



Transition Network: Information for potential Trustees

Transition Network is a charity registered in England and Wales, working internationally to support the Transition movement. We are looking for three new trustees including a new treasurer. Can you help us by becoming one of our new trustees? Can you bring perspective, wisdom, marginalised voices and your time and energy, to help guide Transition Network’s strategy and run our organisation well? We hope to find new trustees from a diversity of backgrounds and lived experiences. We are inviting new trustees into a non-hierarchical organisation that uses shared governance structures and processes.

Contents:

Transition Network and the Transition movement	1
Why we want new trustees	2
Seeking diversity	2
Meeting in person.....	3
Our shared governance model	3
What is it like to be a trustee in a shared governance structure?	4
How do we divide up roles in the trustee group?	4
Trustee recruitment schedule.....	5

Transition Network and the Transition movement

Transition community groups in 40 countries are developing a huge variety of approaches to create a low-carbon future and nurture a caring culture - addressing the complex challenges of our time by developing community resilience and creative innovation for sustainability.

Transition Network supports the Transition movement, amplifies stories of community-led change, and nurtures collaboration across difference to challenge us all to reimagine and rebuild our world. [Our current organisational purpose statement is here.](#)

Our organisation was created in 2007 and registered as a charity in March 2009. We currently have ten part-time employees and five trustees. We have a modest office in Totnes and most staff work from home in the South and South West of England and in Brussels. We work closely with freelancers and volunteers across the world, including members of the [Municipalities in Transition](#) project team and the [Transition Hubs Group](#). Our most recent [Trustees Report and Financial Statements](#) are here.

“The team and trustees are a wonderful bunch of people; smart, committed and fun. It is a genuine pleasure to be part of.” - quote from a current Trustee

Why we want new trustees

We need trustees to be part of our primary circle, setting and guiding our strategic direction; to exercise the responsibilities required by England & Wales charity law; and to take other roles in our team and structure as skills, capacity, interest and opportunity allow.

The wisdom brought by our trustees often comes from the sense of perspective available from stepping back from the day-to-day work, as well as drawing on their experience in Transition groups and Hubs, or their work in aligned environmental, social, cultural or economic fields.

Currently we have five trustees - [meet them here](#) - and one will step down in 2020 at the end of their second and final term. This feels like it concentrates the responsibilities and requests on too few people. Ideally we would like seven trustees. Our current treasurer is holding the role temporarily until we can recruit someone who is drawn to the financial role and with relevant experience to offer. Therefore we are also specifically looking to recruit a trustee who will be Transition Network's treasurer.

Being a trustee is an unpaid, voluntary role (as generally required by charity regulations). Trustees serve an initial term of four years and may then apply for reselection for a further four years. This autumn Transition Network will also be advertising a new staff role, and recruiting a freelance contractor as an international training co-ordinator.

"The biggest reward of being a trustee of TN is the opportunity to contribute to, and help shape, a movement that is part of a global network of movements making positive change in the world." - quote from a current Trustee

Seeking diversity

We would like to recruit new trustees from a diversity of backgrounds and experiences, so that we can widen the range of perspectives and different voices brought by trustees. The range of diversity we hope for might include: people of black or minority ethnic heritage, from working class backgrounds, people living with disabilities, a range of ages or sexualities, and/or those who have experienced disadvantage in society or their lives. Increased diversity in our group of trustees will help us listen better to voices and perspectives that are more marginalised in society and currently under-represented in Transition Network, and to reflect this in our planning and actions.

"Transition Network really values the contribution made by everyone - staff, trustees and partners. The active commitment to valuing diversity, addressing privilege and seeing the whole person has kept me hopeful during 8 years as a trustee."

We work internationally, so we will benefit from new trustees who have an international background. However given the focus on England & Wales charity regulations, and the need to minimise carbon emissions in attending face-to-face gatherings, it would be an advantage if new trustees reside in or near the UK.

Meeting in person

Our current practice is that the staff and trustee team meets together twice a year in January and summer. In January we reflect together on our impact and strategic direction and agree new Key Areas of Focus for the year ahead.

Our next strategy gathering will take place from 13th to 15th January 2020 (probably near Reading) and we hope that new trustees will be able to join us at this gathering.

Our shared governance model

Since April 2018 Transition Network has been operating an innovative shared governance model, drawn from [sociocracy](#) and [holacracy](#), and developed with the support of [Université du Nous](#). We work this way to distribute power, to empower individuals in the team to act, to have clear decision-making processes that help us access collective intelligence and to create a more resilient, agile and collaborative organisation.

