

## ICOMOS UK

### Information Pack for the role of President of ICOMOS UK

Thank you for your interest in this role. This guidance provides more information about it, the work of ICOMOS UK, and the qualities and experience we are looking for in the selection process.

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#### **Introduction**

Under the leadership of the current President, Clara Arokiasamy, ICOMOS UK has undertaken an extensive programme of modernisation. As a result, it has strengthened its governance and management arrangements, raised its profile, and contributed directly to the development of UK heritage policy and practice. It has also contributed to ICOMOS International's standard setting, policies and processes for the conservation of buildings, monuments and sites.

She will step down at the end of this year, after two three-year terms. We are therefore seeking an exceptional candidate to continue the work she began, and to maintain its momentum.

This is a challenging and rewarding role in equal measure. It demands critical thinking, personal authority, and a deep understanding of the value of all forms of cultural heritage – the indivisible link between the tangible and intangible, a source of joy, learning, belonging, disquiet, and of environmental and economic sustainability.

## About ICOMOS International and ICOMOS UK

The International Council On Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) is a non-governmental body that works for the conservation of monument and sites; and the only worldwide NGO dedicated to applying theoretical and practice-based research to the conservation of both tangible and intangible elements of cultural heritage places. It comprises a network of over 110 National Committees (of which ICOMOS UK is one), has more than 12,000 members in 130 countries, and over 30 specialist International Scientific Committees and Working Groups.

Originating in thinking which began in the 1930s, ICOMOS was established in 1965 to implement the 1964 [Venice Charter](#), as part of the wider process of post-war reconstruction in Europe. Since then, it has created a shared framework for the development of policy and practice in heritage conservation, tangible and intangible heritage, technical skills, and advocacy. ICOMOS is a formal advisor to UNESCO's World Heritage Committee, and has a mandated role in supporting the processes of nomination, inscription, and monitoring.

ICOMOS UK largely mirrors the structure of the international agency. It is a membership body, formally constituted in the UK as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) overseen by an Executive Board of fifteen Trustees, including the President, Vice President, and Treasurer. It works nationally and internationally with and for heritage professionals from all disciplines, across disciplinary boundaries, and at all stages of their careers. Joining the National Committee offers practitioners, researchers, generalists and specialists a route to international collaboration and knowledge exchange, and opportunities for professional development and dialogue. This takes place through a network of National and International Scientific Committees and in collaboration with higher education, other professional bodies, and sector organisations. ICOMOS UK has formal partnership agreements with World Heritage UK and the Institute of Historic Building Conservation.

Our expertise encompasses architecture and design, conservation, community engagement and activism, historic site management, advocacy, urban planning, placemaking, cultural landscapes, climate change, and digital heritage. Our members have worked on a wide range of heritage projects in the UK and across the globe, in conflict zones, and with ICOMOS International through its monitoring and review processes and on its Scientific Committees. Members contribute practical solutions to the challenges of risk, vulnerability, and sustainability within their own communities of practice and on behalf of others.

## The role of President

This is a high-profile role which demands energy, commitment, and ambition, supporting a small organisation to increase its financial sustainability, extend its reach, and demonstrate its impact. Current priorities are to:

- Build resources and capacity to sustain core operations and respond to the increasing demand for advice and collaboration
- Continue to strengthen relationships with Government agencies in the UK and with ICOMOS in Paris
- Continue work to articulate and reinforce ICOMOS UK's distinctive role and independent voice in the development of inclusive heritage practice in the UK and internationally

## How to apply

Candidates for the role are asked to submit a short CV and supporting statement, which clearly demonstrate the expertise they can offer and how they meet the person specification. The CV and supporting statement should be no longer than two sides each.

The General Secretary of ICOMOS UK will be available during July, if you would like to arrange a short meeting to discuss the role in greater detail. Please contact [alison.hems@icomos-uk.org](mailto:alison.hems@icomos-uk.org)

The deadline for the submission of applications is 12noon on 17 August 2026.

Applications should be sent to [admin@icomos-uk.org](mailto:admin@icomos-uk.org)

Interviews will take place on 9 or 15 September at ICOMOS's office in London or online.

Recommendations on potential candidates will then be considered by the Board, for final ratification at the Annual General Meeting on 12 November 2026. Other than in exceptional circumstances, the recommended candidates are expected to attend this meeting.

The successful candidate will take up their role after the AGM. The first Board meeting of their term takes place on Thursday 3 December. The initial term is for three years, with the option of extension for a further three.

## Role Description

*The President's primary role is to:*

- Provide strategic leadership for the Charity, and ensure that its statutory obligations are met. *See the Appendix for guidance on the legal duties of charity trustees.*
- Act as a link between Trustees and staff and as a line manager for the General Secretary (CEO equivalent) on behalf of Trustees to ensure their decisions are acted upon and the organisation is managed effectively.
- Act as Chair of ICOMOS UK's Executive Board, and provide strategic oversight of its activities and of activities delegated to others.
- Represent ICOMOS UK nationally and internationally, including to Government departments, heritage agencies, practitioners and professional bodies.
- Foster learning across the organisation and through dialogue with national and international colleagues and partners.

