02 July 2021

COMPANY DRINKS SEEKS NEW MEMBERS FOR OUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Company Drinks is a highly regarded, well-established cultural organisation for communal use in Barking and Dagenham. Company Drinks is a community space and social enterprise, where we make drinks with and for each other.

Company Drinks exists as an expanding network of users, collaborators and partners, who come together to pick, grow, make, learn, unlock and share the resources and knowledge around us. Like the seasons, Company Drinks changes and adapts, and is shaped by those who are involved. We collaborate and champion the ideas of those around us, encourage each other to re-imagine new ways of working, trading and existing together, through conversation, care and good company. The non-alcoholic drinks are made across Company Drinks activities.

Company Drinks was set up in 2014 as an art commission through a Create Art Award, and registered as a Community Interest Company (CIC) in 2015. Company Drinks sees itself as part of a larger community-focused ecosystem of care, that strives for an equal, just and non-discriminatory world.

Company Drinks is based at the Former Outdoor Bowls Pavilion in Barking Park, where we have a multifunctional and fully accessible building, including a good size club room, a tea kitchen, a training and production kitchen, office, and storage. Our outdoor space has a large lawn area, a wildflower meadow and community growing area with a focus on well-being and community herbalism.

Company Drinks is organised in a cooperative manner by a team of five who work between 1-3 days/week. Our continuous programmes include

- Community Growing, Well-being and Community Herbalism
- Wild and Well Programme for families, carers and young people
- Picking Trips and small batch drinks production
- The Good Food Collective
- Creative Opportunities for young people
- Local Social History and Heritage
- Community Economy and the Arts

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Everything we do is underpinned by our core values, which are

Be inclusive, our space and workshops are accessible to all, and we welcome everyone.
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Be transparent, we are open and visible with the inner workings of how we run things.
.
Be anti – oppression, we are supportive of all marginalised groups, whether this affects race, age, gender or ability.
.
Give more than we take – we want people to leave us with more than they came to us with, this could be knowledge, food, drink or social interaction.
.
We are all teachers and learners – and respect everyone's knowledge.
.
Being flexible – to change, we want to learn and grow as a community company and are open to changes to help us grow.
.
Promote positive community collaboration – we want people to work together collaboratively and in supportive environments.
.
Sharing healthy food and growing knowledge, giving people information and hand-on opportunities for healthier food choices.
.
Practice an economy that cares about the well-being of our minds, bodies and planet.

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Context for Extending the CIC's Board of Directors

Having started as temporary arts commission in 2014, the Company Drinks team grew and changed over the years according to its programmes and activities, and a Board of Directors has been in place since the start of the CIC in 2015. Throughout 2020, Company Drinks has re-organised and structured their organisational set-up and operations. As part of Phase 02 of the organisation's Anti-Racism Action Plan which was written in September 2020, Company Drinks is reviewing the role and function of the board. A small working group comprising of Kathrin Böhm (Board and Team), Oribi Davies (Board and Team) and Jess Denning (Board) is currently structuring and supporting this change.

2021 marks a very exciting year for Company Drinks, as we have entered our 7th year of 'going picking' and community programmes, alongside the re-opening of our now fully accessible pavilion in Barking Park. We have commissioned two LBBD based artists and designers to develop furniture and signage to support the cultural accessibility of the building. We are looking back at a year of successfully managing to deliver our core activities with Covid restrictions in place.

Company Drinks is proud of its achievements so far and is here to stay. We manage and use our resources carefully and are acknowledging the different economic underpinnings and contributions that enable us to exist. The Board plays an important role in our organisational ecosystem of mutual support, and we are excited to welcome new members who like us believe passionately in the importance of unlocking and fairly sharing the resources and knowledge around us.

We are looking for new members to the Board, including a new Chairperson to add to the skills and experience of the current Board, who enjoy working as part of a supportive but rigorous team. We would expect you to be familiar with our organisation, and welcome interested candidates to come and meet us in Barking during our annual Open Day on Saturday 11th September from 11am to 4pm.

We are looking particularly, but not exclusively, for individuals who have expertise in the following areas:

- Fundraising and Developing Relationships with Foundations
- HR and Organisational Policies
- Community Food Sector
- Finance and Bookkeeping
- Developing Multi-Stakeholder Programmes and Dialogue
- Legal Advice (in regards to our site)

Company Drinks welcomes all applicants and wants the team to reflect the diversity of the communities we work with. We recognise that Company Drinks and the growing/craft food industry does not currently represent the population of the UK, and more specifically, that of the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham, and we are committed to addressing this in our recruitment process. We would like to encourage applications from Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic, disabled and LGBT background as they are underrepresented in the team.

We're interested in the whole person and know that we all develop skills both in and outside of work, so even if there are some boxes you don't quite tick we'd love to hear from you anyway.

Being a Director of a CIC
As a member of the Board of a Community Interest Company, you will use your experience to help the organisation achieve its full potential as local a cultural and community-focused organisation.

This involves:

- Ensuring good governance, policies and management.
- Achieving financial stability, based on our Community Economy Model.
- Using your specific knowledge and experience to provide advice and guidance on issues relevant to your area of special expertise.
- Supporting the strategic vision and long-term planning of this multi-stakeholder organisation.

The Board meets four times, and meetings take place on-line and at the Company Drinks Pavilion in Barking. Board meetings are usually held on Monday evenings. The director's role is currently unpaid, but Company Drinks holds funds to pay members of the board who can't support the organisation in an unpaid role. The current hourly rate that is paid across all programmes and activities is £12,50 per hour. Reasonable travel expenses can be covered.

As a Board member you will agree to:

- Attend board meetings (minimum 3 a year).
- Be up to date with the business of the company.
- Be well prepared for each Board meeting.
- Offer timely feedback and responses within your realm of expertise.
- Advocate for the company where/when appropriate.

What next?
If, having read the above, you are interested in becoming a Director please email Company Drinks' Kathrin Böhm at kathrin@companydrinks.info with a one-page expression of interest (you can also include a CV if you wish).

Should you wish to have an informal chat before applying, please also get in touch with either Oribi or Jess to schedule a call, and please e-mail contact@companydrinks.info for this. If you need to use another form of communication, such as video, please let us know; we aim to be as accessible and inclusive as possible in this process.

The closing date for **initial expressions of interest is Friday 17th October** at 5pm (GMT). We aim to schedule meetings/interviews with a shortlist of candidates in early November so that selected candidates can observe at our next Board meeting in early December.