



Trustee

Recruitment & Information Pack

February 2021

Information Pack for potential trustees

This pack contains information about our movement, our organisation and our ways of working. We definitely don't expect you to commit all this information to memory or even to fully understand everything that is set out here - much of it will only be made real through experience. However, we are looking for people who feel intrigued and excited by the possibility of becoming part of our organisation. Your questions and ideas are very welcome throughout the process to trustee-recruitment@transitionnetwork.org.

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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 13 part-time employees and four trustees. We have a modest office in Totnes and most staff work from home in the South and South West of England, Wales, Brussels and Portugal. 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

Trustees are part of our Primary Circle, setting and guiding our strategic direction; exercising the responsibilities required by England & Wales charity law; and taking 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 four trustees - [meet them here](#). We are hoping to recruit two new trustees in this process to bring our total up to six.

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.

“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.” - quote from a current Trustee

We work internationally, so we will benefit from a new trustee who has connections and experience of working beyond the UK context. However given the focus on England & Wales charity regulations, and the need to minimise carbon emissions when attending face-to-face gatherings, it would be an advantage if our new trustee resides in or near the UK. We have other mechanisms to seek feedback from and share power and resources with the wider Transition movement.

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 support and guide someone who hasn'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 Nicola Hillary) 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?

Applicants with previous trustee experience may find that being a trustee for Transition Network operating under shared governance is a significantly different experience. For example, trustees work much more closely with staff.

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. These roles are currently filled until 2023 (Co-Chair) and 2025 (Co-Chair and Treasurer).

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. The trustee vacancies will be advertised from the end of February 2021. The closing date for applications is **11pm on Sunday 11 April 2021**.
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 address the following questions:
 - a. Why would you like to become a trustee of Transition Network, and what do you hope to gain from the experience?
 - b. What perspectives, skills and experiences will you bring?
 - c. What support will you need in order to effectively contribute as a trustee?

Applicants may refer to the [person specification](#), but are also encouraged to bring their own perspectives on what they will bring to the role.

Applications should be sent to trustee-recruitment@transitionnetwork.org, alternatively video or audio applications can be sent via WhatsApp or Signal to +44 7719 867280.

3. Applicants have the opportunity to contact us via the trustee recruitment email above if they have queries before they submit their applications.
4. An appointments panel made up of trustees and staff will review the applications and conduct informal online discussion meetings with applicants after 11 April.

5. Further discussions and opportunities to meet team members or observe meetings will be arranged for the short-listed candidate/s. Transition Network and the short-listed candidate/s will be given time to explore and review both separately and together before the panel makes a final decision to offer appointment as trustee.
6. As part of the induction process, the new trustee/s will be assigned a steward (staff or trustee) who will develop an induction plan appropriate to their needs and experience. This process will be supported by Team Wellbeing (Julia) and Trustee Compliance Link (Nicola).
7. When the steward and the new trustee/s agree that the time is right, they will put a proposal to the Primary Circle that the trustee/s should be granted objection rights.

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, representing or speaking on behalf of Transition Network 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. It is not expected that any trustee will meet all of these criteria, but skills and experience that it would be **particularly desirable for our new trustee/s to have** 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.

- **Experience as a storyteller, with the ability to tell stories about the way we work.**
- 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. We therefore encourage applicants to suggest other experiences and skills that could be equally or more important than those listed above.

Some Practicalities

We are open to appointing trustees living in countries other than the UK, though the move to shared governance has focused the 'core' trustee role more firmly on compliance with England & Wales charity law. 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). *Covid-19 permitting.
- 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.

Decision-making also takes place outside of the above meetings, either over email or through additional online meetings arranged around the availability of those involved. There are also opportunities for trustees to take on specific roles or get involved in particular projects or processes within Transition Network. These opportunities are not expectations, but we hope to support any new trustees to become comfortable with and influence our ways of working so that they feel able to actively participate in delivering on Transition Network's purpose.

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.

Appendix 1: Matters reserved for the Trustees - the statutory responsibilities of Transition Network Trustees

Transition Network has a Primary Circle of staff and trustee members, which is the decision-making body for:

Purpose: To connect to our evolving organisational purpose, agreeing and energising TN's strategic focus and overall governance model.

Domain: Transition Network, the organisation.

Accountabilities:

- To set and keep under review our evolutionary organisational purpose (ensuring alignment with the charity’s objects as set out in TN’s Memorandum of Association)
- To agree any changes to the organisational safety agreement
- To admit new members to the primary circle and/or make any changes to criteria for membership
- To agree any significant changes to TN’s strategic framework, as determined by the strategy review role or other appropriate role
- To determine broad areas of focus for the organisation over the coming 12 months
- To elect the lead link of the Heart circle

However, under England & Wales charity regulations, there are some decisions that the trustees cannot delegate, and are therefore “reserved for” the group of trustees; matters and decisions that need ultimately to come to the trustees as a collective, regardless of where else within the structure the proposals might be created and/or discussed.

