

ISTD AGM 2025 Candidate and Trustee biographies

Trustees standing for re-election:

Lynn Chandler

Lynn Chandler has spent nearly all her professional life in the education sector and enjoys bringing financial discipline and process to companies as they grow and scale.

Lynn graduated from Essex University in Economics in 1982 and qualified as a Chartered Accountant with Ernst & Young in 1985. She joined BPP Holdings plc, a professional education group which had just floated on the Stock Exchange, as Group Financial Controller in 1988; was promoted to Group Finance Director in 1995 and retired from full-time employment in 2005. Whilst at BPP, the group grew from a UK business with £6M turnover and 125 staff to an international group with turnover of over £130m employing 1,600 staff across 40 offices throughout Europe.

Since 2005 Lynn has worked part-time. In 2007 she was co-founder of a government sponsored vocational training business which was sold in 2014 to an AIM listed company. In 2014, Lynn joined Virtual Class, an educational start-up, as Chief Financial Officer and Company Secretary.

Lynn is currently a trustee of the Dance Professionals Fund (Royal Ballet Benevolent Fund) and previously served as a non-executive committee member of A2Dominion Housing Group (a registered social housing group with over 34,000 homes under management and an asset base of over £2bn) and as a non-executive director of an NHS Hospital Trust.

Lynn believes the Society is well placed to achieve its aspiration of being a world leader in dance education. She considers it to be an exciting and interesting time to be a Trustee of the Imperial Society of Teachers of Dancing and to be part of ensuring it succeeds in securing its future by expanding the Society's influence and status as a high quality, multi-genre dance examination board world-wide.

Juliet Diener

Juliet Diener is Founder and CEO of icandance, a Dance Movement Psychotherapist, clinical supervisor, Inclusive dance specialist, trained Cecchetti ballet teacher and a qualified specialist educator.

Juliet's love for dance began in her early childhood as she trained in the Cecchetti Ballet method within the ISTD in South Africa. Having moved to London in 1999 she worked as a ballet teacher in various dance schools and has remained a member of the ISTD throughout. Alongside her love for dance Juliet has worked in education for over 25 years in both mainstream, special and Higher education teaching and lecturing, including leadership and consultancy roles. Exploring the interface between wellbeing, creativity and learning, Juliet

completed a master's degree in Dance Movement Psychotherapy working further in Mental Health settings.

Bringing together her expertise in education, dance, and psychotherapeutic approaches, Juliet founded the charity icandance in 2006. icandance is a creative, therapeutic community which empowers disabled children and young people through dance and performance.

Juliet integrates her expertise to create, lead and research inclusive communities and is currently pursuing a Doctorate study researching the approach developed at icandance. She supervises, lectures, and leads trainings combining her various areas of expertise and runs a private clinical practice in North London. She also continues as an inclusive dance specialist for the ISTD. Juliet is a regular research contributor for the disability advocacy magazine, Disability Living, and continues to research and publish focusing on areas of creativity, embodied practice, dance, and inclusion.

Juliet is a registered member of the UKCP and ADMPUK.

Peter Meager

Pete is a qualified Dancesport teacher, trained under the guidance and support of the Imperial Society of Teachers of Dancing. He has also been a recognised competition adjudicator by the British Dance Council.

When Pete is not teaching, he works as a professional Master of Ceremonies for both national and international dance competitions. With his vast amount of experience with the 'equality dance' scene, Pete is often at the helm of large Championships such as the IFSSDA World Championships which were last held in Paris in 2018 as part of the 10. Gay Games.

He also regularly supports the European Championships and has been an active board member of United Kingdom Equality Dance Council (UKEDC), European Same Sex Dance Association (ESSDA), and Federation of Gay Games (FGG).

Pete also organises two equality dance competitions here in the UK: the 'UK Equality Open' and the 'Equality Fun Competition'. He supports both the social and competitive dancer and works voluntarily for Out4Dance and Out4Sport to promote equality dancing around the UK.

He brings to the board a wealth of experience as a Director for Compass Group UK & Ireland and will assist driving the organisation forward – focusing specifically on diversity, sustainable growth and enhanced stakeholder relationships.

