

## Role Description for a Council Member and Trustee of the Royal Society of Biology

### Key Responsibilities

#### *Legal*

- To ensure that the Society complies with its governing documents, charity and company law, and any other relevant legislation or regulations.
- To ensure that the Society pursues its objects, as defined in its governing documents.
- To ensure that the Society uses its resources exclusively in pursuance of its objects.
- To act in the best interests of the Society, its beneficiaries and future beneficiaries at all times.

#### *Strategic*

- To contribute actively to the Board of Trustees' role in giving clear strategic direction to the Charity, setting overall policy, defining goals and objectives, and evaluating performance against agreed targets; and to keep under review the long term development of the Charity in light of the political, economic and social environment in which it operates.
- To safeguard the good name and values of the Charity.

#### *Financial*

- To ensure the financial stability of the Charity.
- To approve the annual budget.
- To protect and manage the property of the Charity and to ensure the proper investment of the Charity's funds.

#### *Other*

- To appoint the Chief Executive and to monitor his / her performance.
- To ensure the effective and efficient administration of the Charity.
- To ensure appropriate advice is taken from professional advisers on matters where there may be material risk to the Charity or where Trustees may be in breach of their duties.
- To maintain the confidentiality of all sensitive / confidential information received in the course of a Trustee's responsibilities.
- Trustees elected from the College of Organisational Members have the responsibility to engage with Member Organisations to facilitate dialogue and maintain strong relationships with these organisations.

### Person Specification

- Demonstrable interest in the biosciences from a personal or professional perspective.
- Expected to devote necessary time and effort to trusteeship.
- Understanding of the Royal Society of Biology, its purpose and its work.
- The ability to probe facts, challenge assumptions and identify the advantages and disadvantages of proposals.
- The ability to work at a strategic level, think creatively & criticise constructively.
- Good, independent judgement and a willingness to speak their mind.
- Ability to work effectively as a member of a team.
- Understanding & acceptance of legal duties, responsibilities and liabilities of Trusteeship.
- Acceptance of the Nolan Committee's Seven Principles of Public Life; selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership.

#### *Further information that may of interest to applicants;*

- [The Seven Principles of Public Life](#) by the [Committee on Standards in Public Life](#)
- [The Essential Trustee: What you need to know](#) from the [Charity Commission](#)

Nolan Principles: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-7-principles-of-public-life>

## **The Seven Principles of Public Life**

### **Selflessness**

Holders of public office should take decisions solely in terms of the public interest. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends.

### **Integrity**

Holders of public office should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might influence them in the performance of their official duties.

### **Objectivity**

In carrying out public business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, holders of public office should make choices on merit.

### **Accountability**

Holders of public office are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office.

### **Openness**

Holders of public office should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions that they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands.

### **Honesty**

Holders of public office have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.

### **Leadership**

Holders of public office should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.

*Notes:*

<http://www.charity-commission.gov.uk/publications/cc3.asp#b2>

*This section summarises the main duties and responsibilities of charity trustees. It is not a legal document, but sets out the legal principles in everyday language. The headings on this page are also used for sections of the more detailed guidance that follows.*

## **Trustees and their responsibilities**

Charity trustees are the people who serve on the governing body of a charity. They may be known as trustees, directors, board members, governors or committee members. The principles and main duties are the same in all cases.

(1) Trustees have and must accept ultimate responsibility for directing the affairs of a charity, and ensuring that it is solvent, well-run, and delivering the charitable outcomes for the benefit of the public for which it has been set up.

### **Compliance – Trustees must:**

(2) Ensure that the charity complies with charity law, and with the requirements of the Charity Commission as regulator; in particular ensure that the charity prepares reports on what it has achieved and Annual Returns and accounts as required by law.

(3) Ensure that the charity does not breach any of the requirements or rules set out in its governing document and that it remains true to the charitable purpose and objects set out there.

(4) Comply with the requirements of other legislation and other regulators (if any) which govern the activities of the charity.

(5) Act with integrity, and avoid any personal conflicts of interest or misuse of charity funds or assets.

### **Duty of prudence – Trustees must:**

(6) Ensure that the charity is and will remain solvent.

(7) Use charitable funds and assets reasonably, and only in furtherance of the charity's objects.

(8) Avoid undertaking activities that might place the charity's endowment, funds, assets or reputation at undue risk.

(9) Take special care when investing the funds of the charity, or borrowing funds for the charity to use.

### **Duty of care – Trustees must:**

(10) Use reasonable care and skill in their work as trustees, using their personal skills and experience as needed to ensure that the charity is well-run and efficient.

(11) Consider getting external professional advice on all matters where there may be material risk to the charity, or where the trustees may be in breach of their duties.