principle of co-chairing to share the workload and enable different skills to be balanced in a complex and challenging climate for a volunteer Board and it also provides valuable corporate continuity as Board members retire and new Board members arrive

*Jane Ryder, Co-Chair*

*Gordon Munro, Co-Chair*

*2/10/2019*