Frederick Way

Frederick Way is a UK Mediator working across civil, commercial and employment disputes both for his own company Frederick Way Mediation and for CEDR (the Centre for Effective Dispute Resolution). Ranked in Legal 500 as a leading UK mediator, in December 2024, Frederick was named Civil/Commercial Mediator of the Year at the National Mediation Awards, the highest award in UK Mediation.

Prior to becoming a mediator, Frederick trained as a barrister and worked in property and professional negligence disputes. From 2012 to 2025, Frederick worked for Europe's largest provider of Mediation Services, CEDR as a civil, commercial and employment mediator, trainer and Senior Dispute Resolution Consultant working across legal industries to develop alternative dispute resolution systems. Prior to that role, Frederick was the Head of the CEDR Foundation, responsible for all of CEDR's charitable output and innovation.

Having set up his own practice Frederick Way Mediation in 2025, Frederick continues to work with CEDR as a Leading Panel Mediator and also works as a Lead Trainer in Mediation for CEDR, as well as being a coach and assessor of mediator candidates. Frederick was the Coach of the English and Welsh National student negotiation teams between 2018-2023 for the International Championships. As well as being Vice Chair of the ISTD, Frederick was previously Deputy Chair of Access All Areas, a theatre charity for Learning Disabled and Neurodiverse performers from 2015-2023.

Trustees in office:

Michael Elliott – Chair of Council

Michael Elliott is a Trustee of the Birmingham Royal Ballet, a member of the Governing Body of Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance, Company Member of the Greenheart Learning Partnership, and is currently employed as the Interim Executive Chair at the David Ross Education Trust.

In the last 20 years he has served as the Chief Executive of both the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic and the Royal Scottish National Orchestra; as Director, Culture in the senior civil service of the Department for Culture, Media, and Sport (DCMS); and, until his retirement, as Chief Executive of the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music (ABRSM), the world's leading music exam board at the end of 2020. In 2022 he acted as Interim Chief Executive of the Arts Council of Wales for nine months, and in 2024 was Interim Director of the National Portrait Gallery.

His early professional career spanned policy development in Europe, higher education, arts funding, and tourism, and he was appointed to his first Chief Executive role in 1989.

Michael has held voluntary roles in the arts and education sectors, including serving as a governor of schools and colleges in Sheffield and the West Midlands; as Chair of the Belgrade Theatre Coventry and Deputy Chair of the Sheffield Crucible Theatre; and as Chair of the Governing Body of the University of Wolverhampton. He has been awarded Honorary Doctorates by Sheffield Hallam University and the University of Wolverhampton.

He has acted as an advisor to both the DCMS and the Department for Education on key developments, including the Model Music Curriculum, and has chaired national groupings of regional agency Chief Officers in arts funding and tourism at key moments

of government driven sectoral change. He also served as Cultural Director for Liverpool 08.

Mary Cooke

Mary Has been involved with the ISTD for many years. Starting with her own early training where love of the work of many genres began. This was then incorporated into her teaching career and her role as examiner for the ICB faculty.

Her teaching career began after gaining her LRAD in London. Her first teaching role was at the renowned Bush Davies School. Time here taught her the value of the exchange of knowledge, how this is passed on and how that then builds the young teacher's teaching skills toolbox. Further development continued as Principal of a large private school in Sussex. New experiences were added to the list when initiating and creating start-up schools, when family job relocations demanded, and the many difficulties experienced were noted.

She also discovered a very rewarding role supporting teachers in her area, including organising several "Day of Dance" events. Mary's goal was to build relationships, so that the teachers feel supported and not isolated, just as she had experienced in her young teaching days.

From 2017 Mary has been a Mentor on the DDP for unit 2 and been delighted to witness the development of teaching skills and confidence in the mentees.

As an Imperial Ballet examiner for many years, she has witnessed a raft of changes. This gives a unique insight into the delivery of exams on the ground.

With this kaleidoscope of knowledge Mary has been able to contribute at council meetings with her understanding of the many stakeholders. She has been a board member since November 2023.

She is committed to supporting the ISTD to take forward a strong, vibrant Society offering dance for the future for all.

As a supporter and participant in creative dance projects in her local area she understands the power of dance and the joy that it can bring.

