



The Friendly Almshouses

TRUSTEE ROLE DESCRIPTION

Context

The Friendly Almshouses (TFA) is a long-established charity, founded in 1802 by a group of women who saw a need for financial and housing support for older women. It has had a presence in Brixton since 1863, when seven cottages providing accommodation for 28 women were opened. More than 200 years on, the Charity remains true to its original resolution, that it should be an organisation run 'by women for women'. In 2015 the Charity was incorporated as a Company limited by guarantee.

TFA's charitable purpose is to:

“relieve and assist women of good character who are over the age of 50 who are in need, in particular by the provision of social housing in the form of almshouse accommodation and facilities for such women on terms appropriate to their needs.”

Beneficiaries of the Charity live in a sheltered community, being supported by the Clerk to the Trustees, a resident warden, and a non-resident deputy warden.

Under its Memorandum of Association, the Charity must appoint a minimum of five and a maximum of fourteen Trustees, who are also Directors of the Company. New Trustees are normally co-opted at a Committee meeting, with their appointment being confirmed by election at the following AGM.

Key People

Chairman:	Hilary Parsons
Vice-Chairman:	Kate Woolcombe
Treasurer:	Julia Cattle
Company Secretary:	Deborah Barker

Clerk to the Trustees:	Sandy Ryan
Scheme Manager/Warden:	Dorota Piestrzeniewicz

Governance Arrangements

The Committee of Trustees meets monthly, currently on the second Wednesday of the month, at 10 am at Martindale House. The Clerk to the Trustees is the Board Secretary.

There are four Sub-Committees supporting the Trustees:

- Redevelopment

- Residents Affairs
- Finance
- Marketing and Fund Raising

The Agenda and papers for Committee meetings are provided electronically, normally a week before the meeting.

Trustee Role and Responsibilities

The Trustees of The Friendly Almshouses are responsible for managing the assets of the Charity and applying them only for the charitable purposes as set out above. They must act as a group and not as individuals, and always in the Charity's best interests. Trustees must exercise the same duty of care and prudence as they would if managing their own assets, or those of someone else for whom they are responsible.

The duties of a Trustee are to ensure that the Charity:

1. complies with its governing document (ie the Memorandum of Association), charity law, company law, and any other relevant legislation or regulations
2. pursues its objects as defined in its governing document
3. applies its resources exclusively in pursuance of its Charitable Purpose, ie it must not spend money on activities which are not included in the objects, however worthwhile they may be

A Trustee/Director is expected to:

1. attend Committee meetings regularly
2. be an active member of at least one Sub-Committee
3. contribute actively to the Committee of Trustees' role in giving firm strategic direction, setting overall policy, defining goals and setting targets, and evaluating performance against agreed targets
4. take a leadership role in a specific aspect of the Charity's work, as appropriate
5. safeguard the Charity's good name and values
6. ensure the Charity's financial stability
7. protect and manage the Charity's property and ensure proper investment of its funds
8. support the Clerk to the Trustees and monitor his/her performance

In addition to the above statutory duties, individual Trustees are expected to draw upon their specific knowledge, skills, or experience to assist the Committee in reaching robust and considered decisions.

Remuneration

This role is voluntary/unpaid, but reasonable expenses will be reimbursed when agreed in advance.

Person Specification

Eligibility to act

- must complete and sign the Statement of Eligibility, to comply with Charity Commission requirements

Skills and Experience

- experience of (paid or voluntary) work in a relevant field
- experience of working in a team towards agreed goals

- Knowledge**
- understanding of the legal duties of a trustee
 - awareness of the issues commonly faced by the Charity’s target beneficiaries
 - understanding of the place almshouses have in meeting housing need
 - awareness of the basic principles of organisational governance and why it matters
- Qualities and Attributes**
- commitment to the ethos and aims of the Charity
 - integrity
 - sound and independent judgement
 - ability to think creatively and strategically, with an eye to the future
 - willingness to constructively challenge
 - culturally aware
- Time Commitment**
- half day per month for Committee meetings, plus preparation time
 - participation in Sub-Committees and other ad hoc work: variable according to prevailing demands, and by agreement

Attention is drawn to Guidance published by the Charity Commission “The essential trustee: what you need to know, what you need to do”, which can be found online at:
www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/617828/CC3.pdf

Approved by the Committee
5th March 2018