

SOUTHERN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION (Charity No. 1091240) – Trustee with Financial Management experience to serve as Honorary Treasurer

Our trustees steer the SUA to achieve its core Object¹ of promoting religion via local Unitarian congregations.

This small charity is a mutual society of the Unitarian congregations in the central south of England. It exists to enrich the faith lives of those Unitarian congregations via mutual support; and to vicariously enrich the lives of the people served by those congregations². Sometimes the support given is financial, sometimes the sharing of ideas, sometimes simply encouragement. The financial support given may be for spirituality-based initiatives or for infrastructure projects.

Working as the Executive Committee, the trustees oversee the overall management and administration of the charity. They ensure that the SUA has a strategy and that the goals we set ourselves match the volunteer time and energies that are available to deliver the Object and administer the charity.

We are looking for a trustee who as the Honorary Treasurer can contribute to the work of the Executive Committee by being the mainstay for financial advice and guidance.

The SUA Constitution requires that trustees must be recognised members of one of the member congregations. Accordingly, the Hon Treasurer must agree to taking part in the life of one of those congregations. There is no requirement regarding belief or philosophical position; only that trustees must be involved in the life of a congregation that is a member of the SUA. Currently, there are well-established congregations at Portsmouth, Newport (Isle of Wight) and Ringwood. There is also a congregation at Southampton but it is at a crucial point of self-renewal and may be thought of as being in a tentative stage.

An electronic copy of the governance documents may be found at <https://southernunitarianassociation.blogspot.com/> and the Charity Commission entry is at <https://register-of-charities.charitycommission.gov.uk/charity-search/-/charity-details/3980950/charity-overview>

For more information on UK Unitarians see this link: <https://www.unitarian.org.uk/who-we-are/radical-roots/>

¹ The Object of the Association is the promotion of religion, among or on behalf of those congregations who are members of the Association, in accordance with the principles of the General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches.

² The congregations are self-governing entities, serving not only the people they recognise as members, but more importantly, the general public beyond their membership.

Trustee Duties specific to Honorary Treasurer:

- Provide financial advice in respect of projects, goals, and risks; bring experience of financial regulatory frameworks, investments, cashflow management, accounting practice, audit, book-keeping etc.
- Oversee the generation of the SUA's financial statements and make financial reports to the Executive Committee. The Hon Treasurer may wish to propose that the SUA get paid help for collecting data and production of statements and reports (which are currently produced without paid support).
- As a member of the Officers' Subcommittee: provide support and challenge to the other two Officers of the SUA (President, Hon Secretary); attend online and face-to-face meetings, adequately prepared to contribute to discussions.
- Scrutinizing papers, leading discussions, carrying out minor research, providing advice and guidance on initiatives, or taking other action in respect of issues in which they have expertise.

General Trustee Duties that apply:

With other trustees (as a member of the Executive Committee),

- Approve policies and plans, and monitor and evaluate their implementation.
- Oversee SUA's financial plans and budgets, and monitor and evaluate progress.
- Administer the organisation, achieving the 29 July date for the return to the Charity Commission, and planning for the future through succession planning.
- Identify, monitor and control key risks.
- Review and approve SUA's financial statements.
- Keep abreast of changes in SUA's operating environment.
- Contribute to regular reviews of SUA's own governance.
- Attend online and face-to-face meetings of the Executive Committee and General Meetings, adequately prepared to contribute to discussions.
- Use independent judgment, acting legally and in good faith, to promote and protect SUA's interests to the exclusion of own personal and/or any third party interests.
- Contribute to the broader promotion of SUA's Object, aims and reputation by applying personal skills, expertise, knowledge and contacts.

What we are looking for

For continuity in ethos, previous experience or knowledge of the Unitarian context in which the SUA operates would be advantageous; but is **not** necessary.

Nonetheless, it is vital that the Hon Treasurer is able publicly to state on appointment that they are willing to adhere to the Unitarian outlook as it is described on the SUA blog:

<https://southernunitarianassociation.blogspot.com/p/who-are-unitarians.html> and after appointment they may be challenged should they not demonstrate these values in all their dealings. However, the interior reconciliation between personally-held values and this Unitarian outlook is a private concern and will not be gone into at any time.

We are looking for someone willing to bring energy, enthusiasm and commitment to the role; someone to become our mainstay for advice for decision-making in respect of finance; someone who will broaden the range of thinking on our Executive Committee.

We would be particularly interested in past experience regarding (1) governance and (2) contracting for paid support.

To be sustainable, the charity needs to develop an emphasis on trustee training. We would welcome someone able to contribute in this task.

Personal skills and qualities

- Enthusiasm for our aims, seeing finance as a means to those aims and not an end in itself.
- Willingness and ability to understand and accept their responsibilities and liabilities as a trustee and to act in the best interests of the organization.
- Ability to exercise independent judgment whilst effective in working corporately as a member of the Executive Committee.
- Ability to communicate effectively and willingness to participate actively in discussion.
- Commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion.
- Willingness to lead.
- Commitment to Nolan's seven principles of public life: selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership.

Terms of office

- This would be a co-option under the terms of the SUA Constitution.
- The appointee will need to accept a personal involvement in the life of one of our congregations.
- Trustees are appointed for a one year term of office, renewable at each Annual General Meeting.
- This is a voluntary position, but reasonable expenses are reimbursed.

Time commitment and ways of working

- Business meetings are currently held online by video-conferencing and much business is carried out by email and telephone. The SUA stands ready to be advised by the appointee, regarding any reasonable adjustments to these ways of working that will be needed for total accessibility.
- Attending four meetings of the Executive Committee annually. Currently meetings are held remotely (online), on 2nd Saturdays in October, January, March (AGM) and June, subject to minor adjustments. Meetings may last two hours.

- Working between meetings of the Executive Committee to generate (or supervise the generation of) financial reports and the accounts, and to conduct research relevant to investments, changes to the regulatory framework, etc.
- Officers' Subcommittee membership – Ad hoc informal meetings of the three officers of the SUA, remotely or face-to-face, to make delegated decisions regarding grants and to address risk management, as well as the normal cycle of administration. Usually no more than six meetings annually; currently during Mon-Fri but by negotiation. Meetings' lengths variable.
- By choice, attending the sole face-to-face gathering of the wider SUA annually, which takes up most of a Saturday, and which is held in one of the Unitarian venues in Southampton, Portsmouth, Newport (Isle of Wight) or Ringwood. The gathering takes place on a Saturday in the second half of August or the first half of September. Travel expenses are reimbursed.