

Bat Conservation Trust



Trustee role description

Our Trustee Role

BCT is governed by a Board of Trustees (BoT), which comprises a maximum of fourteen Trustees. Included in this number are four officers (Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary and Treasurer). Trustees have a collective responsibility. This means that Trustees always act as a group and not as individuals. The BoT meets four times a year, currently one in-person meeting and three video conference meetings.

We always consider individual Trustee circumstances and needs and are happy to make any reasonable adjustments. We strive to be as flexible as possible to ensure our meeting arrangements are inclusive and suitable for all. Currently, fifty two percent of BCT staff consider themselves to have a disability and so we have experience of accommodating different requirements.

Our Trustees play a vital role in making sure that BCT achieves its core purpose. They oversee the wider management and administration of the charity. They also ensure that BCT has a clear strategy and that our work and goals are in line with our vision. Just as importantly, they support and challenge the Senior Management Team to enable BCT to grow and thrive, and through this, achieve our mission to work collaboratively and with a diversity of people to achieve resilient populations of bats and improve their habitats in an ever-changing world. Being a Trustee can be rewarding for many reasons – from knowing that you are making a difference to the charity's cause, to gaining knowledge and building relationships. Trustees do not need any prior knowledge about bat conservation but must become a member of BCT if they are not already.

Trustees are elected at BCT's Annual General Meeting and serve for an initial term of three years, with the option to stand for a further two three-year terms if they wish to.

The BoT may co-opt members onto the Board should a vacancy arise, but only until the next AGM when they must seek election.

BCT's Chief Executive attends BoT meetings, as can other relevant staff, other specialists and observers.

Trustees will receive an induction on joining BCT where they will have the opportunity to talk to different members of staff and fellow Trustees.

The role of Trustee is not a paid role, although travel and subsistence to attend board meetings will be covered.

Potential Trustees need to be eligible to stand as a Trustee in accordance with Charity Commission rules <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-essential-trustee-what-you-need-to-know-cc3/the-essential-trustee-what-you-need-to-know-what-you-need-to-do#who-can-be-a-trustee-and-how-trustees-are-appointed>

Trustee responsibilities

The Board of Trustees has overall responsibility for the six major duties as defined by the Charity Commission (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/charity-trustee-whats-involved>). Each Trustee must accept collective responsibility for the decisions of the Board of Trustees and must work cooperatively with the other Trustees to exercise this responsibility.

A Trustee must be willing to support and provide advice on BCT's purpose, vision, strategy, governance and financial stability.

The following sets out in more detail the responsibilities of a Trustee at BCT:

- To ensure that BCT pursues its objects as defined in its governing document (*Memorandum and Articles of Association*).
- To ensure that BCT complies with its governing document, charity law, company law and any other relevant legislation or regulations.
- To ensure the BCT applies its resources exclusively in pursuance of its objects. The charity must not spend money on activities which are not included in its objects, no matter how worthwhile or charitable those activities are.
- To ensure that BCT has a clear vision, mission and direction and is focused on achieving these.
- To contribute actively to the BoT's role of giving firm strategic direction to BCT, setting overall strategy and policy, defining goals and setting targets, and evaluating performance against those targets.
- To act in the best interests of BCT. To do this, Trustees must do what the BoT (and no one else) decides will best enable BCT to carry out its purposes. Trustees must make balanced and adequately informed decisions, thinking about the long as well as the short-term.
- To safeguard BCT's good name and values.
- To manage BCT's resources responsibly ('duty of prudence'). Trustees must act responsibly, reasonably and honestly to ensure that BCT's assets are only used to support its purposes, to avoid exposing BCT assets and reputation to undue risk, and to not over commit the charity.
- To ensure the financial stability of BCT.
- To protect and manage BCT's property and to ensure the proper investment of its funds.
- To ensure BCT is accountable by complying with statutory accounting and reporting requirements, and by being accountable to its members.
- To ensure the effective and efficient administration of BCT, including having appropriate policies and procedures in place.
- To act with reasonable care and skill, making use of their own skills and experience and taking advice when necessary ('duty of care'). Trustees should give enough time, thought and energy to the role by preparing for, attending and actively participating in all Trustee meetings.
- To ensure that they avoid putting themselves in a position where their duty to BCT conflicts with their personal interests or loyalty to any other body. Trustees may not receive any benefit from BCT unless it is in BCT's interests and is properly authorised.

Attributes of Trustees

The following experience, skills, knowledge, personal qualities and qualifications are desirable in all Trustees:

- An interest in bats and commitment to their conservation
- A commitment to Equity, Diversity and Inclusion
- A commitment to BCT's work and values
- An understanding of charity governance
- An understanding and acceptance of the legal duties, responsibilities and liabilities of Trustees
- An ability to think strategically and creatively
- A willingness to speak their mind
- A willingness to commit time to studying papers, preparing for and attending meetings, following up on specific tasks with other Trustees, and liaise with the Chief Executive or other staff as requested. This is likely to take a total of 7-10 days per annum.
- An ability to work as part of a team which meets four times a year
- A commitment to Nolan's seven principles of public life: selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty, and leadership.