National Trust for Scotland - Trustee Role Description

Introduction

The Board of Trustees of the National Trust for Scotland is responsible for the governance of the Trust’s activities and the achievement of its charitable purpose; to promote the conservation, access and enjoyment of Scotland’s places of historic interest or natural beauty. The Board of Trustees is responsible for the strategic leadership and governance of the Trust rather than the day to day operations or practical delivery of the Trust’s strategy.

It is important that the Board of Trustees reflects the diversity of the Trust’s activities. This is achieved by drawing upon the wide ranging backgrounds of the ten elected Trustees and complementing those with four carefully selected co-opted Trustees to achieve, as far as possible, a well-balanced, appropriately skilled, and diverse Board.

The expected time commitment of the post is at least ten Board days per year in addition to preparation and travel time. The Trustee may also become and be willing to get involved in Board committees, ad hoc assignments, fundraising activities, or other local engagement events on behalf of the Trust.

It is the responsibility of the Board of Trustees (and each individual member) to discharge the duties imposed by the Trust’s governing Acts of Parliament and all other applicable laws affecting the Trust including those imposing fiduciary duties on charity trustees for the stewardship of the Trust’s charitable assets.

Overall responsibility

To provide strategic direction and guidance for the National Trust for Scotland by:

a) Developing and setting the strategy to ensure the Trust achieves our charitable purpose, now and in the future;

b) Ensuring that the Trust carries out its operations in a financially prudent and sustainable manner;

c) Promoting a culture of safety and wellbeing throughout the Trust and its activities;

d) Ensuring that the charity’s governance is of the highest possible standard, and the Trust’s actions are in line with both our governing Acts of Parliament and charity law requirements;

e) Ensuring that the Trust complies with all legal and regulatory requirements;
f) Monitoring performance of the charity to ensure the Trust meets strategic objectives whilst using charity resources responsibly;

g) Working with your co-trustees to make balanced and adequately informed decisions, thinking about the long term as well as the short term impacts on our charitable purpose;

h) Acting as the guardians of the charity’s assets, both tangible and intangible, taking all due care over their security, deployment and proper application; and

i) Acting at all times in accordance with the Board of Trustees’ Code of Good Governance (see Appendix A) and taking collective responsibility and accountability for the Trust’s overall strategy, performance, management of risk and delivery of charitable purpose in an ethical manner.

PERSON SPECIFICATION
The qualities, skills, experiences and behaviours to be found in the successful candidate:

(A) Essential Qualities

a) A passion for the cause of the Trust and heritage in Scotland.

b) Outstanding leadership skills with the experience, abilities and diplomacy to guide the Trust through a continued period of change and renewal.

c) Experience of managing a range of strategic challenges in a complex, multifaceted, multi-site organisation and a demonstrable understanding of the operation of boards at a PLC level or the level of other organisations of a similar scale and complexity.

d) A demonstrable personal and professional reputation for probity and integrity.

e) The ability to make sound, well considered and independent decisions.

f) Strong communication skills, the ability to work collaboratively, seek support or challenge constructively where necessary.

g) An ability to devote sufficient time to the discharge of the duties of a Trustee.

h) The ability to act as an ambassador and positive role model for the Trust and its values.

i) Demonstrable experience in one of the Essential Skills pre-determined by the Board of Trustees for any particular election.
(B) Essential Skills and Experiences
A candidate must be able to demonstrate that they can fulfil one of the following skills or experiences categories:

i) Professional knowledge and experience of risk, governance and finance with the ability to chair the Audit and Risk Management Committee;

ii) Professional knowledge and experience of gardens, horticulture and designed landscapes; or

iii) A demonstrable interest in and commitment to the work of the Trust either as a member or volunteer.

(C) Behavioural specification

Performance at the National Trust for Scotland is measured by how we work as well as what we deliver; all of our volunteers and employees are expected to show the right behaviours as we work together to deliver our charitable purpose. There are seven broad behaviours which have been developed which we see as promoting our success:

- Focusing on the Customer
- Thinking broadly
- Building trust and developing a team at a strategic leadership level
- Communicating
- Being bold & confident
- Coaching & developing others
- Being flexible & agile

There are four levels described for each behaviour, with each level building on the previous one and showing an increase in complexity and sophistication. Please see the Appendix where the expected behaviours at a Trustee level are described in more detail.
**Appendix– Behavioural Competencies for Trustees**