Christina Fotinaki

Christina Fotinaki is an award winning choreographer, FISTD and Examiner in Modern Theatre, Imperial Ballet and Contemporary Dance, in addition to her roles as a Tutor and Assessor for DDE.

Christina is a member of the ISTD Imperial Ballet and Modern Theatre teaching teams, delivering lectures and CPD courses Internationally.

Enrolled as a full-time student, Christina pursued her studies at the Maya Sofou Professional School of Dance and successfully completed her graduation in 1992. Christina extended her educational pursuits globally by participating in courses across Bern, Zurich, Vienna, New

York, and Los Angeles. Her studies encompassed disciplines such as Graham, Cunningham, Hawkins, Limón, and Release techniques, with a particular focus on choreography, improvisation, musical jazz, commercial jazz, hip-hop, and contemporary jazz from 1993 to 2007.

Following her graduation, Christina embarked on her teaching journey, instructing diverse groups and levels of students, ranging from foundational to Advanced 2, DDE, Licentiate, and Fellowship levels in both Modern Theatre and Imperial Ballet.

As a co-founder and Director of Dance Texture, Christina spearheads a comprehensive, full-time professional training program designed for both dancers and dance teachers. This initiative is established in Athens, Greece.

Christina's achievements as a choreographer within the performing industry are equally remarkable. In 2000, she took on the role of assistant choreographer for "Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dream coat" directed and choreographed by Toni award winner Gillian Gregory. Additionally, she served as an assistant choreographer in 2003 for "Victor-Victoria," also directed by Gillian Gregory, and in the same year, contributed as an assistant choreographer to "Musical Nights," directed by Derrick Lassala.

From 2003 until the present day, Christina has been involved in choreographing as well as being a part of the production teams in major musical productions, theatre performances, dance group showcases, video clips, television programs, TV series, film, music stage productions, and music awards ceremonies in Athens.

In 2018 Christina was awarded the Imperial International Theatre Award.

Tom Hobden

Tom is a multi-hyphenate artist with movement, film, digital, education and participation at his core, whose 24+ years with the UK's leading arts organisations have made him a go-to leader in socially driven creativity.

In mid-2024, Tom launched Tom Hobden Studio, a creative hub producing films, digital events, and arts projects that connect people through everyday human stories. Whether crafting thoughtful films for independent brands, developing innovative arts projects that bring communities together, or creating interactive digital experiences, Tom and his team make work that is personal, impactful, and deeply meaningful. A small, Suffolk-based and proudly independent studio, Tom Hobden Studio is all about making something human and joyful, while driving change in everyday communities.

Always pushing boundaries, Tom has pioneered digital engagement through interactive installations, projection mapping, VR and AR projects, online shows, social content, and digital resources that have inspired and excited audiences across the UK.

Throughout his career, Tom has taken on diverse roles, including community dance artist, creative director, choreographer, filmmaker, digital artist, educator, and curator. His work spans both cultural and commercial sectors, reflecting his versatility and dedication to the

arts. In 2014, he co-founded We Are Unit C.I.C, a highly successful collaboration with filmmaker Kate Flurrie and movement director Laura Williamson Biggs.

Tom has worked with leading organisations including New Adventures, the Royal Opera House, Alexandra Palace, Sadler's Wells, Dance East, The Mercury Theatre, Studio Wayne McGregor, Orchestras Live, Dance United, Trinity Laban, and ISTD. He has also collaborated with renowned companies such as Gecko Theatre and Alexander Whitley. His past roles include associate artist at Theatre Royal Bury St. Edmunds (2003–2004) and Dance East (2015–2017), as well as being a Clore Short Course graduate (2017). He has been a Quest Lab Artist at Studio Wayne McGregor (2019–2020), a Start Something Immersive participant with Real Ideas (2020–2021), Mercury Creative artist (2021–2022) and Creative UK Screen launch pad Cohort member (2025)

Most significantly in his career Tom curated New Adventures 'Overture' Programme (A national CPD programme for early-career community artists) and is the lead artist for Dance East Pioneering Digital primaries programme, Exploring live streaming, AR and 5G technology

Jeremy Kean FCCA

Jeremy was born in Buckinghamshire and educated at Rugby School. He first worked on the floor of the Stock Exchange for Akroyd & Smithers in the early 1970's before leaving the City to qualify as an accountant in 1981.

