

Triangle Community Garden Trustee roles



Background: The Triangle Garden is a community garden, created and cultivated by local people of all ages and abilities, in Ransom's Rec, Hitchin.

We aim to enable people to reconnect with the natural world through a variety of different activities:

- **Community gardening**, forest gardening and permaculture in practice.
- **Community events**, talks, walks and workshops focused on local resilience, bringing people together, and learning about wildlife, food growing and low impact gardening.
- Social, therapeutic horticulture and health/well-being projects for people with learning disabilities: **Growing Ability**, **Growing Gang** and **Growing Health**.

Summary: The role of trustee is partly strategic, but also actively involved in one or more of our sub-committees where most of the work goes on in helping the organisation achieve and maintain its objectives. In addition to committee work, we encourage our trustees get involved in either helping at our events or volunteering at the Triangle Garden, or both.

Our ideal trustee will be constructive, reliable, independently-minded, willing, committed and a good team player.

Time commitments:

- Attendance at evening trustee meetings (approximately 6 meetings a year) usually Wednesdays
- Attendance at one of our sub-committees (usually evening meetings) related to Events, Personnel, the Garden, Publicity, Fundraising, Finance, and Premises & Safety – each committee meets up to 6 times a year, except events which meets up to 10 times a year.
- Able to commit small amounts of time between meetings furthering actions.
- Able to help at some of our events (eg Open Day in June and Apple Day in October) and attend occasional volunteer activity days (last Sunday of the month excl Aug and Dec).
- Make a half-day visit to one of our learning disability projects once a year (during the day Tues-Thurs)

The Triangle Community Garden is a project enabled by Hitchin Community Gardens, Regd Charity No 1145243 & Company Ltd by Guarantee No 7676360. Other projects include Growing Ability, Growing Health, Growing Gang & Ransom's Pavilion.

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1.0 The role of trustee

1.1 For all trustees:

- To govern: to direct and control the organisation through collective decision making. All trustees are responsible for doing this, as set out in paragraph 1.3.

1.2 Potential additional roles - to be agreed when joining the board:

- To be a pool of expertise and advice i.e. making advice and expertise available to the committee, staff and volunteers.
- To manage one or more staff, volunteers or projects (for instance managing the Project Manager, or managing the production of the e-bulletin).
- To do work (managing social media, organising events, answering correspondence, filling out grant applications, attending volunteer activity sessions, taking an active role in sub-committee meetings, representing the organisation, etc).

1.3 The Governance role

Together the trustees must fulfil the five Core Governance Functions:

- Determine Mission and Strategy – setting the organisation's direction and determining how it will get there.
- Accountability – being held to account for the actions of the organisation and holding those who carry out the work (staff and/or volunteers) to account.
- Look after the trustee body – ensuring renewal (recruitment, induction and retirement), effective decision making and information sharing processes, positive group dynamics, and reflection, learning and development for the trustee body as necessary.
- Safeguard assets – acting as custodian of the assets, tangible (money, property etc) and intangible (organisation's reputation and name), ensuring that assets are used appropriately and according to HCG's constitution. Ensuring that there are sufficient assets and income for the organisation's survival.
- Act in an outreach capacity – linking the organisation to its stakeholders, such as members, the community, funders etc.

In addition there is always one management role for the Board of Trustees once staff are employed;

- Hire, support, monitor (and, if necessary, fire) the Project Manager.

1.4 Conduct (legal)

Trustees must:

- Be active – you cannot be a dormant or 'sleeping' trustee, you are still liable for the decisions the others make in your absence.
- Act jointly – an individual has no powers on their own unless they have been specifically given them by the trustee body (minuted at a proper meeting).
- Act constitutionally (and within the law) – Trustees should familiarise themselves with the constitution and make sure that they act within the powers and objects (remit) set out in

it. This includes following the constitution on how meetings are run and how the trustee body is recruited.

- Act in the interests of the organisation and its beneficiaries – put yourself in the beneficiaries' position and make decisions that are best for them.
- Act reasonably and honestly – remembering to minute discussions and debates so that your reasonableness can be demonstrated.
- Have a duty of care – act prudently and reasonably.
- Not delegate control – everything can be delegated except the power of delegation but the trustee body remains responsible and accountable.
- Not benefit personally – unless allowed specifically in the constitution or by law.
- Avoid conflict of interest – manage actual conflicts of interest through a written process/policy and elsewhere avoid the appearance of conflicts of interest.

1.5 Conduct (practical)

Trustees should:

- Strive to attend all meetings, sending apologies to the chair for necessary absences.
- Prepare for the meeting by reading the agenda, papers and emails before the meeting.
- Talk to the chair before the meeting if you need to clarify anything.
- Arrive on time. Stay to the end.
- Participate fully in the meeting;
 - Listen to what others have to say and keep an open mind.
 - Contribute positively to the discussions.
 - Try to be concise and avoid soliloquies/speeches.
 - Help others concentrate on the meeting. Discourage side conversations.
- Have the best interests of the organisation/beneficiaries in mind at all times.
- Draw attention to any potential conflicts of interest that may arise in the meeting.
- Fulfil any responsibilities assigned to you at the meeting and be prepared to report back on your progress at the next meeting.

1.6 Conduct (best practice)

Ideal Qualities

Trustees should:

- Have a commitment to the organisation and its aims.
- Have a willingness to devote the necessary time and effort.
- Possess good judgement and independence of mind.
- Show a willingness to work collectively as part of a group.
- Seek constructive debate and dialogue over confrontation.