

Information pack for Prospective Treasurer



As Treasurer, you will be providing vital support for a charity that works with members, projects, educators and initiatives to develop practical solutions for many of the biggest challenges that we face.

Contents

[About this document and important information](#)

[Aims of the Permaculture Association](#)

[The legal and charitable objects of the Association](#)

[About the Association and the Board of Trustees](#)

[The role of the board within the Association](#)

[Board Job Description \(text from the Policy Manual\)](#)

[Board work pattern](#)

[Roles and responsibilities of a trustee](#)

[Treasurer job description](#)

[Requirements for a Treasurer](#)

[Regular duties as a Trustee](#)

[What's in it for you?](#)

[How to apply](#)

About this document and important information

This document has been written to give you an overview of what is entailed in becoming a Trustee of the Permaculture Association (PA). There are links to various other documents and websites but please be aware that this is a living document so please let someone in the [PA office](#) know if there are any broken links, things that you do not understand or any suggestions for how to make this document more accessible.

Becoming a Trustee is not something to be taken lightly but it has the potential to be a fulfilling experience with huge potential for personal growth. In each year, one third of trustees stand down, either because they wish to retire or to be re-elected (see the [Memorandum of Association](#)).

It is hoped that this document will help you decide whether being a PA Trustee is something that you have the time and passion for. However that decision will also be easier if you attend some of the Board Meetings to see the finer workings of the Board. It would therefore be great if you could attend an upcoming meeting.

Vision, Mission and Aims of the Permaculture Association

Our vision

A world where nature and communities thrive together.

Our mission

Inspiring, empowering and mobilising people to grow permaculture at every scale.

Our aims:

INSPIRE

1. Shape and share permaculture in action

We listen, gather and share stories, insights and lived experience to reflect and evolve the

movement.

EMPOWER

2. Create clear pathways into practice

We support people to learn, apply and adapt permaculture in everyday life and wider systems.

MOBILISE

3. Nurture connected networks

We bring diverse people, places and projects together to enable collaboration and collective change, locally, nationally and globally.

The legal and charitable objects of the Association

From the [Memorandum and Articles of Association document](#) which is the Association's legally binding governing document:

a) to advance the education of the public in the theory and practice of permaculture, the conservation of the environment, and related subjects.

b) to carry out research into permaculture and related subjects and to publish and disseminate the results of such research with or without charge.

About the Association and the Board of Trustees

The role of the board within the Association

The Association is governed by a Board of Trustees, elected by members annually at the Annual General Meeting (AGM). The role of the board is to act as champions for the members and beneficiaries in the day to day work of the Association, and to ensure that we are well governed, meeting all legal and statutory duties and requirements. We are using a governance approach developed by John and Miriam Carver. ("Carver Governance").

Board Job Description (text from the Policy Manual)

The Permaculture Association is a member organisation. The job of the Board is to represent these members - the "moral ownership" of the Association. As the representative of the owners of the organisation, the Board will determine and require appropriate organisational performance throughout the Association. To distinguish our own unique job from the tasks of staff, the Board will concentrate on the following job "products," or outputs:

1. The link between the organisation and the membership.
2. Written governing policies which, at the broadest level, address:
 - **Aims:** Setting out the key aims for the organisation.
 - **Board self-management:** Being clear about how the Board designs, carries out, and monitors its own work.
 - **Board-Executive Relationship:** How power is delegated and its proper use monitored; the Executive's role, its authority and accountability.
 - **Executive Limitations:** Constraints on executive authority which establish the prudential and ethical boundaries within which all executive activity and decisions must take place.

- The assurance of Executive performance

Board work pattern

The work of the board takes place via monthly online meetings (except December and August) with an annual face to face meeting in the Spring.

The board has subcommittees, who can make decisions and develop aspects of the board's work within defined parameters. Subcommittee work is carried out between board meetings, and reported back. All members of the Board are encouraged to work within one or more of the subcommittees to help share the work.

The current regular subcommittees are:

- Finance Audit and Risk (FAR)
- Nominations and training of trustees (NOMs)
- Justice, Equity, Diversity, Accessibility, Inclusion (JEDAI)
- Approval of member projects and proposals (AMPPS)
- Business Planning

We also convene other working groups to look at specific issues, which are led by trustees and involve staff, members and other invited contributors.

The Treasurer is responsible for chairing the Finance Audit & Risk meetings, and may also attend the staff led Monthly Finance meeting.

Roles and responsibilities of a trustee

As defined by the [National Occupational Standards for Trustees](#) (see also their toolkit), and by the Association's Board Policy Manual are:

1. To safeguard and promote the values and mission of the PA

The board of trustees sets out the Association's long-term direction, upholding its values and delivery of its aims.

Within Carver Governance, our main input into the Association's direction is through defining the Aims and through recommendations arising from major discussion topics during our meetings.

2. To determine the strategy and structure of the PA

This is about present and future strategic planning. It covers decisions about how the Association's values and mission are expressed in aims and activities, and in the structures and processes needed to implement them.

Within Carver Governance, the board oversees and contributes to strategy, but delegates detailed strategic planning to the Executive. As a board, we ensure that the strategic plan stays within the limits of the Executive Limitations Policy, and monitor the Association's performance against the plan.

3. Ensure the PA operates in an effective, responsible and accountable manner

As a trustee, you will work with the other trustees on the board to ensure the Association is well-managed, is meeting its aims and needs, and achieving good practice whilst complying with

the law. The board's role is to lead the Association, and also to ensure the organisation is managed properly and by the best people available.

