

Transition Network: Information for potential Trustees

What is Transition?

When we use the term "Transition" we're talking about the changes we need to make to get to a low-carbon, socially-just, healthier and happier future, a future which is more enriching and more gentle on the earth than the way most of us live today.

In our vision of the future, people work together to find ways to live with a lot less reliance on fossil fuels, much reduced carbon emissions, improved wellbeing for all and stronger local economies. The Transition movement is a social experiment, in which communities learn from each other and are part of a global and historic push towards a better future for us and the planet.

What is Transition Network?

Transition Network is a charity which works to inspire, encourage, connect, support and train communities as they self-organise around the Transition model. We have grown organically in response to needs and opportunities, but we have recently recognised that our organisation undertakes four distinct roles:

Role 1: Holding the Transition 'source code'

Maintaining an up-to-date description of the Transition story - the what, why, how and where of Transition.

Role 2: Catalysing and supporting the spread of Transition globally

Working to ensure that more people in more countries have access to information, training and other support relating to Transition. One important way we do this is by supporting National Hubs to form, encouraging groups of people to take on the role of supporting, inspiring and connecting Transition Initiatives in their country.

Role 3: Co-ordinating and supporting the National Hubs Network

Helping National Hubs to share ideas and inspiration, take collective action and become part of a worldwide learning network.

Role 4: Acting as the UK National Hub

Identifying and developing resources, networks, training and events specifically geared to the UK context and representing the UK within the National Hubs Network.

At some point in the future, it may no longer make sense for a single UK-based organisation to perform all these roles. Our Trustees are open to

exploring new structures and governance arrangements as the Transition movement spreads and evolves.

Transition Network was established as a UK company limited by guarantee in March 2007, and registered as a UK charity in March 2009. We have a team of 14 people, a mix of employed staff and freelance contractors and all but 2 of them part-time. We have small office in Totnes, Devon and many of the team work from home, one in Brussels. You can find our most recent annual report and accounts [here](#).

Transition Network has recently carried out a strategy review and we have recently consulted the wider Transition movement about our [draft strategy](#).

What are the responsibilities of TN Board members?

The board of Transition Network is responsible for ensuring the effective governance of the organisation, for agreeing its strategy and monitoring progress against its strategic objectives. Trustees have the following statutory duties:

- To ensure that Transition Network complies with its governing document, UK charity law, UK company law and any other relevant legislation or regulations;;
- To ensure that Transition Network pursues its charitable objects as defined in its governing document;
- To ensure Transition Network uses its resources exclusively in pursuance of its objects: the charity must not spend money on activities which are not included in its own objects, no matter how worthwhile or charitable those activities are;
- To contribute actively to the board of trustees' role in giving firm strategic direction to Transition Network, setting overall policy, defining goals and setting targets and evaluating performance against agreed targets;
- To safeguard the good name and values of Transition Network;
- To ensure the effective and efficient administration of Transition Network;
- To ensure the financial stability of Transition Network;
- To protect and manage the property of Transition Network and to ensure the proper investment of the Transition Network's funds

The board consists of a Chair and up to nine other trustees. Trustees terms of office are fixed to provide regular opportunities for new people to join the board.

We are currently seeking up to four new trustees, with one of these places being reserved for a trustee nominated by the National Hubs.

Trustee person specification

You can find general information about the role and responsibilities of a trustee of a UK charity [here](#)

All TN trustees should be:

- Committed to the aims, values, principles and practices of Transition Network and the Transition movement (see, for example, the 'How we will work' section in the draft strategy);
- Committed to maintaining high levels of trust and openness between trustees, the TN team and the wider Transition movement;
- Able to give 1 to 2 days per month to Transition Network business, including attending meetings and awaydays and, if appropriate, to take responsibility for particular issues or areas of work;
- Able to think strategically and realistically, and to adapt to fast changing circumstances
- Able to contribute to the process of the organisation in English.
- Willing to speak their mind in a board setting, to listen to others' views and be flexible, constructive and open to challenge.
- Understanding and accepting of the legal duties, responsibilities and liabilities of trusteeship.
- Able to shape ideas into action.

We list below skills and experiences which we believe would be useful to the board at this stage in our development. Our aim is for the collective experience of board members to reflect as broad a range as possible of these skills and experiences. When selecting new trustees we will seek to complement the skills and experience of existing board members.

- Experience of building and developing grassroots organisation/s for social change;
- Experience of creating partnerships with diverse organisations and understanding of issues around inclusion and power including race, class, faith, global north/south;
- Experience of active participation in a Transition Initiative;
- Experience of active participation in a Transition National Hub;
- Experience of evaluating and monitoring an organisation's impact and effectiveness;
- An understanding of the UK political process;
- Experience of contributing to major cultural change or influencing people from a diversity of backgrounds;
- Experience of fund raising and/or access to high net worth individuals;

- A background in social entrepreneurship;
- Experience of human resources, organisational development, staff management, capacity building.
- Experience/skills in communications and marketing (inc. the innovative use of social media)

Fulfilling the Role

All TN trustees are expected to:

- Participate in Board meetings which are held at least four times a year (our current pattern is for the meeting location to rotate between Totnes, Bristol and London and there is scope to participate via video-conference);
- Attend TN Away-days in person (a minimum commitment of 2 concurrent days twice a year in Totnes);
- Participate in some email discussions/decisions outside meetings

Trustees are also encouraged/invited to attend other Transition Network conferences, events and training courses and may volunteer to take on additional work on behalf of the board.

Repeated non-attendance at meetings and/or awaydays may result in the trustee being asked to resign from the board.

Board meetings are held on a weekday (usually a Friday), and last around 6 hours. Away-days are held on concurrent weekdays and may require 2 overnight stays for trustees who do not live within easy commuting distance of Totnes. We can usually arrange overnight accommodation with a member of the TN team and aim to agree meeting and away day dates at least six months in advance.

Trustees may claim reasonable expenses for board meetings and away-days. Expenses for other work may be payable with prior agreement.

Trustees serve an initial term of four years and may then apply for re-selection for a further four years. The Chair of the board may serve more than two terms with the agreement of the board.

The Process for Appointing New Trustees

The process for appointing new trustees is as follows:

1. Vacancies for trustees will advertised on the Transition Network website during the week of 3 March 2014. The vacancies will be publicised in the Transition Newsletter and via Twitter and Facebook.
2. One of the vacancies will be reserved for a trustee nominated by the National Hubs Group. A separate process for selecting this nominee is being agreed by the National Hubs Group.

3. Other applicants should send a cv and covering letter, explaining why they are interested in becoming a trustee and how they meet the person specification to amberponton@transitionnetwork.org by 4 April 2014.
4. An appointments panel (made up of 2 board members, the Delivery Director and an independent person with experience of the Transition movement) will review the applications and select individuals to recommend to the board.
5. Members of the appointments panel may conduct informal phone interviews before making their recommendations to the board.
6. The board is aiming to approve new trustees by 21 April.
7. New board members will be strongly encouraged to attend the TN Awaydays in Totnes on 15 & 16 May 2014. Their first board meeting will take place on 6 June 2014.