

## Template Role Descriptions for Trustees

Each individual member of the Committee should have their own role specific responsibilities outlined in their role description e.g.

- Chair
- Treasurer
- Vice Chair
- Company Secretary
- Income Generation
- Profile Raising
- Volunteers
- Personnel
- Other sub-committees etc. Finance and Personnel are normally priorities

Therefore your Trustee's Role Description will not be exactly the same each time. Below are some templates that can be used as a base, but remember to change these to fit your organisation and the trustees you wish to recruit.

But remember, **ALL** trustees/management committee members have **equal** responsibility for decisions.

You may want to begin each role description with a brief overview of the organisation. What is its mission? What does it do? How does it do this? What legal form is it?

Also remember to make it clear what the terms of service will be for trustees i.e. for a year, 3 year terms before re-election etc. Is there a minimum and/or maximum term? How many days a year would you expect a trustee to give to the organisation? Do you have the meetings dates for the coming year already in the diary?

Remember that when you write specific role description, they also need to understand their role in relation to the rest of the Board. All board/management committee members should receive a Trustee Handbook, information from the Charity Commission, a role description etc. as part of their induction pack.

**The following Role Descriptions should be adapted to suit the circumstances of individual organisations.**

- [Suggested role description: General](#)
- [Suggested role description: Chair](#)
- [Suggested role description: Vice-Chair](#)
- [Suggested role description: Treasurer](#)
- [Suggested role description: Company Secretary](#)

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## Suggested role description: General

### Name of Organisation:

**Role:** As a representative of the community to be the main force pressing the organisation to the realisation of its opportunities for service and the fulfilment of its objectives to the organisation's users, staff, volunteers, funders and wider community.

### Responsibilities

#### Planning

- Approve the organisation's mission statement and review the staff's performance in achieving it
- Annually assess the changing environment and approve the organisation's one-year plan
- Annually review and approve the organisation's one-year strategy
- Review and approve the organisation's five year financial goals
- Annually review and approve the organisation's budget
- Approve major policies

#### Organisation

- Recruit, appoint, evaluate, monitor, appraise, advise, stimulate, support, reward and if necessary or desirable, change the Chief Executive of the organisation.
- Regularly discuss with the Chief Executive matters that are of concern to him/her or to the Committee
- Be assured that management succession is being properly provided
- Be assured that the organisational strength and staffing is equal to the requirements of the long range goals
- Approve appropriate salaries, terms and conditions of service for all staff
- Put forward names of prospective members of the management committee and fill vacancies as needed
- Annually approve the staff's work plans and review their performance
- Annually approve the performance of the Board of Trustees and take steps (including composition, organisation and responsibilities) to improve its performance

#### Operations

- Review the results achieved by the staff team in relation to the organisation's aims and objectives, annual and long range goals and the performance of similar projects
- Be certain that the financial structure of the organisation is adequate for its current needs and its long range strategy
- Provide candid and constructive criticism, advice, comments and praise
- Approve major actions of the organisation, such as capital expenditure on all items over authorised limits and major changes in activities and services.

#### Audit

- Be assured that the Board is adequately and currently informed – through reports and other methods – of the condition of the organisation and its operations
- Be assured that published reports adequately reflect the nature of the services and the financial condition of the organisation

- Ascertain that the Chief Executive has established appropriate policies to define and identify conflicts of interest throughout the organisation and is administering and enforcing those policies
  - Appoint independent auditors subject to approval by members
  - Review the compliance with relevant laws affecting the organisation
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## Suggested role description: Chair

For **Name of organisation**

**Role title:** Chair

**Reports to:** The Board/Management Committee

### Purpose of the role

- to lead the committee in ensuring the effective performance of its governance responsibilities
- to work in partnership with the Chief Officer or Director to help him / her achieve the objects set for the **organisation**
- to ensure there is an effective relationship between the committee and the organisation, staff, volunteers, members, and stakeholders.

### Main duties

Note: some of the duties listed below may be delegated to other committee members.

### Ensure the committee fulfils its responsibilities

- chair committee meetings so that the committee functions effectively and carries out its duties
- ensure the committee sets an overall direction (strategy) for the **organisation** with clear policy objectives
- ensure the business of meetings is dealt with, and decisions, when required, are arrived at, and recorded, and their implementation monitored
- ensure the **organisation's** financial dealings are prudently and systematically accounted for, audited, or independently examined, and publicly available
- ensure the **organisation** has a satisfactory system for holding in trust for its beneficiaries any funds or property, and for investing to the greatest benefit of the **organisation**, within the constraints of the law and ethical investment practices.
- ensure that satisfactory arrangements are made to identify and nominate the next Chair of the committee
- work in consultation with the Chief Officer to recruit committee members with relevant expertise and experience
- ensure the committee regularly reviews its structure, role, and relationship to staff and implements change as necessary
- ensure, with the Chief Officer, that committee members receive appropriate advice, training, and information relating to their role
- serve as an additional promoter of the **organisation** to relevant stakeholders.

### Help the Chief Officer/director/manager achieve the objects set for the **organisation**

- ensure the committee develops a long-term strategy for the **organisation** with objectives which can be monitored
- monitor progress in implementing the annual work plan

- ensure appropriate goals are set for the resources available to the **organisation**
- ensure appropriate arrangements are in place to support, monitor and review the work of the Chief Officer/director/manager and other staff
- help promote the **organisation** to a wider audience of potential funders and beneficiaries.

