



News release

For immediate release:

English Heritage seeks its first named curator

- Applications for Friends of Kenwood Curator now open -

Kenwood House, in Hampstead, London is to benefit from the first named curator at any of English Heritage's sites across England. Applications are now being invited for the position of Friends of Kenwood Curator.

Of the 400 properties English Heritage cares for, Kenwood is generally regarded as one of the greatest treasures in the charity's portfolio. Kenwood was given to the nation by Edward Cecil Guinness, 1st Earl of Iveagh, under the Iveagh Bequest Act of 1929. Guinness collected a world-class group of Dutch old master and 18th Century British paintings, including works by Rembrandt, Vermeer, Gainsborough and Reynolds, which he gave to the nation in perpetuity together with the house and surrounding estate. The house and interiors are held to be among the finest surviving examples of Robert Adam's neoclassical architecture. Kenwood's grounds are one of the best remaining examples of landscape design by Humphry Repton, bordered by ancient woodland and Hampstead Heath. Kenwood's other notable collections include fine 18th century furniture, a unique collection of portrait miniatures, and the Suffolk Collection of Jacobean dynastic portraits bequeathed to the nation in 1964.

English Heritage is a charity and to look after the collection in its care and to share it with the public, it relies on the support of its members and visitors, trusts, donors and groups like The Friends of Kenwood. The Friends of Kenwood exists solely to support Kenwood, and has funded exhibitions, acquisitions and conservation since its inception in 1977. It aims to support English Heritage in its work and advocate for Kenwood, providing a constructive platform and a voice for local friends and supporters.

The calibre of Kenwood's collections and interiors is such that it has – and always has had - a full-time, dedicated curator, exclusive to Kenwood. Now, as a sign of its commitment to Kenwood, The Friends of Kenwood have kindly committed to fund this role for the next five years. Funding for the post has been secured from a number of sources: the Pears Foundation has committed a substantial annual sum for three years, other foundations have provided important support, and individual members of the Friends of Kenwood have donated funds in quantities large and

small. Several local Friends are donating at this level for the first time, a testament to their affection for Kenwood.

The scale and source of this support demonstrates the international importance of Kenwood and the high affection in which it is held by the local community.

Chair of the Friends of Kenwood, Dame Jenny Abramsky, GBE said: *“The high international status of Kenwood’s art collection requires a dedicated curator with a deep knowledge of art, the house and its collections. This is why the Friends of Kenwood have agreed to fund the post of Curator for the next five years.*

“We are extremely grateful to the Pears Foundation for their significant support, and also to The Aldama Foundation, The Rubin Foundation, Sally Cowan, Jennye Seres, Mr James and Lady Emma Barnard, Stephanie and John Cooper, Angela Cox, Jacqueline and Jonathan Gestetner, Carol and John Owens, Karen Smith and many of our members, who have contributed to our fund-raising efforts and without whom we would not have been able to succeed in our ambition. Our fundraising must continue in order to sustain this vital role at Kenwood.”

English Heritage’s Senior Curator, Dr Wendy Monkhouse, said: *“Kenwood is special in many ways, but the art collection is at the heart of its particular power. With the Friends’ generous support, we are able to secure the time, knowledge and expertise of a seasoned curator who will be able to share that collection with all the people who visit Kenwood – and inspire them to discover more and grow to love Kenwood as much as the Friends themselves do.”*

Much has been achieved at Kenwood in recent years, often with the Friends of Kenwood working in partnership with English Heritage at central and local levels, and in collaboration with the large group of local Volunteers [e.g. the secondhand bookshop, funding the recent Cold Bath conservation]. Kenwood is loved, and regularly enjoyed, by the large population living nearby, and in addition attracts visitors nationally and from all over the world. It is a fine example of the huge responsibility which comes with English Heritage’s guardianship of some of the most valued heritage assets in the country.

More information on the Friends of Kenwood Curator of Collections and Interiors is available here: <https://bit.ly/4ePFduq>

The closing date for applications is Thursday 9 July.

If you would like to contribute to the fundraising campaign, please go to the Friends of Kenwood website www.friendsofkenwood.org.uk or email info@friendsofkenwood.org.uk for more information

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NOTES TO EDITORS:

- **The Friends of Kenwood** (The Friends of the Iveagh Bequest, Kenwood) provides a voice for supporters and works to promote and preserve Kenwood House, its collection and estate for future generations.

Registered charity no. 273258
www.friendsofkenwood.org.uk

Contact: Mark King, MBE (Trustee), mark.king@friendsofkenwood.org.uk; Helen Payne (Trustee), Membership Secretary & Development, info@friendsofkenwood.org.uk

- **English Heritage** cares for over 400 historic buildings, monuments and sites - from world-famous prehistoric sites to grand medieval castles, from Roman forts on the edges of the empire to a Cold War bunker. Through these, the story of England is brought to life for over 10 million people each year.

Registered charity no. 1140351

www.english-heritage.org.uk

Contact the English Heritage press office at press@english-heritage.org.uk.

The permanent collection at Kenwood, its breathtaking interiors and stunning world-class architecture and art, including Rembrandt's 'Self-Portrait with Two Circles', is free to visit all year round.

- **Pears Foundation**, Haskell House, 152 West End Lane, West Hampstead, London NW6 1SD <https://pearsfoundation.org.uk/>
- **The Aldama Foundation**, 4th Floor, 7 Swallow Street, London W1B 4DE
- **The Rubin Foundation**, Rubin Foundation Charitable Trust, 8 Manchester Square, London W1U 3PH