For all Trustees, volunteers and employees at the Trust, these competencies have been developed to help describe the key behaviours required of everyone. This is not meant to be an exhaustive list, but describes the areas that will make the biggest difference to our work:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focusing on the Customer</th>
<th>Being focused on understanding, and getting the right outcome, for your customer (either internal ‘clients’ or our visitors, members, supporters and communities). This is about keeping them at the centre of your thinking and putting them at the heart of your plans.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thinking broadly</td>
<td>Stepping back from the task in hand to plan effectively, seeing beyond your own area of the Trust and thinking broadly about the best solution or action. It includes being innovative and coming up with new and different ideas to help deliver our charitable purposes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building trust and Board team development</td>
<td>Using empathy and interpersonal awareness to engage effectively with those around you. It is about managing yourself in challenging situations, and effectively managing relationships with others within the Board and across the Trust.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Communicating</td>
<td>Building strong relationships internally and externally, and communicating effectively with colleagues, customers and external groups.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Being bold &amp; confident</td>
<td>Taking responsibility for decision making and moving to action; being proactive, taking the initiative, and striving to get things done (within the framework laid out). It is about a drive for action, achievement and improvement.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Coaching &amp; developing others</td>
<td>Focusing on the development of others, giving and receiving feedback effectively, and supporting others through good coaching conversations.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Being flexible &amp; agile</td>
<td>Being able to change your behaviour or ways of working when necessary to achieve a goal, and adjust effectively to the needs of the situation. It includes responding to change positively and showing a willingness to try new things.</td>
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For employees, there are four levels described for each behaviour, with each level building on the previous one and showing an increase in complexity and sophistication. The following pages describe the expected behaviours at a Trustee level.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focusing on the Customer</th>
<th><strong>Expectations:</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- In pursuance of our charitable purpose, at all times supports the strategic need to drive access and enjoyment of our heritage to the widest possible group of visitors</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Takes a strategic view of future visitor needs, looking at potential and future members and supporters not just existing membership</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Supports the development of the Trust’s visitor offer in new and exciting ways, building the strategy around enjoyable, innovative outcomes for all visitors and members</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Possible negative indicators:</strong></td>
<td>- Focusing on one group of visitors or members at the expense of the full breadth of our current and potential audience</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Plans built from the ‘inside-out’, focusing on internal issues rather than starting with the visitor</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Dismissive of visitor needs or concerns</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Thinking broadly</th>
<th><strong>Expectations:</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Supports long-term financially sustainable strategies which will fulfil the changing needs of the Trust in the future</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Looks beyond the current organisational model to envisage new ways of working that are not obvious to others</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Understands, anticipates and acts upon the forces that will shape the sector or Trust environment in the future</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Brings in innovative ideas from other sources to the Trust</td>
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<td><strong>Possible negative indicators:</strong></td>
<td>- Only focuses on one area or one Property; acts as a ‘single issue’ Trustee</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Gets lost in the detail and doesn’t step back and think strategically</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Not open to listening to others’ experiences or seeing other perspectives</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Unable to see the bigger picture</td>
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<tr>
<th>Building trust and Board team development</th>
<th><strong>Expectations:</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Creates an environment of mutual trust and inclusion at Board level, where diverse people can thrive and where all voices are heard</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Respects others’ viewpoints, and listens to all sides and points of view even in challenging discussions</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Use the highest levels of interpersonal understanding, and engagement strategies, to build consensus and support across diverse groups</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Airs issues early to defuse tensions and potential conflicts before they arise</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Voices concerns and questions appropriately at Board level, but takes ‘cabinet responsibility’ for Board decisions; publically supports Trust decisions which have been taken</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Possible negative indicators:</strong></td>
<td>- Focusing only on own agenda / aims at the expense of others or the wider charitable purpose of the Trust</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Contradicts or challenges Trust / Board decisions in public</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Acts unprofessionally, rudely, or loses self-control</td>
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<td>- Seeks to exclude other members of the Board or senior management from decision making</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Communicate</th>
<th><strong>Expectations:</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Acts as an advocate for the Trust, utilising their networks and relationships outside the organisation to drive the Trust agenda forwards</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Communicates effectively with other Board members, Chair and CEO to raise issues and questions in an appropriate way</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Communicates consistently internally and externally, focusing on the charitable purpose of the Trust and how to meet it</td>
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</table>
### Possible negative indicators:
- Inappropriate public communication of discussions held at board level
- Only engages with one group, or sub-group across the Trust
- Poor personal communication

### Expectations:
- Challenges the status quo, supporting bold, confident decision-making to enable better delivery of our charitable purpose in a financially sustainable way and whilst managing risks effectively
- Supports others across the whole organisation to speed up decision making and get things done
- Questions and simplifies unneeded bureaucracy, removing barriers to enable others to deliver more effectively
- Drives efficiencies and better ways of working across the wider Trust

### Possible negative indicators:
- Avoids responsibility for decision-making
- Adds unneeded bureaucracy into decision-making processes, or gets bogged down in operational details
- Does not appropriately balance risk and financial impacts when making decisions
- Focuses on reasons not to do something rather than reasons to start

### Being bold & confident

### Coaching & developing others

### Possible negative indicators:
- Shies away from giving honest feedback when it is required
- Gives one-sided feedback, either overly harsh or solely positive
- Rejects own personal feedback, or acts defensively when given feedback

### Expectations:
- Personally models giving and receiving feedback; asks for feedback from others and adapts behaviour accordingly
- Gives constructive, developmental feedback to other Trustees and senior colleagues
- Visibly celebrates success across the Trust
- Supports strategic development across the Trust, and supports diversity at all levels

