



January 2021

Dear Candidate

Thank you for your interest in joining the Board of Thrive Audience Development. I would strongly encourage you to join us on the Board, having thoroughly enjoyed my time as a member, as Vice-Chair and, finally, as Chair.

Every Board member brings their own unique skills, experience and personality to the role. I thought it might be useful to say something of my experience as you consider how you might contribute to *thrive's* future success.

Thrive plays a key strategic role in the cultural sector in Northern Ireland. Drawing on its unique set of audience data and vast expertise, thrive works with statutory stakeholders and grass roots cultural organisations, bringing insight and action to bear in practical and effective ways. The Board has worked closely with management to set a strong strategic framework to enable the charity to respond to changing needs and to make the most of new opportunities. Two examples stand out. Firstly, *thrive* has responded to ever diminishing public funding by developing important new income streams and expanding its client base beyond arts organisations into the wider cultural and heritage sector. Secondly, it has been proactive in embracing new digital opportunities by forming partnerships and bringing the benefits to the wider sector – a work that is still very much in progress and is essential for the future of arts, heritage and culture in NI.

The appointment of new trustees comes as the Board and management consider the charity's next three year strategy. The devastating impact of the Covid-19 pandemic means that *thrive's* role in helping the cultural sector to 'rebuild better' is more crucial than ever. New opportunities and needs are becoming apparent and there are also significant, and interesting, challenges to be considered, not least the need to fully embed financial sustainability. The Board will play a vital role in setting a strategy that is inspired, relevant and, ultimately, delivered.

We have made great strides in developing our governance over recent years and were delighted to win the VSB Foundation Leadership and Good Governance Award for a small organisation in 2020. We see excellence in governance not as an end in itself but as a way of ensuring that *thrive* delivers all the right things, for the right people in the right ways. This is an ongoing journey of self-evaluation and development which has helped to strengthen our work as a team and to underpin our ambition for the future.

I have undoubtedly received more than I have given in my time on the Board. I have developed new skills, experiences and networks which have contributed to my professional and personal development, and which I will continue to draw upon as a consultant and non-executive director. *thrive* has won great credibility and support with stakeholders at all levels, and the whole Board is pleased to be associated with and support this.

The greatest reward for me has been working with a diverse and talented team, both on the Board and in the staff team. Together, we have placed great emphasis on a positive, values-based culture that is lived out day to day, with humour and creativity as well as hard work. I have learnt a tremendous amount from my colleagues' expertise in different areas and will carry these bonds forward when I finish my tenure as Chair in June 2021. As a new Board member you could play a vital role in *thrive's* future success, as part of a committed team. I hope you will consider joining us.

Good luck!

Carrie Matchett
Chair, *thrive*