

Trustee role description

Position

Trustee of Friends of Highgate Cemetery Trust (voluntary)

Accountable to

Members, Companies House, Charity Commission, funders and other regulators

Purpose

Trustees have ultimate responsibility for the organisation, including finance, organisational strategy and staff

Key responsibilities

With other trustees to hold the charity in 'trust' for current and future beneficiaries by:

1. Ensuring that the charity has a clear vision, mission and strategic direction and is focused in achieving these;
2. Being responsible for the performance of the charity and for its corporate behaviour;
3. Ensuring that the charity complies with all legal and regulatory requirements;
4. Acting as guardians of the charity's assets, both tangible and intangible, taking all due care over their security, deployment and proper application;
5. Ensuring that the charity's governance is of the highest possible standard.

Overall responsibility

- Trustees have and must accept ultimate responsibility for directing the affairs of a charity, and ensuring that it is solvent, well-run, and delivering the charitable outcomes for the benefit of the public for which it has been set up.
- Trustees are responsible for the recruitment of the Chief Executive, and for ongoing monitoring of his/her work in the day to day running of the organisation.
- There is a subsidiary company which manages the Cemetery operations.

Compliance

- Ensure that FOHCT complies with charity law, and with the requirements of the Charity Commission as regulator; in particular ensure that the charity prepares its Annual Report and accounts as required by law
- Ensure that FOHCT does not breach any of the requirements or rules set out in its governing document and that it remains true to the charitable purpose and objects set out there
- Comply with the requirements of other legislation and other regulators that govern the activities of the charity
- Act with integrity, and avoid any personal conflicts of interest or misuse of FOHCT funds or assets

Duty of prudence

- Ensure that FOHCT is and will remain solvent

- Use charitable funds and assets reasonably, and only in furtherance of the FOHCT's objects
- Avoid undertaking activities that might place FOHCT's funds, assets or reputation at undue risk
- Take special care when investing FOHCT's funds of the charity, or borrowing funds for the charity to use
- To maintain absolute confidentiality about all aspects of trustees' business, bearing in mind the over-riding legal obligations placed upon trustees

Duty of care

- Use reasonable care and skill in their work as trustees, using their personal skills and experience as needed to ensure that the charity is well-run and efficient;
- Consider getting external professional advice on all matters where there may be material risk to the charity, or where the trustees may be in breach of their duties.

Other duties

In addition to the above statutory duties, each trustee is expected to use any specific skills, knowledge or experience they have to help the board reach sound decisions. This may involve:

- Scrutinising board papers;
- Leading discussions;
- Focusing on key issues;
- Providing guidance on initiatives;
- Other issues in which the trustee has special expertise.

Length of term

Trustees are elected for a 3 year term and may stand for election for a further 3 year term

Time commitment

- 6 Board meetings a year in Highgate, North London - in the evening lasting 2-3 hours
- Sub-committee involvement as required
- Attendance at Board induction

Other requirements

- Sign a declaration of eligibility to act as a trustee
- Sign a register of interests upon appointment, to declare any potential conflicts or interests
- Sign a trustee code of conduct
- Become a member of the Friends of Highgate Cemetery Trust

TRUSTEE PERSON SPECIFICATION

Essential skills

- Strategic perspective and vision
- Willingness to devote the necessary time and effort
- Sound, independent judgment and ability to think creatively
- Drive and commitment and the ability to demonstrate this to others
- Understanding and acceptance of the legal duties, responsibilities and liabilities of trusteeship
- Ability to work positively as a member of a team
- Strong interpersonal, communication and negotiation skills, and the ability to develop effective, sustainable partnerships
- Nolan's seven principles of public life: selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership
- Willingness to be an ambassador for FOHCT

Desired competencies and qualities:

- Commitment and interest in the objectives of the organisation
- Strong intellectual and analytical ability; innovative thinker and ability to focus on issues requiring action
- Dynamic, enthusiastic and energetic

In addition FOHCT seeks a balance of the following skills, knowledge and experience in its trustees, who would be expected to meet some but not necessarily all of the following criteria:

- Experience as a financial manager in a small-medium organisation;
- Knowledge and experience of HR/employment law issues;
- Knowledge and experience of other legal issues;
- Experience in coaching and training staff and volunteers;
- Experience of the voluntary sector;
- Ability to bring or build networks and alliances that can benefit FOHCT in fulfilling its aims.