



Trustee

Recruitment & Information Pack

October 2022

Summary

We are recruiting for new trustees to our Board. The role of trustee is unpaid, and the term length is four years. All trustees are required to:

- be fluent in English to contribute fully to the role
- participate in online Trustee meetings which are held at least three times a year
- attend Transition Network strategy gatherings in person (usually, a minimum commitment of 3 days in January and 2 days in summer)
- participate in email discussions and decisions, or other online or in-person meetings, throughout the year.

If you have any questions about anything in this pack you can email us at:
trustee-recruitment@transitionnetwork.org.

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About Transition Network and the Transition movement

Transition is an international movement that has been growing since 2005. Community-led Transition groups are working for a low-carbon, socially just future with resilient communities, more active participation in society, and a caring culture focused on supporting each other. Their approach is rooted in the [Transition Principles](#).

Transition Network is the charity that 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. Our staff team all work remotely and part-time (currently from UK, Belgium and Portugal). We also work closely with freelancers and volunteers across the world, including members of distributed circles/ project teams.

These ‘distributed circles’ are made up of Transitioners from around the world who are supporting the movement at an international level. This includes the Training Circle and Inner Transition Circle, and [this diagram](#) shows the international enabling infrastructure of the Hubs Heart Circle, Transition Network and the distributed teams and circles. Our most recent [Trustees Report and Financial Statements](#) are here.

What our trustees do

Trustees are part of setting and guiding our strategic direction. They exercise the responsibilities required by England & Wales charity law. They sometimes take other roles in our team and structure.

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.

Being a trustee is an unpaid, voluntary role. We will reimburse expenses incurred such as travel, for board meetings and away-days.

Trustees serve an initial term of four years and may then apply for reselection for a further four years.

Trustee recruitment process

How to apply

Please read the role description and person specification before applying.

The closing date for applications is **11pm on Monday 5 December 2022**.

Please send your CV and either a covering letter (no more than 4 pages long) or an audio or video application no more than 8 minutes long). Your letter or recording should answer 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 to effectively contribute as a trustee?

You should refer to the [person specification](#), but are also encouraged to bring your own perspectives on what you will bring to the role.

Send your application to trustee-recruitment@transitionnetwork.org. Your video or audio applications can be sent via WhatsApp or Signal to +44 7976 771309.

You can use the trustee recruitment email address to ask us any questions before submitting your application.

Our selection process

After the closing date for applications, an appointments panel made up of trustees and staff will review the applications. They will conduct informal online discussion meetings with applicants from Monday 12 December.

Further discussions and opportunities to meet team members or observe meetings will be arranged for the short-listed candidate/s. There is time given to getting to know everyone and for reflection (separately and as a group) before the panel makes a final decision to offer the candidate a position as trustee.

Following the selection process

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 experiences.

Role Description - Trustee

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

1. A member of the Primary Circle - this is the way we collectively make decisions in our [Shared Governance structure](#).
2. The legal role of trustee as required by England & Wales [charity and company law](#)
3. A member of the Transition Network 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, which are usually 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, online messages, 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, online messages, 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 or recent examples include:

- Two trustees who are part of Transition Network's HR Decision-making Group, alongside two staff members.
- A trustee designing and facilitating a team wellbeing check-in session for staff.
- A trustee joining a co-design team for a project.

Person specification - Trustee

The following skills, experiences and qualities are ones we see as important to have in 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.

Seeking diversity

We are actively seeking to recruit individuals whose background or lived experiences will bring extra depth and/or a diversity of perspectives to the TN team. The range of diversity might include people who experience ethnic or racial inequity, discrimination or inequality, from working-class backgrounds, people living with disabilities, a range of ages, genders and sexualities, and/or those who have experienced disadvantage in society or their lives.

We work internationally, so we would also benefit from trustees with connections and experience of working and living beyond the UK context. We are very open to exploring the practicalities and costs (carbon and financial) of appointing trustees who are based in mainland Europe or beyond.

Increased diversity in our group of trustees will help us listen better to voices and perspectives that are marginalised and currently under-represented in Transition Network, and to reflect this in our planning and actions.

What we require from our trustees

We seek to minimise unnecessary travel so most 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 to be comfortable working online, with access to good IT equipment and a high-quality broadband connection.

All Transition Network trustees are expected to:

- Be fluent in English to contribute fully to the role

- Participate in online Trustee meetings which are held at least three times a year
- Attend Transition Network strategy gatherings in person (usually a minimum commitment of 3 days in January and 2 days in summer)
- Participate in email discussions/decisions, other asynchronous communication, or online or in-person meetings.

Trustees who repeatedly miss meetings and/or strategy gatherings may be asked to resign.

In addition to the meetings mentioned above, decision-making takes place either over email or through online meetings arranged around the availability of those involved. Trustees may be expected to make time for these decision-making processes.

Why we seek new trustees

Currently we have [six trustees](#), and one of our current trustees is soon reaching the end of their second term and will therefore step down. We don't have a set number of trustees, but our experience is that around seven trustees can be a good number. That enables a healthy range of capacity for trustee input into Transition Network's work, and helps to create a group of trustees with a diverse and broad range of skills and experience.

Our shared governance model

Shared Governance

In 2018 TN made a shift away from what was basically a hierarchical structure to a shared governance model. You can read more about this here:

<https://transitionnetwork.org/about-the-movement/how-we-work/shared-governance/> .

We use participatory forms of decision making such as consent decision-making and election-by-consent when appropriate.

This video (produced by [Université du Nous](#)) gives a sense of the philosophy that underpins our governance model - [Video - Our Relationship With Power](#).

This [podcast](#) (with an abridged text version) gives some background to the journey that we have made as a team.

Organisational Structure

In our shared governance model we have a Primary Circle which is responsible for defining Transition Network's evolving organisational purpose, agreeing our strategic focus and keeping our overall governance model under review. Most of our trustees and staff members have chosen to join this circle, which meets 4 or 5 times a year (mostly online).

Responsibility for delivering Transition Network's organisational strategy rests with the Heart Circle. The Primary Circle elects one of its members (currently a tandem of Fllipa Pimental and Deborah Benham) to act as Lead Link for the Heart Circle. The Lead Link is responsible for appointing other roles to the Heart Circle, supporting them to deliver what's needed. There are other sub-circles connected into the Heart Circle.

The structure is designed to evolve organically in response to tensions and needs within the organisation. People accept and relinquish roles, and circles are created or dissolved, as circumstances change.

Here is a diagram of [Transition Network's current structure](#), and [this version](#) gives you the option to click on roles or circles to find out more about their Purpose and Accountabilities.

Part of our shared governance journey includes ongoing work to distribute power, resources and roles across the international Transition movement. We work in collaboration with the Hubs Heart Circle, which is the organising group for the [Transition Hubs Group](#).

Being a trustee in our shared governance structure

Our trustees participate in our governance model on equivalent terms with members of staff while retaining responsibility for ensuring that the charity is complying with the law, managing its finances well and acting in accordance with its charitable objects. Trustees meet three times a year to review and approve key decisions and satisfy themselves that the governance model is operating appropriately.

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

Here's what our current trustees say about our shared governance:

"The 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 Transition Network'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 in keeping an eye on the 'bigger picture' of the organisation alongside the staff (not instead of them) is really valued."

"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 in the group of trustees: two Co-Chairs and a Treasurer. Sharing the Chair of Trustees position helps with sharing and smooth handover of knowledge and responsibilities. Trustees can choose, or be elected, to step into additional roles and responsibilities, for example in the Income Generation Group or the HR Decision Making Group. These could be temporary or longer-term.

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. (*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.*)

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. 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.