WITNESS THE PAST. WRITE THE FUTURE.

Dynamic Earth

CANDIDATE PACK
CHAIR OF THE BOARD

DYNAMICEARTH.ORG.UK

Scottish Charity No. SC020363

HELP SHAPE WHAT COMES NEXT

Science. Planet. People. Possibility.

Dynamic Earth is entering one of the most important periods in its history. We are seeking new Trustees and an exceptional Chair to bring strategic leadership, sound judgement and a collaborative spirit to the next chapter of our work.

This is a planned succession. Following two four-year terms leading the Board through a period of significant transformation, Professor Sir Peter Downes will support a managed transition from February 2027.

We are looking for someone who shares our belief in the power of science to inspire curiosity, understanding and action, and who can help us turn an ambitious future into a sustainable reality.

A positive future for our planet.

An invitation from our Chair

Dynamic Earth has always been about big ideas. Since opening in 1999, millions of people have explored the story of our planet in our extraordinary setting at Holyrood, beneath Arthur's Seat. For generations of children and families, it has been a place of discovery, wonder and memorable first encounters with science.

Over the past eight years, I have had the privilege of chairing the Board through two four-year terms of change and transformation. As I prepare to hand on this responsibility, I am confident in the ambition, talent and potential of the organisation, and in the importance of the work it does.

Our next Chair will join at a defining moment. The opportunity is to strengthen Dynamic Earth's contribution to science engagement, help secure a financially and environmentally sustainable future, and oversee the development of a transformed visitor experience and estate that connects more meaningfully with the remarkable Holyrood landscape around us.

I am committed to supporting a thoughtful and well-managed transition from February 2027, ensuring continuity while giving the incoming Chair the space and authority to lead. We welcome candidates who will challenge constructively, champion our purpose and work in partnership with our Trustees, Chief Executive, staff and supporters.

Best Wishes

Professor Sir Pete Downes
Chair of the Board of Trustees





WHY DYNAMIC EARTH, WHY NOW?



Dynamic Earth combines an extraordinary place with a vital public purpose: helping people understand our planet, the science that shapes it and the choices that will shape its future. In an age of environmental change, misinformation and growing need for scientific literacy, our role as an accessible and trusted place of learning matters more than ever.

We are developing an ambitious transformation programme to renew our visitor experience, address long-term building and infrastructure needs, strengthen financial resilience and establish Dynamic Earth as a leading science engagement charity. We also see a wider opportunity to connect Dynamic Earth more closely to the Palace of Holyroodhouse, the Scottish Parliament, Holyrood Park and Arthur's Seat, helping create a more compelling destination at the end of Edinburgh's Royal Mile.

Alongside this, early exploration of local heat and energy network opportunities reflects our commitment to sustainable infrastructure, practical collaboration and innovation. These projects are at different stages of development and will require careful testing, investment decisions and governance.



THE ROLE OF A TRUSTEE

Helping Dynamic Earth fulfil it's purpose and realise it's ambition.

Trustees are collectively responsible for the governance and strategic direction of Dynamic Earth Charitable Trust.

This is not an operational role. Day-to-day leadership and management sit with the Chief Executive and Leadership Team. The Board's role is to ensure that Dynamic Earth remains true to its charitable purpose, is well governed and financially sustainable, manages risk responsibly and has the strategy, leadership and resources necessary to succeed.

Trustees will:

- Champion our purpose and ensure that our decisions remain focused on public benefit and Dynamic Earth's charitable mission.
- Help shape strategy, bringing judgement, experience, curiosity and an external perspective to some of the biggest opportunities in Dynamic Earth's history.
- Support and constructively challenge the Chief Executive and Leadership Team, creating a relationship built on trust, openness and clear accountability.
- Contribute to major decisions about organisational transformation, investment, capital development, partnerships and long-term sustainability.
- Provide appropriate scrutiny of performance, finance, risk and organisational effectiveness.
- Bring your experience and networks, where appropriate, to help Dynamic Earth build relationships, partnerships, profile and support.
- Think beyond your own professional discipline, recognising that every Trustee shares responsibility for the whole organisation.
- Act as an ambassador for Dynamic Earth and for the importance of science engagement.
- Work collectively, respecting different perspectives and supporting effective decision-making once the Board has reached a conclusion.
- Uphold high standards of integrity, inclusion and governance in everything we do.