The schedule below is a list of those matters that the trustees cannot, or do not intend to, delegate:

SCHEDULE OF MATTERS RESERVED FOR THE TRUSTEES

| |
|---|
| Ensuring Transition Network is carrying out its purposes for the public benefit |
| To receive and approve decisions made by the primary circle that relate to organisational purpose and strategy. <i>(Trustees have agreed that the primary circle, of which they are part, will play the active part in formulating and agreeing matters relating to TN’s organisational purpose and strategy. Relevant decisions will subsequently be reviewed and agreed at a trustees meeting.)</i> |
| Approve, and monitor the functioning of, the purpose and accountabilities of the primary circle and the delegated powers of individual trustees and trustee sub-groups. |
| Complying with TN’s governing document and the law |
| To register the charity and provide further information, as requested, to the Charity Commission and Companies House where appropriate, or to advise if the charity ceases to exist. |
| To approve the charity’s annual Trustees Report and Financial Statements. |
| To satisfy themselves that the governance arrangements are working effectively, continue to be appropriate to the needs, responsibilities and charitable purpose of the organisation and do not expose the organisation or individual trustees to unacceptable levels of risk. |

To approve changes or amendments to the charity's governance model, and/or its governing document and/or the charity's objects.

To approve a schedule of matters reserved for the trustees.

To approve and monitor a scheme of delegation recording the roles, powers and responsibilities that individual trustees hold in Transition Network, in particular in relation to areas where trustees have duties, for example, HR, finance and legal.

To monitor an Annual Check list of policies and actions that underpin financial and legal compliance.

To ensure Transition Network complies with relevant law including employment, pension, equality and health and safety law.

Establish/review/amend/approve key organisational policies including:

- trustee code of conduct
- trustee engagement/agreement to serve letter
- employment policy
- health and safety policy
- environmental policy
- communications policy
- complaints policy
- treasury and investments policy
- reserves policy
- whistleblowing policy
- risk management policy
- corporate social responsibility
- conflicts of interest policy

To make decisions relating to court proceedings against or on behalf of the charity.

Act in TN's best interests

To require and receive the declaration of trustees interests that may conflict with those of the charity, and to determine the manner in which such conflicts will be managed.

Manage TN's resources responsibly

Establish, maintain and retain appropriate financial reporting arrangements, records and controls, and approve any significant changes in accounting policies or practices.

To receive and approve reports from the Finance group and others, on the financial performance of the charity against agreed budgets and strategy, and to agree action where

appropriate to ensure Transition Network is financially responsible.

To decide on the number, purpose and mandates of bank accounts and other deposit media.

To review, amend and approve Transition Network's reserves policy.

To consider, approve or reject proposals from the HR Decision-Making Group regarding salary reviews.

To approve any move to a different pension scheme than the NEST workplace pension scheme.

To approve and amend Transition Network's policies and procedures for the management of risk and protection of the charity's property.

To regularly review, assess and manage risks to Transition Network and avoid exposing Transition Network to undue risk.

Approve/reject proposals for the acquisition/ disposal of land/buildings, or change in its use, following the receipt and consideration of professional guidance.

To agree and review strategies for investment.

To approve the transfer for charity property to another charity with substantially similar objects.

Act with reasonable care and skill

To nominate and elect trustees to serve in the positions of co-chair and treasurer as appropriate.

To put in place effective procedures for the succession planning of trustees.

To consider and decide on any proposal to remunerate a trustee or former trustee, subject to the restrictions of the charity's governing document and the requirements of the Charities Acts.

Ensure TN is accountable

Responsible for the overall management of the charity, ensuring compliance with the charity's objects and relevant legislation.

To agree procedures for the effective evaluation of the trustees as a group and as individuals.

To approve the remuneration of external auditors, and professional advisors, their appointment, re-appointment or removal, in line with legislation and the requirements of the charity's governing document.

To receive and note the annual management letter from the external auditor and agree the proposed course of action.

Appendix 2: Transition Network's Relational Agreements

When working for Transition Network we agree to do our best to align ourselves with the following ways of being and relating to help us create healthy collaborative culture:

Accountability: We do what we say we are going to do and communicate clearly when we are no longer able to.

Appreciation: We find ways to cultivate appreciation and gratitude and express this regularly.

Awareness: We find ways to increase our self-awareness in relationship to our: needs; impact on others; relationships with power; and, our conditioned ways of being and relating.

Sovereignty: We act on our increasing self awareness and compassion around power, privilege, rank and the Drama Triangle to more and more:

- Exercise agency alongside empathy and compassion;
- Say 'no' when we need to;
- Voice 'reasonable' objections as and when they arise;
- Offer and receive feedback even when it feels uncomfortable and as early as we're able to;
- Name conflict when we feel/see it, whether directly involved or not;
- Honour the diversity of our experience by expressing our appreciation, gratitude, joy, celebrations, achievements, hopes, longings and positivity as well as our fears, frustrations, anger, sadness, vulnerability, despair and grief.

Communication: We find ways to communicate with respect, care and compassion for ourselves and each other, including: listening at least as much as we speak; speaking one at a time without interrupting; supporting all voices to be heard; owning our judgements; seeking agreement around and holding confidentiality as appropriate; and, speaking from our needs and hearts.

Feedback: We take action to learn how to offer and receive feedback in healthy ways, even and especially when it feels uncomfortable, and to respect any agreed processes around this.

Conflict Resilience: We make the effort to find ways of becoming more conflict resilient, and to respect any agreed processes around this.

Resourced and Available: We do what we can to become adequately resourced and available within our collaborations - both physically and emotionally, by: cultivating balance in our lives and learning how to avoid burnout; finding ways of balancing our own needs with that of the group; and saying 'no' when we need to.