### **Ensure an effective relationship between staff, volunteers, members, and other stakeholders**

- ensure the organisation has appropriate procedures to:
  - comply with current legislation and good practice, including employment, health and safety, non-discrimination
  - advertise for, interview, select and appoint staff
- agree, with the Chief Officer, an annual schedule for committee and subcommittee meetings and key events
- through the Chief Officer, ensure appropriate communication between the committee and staff, volunteers, members and stakeholders.

### **Key qualities**

- a knowledge of and commitment to the work of the **organisation**
- good meeting and presentation skills
- supportive and confident leadership style.
- Add any further essential qualities your organization is looking for, this may be to fit in with strategic objectives

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## **Suggested role description: Vice-chair**

For **Name of organisation**

**Role title:** Vice-chair

**Reports to:** The committee

### **Purpose of the role**

- to deputise for the Chair at committee meetings, other meetings and events
- to chair particular standing or sub-committees or working groups
- to act in other specialised capacities e.g. Membership Secretary,
- representative on other bodies.

### **Main duties**

These may mirror those of the Chair, combined with some specialist knowledge / expertise as required.

### **Key qualities**

- a knowledge of and commitment to the work of the **organisation**
- good meeting and presentation skills
- supportive and confident leadership style.

## Suggested role description: Treasurer

For **Name of organisation**

**Role title:** Treasurer

**Reports to:** The committee

### **Purpose of the role**

- to ensure the financial affairs of the **organisation** are conducted within legal requirements, accounting conventions and good practice
- in partnership with the Chief Officer and / or Finance Officer, ensure the financial viability and development of the **organisation**.

### **Main duties**

- ensure the committee fulfils its financial responsibilities
- ensure proper systems for budgeting, financial control, insurance, and reporting
- keep committee members informed about **organisation**' finances by written report, at least on a quarterly basis
- communicate with relevant staff and other committee members so as to maintain a clear picture of the financial health of the **organisation**
- ensure compliance with Inland Revenue and Customs and Excise (VAT) requirements as appropriate
- ensure financial reports are comprehensible and properly discussed
- ensure financial reports are provided in the proper format and at the proper time, as required by other bodies in law
- ensure the appointment of auditors or independent examiners
- provide a financial report to members on an annual basis.

### **Ensure financial viability and development of the **organisation****

- Ensure the committee develops a long-term financial strategy for the **organisation** with objectives which can be monitored
- monitor progress in budget implementation
- ensure appropriate financial goals are set for the resources available to the **organisation**.

### **Key qualities**

- a knowledge of financial accounting and reporting procedures
  - ability to communicate financial information to those who may have little or no financial background
  - hands-on book-keeping skills (if required in new or small organisations )
  - strategic financial planning skills (in larger organisations).
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## Suggested role description: Company Secretary

For **Name of organisation**

**Role title:** (Company) Secretary

**Reports to:** The Trustee Board

### Purpose of the role

- to ensure the administrative affairs of the **organization** are conducted within legal requirements
- to ensure that Trustee Board meetings are properly administratively serviced.

### Main duties

#### Ensure the Board fulfils its administrative responsibilities

- deal with Trustee Board correspondence and keep a record of this
- keep a check on the progress of work as agreed by the Trustee Board
- ensure the Trustee Board meets its legal obligations, including reporting, meeting charity and company law and insurance requirements
- record decisions and policy in formal minutes
- make arrangements for Trustee Board meetings
- receive agenda items and prepare the agenda with the Chair and Chief Officer
- ensure the circulation of agendas, previous minutes, and papers, prior to meetings
- ensure that any Trustee Board members who have been given tasks know what it is they have been asked to do
- book meeting rooms, as required
- check that action has been taken following decisions at previous meetings
- ensure members are informed of the AGM and any Extraordinary or Special Meetings
- ensure the Annual Report is written and produced and sent to relevant bodies.

#### Ensure the proper administration of Trustee Board meetings

- ensure the Chair signs the minutes of the previous meeting once approved by the Trustee Board
- ensure minutes are taken and produced
- ensure decisions are clearly recorded
- record who will do what by when, as agreed by the Trustee Board

### Key qualities

- a knowledge of administrative procedures
- ability to write clearly
- ability to progress chase in a coaching rather than an autocratic manner
- ability to provide clear advice on procedural and relevant legislative matters.

### Note:

In companies it is common for the Chief Officer of the **organisation** to be appointed as the Company Secretary. If the post is held by a member of the Trustee Board, close collaboration will be required with the Chief Officer to ensure harmonisation of duties

## Resources

- Institute of Chartered Secretaries and Administrators (ICSA): [www.icsa.org.uk](http://www.icsa.org.uk)
- Association of Chairs: <http://www.associationofchairs.org.uk/>
- Governance Pages: [Role Description for a Chair](#)
- The Charity Commission Guidance: [Charity Trustee, what's involved?](#) (2013)
- The Russell-Cooke Voluntary Sector Legal Handbook, Third Edition
- Ruth Hayes and Jacki Reason: 'Voluntary but not Amateur – A guide to the law for the voluntary organisations and community groups': 8<sup>th</sup> Edition: Directory of Social Change (2012).
- Cecile Gillard: 'Charity Checklists': Institute of Chartered Secretaries and Administrators (ICSA) (2014)
- ICSA Guidance Note: [ICSA Model Role Description for a Charity Treasurer \(England & Wales\)](#). (2007)
- Governance Pages: [Role Description for a Treasurer](#)
- Civil Society: Charity Finance Yearbook: [Model job description – charity honorary treasurer](#). (2010)

## Support

If you would like any support with governance or any other issues facing your organisation, please contact the Development Team at Community Southwark:

[development@communitysouthwark.org.uk](mailto:development@communitysouthwark.org.uk) or 020 7358 7020.