WHAT THE CHAIR WILL LEAD

Working with the Board and Chief Executive, the Chair will provide the leadership and stewardship needed to convert this ambition into an achievable programme, balancing innovation with financial discipline, appropriate risk management and the Trust's charitable purpose.

- Lead an effective, inclusive and high-performing Board, creating a culture of constructive challenge, good decisions and collective responsibility.
- Support and hold the Chief Executive to account through a strong, respectful partnership with clear boundaries between governance and executive management.
- Guide the Board's scrutiny of strategy, organisational performance, financial sustainability, risk and major capital and transformation decisions.
- Champion the charitable mission, scientific credibility, public benefit, accessibility and impact of Dynamic Earth.
- Help build productive relationships with funders, public bodies, universities, scientific institutions, civic partners and the wider visitor economy.
- Oversee good governance, succession planning, Board development and the effective operation of Board committees.



THE COMMITMENT



Trustees are normally appointed for an initial four-year term, with a normal maximum of two terms.

We anticipate an overall commitment of approximately eight days each year, following induction, including:

- quarterly Board meetings;
- preparation and reading;
- the AGM;
- participation in a Board committee;
- an annual Board Strategy/Away Day;
- occasional events and ambassadorial activity; and
- additional engagement at particularly important points in Dynamic Earth's development.



The majority of these activities do not require a full day commitment and are managable around a full time role.

The position is voluntary and unremunerated, although reasonable expenses are reimbursed.

A tailored induction programme will be provided.

WHO WE ARE LOOKING FOR

We are interested in candidates who can bring the confidence and perspective to chair a charity at a pivotal stage, without needing to have followed a single conventional career path. Experience of senior leadership, governance and organisational change will be important; commitment to our mission is essential.

Essential Qualities

- A record of effective strategic leadership and the judgement to oversee complexity, uncertainty and competing priorities.
- Strong understanding of Board governance, trustee duties, financial stewardship, organisational risk and collective accountability.
- The ability to chair inclusive, purposeful discussions, listen carefully, draw out different perspectives and reach clear decisions.
- An excellent working relationship with a Chief Executive: supportive and appropriately challenging, while respecting executive responsibilities.
- The credibility, integrity and communication skills to represent Dynamic Earth with a wide range of partners and stakeholders.
- Genuine enthusiasm for science engagement, learning, environmental sustainability and widening access to opportunity.

Experience that would be valuable

- Leading or governing major capital developments, estate renewal or complex organisational transformation.
- Fundraising, philanthropy, strategic partnerships and public-sector relationships.
- Visitor attractions, culture, education, science communication or the wider charitable sector.
- Commercial development, income diversification and long-term financial resilience.
- Place-based regeneration, sustainability, energy and collaborative civic development.

We do not expect any one candidate to bring all of these experiences. We welcome a breadth of professional backgrounds and perspectives, and are committed to inclusive recruitment.

THE TRANSITION

Professor Sir Peter Downes will support a managed transition beginning in February 2027, following completion of his two four-year terms. The precise appointment, induction and handover arrangements will be agreed with the successful candidate and the Board, with appropriate continuity in leadership and governance.

THE ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Chair is a trustee and leads the Board collectively. The role is non-executive: the Board sets direction and provides oversight, while the Chief Executive and executive team are responsible for delivery. The Chair will be expected to lead Board meetings, maintain regular contact with the Chief Executive, contribute to key stakeholder relationships and be available for significant governance or strategic matters as they arise.

All Trustees share responsibility for advancing the Trust's charitable purposes, acting in its best interests and exercising appropriate care and diligence in accordance with applicable Scottish charity law and the Trust's governing documents.

AN INVITATION TO LEAD

We are looking for a Chair who can honour what Dynamic Earth has achieved while helping us ask bolder questions about what it can become. If you believe science should inspire every generation, and that outstanding governance can help ambitious ideas take shape, we would welcome a conversation.

A positive future for our planet.

Dynamic Earth

HOW TO APPLY

For further information or to arrange a confidential discussion about the vacancy, please contact Alan Surgeon and Donna McKay at AWS:

Email: alan@awsexecutive.com

Email: donna@awsexecutive.com

Closing Date for Applications is 12 noon on 6th January 2027
Interviews will take place week commencing 18th January 2027

AWS

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Dynamic Earth Charitable Trust (known as Dynamic Earth) is a registered Scottish Charity, SC020363, regulated by the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR).
Company Reg No. SC138695