Jeremy's career included working at Aviva, Willis Faber and then Robert Fleming, before becoming the Finance and IT Director at the Financial Ombudsman Service. During his career he spent time abroad working in Paris, which enabled him to learn to speak French, and also travelled the world extensively in his other roles.

Retiring in 2010, apart from being the chairman of the Finance and General Purposes Committee (F&GP) at the Imperial Society of Teachers of Dancing, he now spends his time as the team leader of the Oxted Community First Responders with the South East Coast Ambulance Service, and driving for a local charity that enables people to attend medical appointments. He is a trustee of the Mitchell City of London Charity & Educational Foundation as well as a past master of the Worshipful Company of Curriers.

Leanne Kirkham

Leanne is originally from Blackpool where her dancing life began under the guidance of ISTD Fellows Ruth and Joan Langley, she then went on to train at Performers College, completing ISTD Associate qualifications. Upon graduating, Leanne performed in various productions including the UK Tour of 42nd Street, before returning to her hometown.

Leanne spent 10 years teaching at various dance schools, and whilst developing her teaching practice, was keen to ensure that dance was accessible to everyone. She undertook training in inclusive theatre with Chickenshed, which enabled her to broaden her knowledge, skills and confidence in teaching students of all abilities. Leanne then worked alongside teaching artists from The Royal Ballet School as part of the Primary Steps programme in her role as

Joint Director of Dance at Bispham High School Arts College.

In 2010, Leanne undertook her BA (Hons) in Community Dance Practice, graduating in 2011 with First Class Honours. She then worked as Dance Education Officer at Northern Ballet in Leeds, before taking up the role of Director of Learning in 2016, and is now Director of Academy Operations and Learning. As part of the Senior Leadership Team, Leanne is Designated Safeguarding Lead, and has responsibility for the Academy of Northern Ballet, and the Learning and Outreach programme. Her team have developed an in-school programme to support children to develop their physical and emotional wellbeing through dance, and recently launched a similar pilot programme for SEND schools. Leanne is a proud advocate of inclusive dance, ensuring the programmes at Northern Ballet are accessible to all. Alongside her team, she recently worked with inclusive companies in Madrid and Rotterdam to develop new pedagogy in inclusive dance, with a focus on hyper-mobility and safe practice.

Elizabeth Nyman

Elizabeth is a Director of Strategy & Planning for Informa, a FSTE 100 B2B events and publishing group. After graduating in Law, she began her career in consulting, working for Deloitte, PwC, and The Berkeley Partnership. Here, she built extensive experience in strategy and transformation consulting, with a focus on helping large, complex organisations to set direction and structure effective teams.

Elizabeth's consulting work primarily spanned the media and advertising, finance and CPG sectors, with a particularly memorable year spent working with Michael Elliott to define the digital-led business strategy of the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music (ABRSM) in 2015. She has a lifelong love of music and the Arts, and has played the piano for as long as she can remember.

Keith-Derrick Randolph

Living and working in Europe for 33 years, native New Yorker Keith-Derrick is a choreographer, teacher and dance administrator. He has a broad dance education which includes ballet, modern, jazz, African, Afro Caribbean and Brazilian dance, as well as studying drama, music and lighting. In addition to his early education in 2005 Keith-Derrick received his Didactic Teacher's diploma and in 2010 a master's degree in choreography.

Keith-Derrick has been a choreographer in the Dutch independent dance scene, as well as choreographing and teaching abroad. For fifteen years he had a successful career as a dancer and choreographer with Scapino Ballet Rotterdam. For nine of those years he was on Scapino's artistic staff where he gained a wide and varied knowledge of all aspects of company management. As a ballet master, teacher and administrator, he managed and coordinated Scapino's workshops, the education program, apprentices, and the yearly auditions.

Keith-Derrick is now on the staff of Codarts Rotterdam – bachelor performing dance as a coordinator (practice and academic subjects, repertoire and performances) and teacher (ballet and partnering) and répétiteur. He is also member of the core team that runs Master Choreography – COMMA, a joint degree between Codarts and Fontys School of

Fine and Performing Arts in Tilburg.

Keith-Derrick has also served on committees in key organisations within the Dutch dance world and is an accomplished costume designer.