



Role Description - Trustee

The role of trustee at Transition Network can be viewed as having three aspects:

1. A member of the Primary Circle
2. The legal role of trustee as required by England & Wales [charity and company law](#)
3. A member of the TN team who can step in to specific roles, responsibilities or tasks

1. A member of the Primary Circle

- Bring your skills, experience and knowledge into discussions exploring and agreeing changes to Transition Network's strategic focus, organisational purpose or governance model.
- Exercise objection rights in Primary Circle decisions by consent and elections by consent. Please note: new trustees will not be granted objection rights until they have become familiar with our organisation and have demonstrated that they can work within the shared governance model, a process which we expect to take at least six months.
- Engage constructively and carefully with Transition Network's relational agreements (see appendix 2) and support other members of the team to do the same.
- Able to attend Primary Circle meetings/strategy gatherings for 3 days in January and 2 days in summer, as well as other online or in-person meetings as required.
- Able to respond to emails and comment on online documents relating to the work of the Primary Circle.

2. The legal role of trustee in relation to England & Wales charity and company law

- On matters reserved for the trustees relating to finances, funding, risks, policies and other aspects of their legal responsibilities:
 - Analyse, consider and discuss information prepared for the group of trustees;
 - Make recommendations and agree actions;
 - Take collective decisions.
- Able to attend at least three 3-hour online Trustees Meetings per year, as well as any other online or in-person meetings required.
- Able to respond to emails and comment on online documents relating to matters reserved for the trustees. (See appendix 1)

3. A member of the TN team who can step in specific roles, responsibilities or tasks

- Take up opportunities, if you wish, to step into specific roles, responsibilities or tasks at Transition Network:
 - contributing to the delivery of Transition Network’s evolving organisational purpose.
 - working within the context of the shared governance model.
- Such uses of your skills, experience, qualities and interests are usually outside of Trustees meetings and Primary Circle gatherings, and could involve online meetings, emails, drafting documents, commenting on documents, or attending events.
- Welcome opportunities to learn and develop skills and practices which enhance your contribution to the team and support other members of the team to do the same.

Current examples include:

- Two trustees who are part of Transition Network’s HR Decision-making Group, alongside two staff members.
- A trustee who is part of the core group designing a 9-month project to convene practitioners and experts to share and find new ways to support the municipal level response to climate and ecological crises.

Person specification - Trustee

The following skills, experiences and qualities are ones we see as important to have within and across our group of trustees. Skills and experience that we are **particularly aiming to strengthen in the trustee team in this recruitment round** are highlighted in bold.

- Understanding and alignment with the aims, values, [principles](#) and practices of Transition Network and the Transition movement. This might include experience of active participation in a Transition initiative or a Transition Hub, or other grassroots organisations or networks for social change.
- Committed to maintaining high levels of trust and openness between trustees, the Transition Network team and the wider Transition movement.
- Willingness to experiment, access creativity, and bring whole self to the role.
- Understanding of the legal duties, responsibilities and liabilities of trusteeship, and/or previous experience of charity or voluntary organisation governance.
- **Experience of fundraising, connections with funders, and/or experience of income generation or social entrepreneurship.**
- **Experience of financial management of an organisation.**
- **Experience of developing and applying Human Resources practices and policies, particularly around equalities and diversity.**
- **Legal experience or knowledge.**
- Ability to listen to and collaborate with people across different levels of scale, from local through to international, and across multiple cultures and countries in an inclusive and empowering way.
- Personal resilience - a commitment to self-care and the ability to remain grounded in the midst of uncertainty and the potentially overwhelming global context.
- Willingness to engage in an ongoing exploration of healthy collaborative culture and the skills, attitudes and practices which support us to work effectively across difference.
- Experience of, or willingness to engage with, what leadership looks and feels like within a collaborative/ shared governance context, and willing to understand, use and experiment with practices such as consent-based decision-making and governance circles.
- Experience of organisational capacity-building and/or strategic planning.

- Experience of evaluating and monitoring an organisation’s impact and effectiveness.
- Mentoring skills and experience, and/or skills and experience in conflict resolution.

We hope to make appointments that reflect a diversity of backgrounds and lived experiences, to promote a rich range of perspectives within the group of trustees.

Some Practicalities

The move to shared governance has focused the “core” trustee role more firmly on compliance with England & Wales charity law. We are open to appointing trustees residing in countries other than the UK, but we are aware that previous non-UK-based trustees have found the aspects around running a charity based in England & Wales to be the least satisfying aspects of the role. We welcome prospective trustees who have an international perspective and are also exploring other ways for our international movement to be represented within our governance model. Trustees need to be fluent in English to contribute fully to the role of trustee.

We seek to minimise unnecessary travel so a very high proportion of our meetings and other collaborative activities take place online. We experiment with ways to bring creativity and heart to our virtual meetings. Trustees will need access to good IT equipment and a high quality broadband connection, and be comfortable working online.

All Transition Network trustees are expected to:

- Participate in online Trustee meetings which are held at least three times a year .
- Attend Transition Network strategy gatherings in person (a minimum commitment of 3 days in January and 2 days in summer) .
- Participate in email discussions/decisions or other online or in-person meetings. Trustees may volunteer to take on additional roles or tasks.

Repeated non-attendance at meetings and/or strategy gatherings may result in the trustee being asked to resign.

This is an unpaid, voluntary role. However, trustees may claim reasonable expenses for board meetings and away-days. Expenses for other work may be payable with prior agreement.

Trustees serve an initial term of four years and may then apply for reselection for a further four years. The Co-chairs of the board may serve more than two terms with the agreement of the group of trustees.

Role Description of Treasurer

We are aiming to recruit a trustee who will take on the role of Treasurer. The description below is in addition to the trustee role description above.

- A member of Transition Network's finance group along with the Finance, Fundraising and Heart Circle Lead Link roles. The Treasurer is asked to meet with the finance group ahead of trustee meetings to review, interrogate and understand Transition Network's financial position and agree on the information to be presented to trustees.
- To receive and respond to reports from the Finance roles about financial matters, for example in relation to audit, bank accounts, foreign money transfers and financial controls.
- To be one of three trustees (two Co-Chairs and the Treasurer) to whom the following responsibilities are delegated:
 - That at least one of these three trustees reviews and approves funding bids before they are submitted, giving all trustees assurance that the funding proposals Transition Network submits are aligned to our organisational purpose/ charitable objects and do not give rise to unacceptable risks.
 - That at least one of these three trustees gives email authorisation for expenditure of amounts above £3,000.
- To offer broad perspective and recommendations, from your financial and organisational experience, to the group of trustees on financial matters.
- To be the key trustee maintaining an overview of:
 - any changes to Transition Network's financial controls, financial reporting arrangements, financial records or significant changes in accounting policies or practices.
 - any changes to Transition Network's reserves policy.
 - any changes to a different pension scheme for Transition Network staff than the NEST workplace pension scheme.
 - any change of external accountants/ auditors.
- To be the key trustee to receive and note the annual management letter from the external auditor, share with the group of trustees and ensure that any new courses of action are agreed.