## Person specification

Candidates will be able to demonstrate:

### Skills and experience

- Previous experience in a strategic leadership role in complex organisations
- Previous experience as an independent chair in a charitable organisation
- Financial and commercial awareness
- Excellent communication and relationship-building skills, including through formal partnerships and informal networks
- Experience of working with volunteers is highly desirable

### Knowledge and expertise

- Comprehensive knowledge of UK heritage organisations, current challenges, and opportunities
- Knowledge of ICOMOS and international frameworks in which cultural heritage is defined, managed and conserved;
- Expertise in at least one aspect of ICOMOS UK's portfolio of activity, which lends credibility and authority to their role as President

## Approach

- Critical thinking about heritage, its role, and the role of ICOMOS as a thought-leader
- A commitment to community-led and inclusive heritage practice
- A willingness to challenge conventional approaches and the ability to inspire confidence in fellow Trustees, Members, and the wider sector

The President of ICOMOS UK is automatically a member of the International ICOMOS Advisory Committee that consists of Chairs of National and Scientific Committees and the European Region Group. He/she is expected to attend (in person or online), as a representative of ICOMOS UK, annual meetings of the Advisory Committee and the ICOMOS General Assembly, as well as quarterly and special meetings of the ICOMOS Europe Group. There is provision to delegate attendance in exceptional circumstances.

Candidates must have the right to live and work in the UK, and will be expected to attend meetings in London and elsewhere throughout the year.

This is an ex-officio role on the Executive Board, and automatically a Trustee of ICOMOS UK and the CIO.

The role is unpaid.

Candidates should be prepared to commit about two days per month to the role.

## **Appendix: Information on the legal duties of Trustees**

The overriding duty of all charity trustees is to advance the purposes of their charity as well as several basic responsibilities.

The following six legal duties are taken from the Charity Commission's core guidance: *The Essential Trustee: what you need to know, what you need to do*

### **1. Ensure your charity is carrying out its purposes for the public benefit**

You and your co-trustees must make sure that the charity is carrying out the purposes for which it is set up, and no other purpose

This means you should:

- ensure you understand the charity's purposes as set out in its governing document
- plan what your charity will do, and what you want it to achieve
- be able to explain how all of the charity's activities are intended to further or support its purposes
- understand how the charity benefits the public by carrying out its purposes

Spending charity funds on the wrong purposes is a very serious matter; in some cases trustees may have to reimburse the charity personally.

### **2. Comply with your charity's governing document and the law**

You and your co-trustees must:

- make sure that the charity complies with its governing document
- comply with charity law requirements and other laws that apply to your charity  
You should take reasonable steps to find out about legal requirements, for example by reading relevant guidance or taking appropriate advice when you need to.

### **3. Act in your charity's best interests**

You must:

- do what you and your co-trustees (and no one else) decide will best enable the charity to carry out its purposes
- with your co-trustees, make balanced and adequately informed decisions, thinking about the long term as well as the short term and avoid putting yourself

in a position where your duty to your charity conflicts with your personal interests or loyalty to any other person or body

- not receive any benefit from the charity unless it is properly authorised and is clearly in the charity's interests; this also includes anyone who is financially connected to you, such as a partner, dependent child or business partner

#### **4. Manage your charity's resources responsibly**

You must act responsibly, reasonably and honestly. This is sometimes called the duty of prudence. Prudence is about exercising sound judgement. You and your co-trustees must:

- make sure the charity's assets are only used to support or carry out its purposes
- avoid exposing the charity's assets, beneficiaries or reputation to undue risk
- not over-commit the charity
- take special care when investing or borrowing
- comply with any restrictions on spending funds or selling land

You and your co-trustees should put appropriate procedures and safeguards in place and take reasonable steps to ensure that these are followed. Otherwise you risk making the charity vulnerable to fraud or theft, or other kinds of abuse, and being in breach of your duty.

#### **5. Act with reasonable care and skill**

As someone responsible for governing a charity, you:

- must use reasonable care and skill, making use of your skills and experience and taking appropriate advice when necessary
- should give enough time, thought and energy to your role, for example by preparing for, attending and actively participating in all trustees' meetings.

#### **6. Ensure your charity is accountable**

You and your co-trustees must comply with statutory accounting and reporting requirements. You should also:

- be able to demonstrate that your charity is complying with the law, well run and effective
- ensure appropriate accountability to members, if your charity has a membership separate from the trustees
- ensure accountability within the charity, particularly where you delegate responsibility for particular tasks or decisions to staff or volunteers