

OCF Trustee role description

Introduction to OCF

Oxfordshire Community Foundation (OCF) is a charity that builds thriving communities through effective philanthropy.

Local donors choose to work with OCF because we bring an in-depth understanding of [these needs](#) and priority issues, alongside trusted relationships with our network of grassroots delivery charities and community groups. We champion this vibrant [local charity sector](#) as a crucial way to combat issues such as homelessness, educational inequality, and loneliness and isolation, awarding around £2 million in [grants](#) annually.

Our county's wealth, success and beauty hide a number of serious and shocking social problems. The long shadow of the pandemic and the continuing increases in the cost of living have made these issues worse, while the impacts of the climate crisis are becoming ever more urgent.

We work with philanthropists, businesses and the public sector, making the case for giving and pooling their funds so that they can make a bigger difference together. Funders can feel confident of a safe pair of hands for their contributions as we implement strong governance processes, conduct thorough due diligence on all grant applications, and report back with inspiring stories on the [impact](#) of their support.

Our [values](#) are the guiding principles which represent who we are and what we stand for. They stand alongside our [vision, mission and objectives](#) to support our goal to be the gold-standard in grant-making. We have been working in Oxfordshire [since 1995](#), and are a member of the UK network of 47 quality-accredited community foundations.

Being an OCF trustee

The Charity Commission explains:

'Trustees have overall responsibility for making sure a charity stays true to its purpose, uses its resources well and meets its legal duties. In practice, that means working with other trustees to guide the organisation's direction, oversee finances, make sound decisions and support good governance.'

People from all walks of life can become trustees. Whether you are at the start of your career, in work, retired, or bringing lived experience from your community, your perspective can be valuable. Strong boards benefit from a mix of skills, backgrounds, ages and experiences.'

OCF trustees are expected to play a very active role, working collaboratively with the small and friendly staff team to reach our goal of being a gold-standard grant-maker. In addition to their legal duties and required governance meetings, they act as local ambassadors at events and often provide expertise for grantmaking and ad hoc projects. OCF is a very varied and stimulating environment, encompassing work to support the smallest of grassroots charities, steward assets of £12 million, and engage wealthy individuals and

institutions in local philanthropy. Our trustees are drawn from throughout Oxfordshire and bring a diverse range of experiences and perspectives.

We currently have five trustees and are looking to recruit a further three or four. There are also opportunities for applicants to take up important non-trustee governance roles within OCF through our Grants and Impact Committee, Grants Panels and Philanthropy Taskforce. We are looking to bring in the widest range of talent to fill these key decision-making roles. We will assess all applications on its merits, and if the number of excellent candidates exceeds the number of vacant trustee positions then we will suggest these other opportunities to candidates.

General Duties

- Provide assurance that the OCF is meeting its objectives and is compliant with relevant legal requirements
- Ensure that key risks are being identified, monitored and controlled effectively.
- Oversee OCF's financial plans and budgets and monitor and evaluate progress.
- Review and approve OCF's financial statements.
- Approve operational strategies and policies, and monitor and evaluate their implementation.
- Support and advise on OCF's purpose, vision, goals and activities.
- Ensure the effective and efficient administration of the organisation.
- Provide support and challenge to OCF's CEO in the exercise of their delegated authority and affairs.
- Keep abreast of changes in OCF's operating environment.
- Contribute to regular reviews of OCF's own governance.
- Use independent judgment, acting legally and in good faith to promote and protect OCF's interests, to the exclusion of their own personal and/or any third-party interests.
- Contribute to the broader promotion of OCF's objects, aims and reputation by applying their skills, expertise, knowledge and contacts.

Specific activities and time commitment

- Attend four quarterly Board meetings, including reading papers in advance. These meetings happen in person at the OCF office in central Oxford.
- Participate in at least one of the three Board sub-committees which oversee our core functions: Grants and Impact, Finance, and Philanthropy (donor relations). These sub-committees include expert co-opted members who support trustees, and typically meet in person, quarterly, with papers to read in advance. These are typically scheduled after working hours and around members' availability.
- Participate in an annual strategy awayday with the Board and staff. This year's theme was a focus on cyber security; read more [here](#).
- Attend approximately two additional meetings a year outside the quarterly schedule, for discussing ad hoc topics. These are often online and include some advanced reading.



- Participate in at least one 'grants round' a year, which is when OCF assesses applications for a particular fund and makes decisions on how to award grants. Members of the Grants and Impact subcommittee participate in more than one. This includes reading applications from charities and submitting assessments. Trustees find this really rewarding as they get to see the real-life stories of charities and the people they serve. We manage up to 7 open grants rounds a year; read about them [here](#).
- Attend events as an ambassador for OCF; we do around five a year. These are really enjoyable events which happen at very special location in Oxfordshire, for example our recent [Thriving in Nature celebration at Asthall Manor](#).
- Support OCF staff with individual projects, if the trustee has time and expertise, e.g. developing our monitoring and evaluation approach, assessing our data architecture needs, or meeting particular donors.

Candidate requirements

We are looking for people willing to bring energy, enthusiasm and commitment to the role, and who will ensure we have a breadth of experience, perspectives and skills on the board. OCF is committed to creating an inclusive working environment where everyone can flourish whilst contributing to our mission and we warmly welcome applicants from across the rich diversity of Oxfordshire.

General attributes

- Willingness and ability to understand and accept the responsibilities and liabilities of a trustee and to act in the best interests of the organisation.
- Ability to commit time to attend meetings, including adequate preparation to contribute to discussions, and additional events.
- 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.
- Enthusiasm for our [vision and mission](#).
- A strong personal commitment to govern according to [our values](#): applying insight, supporting others, being fair, always learning and thinking long-term.
- Commitment to Nolan's seven principles of public life: selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership.
- Living in Oxfordshire.
- Note: It is not a requirement of the role to have previous experience of being a trustee.

Specific knowledge and skills

Our current Board members hold significant experience in governance and leadership, finance, donor relations and fundraising, and marketing including professional qualifications in law and accountancy. We welcome candidates with strengths in those areas, and we are particularly keen to recruit candidates with:



- Experience of delivery in a small grassroots charity, community group or social enterprises. This could be as an employee, volunteer or in a governance role.
- Experience of grant-making, including governance considerations and best practice
- IT and digital knowledge, particularly on CRM systems and more broadly on data architecture.
- HR and people management experience, including those who understand the legal and best practice requirements for managing volunteers as well as employees.

Terms of appointment

Trustees are appointed for a three-year term of office, renewable for two further consecutive terms.

This is a voluntary position, but expenses are reimbursed in line with OCF's Volunteer Expenses Policy which aim to make volunteering accessible to all. These cover reasonable cost of travel and childcare or care of other dependents whilst the volunteer is engaged in their duties.

Application process

The deadline for applications is **midday 4 August**.

1. The first step for all interested candidates is an initial conversation with OCF's CEO, Deputy CEO, Senior Philanthropy Adviser or Chair.
Please email Recruitment@oxfordshire.org to request a meeting.
2. Candidates will then be invited to submit a CV (max. 2 pages) and a covering letter (max. 1 page) indicating motivation for applying to Recruitment@oxfordshire.org by **midday 4 August**. We are happy for AI to be used, but candidates need to ensure all documents are accurate and reflect their unique motivations, experience and voice.
3. All applications will be sifted, and successful candidates will be invited to a formal interview with the Chair and two other trustees. These are scheduled to take place between 17 and 28 August.

Any decision on appointments will need to be ratified by the OCF Board by mid-September. If the number of excellent candidates exceeds the number of vacant trustee positions, we will propose other governance opportunities to candidates.

