

OUR LEADERSHIP

Our Trustees are the people who lead the Forum operationally as skilled volunteers and decide how it is run as a 'not for profit' organisation (in liaison with the vice patrons and other ambassadors), and are responsible for making sure it is doing what it was set up to do properly; and consistent with the Forum's governing document and all other applicable rules and regulations.

Sonia Gayle – Chair and interim Treasurer

- Sonia is one of the co-founders of the African Heritage Culture Forum.
- She is a non-executive director at [Sheffield Teaching Hospital](#) and is also a presenter for [Women on Boards UK](#) on board governance.
- Sonia recently served as a trustee for [Breast Cancer Now](#); and was formerly a Commissioner for the [Sheffield Race Equality Commission](#).
- Sonia has extensive governance, strategic policy, risk management and organisational transformation experience in public, private and not-for-profit sectors.
- She qualified as a chartered banker and Fellow of the International Compliance Association, with a thirty-year career in financial services (including over ten years as a regulator and former senior advisor for Ernst Young working with multi-national clients). Prior to that Sonia worked for the Home Office and Virgin Media Group.

Kaltum Osman Rivers – Vice Chair

- Kaltum manages the Forum's relationship with local govt. and community / voluntary sector leads across Sheffield's African heritage communities.
- She has been an equity and inclusion activist most of her working life and sits on the charity board of [Utopia Theatre](#) (a leading voice for African Theatre in the UK).
- Kaltum graduated with a BA in Social Anthropology and MA in Education (having also led research in key areas such as Health, Housing, Education and Social Care) and is currently a PhD candidate at the University of Sheffield.
- In 2018, prior to her academic career, Kaltum was elected to Sheffield City Council as the first African female councillor in South Yorkshire.

Dr Rita Gayle - Trustee

- Dr Gayle manages the Forum's relations with the academic community / education sectors and African heritage creatives and artists (local and international).
- She is a Research Fellow on The [Stuart Hall Project](#) at the University of Birmingham, UK, and will focus on the section of the project that is concerned with the application of Hall's work to present-day cultural issues and concerns.
- Dr Gayle's PhD thesis investigated the emergence of the millennial generation of Black feminist creative collectives across Britain since 2013.
- Prior to her academic career, Dr Gayle worked for BBC News and in Further Education.

Our Ambassadors (and vice patrons) are each recognised as effective custodians of Sheffield's African heritage culture and highly respected within the community (and by key partners) as a trusted cultural liaison representative. Accordingly, they are appointed by the Trustees to sit on The Forum's Executive (Steering) Committee to support (and actively promote) the Forum's objectives and mission to help raise awareness, educate, recognise and celebrate the city's rich and diverse heritage.

Vice Patrons

- **Des Smith**

Des is a co-founder of the African Heritage Culture Forum, and currently serves as presiding specialist lay-member of the Criminal Injuries Compensation Tribunal and Employment Appeal.

He is a 'disability qualified' member of the Social Security and Child Support Tribunals; Chairman of Sheffield and Hallamshire County Football Association 'Inclusion and Diversity Group'; and co-founder of Sheffield Caribbean Sports and Social Club.

Des also serves as an appointed [Deputy Lieutenant of South Yorkshire](#).

- **Olivier Tsemo**

Olivier is a co-founder of the African Heritage Culture Forum, and is the CEO of SADACCA (Sheffield and District African Caribbean Community Association). [SADACCA](#) has been operating for over forty years and is one of the city's leading community organisations.

He is a leading figure in the voluntary sectors, both locally and nationally. Currently he is co-chair of the [Sheffield Culture Consortium](#), and recently served as a Commissioner for the [Sheffield Race Equality Commission](#).

Olivier previously served as President of the African community of South Yorkshire for almost ten years. In his early career, Olivier held senior advisory consultant roles with the local education authorities. Prior to this he was a senior lecturer and researcher in both applied mathematics and mathematics education, and spent several years working as a senior analyst in the energy sector.

Other Ambassadors

- Adrian Bent (Community)
- Cheryl Bowen (Museums)
- Robert J Cotterell (Community)
- Susan Downer (Arts / Creatives)
- Clinton McKoy (Community)
- Leroy Wenham (Community)
- Danae Wellington (Poet Laureate / 2022-24)