

INSPIRE COMMUNITY BOARD MEMBER ELECTIONS 2025:

CANDIDATE MANIFESTOS



Inspire

Culture | Learning | Libraries

Sophie Collier



It wasn't until I worked for Inspire that I realised how big their community offer is - I've been a library user all my life but through Inspire I've also enjoyed events like Light Night and the Christmas Concert, I've volunteered at Worksop's Fun Palace, I've attended a number of creative writing courses...the list goes on!! I would like to put myself forward for the Inspire board to be a small part of the large team that makes all of these incredible things happen.

I worked for Inspire from 2020 to 2023, firstly as a Library Customer Service Advisor, and then as Inspire's first Volunteer and Membership Officer. I helped to launch the Community Makers volunteering programme, working across all departments to create volunteering opportunities, and welcomed hundreds of volunteers to the organisation. Inspire helped me to discover my passion for volunteer management and now, working in volunteering at a national governing body in sport, I'd like to bring what I've learnt back to Inspire and help make it an even better organisation to volunteer with.

Libraries are such an important community resource and there are so many things that happen within them to tackle social isolation. I'm proud to have been a part of setting up the first Places of Welcome and the Adult Reading Scheme and would relish the opportunity to join the Inspire board to bring my knowledge, skills, and passion to support an organisation that improves the lives of people in Nottinghamshire in immeasurable ways.

Alison Collis



I'm applying to become a community board member because I'm passionate about the role libraries play in transforming lives. They are inclusive, public spaces where people of all ages and backgrounds can learn, connect, and feel part of a supportive community.

With a background as a facilitator and small business owner, I bring strong communication, financial, and strategic planning skills. My earlier career in the tech sector also gave me valuable leadership experience and a strong understanding of digital tools and innovation—expertise that's increasingly vital as libraries evolve in the digital age.

I'm actively involved in my local community as a steering group member of Nottingham Humanists, where I lead on social media and engagement. I help promote inclusive events, encourage open discussion, and connect with a diverse audience—work that reflects my passion for creating spaces where everyone feels seen, heard, and valued.

If elected, I would be committed to ensuring the library continues to reflect and serve the whole community. I'd support inclusive programming, sound financial planning, and outreach that welcomes and involves everyone. I'm particularly passionate about amplifying under represented voices and helping the library remain a trusted, vibrant, and forward-thinking space.

Libraries face both exciting opportunities and real challenges. I'd be proud to contribute my energy, experience, and community focus to help our library adapt, grow, and thrive—preserving the inspiration, access, and sense of belonging that libraries have always offered.

Mark Dorrington



I am a community elected Inspire Board member seeking a second term. I chair the Culture and Heritage committee, have recently joined the Staffing and Standards committee and attend and support a wide range of events which show the breadth of the Inspire service offer. It would be a privilege to be re-elected to the Inspire Board and continue to contribute to their amazing work in providing culture, libraries and learning across Nottinghamshire.

I have 40 years' experience of working in libraries and archives. Prior to my retirement I was an Associate Director in the University of Nottingham Libraries and Keeper of Manuscripts and Special Collections. Previously I spent 10 years managing Nottinghamshire Archives and latterly also the County Local Studies service. I am a Council member of the Thoroton Society and run their Research Awards; a heritage advisor to Trent Bridge; and a peer reviewer for The National Archives, Archives Accreditation scheme. Previously I chaired the East Midlands Regional Archives Council, was a founding Vice-Chair of the Nottinghamshire Heritage Forum and set up the Friends of Nottinghamshire Archives.

I feel I can bring to the role my extensive experience of the cultural heritage sector, both in Nottinghamshire and the wider Midlands, my experience of working in local government and higher education and my successful track record in fundraising. During my whole career, I have been passionate about preserving and providing access to heritage and I hope you will entrust me with your vote to continue this with Inspire.

Diana Meale



Since I was first elected as a community representative on the Board my admiration for the work of INSPIRE has grown. INSPIRE is much more than a Library service, and has developed into the Learning, Heritage and Cultural hub of Nottinghamshire. It is a precious and unique resource for the County and its residents.

I believe I have contributed to INSPIRE in the past 2 and a half years through my voluntary and practical experience. I am a trustee of the Nottinghamshire Community Foundation (now Forever Notts), Chair the Mansfield Building Society Charitable Trust and secretary to the Nottinghamshire Women's History Group.

Over the years along with local connections, I have developed skills as a Board member. I was an Executive Director of the region's development agency and served on the Boards of Lincoln University, West Notts College, and the Midlands Arts Council and Chaired New Perspectives Theatre Co. I was a local authority Councillor for 8 years. My experience has enabled me, I believe, to contribute effectively to INSPIRE's governance and work.

Colin Sawers



I would like to stand for election to the board of Inspire as my passion for the provision of libraries and adult learning across Nottinghamshire drives my commitment to making a positive impact on our communities.

Having lived in Nottinghamshire since 2002, I graduated from Loughborough University with a degree in Information and Library Studies.

As a chartered member of the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals, my professional journey has been diverse and enriching. I have worked in public libraries, specialising in children's services, and later in an education library service. Additionally, I have managed learning resources at two further education colleges and currently work in a local authority access to records service, focusing on freedom of information and data subject access rights.

In my spare time, I volunteer with the National Trust as a visitor welcome volunteer at Clumber Park and serve as a welcome lead for Nottinghamshire Scouts. I am also a governor at my local primary and secondary schools. My experience in volunteering and volunteer management, including recruitment, selection and development of volunteers, and equips me with valuable skills for the board. Furthermore, my background in organisational development, particularly in local government and education sectors, has been honed through my roles as a governor and trade union representative. I am eager to bring my skills and experience to the board, contributing to the growth and success of Inspire.