

Role description for Trustees

Purpose of the role of Trustee

Trustees are responsible for controlling the management and administration of the organisation in accordance with the law and guidance from the Charity's Commission and our Governance Manual.

As the decision-making body of SWBT, SWBT's trustees have specific responsibilities. The Board of Trustees has and must accept responsibility for directing the affairs of SWBT, ensuring it is solvent and well run, and that it acts within its objects as set out in the Deed of Trust. Trustees are accountable for their decisions and actions to SWBT's governance structures, the public, funders, and users of the charity.

Key Tasks

1. To agree and regularly monitor SWBT's strategic direction and ensure that it pursues its objectives in keeping with these strategic directions.
2. With the other Trustees, ensure that the organisation functions within the legal, charitable, and financial requirements of a charitable organisation and strives to achieve best practice.
3. To actively contribute in giving firm strategic direction to SWBT, setting overall policy, defining goals, and setting targets and evaluating performance against agreed targets.
4. To act in the interests of SWBT.
5. To ensure effective and efficient administration of SWBT.
6. To ensure the financial stability of the organisation and the proper investment of funds in accordance with SWBT's stated aims and objectives and relevant legislation.
7. To appoint or reappoint trustees to key positions on the Board.
8. To use any specific skills, knowledge, and experience to help the Board reach sound decisions (this will include the scrutiny of proposals, leading and initiating discussions, providing advice or guidance on new initiatives and utilising any specialist expertise and experience).

Ensuring Compliance

Trustees must ensure that SWBT complies with:

- Charity law, and the requirements of the Charity Commission as regulator; in particular, you must ensure that the charity prepares reports on its work and submits Annual Returns and accounts as required by law.
- The requirements or rules, and the charitable purpose and objects, set out in the Deed of Trust. All trustees will be provided with an electronic copy of this document, and must be familiar with it.
- To work with BASW to achieve the above compliance.
- The requirement for Trustees to act with integrity, and avoid any personal conflicts of interest or misuse of charity funds or assets.

Duty of Prudence

Trustees must:

- Ensure that SWBT is and will remain solvent; this means that the Trustees need to keep themselves informed of the Trust's activities and financial position.
- Use charitable funds and assets wisely, and only to further the purposes and interests of SWBT.
- Avoid undertaking activities that might place SWBT's property, funds, assets or reputation at undue risk.
- Take special care when investing the funds of SWBT, or borrowing funds for SWBT to use.

Duty of Care

Trustees must:

- Exercise reasonable care and skill as trustees, using personal knowledge and experience to ensure that the charity is well-run and efficient.
- Consider getting external professional advice on all matters where there may be material risk to the charity, or where the trustees may be in breach of their duties.

More information about the role and responsibilities of trustees can be found on the Charity Commission website under "The Essential Trustee"

Further Information for the Appointment of Trustees

Person Specification

Members of SWBT's Board of Trustees will require:

1. A commitment to the aims and objectives of the Trust and to promoting it in a suitable and appropriate way.
2. A willingness to devote time and effort.
3. A level of strategic vision.
4. Good, independent judgement.
5. An ability to think creatively.
6. An understanding and acceptance of legal duties, responsibilities, and liabilities of trusteeship.
7. An ability to work effectively as a member of a team while contributing an independent perspective.
8. A commitment to Nolan's seven principles of public life: selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty, and leadership.
9. Eligibility. There are people disqualified by law from acting as trustees including:
 - Anyone who has an unspent conviction for an offence involving deception or dishonesty.
 - Anyone who is an undischarged bankrupt.
 - Anyone who has been removed from trusteeship of a charity by the Courts or Charity Commission for misconduct or mismanagement.
 - Anyone who is disqualified from being a company director under the Company Directors Disqualification Act 1986.
10. The Trust may conduct necessary checks on prospective Trustees to ensure eligibility. All trustees will be required to sign a declaration that they are not disqualified and complete a DRB check when appointed.

TERMS OF APPOINTMENT

1. The Trust is committed to supporting its trustees and provides an induction to the organisation and role.
2. Trustee appointments will be reviewed annually, and newly inducted trustees should expect to serve for at least 4 years.
3. Trustees will be required to attend meetings of the Board and wherever possible further meetings and events, including any interim or subcommittee meetings.
4. Trustees must therefore be able to commit up to approximately 10 days each year for preparation and attendance of the Board and further meetings and events.
5. Trustees will be expected to attend events relevant to the role, as necessary.
6. The role is unpaid; however reasonable expenses are paid
7. Trustees have a responsibility to attend all meetings or to give their appropriate apologies in a timely fashion.
8. They also need to ensure that they read applications and make their comments. This should be possible even if a trustee is unable to attend a meeting and ensures that they are involved in decision making.
9. It is important to note that trustees are still responsible for decisions even when they are not present at meetings.
10. Generally, the chair/s make contact with trustees if they do not attend a meeting, particularly if there are likely to be welfare considerations. However, if three consecutive meetings are missed without apologies the trustee will be contacted by the chair and invited to discuss their ability to fulfil their role as trustee. If a further meeting is missed in the coming year without prior discussion, the trustee will be deemed to have retired.