

**Title:** TRUSTEE ROLE PROFILE & SPECIFICATION

**Author:** Chris Head

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The West of England Rural Network is a charity that provides expert specialist resource for all communities across South Gloucestershire, Bath & North East Somerset, North Somerset and Bristol (known together as the West of England) but specialising on rural communities.

We work with communities, businesses, social enterprises, organisations and individuals to support and encourage community-led action and to increase the long-term sustainability of local community life.

Our key objectives are;

- Supporting and encouraging community-led action and strong local governance
- Increasing long-term sustainability of local community life;
- Influencing policies and services to achieve equity and optimise wellbeing for all communities.

We are experienced in a wide range of topics that impact on and strategically influence community life such as broadband, access to services, transport, affordable housing, fuel poverty, energy generation, village halls & community assets, health & social care, funding advice, economic development and community led planning.

### **The Role**

Could you help influence and deliver real change to communities across the West of England? We are looking for energetic and enthusiastic Trustees who are passionate about and can make a real difference to community life. You will be required to work strategically, represent the organisation in wider networks and to model good governance.

We work closely with Local Authorities (including the Combined Authority), the new Integrated Care Systems, grant funders, community organisations, Government



West of England Rural Network, PO Box 1237, Bristol BS40 8WJ  
T: 01275 333 701 ● W: [wern.org.uk](http://wern.org.uk) ● E: [info@wern.org.uk](mailto:info@wern.org.uk)

Registered Charity No 1146165 Company Limited by Guarantee Registered in England Company No 7956732  
Registered Office: 5<sup>th</sup> Floor, Mariner House, 62 Prince Street, Bristol BS1 4QD

***Working with Action for Communities in Rural England (ACRE) across South Gloucestershire, Bath & North East Somerset, North Somerset and Bristol***

Departments and national colleague organisation. You will be required to be an active member of a small board using your expertise and influence to shape and manage the West of England Rural Network (WERN).

The key challenges facing our organisation are to build a sustainable and strategic development organisation which works to ensure that the voice of communities (and especially rural communities) is heard within the emerging City region.

The Executive Director currently reports to the small board of Trustees. At this stage there are no separate sub-committees but it is planned that these will evolve over time as the organisation develops.

WERN is a registered charity and a company limited by guarantee and as such a Trustee must be over the age of 18. You will become a Director (listed on Companies House) as well as a Trustee (listed with the Charity Commission) and we are required by law to ensure eligibility for these roles and we use the checklist compiled by the Charity Commission which is appended to this profile for compliance.

### **Person Description**

We are looking for someone with energy, enthusiasm and a real interest in the development of communities. As the charity principally works with the communities of South Gloucestershire, Bath & North East Somerset, North Somerset and Bristol it would be helpful to either live, work or have a strong local connection to the area. A willingness to travel and understand the specific needs of the localities will also be equally important.

### **What impact will the role have?**

You will play a key part in helping communities in the West of England to improve their quality of life, particularly of disadvantaged people and as a result to increase long-term sustainability and equality of local community life.

As a Trustees you will also be able to help shape, develop, influence and challenge policy and services impacting communities both locally and nationally.

### **What's in it for you?**

This is a great opportunity to make a positive impact with people and communities who are often sidelined by the activities and demands of larger urban areas. This opportunity provides the right candidate the chance to develop their board level (or strategic) skills with a small and dedicated staff and Trustee team.

The varied workload of the organisation and networking opportunities will enrich your knowledge and experience in this field together with contributing to the Charity Sector.

### **Role location**

Since the pandemic WERN has become a remote working organisation. All our staff work from home and if required meeting at partner organisations or in shared meeting spaces.

We use remote working and IT (such as Zoom or TEAMS) and other techniques to make our actions and communication as efficient and effective as possible.

Our trustee meetings now take place using Zoom but we will keep under review the use of face to face meetings going forward. Trustees may also be asked to attend occasional events or meetings within the area or on a national basis.

### **Time commitment**

Board meetings are currently held quarterly and Trustees would need to allow three hours maximum for the meeting plus reading/preparation time. There may be a further requirement for additional meetings or events but these would be with agreement of the Trustee if these are needed.

There will also be an annual away-day with the senior management team/trustee team where strategic review and planning occurs. Currently our board meetings are held during the working day but we keep this under review.

### **Role Description**

The overall role of the Trustee (a Trustee of the charity will also be a Director of the company limited by guarantee), will, along with board colleagues, be to;

- ensure that the West of England Rural Network complies with its Memorandum and Articles of Association, Charity Law, Company Law any other relevant legislation or regulations;
- ensure that the West of England Rural Network pursues its objectives as defined in governing documents;
- ensure that The West of England Rural Network applies its resources only in pursuance of its objects and does not expend funds on activities which are not included, no matter how worthwhile or charitable such objectives may be;
- contribute actively to the board of Trustees' role in giving firm strategic direction, setting overall policy, defining goals, setting targets;
- monitor and evaluate the West of England Rural Network performance against agreed objectives;

- safeguard and uphold the good name and values of the West of England Rural Network;
- ensure the effective and efficient administration of the West of England Rural Network and to ensure financial stability;
- protect and manage property of the charity and to ensure proper investment of funds; and
- appoint an Executive Director and monitor performance and reward.

In addition to these statutory duties, each Trustee may be invited to manage a portfolio of activities appropriate to their interests, skills, knowledge and experience.

Trustees may be invited by the Executive Director to work directly with them or with appropriate staff members to provide advice, guidance or support. Trustees may, with agreement from the Executive Director, liaise directly with staff engaged on projects within the Trustee's portfolio.

Trustees will inform and offer guidance to the Board of Trustees in developing strategies for their portfolio activities and will support other Trustees and the Executive Director in the overall development of the organisation.

Where the Board agree that a committee would be of benefit to the operation of the West of England Rural Network an appropriate Trustee will be invited to chair the committee and where practical will be the person holding the portfolio of related activities.

Further details and guidance of what are expected of a Charity Trustee are contained in the Charity Commission guidance note CC3; "[The essential trustee: what you need to know, what you need to do](#)" which is part of this application pack.