### Being flexible & agile

### Possible negative indicators:
- Refuses to engage with different ways of working – “that’s not how we do it around here”
- Solely focuses on the negatives of a change, or focuses on reasons not to change rather than reasons to try something new
- Does not appreciate diversity of opinions or experience

### Expectations:
- Explores a range of strategic options for the Trust, and shifts strategy, in response to the changing demands of the external environment
- Engages a wide range of stakeholders effectively in leading significant change
- Encourages flexibility from others, and supports the wider Trust in trying new things
Appendix – Code of Good Governance for Trustees

The National Trust for Scotland

Board of Trustees Code of Good Governance

Preamble

The National Trust for Scotland has a reputation for high standards of conduct and probity. The role of the Board of Trustees is crucial to the implementation of the Trust’s charitable purposes. The Board of Trustees ensures the direction, effectiveness, supervision, and accountability of the organisation. To achieve these objectives the Trustees agree that they must adhere to principles of good governance. In order to ensure the effectiveness, efficiency, and discipline of the Board of Trustees, the Trustees have adopted this Code of Good Governance. This Code of Good Governance provides Trustees with guidelines for the conduct of their work for the organisation.

Principle 1: Understanding the Role of the Board of Trustees
The Board of Trustees shall understand its role and responsibilities. In particular, the Trustees shall :-
- accept responsibility for the strategic management of the Trust;
- understand the core purpose and vision of the Trust;
- have a full knowledge of their legal duties as charity trustees;
- understand the provisions of the Trust’s constitutional documents and charitable purposes;
- have a full knowledge of the governance and managerial structures of the Trust;
- understand the respective roles of Trustees and the Senior Management Team; and
- provide effective support to staff and volunteers.

Principle 2: Ensuring the Delivery of Objectives
The Board of Trustees shall ensure that the Trust delivers its strategic objectives. In particular, it shall do so by :-
- developing a core purpose and vision for the Trust;
- establishing a long term strategy for the Trust;
- requiring plans and budgets for appropriate timescales;
- monitoring progress and spending against plans and budgets;
- evaluating and assessing the results of the Trust’s work;
- reviewing and/or amending plans to take account of those results;
- securing and safeguarding the Trust’s funds and assets; and
- accepting responsibility for directing the strategic affairs of the Trust.
**Principle 3:** The Effective Board of Trustees  
The Board of Trustees shall ensure that high performance is achieved in the discharge of its duties. In particular, the Trustees shall:

- establish clear lines of reporting and responsibility;
- ensure compliance with all legal and regulatory requirements;
- ensure effective control of the Trust, its operations, and its assets;
- ensure that the Trust maintains proper internal financial and management controls;
- identify key risks affecting the Trust and ensure that they are effectively managed;
- observe financial discipline within the Trust;
- delegate the exercise of functions where practicable and monitor the exercise of those delegated functions; and
- play an active and positive role in the work of the Trust.

**Principle 4:** Review and Renewal of the Board of Trustees  
The Board of Trustees shall ensure that its membership and activities are reviewed and renewed. In particular, the Trustees shall:

- implement a system for the periodic review and appraisal of its own performance and the performance of its members;
- develop a strategy for renewal of the membership of the Board of Trustees; and
- provide opportunities for Trustee training and development.

**Principle 5:** Openness and Accountability:  
The Board of Trustees shall ensure that its work is carried out in as open and transparent a fashion as practicable demonstrating accountability to the Trust’s key stakeholders. In particular, the Trustees shall:

- ensure that as open communication as practicable is exercised in the discharge of its duties;
- undertake appropriate consultations and communication on significant changes to Trust strategy and policies;
- ensure a process is in place to handle complaints constructively, impartially and effectively;
- communicate the Trust’s performance effectively; and
- consider the Trust’s responsibilities to the wider community.
**Principle 6: Collective Responsibility**
The Board of Trustees shall accept and observe the principles of collective responsibility. In particular, the Trustees shall:

- allow and engage in the open debate of issues at meetings;
- recognise the confidentiality of the Board of Trustees’ discussions;
- seek to reach agreement by consensus wherever possible;
- work effectively together as a team; and
- accept, respect, and support the collective decisions of the Board of Trustees.

**Principle 7: High Ethical Standards:**
The Board of Trustees shall observe at all times high ethical standards in the discharge of its duties. In particular, the Trustees shall:

- safeguard and promote the Trust’s reputation;
- identify, disclose, and manage conflicts of interest;
- not use their positions or any confidential information to promote their own interests or the interests of anyone connected to them;
- maintain independence of decision making;
- take decisions selflessly and act, at all times, in good faith and in the best interests of the Trust;
- recognise and implement their legal duty of care to the Trust;
- comply with the policies of the Trust established to avoid bribery and corruption;
- observe the confidentiality of the Trust’s confidential information and avoid the misuse of such information (both during and after the term of their appointments); and
- treat staff, volunteers, and other Trustees with courtesy and respect at all times.