Our main vehicle for fulfilling this role are monitoring of executive performance, and definition of executive limitations. These are described in policies 3 and 4 of the Board Policy Manual.

4. Ensure the effective functioning of the PAs board of trustees

Members of the board of trustees work as a team and reach fair decisions in the best interests of the Association. This requires a range of people whose skills and abilities will ensure that the board of trustees functions effectively as a whole.

Policy 2 of the Board Policy Manual details the processes and structures, roles and responsibilities the board uses to run its affairs.

Your skills and experience are important to the board fulfilling its role well. We expect commitment from all board members to improve their understanding of how the Association works and what their role is in leading the Association. We also expect active participation in board meetings and subcommittees.

5. Legal Responsibility

"Trustees have, and must accept, ultimate responsibility for directing the affairs of a charity, and ensuring that it is solvent, well-run, and meeting the needs for which it has been set up." From CC3: The Essential Trustee (Charity Commission, 2005)

There is more information on the [Charity Commission website](#) but be aware that Trustees are "personally liable for any debts or losses that the charity faces... However, personal liability of this kind is rare, and trustees who have followed the requirements on this page will generally be protected." Essentially, trustees are covered from any personal liability as long as they can show that they have not been negligent.

To be a trustee, you need to be able to declare that:

- I am over age 18.
- I am not an un-discharged bankrupt.
- I have not previously been removed from Trusteeship of a charity by a Court or the Charity Commissioners.
- I am not under a disqualification order under the Company Directors' Disqualification Act 1986.
- I am, in the light of the above, not disqualified by the Charities Act 2011 (Section 72) from acting as a charity trustee.
- I undertake to fulfil my responsibilities and duties as a trustee of the Permaculture Association in good faith and in accordance with the law and within the Permaculture Association's objectives / mission.
- I do not have any financial interests in conflict with those of the Permaculture Association; (either in person or through family or business connections) except those which I have formally notified in a conflict of interest statement. I will specifically notify any such interest at any meeting where trustees are required to make a decision which affects my personal interests, and I will absent myself entirely from any decision on the matter and not vote on it.

Treasurer job description

The specific responsibilities of the Treasurer are to:

- Work effectively with the other Finance Audit & Risk Sub Committee members and chair the meetings.
- Present the following to the Association for discussion and approval:
 - Quarterly management accounts
 - Annual accounts (Report and Financial Statements)
 - Budgets
 - Strategic Plan financial forecasts
 - One-off financial reports requested by the Association
- Advise the CEO and Association on financial control and carry out the following random checks:
 - Ensure the financial records are up to date and that all transactions are documented
 - Perform physical checks of fixed and current (debtors, stocks and cash) assets
 - Scrutinise a random sample of purchases for proper authorisation
 - Verify the bank balances
 - Check that financial regulations are being followed
- Consider business proposals and grant claims and, where appropriate, sign them off.
- Represent the Association in discussions with auditors, examiners, accountants and other external bodies.
- Investigate any case of financial impropriety and produce a report for the Association with recommendations.
- Offer advice to the CEO on financial matters, and guidance and support to the Finance Co-ordinator.

Requirements for a Treasurer

Essential:

- Member of the Association / willing to join!
- Commitment to the ethos, values and aims of the Association
- Commitment to actively contribute to the board's work.
- Commitment to develop the skills and experience necessary to be an effective member of the board.
- Direct skills and experience of managing finances for a project or organisation
- Proactive, enthusiastic with a willingness to question ideas
- Be eligible to stand as a UK charity trustee

Desirable:

- Accountancy qualifications and/or experience of charity finances
- Skills related to work of board subcommittees, or commitment to developing them.
- An understanding of permaculture. If you are new to permaculture we can help you develop an understanding with links to useful resources.

Regular duties as a Trustee

To keep up-to-date with, help to write or approve, or read, the following:

- Latest strategic plan
- Annual accounts
- Annual report
- Memorandum and Articles of Association document
- Board Policy Manual
- Recent Board minutes
- Latest PA newsletters
- [National Occupational Standards for Trustees information](#)

In addition, Trustees are encouraged to :

- Run major discussion topics (MDTs) and internal topics, which are agreed in advance.
- Take Board Meeting minutes occasionally. These are taken 'Quaker Style' which means only main points, decisions and actions are recorded and the minutes are agreed at the end of each agenda section.
- Attend meetings, teleconferences and AGMs
- Attend the meal at face to face meetings so as to get to know fellow trustees and build a sense of trust and community.

What's in it for you?

By joining the board of trustees, you can:

- Get actively involved in shaping the direction in which the Association is moving
- Learn about and develop skills in the governance of a national charitable and membership organisation
- Attend stimulating and thought-provoking board meetings
- Develop your work experience, CV, networks and skills, with references given if requested
- Use your work on the board as part of your permaculture diploma
- Reasonable travel and evening meal expenses will be refunded

How to apply

If this sounds like something you would like to be involved with, please complete the application form on our website: <https://www.permaculture.org.uk/content/board-trustees-application-form>

If you would like to have an informal conversation with the CEO or an existing member of the Board of Trustees before applying please contact office@permaculture.org.uk and we will arrange this for you.

On becoming a trustee

If you do join the team, we will:

- Register you with the Charity Commission and Companies House (the application form asks you for all the information we will need to do this).

- Ask you to register for Companies House ID Verification
- Ask you to sign our Trustee Code of Conduct and Declaration of Interests forms
- Provide you with an appropriate induction to the role
- Introduce you to staff and the Board and make sure you have what you need to participate effectively
- Do everything we can to support you to become a valued member of the team!