

TRIO OF TALENT FOR ART BOARD

Three senior figures from Birmingham's business world have joined ART's Board. Dr David Hardman MBE, CEO of Innovation Birmingham, Beverley Nielsen, Director Corporate Affairs at Birmingham City University, and Professor Monder Ram OBE, Director of the Centre for Research in Ethnic Minority Entrepreneurship at the University of Birmingham, had their appointments confirmed by members at ART's Annual General Meeting on 26th September.

Craig Errington, Chief Executive of Wesleyan Assurance Society and Chair of ART's volunteer Board, said: "2013/14 saw record loan delivery for ART, up 45% on last year. More importantly, opportunities to provide additional funding to businesses in support of job creation and preservation in the future have been obtained, which will allow further growth in the year 2014/2015. ART is more needed now than it has ever been in its 17 year history. We are delighted that David, Beverley and Monder are joining the Board at this exciting time to help shape ART's future."

Steve Walker, Chief Executive of ART said: "The staff team is appreciative of the support received from the Board. The market for business loans is evolving, which brings both opportunities and threats to ART and other providers. The diverse backgrounds and experience of the new members, added to that already existing on the Board will be invaluable in helping us to steer our course in the years ahead."

David Hardman brings expertise in technology, innovation and business support to the ART Board. He spent 10 years working for Babraham Bioscience Technologies before taking on his current role at what was then Aston Science Park. Over the last five years he has led the delivery of a new business strategy which has involved a complete restructuring of the park to create two campuses: the Innovation Birmingham Campus and the Science & Technology Campus. Central to this strategy has been creating a 'science park without walls', with global, national and local connections, able to support the Birmingham economy. This includes generating a new business support infrastructure directed at the low carbon economy, covering innovation in ICT, digital media and clean technologies as well as working with partners across the city to drive a 'smart' approach to economic development. David is Chairman of the UK Science Park Association. He is also on the board of Birmingham Science City and is the ICT Sectors Skills Champion for the Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership.

Beverley Nielsen brings a wealth of experience in industry and entrepreneurship to the ART Board. She has been a Group Director of FTSE 250 plc AGA Foodservice Group, (now AGA Rangemaster); MD of Fired Earth; Chief Executive of the Heart of England Tourist Board; Regional Director, CBI West Midlands and Marketing Director, CBI. Her current role is focussed on developing and implementing strategy to promote Birmingham City University (BCU) and build a productive dialogue across the public policy, political and business arenas. Having launched the BCU-led industry think tank, Idea Birmingham, and the Birmingham Made Me Design Expo, she continues to collaborate with many Midlands brand and design-led businesses. She also supports the RNLI nationally, is Chairman of the outdoor learning company, Malvern Outdoor Elements, which she formed with staff when the closure of this service was threatened by the County Council, and she is a former Worcestershire County Councillor and a Fellow at WMG, the University of Warwick. She was voted 2013 West Midlands Business Masters Business Ambassador, having been previously recognised as Midlands Business Woman of the Year.

Monder Ram brings expertise in the small business sector and the needs of ethnic minority communities to the ART Board. Prior to joining the University of Birmingham he was Professor of Small Business at De Montfort University. He has extensive experience of working in, researching and acting as a consultant to ethnic minority businesses. Monder was responsible for initiating the annual Ethnic Minority Business Conference in 1998, which has developed into the most important event in the calendar for disseminating

policy and research on ethnic minority firms. He also holds the positions of Visiting Fellow at the Industrial Relations Research Unit at Warwick University and the Herbert Felix Visiting Professor at Lund University in Sweden. Monder served in the former Department of Trade and Industry's Ethnic Minority Business Forum and Small Business Council. He currently sits on the Equalities Advisory Group at the Department of Business, Innovation and Skills. His areas of particular expertise include ethnic minority entrepreneurship, employment relations in small firms and small firm policy.

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