

15<sup>th</sup> February 2021

I've had a remarkable time as the Chair of the Pankhurst Trust and as I prepare to step down from the role I wanted to share an insight into what lies ahead for the person who follows me.

I joined the Board in 2014, before becoming Chair in 2015. My background is heritage, and whilst this is part of the work of the Trust, it also uniquely combines this with providing vital services to women and children as Manchester Women's Aid. This could seem quite daunting, but with the support of Gail Heath as Chief Executive, the senior management team and Board members I felt nurtured and supported from the very beginning. I wouldn't be the Chair I am today without all those women working with me, sharing their time and insights, along with cups of tea, biscuits and a listening ear. I know that our new Chair will have access to this support as they learn and grow with the next phase of the Trust.

This is an organisation that at the core of all its work are people and the opportunity to make a difference. By way of example, I'm reminded of our AGMs where our staff, those who have engaged with our services, volunteers, friends and supporters come together to celebrate the previous years achievements. We often have children join us and I remember one year trying to keep the proceedings on track at the same time as the entertainer for the children started an activity. This tells me that the women and children are and should remain our focus. Our last in-person AGM had a display of art works from children that we've worked with, the work was engaging, beautiful and full of meaning. I particularly liked the postcards written by the children to those children who may access our support in the future.

Most recently, I have been completely awed and inspired by the way our Manchester Women's Aid staff and volunteers stepped up to the challenges presented during the ongoing Pandemic. It's not been the easiest of times, but we've continued to be there during lockdowns and that is no small part down to the fantastic team working to make things happen.

I will be there as part of the support team for the new Chair, whilst also continuing to a volunteer in a different capacity, supporting the heritage and community engagement work of the Trust.

We're a small organisation, but with a huge story to tell. In 2018 we played a central role in marking the centenary of the achievement of the vote for the first women. The reaction showed how much the Pankhurst Centre means to people and awakened many to the fact that the suffragette movement began at the site of this fairly ordinary family home in Manchester – a reminder that we can all be the



change. I'm excited by the projects we are working on to explore this fascinating legacy, with *At Home with the Pankhurst Family* due to be unveiled as part of the reopening of the Pankhurst Centre in the summer. I also share the determination and vision of the Board to one day see the Pankhurst Centre conserved and restored so that it is a heritage site and activist space truly befitting of the suffragette movement.

And finally I want to say, if this opportunity interests you, then find out more and apply! I nearly talked myself out of it three times, questioning what value I could bring. I know now that, with the right enthusiasm and passion, how much the Trust is there for all.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Louise', written in a cursive style.

Louise Sutherland

PTMWA Chair to Board of Trustees