

Chris Cotton RIBA, HonRCM

Chair of the Board

Chris retired at the end of March as the Chief Executive Officer of the Royal Albert Hall, one of the world-leading live events venues, a post he has held since 2009. He also served as Chair of the Exhibition Road Cultural Group and steps down in July 2017; Chris is Chair of Jerwood Space London's principle rehearsal studios; and a Director of Julie's Bicycle, an environmental sustainability charity working with the arts and creative industries.

As CEO of the Royal Albert Hall, Chris has led the organisation through a period of unprecedented growth and change management, overseeing the development of a wide and ambitious musical and events programme, and attracting leading artists and performers from across the world.

An area of particular focus for Chris whilst at the Royal Albert Hall has been education and outreach work, particularly with children and young people. The key thrust has been, through music, reaching out and creating opportunities for families, schools and community groups. An architect by training, Chris spearheaded several major development projects at the Hall, including infrastructure, expansion and improvement works to the Grade 1 listed building.

Holly Donagh

Holly Donagh is the Partnerships Director for A New Direction (London's strategic agency connecting arts, culture and young people). She leads on innovation in delivery of cultural education at a city wide and local level. Holly is an experienced arts leader, committed to getting more young Londoners involved in the creative life of the city. Prior to A New Direction Holly worked for Arts Council England for ten years leading on engagement with central government and spearheading initiatives for integrating the arts into public life.

Ayub Khan

Ayub is currently Head of Libraries and Face to Face services for Warwickshire County Council - leading a multi-disciplined workforce of over 500, and managing a multi-million pound budget. Warwickshire - 'Shakespeare's County' - has a population of around 550,000.

He is an executive board-member of the Society of Chief Librarians and leads SCL's Digital Universal Offer. A Fellow and former Trustee of the Chartered Institute of Library Professionals (CILIP), Ayub is also a member of the Library Buildings Committee of the International Federation of Library Associations, and was a member of the UNESCO Culture Committee.

Ayub is President Elect of the Chartered Institute of Library & Information Professionals (CILIP)

Before joining Warwickshire County Council, Ayub was Principal Project Officer for the new Library of Birmingham - involved in the early concept, vision and business planning. He has written a number of articles and publications on library design and theory, and regularly speaks to audiences in the UK and abroad. He also co-authored the Library and Information Centres section of the *Metric Handbook* (planning and design data).

Ayub chaired the CILIP working group that drafted national guidelines for locally-elected politicians with responsibility for public libraries. He also recently led on the national procurement of digital online content for public libraries in England - which yielded savings of over £1.5 million for the sector.

Ayub's interest extends to international library development, with a strong focus on diversity and inclusion. He has worked on a number of library projects for the British Council in Moscow, Siberia, Greece and the Library Revolution in South Asia. Currently he is advising on re-visioning and modernising library services in Bangladesh, supported by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

In 2013 he was awarded an MBE for his services to libraries.

Ben Lee

Ben Lee is an experienced facilitator, project leader, and social researcher. He has specialisms in creating learning and knowledge-sharing programmes, arts and culture, and neighbourhood-level community-led action. Before joining Shared Intelligence, Ben held policy roles with the London Borough of Camden and in central government (in the then DoE and DETR) dealing with social housing and sustainable development.

Ben has been involved in several nationally-significant projects to support neighbourhood level devolution and community-led change. Within this area of his work he has been closely involved establishing the £200m Lottery-funded Big Local programme which supports 150 communities across England, and in 2016 led a national evaluation of CLG's 'Our Place' programme.

Ben has also led a number of research and strategy projects within the arts and cultural sectors – much of it for Arts Council England and the Society of Chief Librarians. This work has often focused on increasing arts participation by children and teens, and developing future-focused public library services. He is currently leading a year-long government-funded research programme with Essex libraries service looking at the impact of library-based early years groups (e.g. 'rhyme times') on maternal mental health.