



WVI Trustee Role Description

1. Who are the charity's trustees?

The Charities Act 1993 defines charity trustees as those responsible under the charity's governing document for controlling the administration and management of the charity. This is the case regardless of the terminology used to describe the role. For WVI the charity trustees are known as The Directors.

The Board of Trustees comprises:

- The chair
- The treasurer
- No less than three elected trustees
- And an appointed Company Secretary

2. The role of the board of trustees

At its simplest, the role of the trustee board is to receive assets from donors, safeguard them and apply them to the charitable purposes of WVI. The trustee board must always act in the best interests of WVI, exercising the same standard of duty of care that a prudent person would apply if looking after the affairs of someone for whom they have responsibility. The trustee board must act as a group and not as individuals.

3. Duties of a trustee board member

The duties of a trustee board member are to:

- Ensure that WVI complies with its governing document (its Articles of Association), charity law, company law and any other relevant legislation or regulations
- Ensure that WVI pursues its objects as defined in its governing document
- Ensure WVI applies its resources exclusively in pursuance of its objects. For example, it must not spend money on activities which are not included in the objects, however worthwhile they may be
- Contribute actively to the board of trustees by giving firm strategic direction to WVI setting overall policy, defining goals, setting targets, and evaluating performance against agreed targets
- Safeguard the good name and values of WVI
- Ensure the financial stability of WVI

In addition to the above statutory duties, each trustee should use any specific skills, knowledge or experience they have to help the board of trustees reach sound decisions. This may involve leading discussions, identifying key issues, providing advice and guidance on new initiatives, and evaluating or offering advice on other areas in which the trustee has particular expertise.

4. Minimum time commitment

- Trustees are expected to attend an induction session prior to their first board meeting. Trustees are expected to attend all board meetings. Board meetings are held three times a year during normal office hours:
 - February/March
 - September/October Annual General Meeting before a general Trustees meeting
 - Others to be held as necessary

- Trustee meetings take 3.5 hours. In person meetings have taken place in London, to date, as well as online.
- Papers are distributed one week in advance of meetings before Trustees meetings and 21 days before the AGM.
- Trustees may be asked to join one of three working groups; Resources, Communications and Conservation. Fundraising falls under both Resources and Communications. Each working group has its own meeting timetable.
- Trustees can claim out of pocket expenses incurred in travelling to meetings.

5. Person specification

Each trustee must have:

- A commitment to the mission of WVI
- A willingness to meet the minimum time requirement
- Integrity
- Strategic vision
- Good, independent judgement
- An ability to think creatively
- A willingness to speak their mind
- An understanding and acceptance of the legal duties, responsibilities and liabilities of trusteeship
- An ability to work effectively as a member of a team and to take decisions for the good of WVI.

The board of trustees collectively needs skills and experience in the following areas:

- Financial management, income generation (individuals, major donors, foundations and trusts, corporate) and enterprise,
- Charity governance and law,
- Communications including digital strategy,
- Human resource management, including volunteers,
- Collaborative partnerships,
- Wildlife veterinary medicine,
- Wildlife conservation practice.

Updated 19 March 2024