

Chair to the Board – Role Description

Introduction

The Charities Act 2011 defines ‘charity trustees’ as the people responsible under the Charity’s governing document for controlling the administration and management of the Charity. The trustees are known collectively as the board of trustees and always act as a group and not as individuals.

In addition, the Charity is a limited company with directors; the directors also serve as trustees of the Charity under the Charities Act.

Aim

The trustees play a vital role in making sure that the Charity achieves its core purpose. They oversee the overall management and administration of the Charity. The trustees also ensure that the Charity has a clear strategy and that our work and goals are in line with our vision. Just as importantly, the trustees support and challenge the chief executive to enable iSightCornwall to grow and thrive, and through this, achieve our mission.

Regardless of whether an individual is the chair or treasurer, all the trustees bear collective responsibility for decisions made and the outcomes.

Role of the chair to the board

The chair leads the board, ensuring that it governs the Charity effectively, in service of the Charity’s vision and mission. The chair leads in an inclusive way, supporting the board to work together well, and providing support and challenge to the chief executive.

Job description

The chair to the board is required to:

- Provide strategic leadership to the Charity and the board, ensuring that iSightCornwall achieves its mission.
- Work in partnership with the chief executive to achieve our mission.
- Lead the board in ensuring that it fulfils its responsibilities for the governance of the organisation.
- Chair the board meetings and the AGM, with others as appropriate.

General responsibilities of a trustee

The chair as a trustee has the following general responsibilities:

- Support and provide advice on the Charity's purpose, vision and goals.
- Approve operational strategies and policies and monitor and evaluate their implementation.
- Oversee the Charity's financial plans and budgets and monitor and evaluate progress.
- Ensure the effective and efficient administration of the organisation.
- Ensure that key risks are being identified, monitored and controlled effectively.
- Review and approve the Charity's financial statements.
- Provide support and challenge to the chief executive in the exercise of their delegated authority and affairs.
- Contribute to regular reviews of the Charity's own governance. Attend board meetings, adequately prepared to contribute to discussions.
- Use independent judgment, acting legally and in good faith to promote and protect the Charity's interests, to the exclusion of their own personal and/or any third-party interests.
- Contribute to the broader promotion of the Charity's objects, aims and reputation by applying your skills, expertise, knowledge and contacts.
- Ensure that the board regularly reviews its own training needs and creates an expectation of continuous professional development throughout the organisation.

As a small charity, there will be times when the trustees will need to be actively involved beyond board meetings. This may involve scrutinising board papers, leading discussions, focusing on key issues, providing advice and guidance on new initiatives, presenting externally, or other issues in which the trustee has special expertise.

What we are looking for – person specification

We are looking for people willing to bring energy, enthusiasm and commitment to the role, and who will broaden the diversity of thinking on our board and be able to demonstrate the following skills and values:

- You do not need to have been a chair before.
- Willingness and ability to understand and accept their responsibilities and liabilities as trustees and to act in the best interests of the organisation.
- Ability to think creatively and strategically, exercise good, independent judgement and work effectively as a board member.
- Effective communication skills and willingness to participate actively in discussion.
- A strong personal commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion.
- Enthusiasm for our vision and mission.
- Commitment to Nolan's seven principles of public life: selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership.

Committee membership

The risk and audit committee consists of at least three trustees and meets one week before the board meetings. Other task and finish working groups provide ad hoc and infrequent support to the chief executive and employee team.

Terms of appointment

Terms of office are for three years, and there is scope for a trustee to serve for a second term of three years, as per the terms set out in the Articles of Association. This is a voluntary position and reasonable expenses are reimbursed.

The trustees are expected to attend up to five board meetings annually. Currently, meetings are held either remotely or in person in Truro. The trustees should also plan to attend the half-day AGM on 10 October 2025, at St Erme Community Centre in Truro.

Appointment and resignation

The trustees are normally co-opted by the board of trustees and serve only until the next AGM, after which they must resign, but they may stand for election by the members at the AGM.

When trustees are approaching the end of their term of office or anticipate that they will need to resign their positions mid-term, there is a general expectation that they shall provide no less than three calendar months' notice. Whilst it is recognised that there may be occasions where this is not possible, the Charity requires as much notice as possible for succession plans to be actioned and trustees' best efforts in this regard are much appreciated.

Supporting information

This job description and person specification should be read alongside the following documents and policies:

- Trustee Code of Conduct.