

Become a Trustee

Help shape stronger communities across Oxfordshire

Our trustees are vital, bringing their skills, experience and perspectives to our strategic direction, ensuring that we continue to best support our communities across Oxfordshire.

Whether you're an experienced trustee or considering your first board role, we'd love to hear from you.

About Community First Oxfordshire

Community First Oxfordshire is a community development and placemaking charity with more than 100 years of experience supporting people and places across the county.

Whether we're helping a volunteer update their hall's fire equipment, supporting a community-led plan, or working with the statutory sector on a major placemaking project, we know how to help.

You can find out more about us on our website here: <https://communityfirstoxon.org/>

Why become a Trustee?

Being a trustee is an opportunity to make a meaningful contribution to communities across Oxfordshire while developing your own skills and experience.

As a trustee, you will:

- Help shape the future direction of the charity.
- Support an organisation with a long history of community impact.
- Work alongside a welcoming and experienced board.
- Have a chance to bring in your own knowledge and experience.
- Learn about charity governance and strategic leadership.
- Meet people from a wide range of backgrounds and professions.

No previous trustee experience is necessary; there is training and guidance available to support you in your role.

Who are we looking for?

We're keen to hear from people with a wide range of backgrounds, experiences and perspectives.

We particularly welcome applications from people who have an interest in volunteering, climate and environment, planning, or HR and IT. We are committed to building a diverse and inclusive Board that reflects the communities we serve.

We're looking for people who:

- Care about strengthening communities.
- Have integrity and good judgement.
- Can think strategically and creatively.
- Are willing to contribute their ideas and challenge constructively.
- Work well as part of a team.
- Can commit the time needed to fulfil the role.
- Understand, or are willing to learn about, the responsibilities of being a charity trustee.

You will also need to become a member of Community First Oxfordshire.

What does a Trustee do?

As trustees, the Board has overall responsibility for the governance and strategic direction of Community First Oxfordshire.

Working together, trustees:

- Help set the charity's long-term vision and strategy.
- Approve the annual business plan and budget.
- Monitor performance and ensure the charity is achieving its objectives.
- Oversee the charity's financial health.
- Ensure the charity meets its legal and regulatory responsibilities.
- Make sure the charity is accountable.
- Act as ambassadors for Community First Oxfordshire within the wider community.

Trustees focus on strategy, governance and oversight, while the day-to-day running of the organisation is led by the Chief Executives and staff team.

What will you gain?

Although the role is voluntary and unpaid, becoming a trustee offers many personal and professional benefits.

You'll have opportunities to develop your leadership and governance experience as you contribute to the charity's strategic decisions. You'll also build your knowledge of the charity and community sector, expanding your networks in Oxfordshire and beyond. As a trustee, you will have the chance to attend training and development sessions, learning from others and sharing your own experience. Previous trustee training has included topics such as Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI), Climate Action and Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD). Most importantly, you'll make a lasting contribution to communities across Oxfordshire.

What we expect from you

The time commitment to be a trustee of Community First Oxfordshire is very modest – approximately 20-30 hours over a full year.

There are 6 Board meetings a year, usually lasting 1-1.5 hours and are mostly online with the occasional in person meeting at a community hall near the office at Worton Park (nr Cassington).

You will also need to attend the AGM, which is online and you may sign up to a sub-committee if it suits your interests, which are again often online and last about an 1hr.

We recommend visiting the office and meeting some of the staff team as well as taking part in training when provided or an away day.

How to apply

If you're interested in joining our Board of Trustees, we'd love to hear from you.

Please send us an email to info@communityfirstoxon.org introducing yourself and telling us (where possible):

- why you'd like to become a trustee;
- the skills, knowledge or experience you could bring to the Board; and
- anything else you'd like us to know about you.

If you'd like an informal conversation before applying, we'd be delighted to arrange one.

What our Trustees say

Our current trustees come from a range of backgrounds, including education, civil service, humanitarian work, planning, public health, finance and policy. Here are some reflections from our chair and vice-chair on their experiences as trustees:

Working in the charity sector myself, I understand the challenges that organisations face, but I also see firsthand how essential trustees are in providing guidance, oversight, and encouragement.

Being part of this collaborative effort - where trustees and staff work together towards a common goal - has been both rewarding and inspiring.

~ **Linda Horgan**

I've been a Trustee of CFO for two years now - having been drawn to them by their impressive reputation and a desire to put back something into a county that I've grown to know and love.

I was a senior manager in local government for over thirty years, and I've never encountered a more dedicated, passionate, friendly and knowledgeable set of people than those to be found working at this organisation!

~ **Chris Kenneford**