Our shift to a shared governance model is an experiment and we hope and expect that our team culture, structures and processes will continue to evolve as needed, in service of the [organisation's purpose](#).

"It wouldn't be an underestimation to say that the facilitative and decision making processes practiced by TN are the most innovative, human and effective that I have experienced in any organisation. Taking part in these processes has fed into my professional and community practice in many ways." - quote from a current Trustee

We work through self-organising circles in which all roles in the circle exercise equivalent power. Roles and circles choose the best way to fulfil their purpose, gathering information, seeking advice and feedback and making decisions as feels most appropriate to them. We use consent decision-making and election-by-consent when appropriate. We will give support and guidance to people who haven't got experience with these particular ways of working and making decisions.

We have a Primary Circle of **all trustees** and most staff, which is responsible for connecting to TN's evolving organisational purpose, agreeing our strategic focus and keeping our overall governance model under review. The Primary Circle meets in person twice a year at the Strategy Gatherings and may meet online or in-person at other times if the need arises.

Responsibility for delivering the organisation's current organisational strategy rests with the Heart Circle. The primary circle elect one of their members (currently Sarah McAdam) to act as lead link for the heart circle and she is responsible for appointing other people to the circle and supporting them to deliver what's needed. The structure is designed to evolve organically in response to tensions and needs within the organisation and people accept and relinquish roles as circumstances change. Here is a picture of our [current structure](#).

What is it like to be a trustee in a shared governance structure?

Shared governance is easiest to understand through experiencing it. **So to give you some more flavour, here are a few quotes from current trustees:**

“When I joined as a trustee, TN operated within a more traditional board and decision making structure. Going through the intensive process of change has been challenging and fascinating. The current structure that we have developed feels more equitable, agile and effective and far better suited to an organisation seeking to support an emergent global movement and context. We are still in a learning process (maybe we always will be) and space and time is given to supporting that process.”

“The time commitment involved as a trustee in our shared governance is not insignificant, but this has been balanced by the benefits of a deeper engagement and understanding which makes my participation and contribution more meaningful. In our new structure we have achieved a better balance between attendance in person (at two strategy gatherings) and online meetings which maximise people's time.”

“Working as part of TN's shared governance involves regularly reflecting about what role you're playing, and looking for ways to give feedback or contribute when opportunities arise. Our role keeping an eye on the 'bigger picture' of the organisation alongside the staff (not instead of them) is really valued.”

“Shared governance allows us to really look at the role of the Trustees within the organisation, moving beyond traditional assumptions towards open and responsive engagement. Personally I find it fascinating, and I have learned a huge amount which I am able to implement into other voluntary and paid roles. The attention to detail with regard to the purpose and process of our interactions has created some of the most enjoyable, deep and efficient meetings I have ever been a part of.”

How do we divide up roles in the trustee group?

We currently have three formal roles within the group of trustees: two Co-Chairs and a Treasurer. The Chair of Trustees position is shared by two people. This aids succession in the Chair role; when one Co-Chair steps down and the other stays on, there can be a smooth handover of knowledge and responsibilities.

Trustees can choose to, or be elected to, step into additional roles and responsibilities. These could be temporary or longer-term.

Trustee recruitment schedule

1. Vacancies for 3 trustees including a Treasurer will advertised from mid-September 2019. The initial closing date for applications was 18th October 2019. We have now set a final closing date for applications of 11th November 2019.
2. Applicants are asked to send a CV and a covering letter, **of a total of no more than 4 pages please**, or alternatively an audio or video application of no more than 8 minutes. The covering letter should explain a) why they are interested in becoming a trustee/ treasurer, and b) outline how they meet the person specification. Please indicate whether you are specifically applying for the role of treasurer. Applications should be sent to trustee-recruitment@transitionnetwork.org
3. Candidates have the opportunity to contact Co-Chairs Hilary Jennings or Henry Owen on trustee-recruitment@transitionnetwork.org if they have queries before they submit their applications.
4. An appointments panel of trustees Hilary Jennings, Henry Owen and Peter Lefort and Trustee Compliance Link Nicola Hillary will review the applications and conduct informal online discussion meetings with applicants, expected to take place between 4-19th November.
5. The group of trustees will decide based on the information and recommendations from the appointments panel, who they would like to appoint as new trustees. We aim to make the decisions at the end of November 2019.
6. We will be holding a Strategy Gathering for all staff and trustees, from 13th - 15th January 2020 and we hope that new trustees will be able to participate.