

Kent Downs Trust

Trustee recruitment information

Kent Downs Trust | 2023 |

Welcome to the Kent Downs Trust

Introduction

Thank you for your interest in becoming a Trustee with the Kent Downs Trust. The Kent Downs Trust is an ambitious new independent charity established to deliver positive change in one of the country's most beautiful but most threatened landscapes.

We are poised to embark on an ambitious new phase of our development and we are seeking Trustees to join the existing board to help bring these plans to fruition. We are looking for individuals who care about the environment, its nature, wildlife and heritage, protecting the beauty of the protected landscape, and how we can ensure it is accessible and inclusive for all.

We are current advertising for the following roles:

- Treasurer
- Trustee – Fundraising

About us

It's hard to imagine just how many people have lived in, visited and loved the landscape of the Kent Downs. The natural beauty of the area gives a timeless and inexhaustible pleasure, from the simple lines of the gently sloping terrain to the rich tapestry of farmland, woodland, wildlife and small historic villages that decorate it. Yet time is the ever-busy sculptor of the land around us and more than ever before, the precious natural world in Kent needs our care and attention, as it meets new pressures.

Despite the peaceful views of the chalk downland around us, we are faced with unprecedented population increase (a predicted 25% by 2031), climate change, species declines and uncertainties regarding on-going investment in the environment.

In addition, we know there are underrepresented sectors of the community who face physical, economic and social barriers to enjoying the benefits of being amongst nature and the outdoors.

A new opportunity to support the Kent Downs

In light of these considerable challenges, we set up the Kent Downs Trust in 2019, a charity, as an additional and lasting commitment to this area we know and love. The Trust champions all that the Downs have to offer and enables a greater wealth of initiatives with many more people, as we move through challenging times.

Becoming a Trustee is an exciting opportunity to contribute to the ongoing protection and enhancement of this cherished landscape and ensure everyone can feel part of it.

Our charitable aims:

The Kent Downs Trust is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation that has 3 distinct charitable aims:

1. To promote the conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty, landscape, wildlife, cultural, scientific and historic value of the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and its setting for the benefit of the public.

2. To advance education in and around the AONB, in the natural beauty, landscape, wildlife, cultural, scientific and historic value of the Kent Downs AONB and its setting, for the benefit of the public.

3. To improve the health and wellbeing of people and promote citizenship of those living in or visiting the Kent Downs AONB and its setting by promoting free access to nature for fresh air, exercise and visual amenity.

In taking forward its charitable aims the Kent Downs Trust shall pay particular attention to demonstrably promoting equality, diversity and inclusion.

The KDT works closely with the Kent Downs AONB unit with the Director acting as ex-officio Trustee on the Board of Trustees. There is currently a small staffing capacity for finance and administration/fundraising provided from the AONB unit staff team.



In 2019 The Kent Downs Trust was awarded a Resilient Heritage Fund grant for its establishment phase. This is now complete and has provided:

- Strategy and planning advice, community and partner consultation for increasing participation in the landscape for diverse audiences
- Consultancy for fundraising research and planning.

The Trust is now in an excellent position to take forward this work to develop meaningful partnerships and initiatives.

Who are we looking for?

Trustees are individuals who are responsible for the strategic direction of the Kent Downs Trust, and, as a board to make decisions on behalf of the charity.

We are looking for individuals who are interested in helping the development of a young charitable organisation to get established, one which works across the whole of the Kent Downs AONB area with a commitment to support conservation, education and heritage and to broaden the AONBs reach to the wider community in Kent and elsewhere.

All trustees will be expected to have:

- A commitment to the work of the Trust and its constituent parts
- A willingness to devote the necessary time and effort to the role
- An understanding and acceptance of the legal duties, responsibilities and liabilities of the role
- Relevant experience and expertise in one of more of the organisation's areas of work
- Financial/budgetary experience
- An ability to contribute to the development of the Trust's policy and strategic vision and ensure these are being effectively implemented
- An ability to work effectively with others and reach decisions through consensus.

Please read the Terms and Conditions below for a full Trustee profile and individual descriptions for specific roles.

What will you be doing?

We expect the minimum level of commitment for this role is approximately 8 days per year, which includes:

1. Attending quarterly Trustee Meetings of the Board.
2. Representing the charity at events and/or partnership meetings
3. Input into activity and project development if related to your specific experience and interests.

This is a voluntary role with all reasonable expenses paid.

Meetings alternate between Bore Place, nr Edenbridge, the Kent AONB offices in Brabourne, nr Ashford, and MS Teams. It is preferred that Trustees reside, can easily access or have an affinity with Kent.

What difference will you make?

We are a small charity but the only one which works across the whole of the Kent Downs, and who is focussed particularly on the key aims of protection, conservation and participation in this beautiful landscape. We have identified a number of huge opportunities to help take the charity forward to an exciting next stage.

Interested? What next?

To apply please send your CV, supporting statement and details of two referees to nick.johannsen@kentdowns.org.uk. Please ensure that your supporting statement is a maximum length of 2 sides of A4 and provides concise and specific examples to demonstrate

(a) why you want this role,

(b) how your skills address the role description you are interested in being considered for (detailed in the Terms of Reference) and

(c) what added value you can provide to ensure KDT develops as an effective and professional organisation.



Further information on Kent Downs Trust can also be obtained from Nick Johannsen at Nick.Johannsen@kentdowns.org.uk or kentdownstrust@kentdowns.org.uk or visit our webpage at: [The Kent Downs Trust - Kent Downs](#)

For an informal discussion about the specific roles please call:

Caroline Arnold, Chair – Tel: 07799 111997

This is a rolling recruitment process and we will continue to promote the roles until they are filled.

Terms of Reference and role profiles

The Kent Downs Trust: Terms of Reference for Trustees

These Terms of Reference have been adopted at the inaugural meeting of the Trustee Board of the Kent Downs Trust (KDT) held on 30 November 2018

The Terms of Reference, which supplement the Constitution of the Kent Downs Trust, are intended to guide the work of the trustees. In the event of conflict between these two documents, the Constitution takes precedence. These Terms of Reference are split into six headings as follows:

- A. Trustee responsibilities
- B. Main duties
- C. Structure of the Board
- D. Governance procedures
- E. Trustee expenses
- F. Trustee induction and training
- An appendix provides Model role descriptions for officers

A. Trustee Responsibilities

Kent Downs Trust's Trustee Board takes its authority and its responsibilities from two sources:

- Under the Charities Act 1993 the trustees of a charity are “the people responsible under the charity’s governing document for controlling the management and administration of the charity, regardless of what they are called”. Charity law lays a number of specific duties on all charity trustees, which are reflected in these terms of reference. In essence these are:

- A duty of compliance with the charity’s objects, its governing documents and all relevant legislation and regulation.
- A duty of care, to ensure that the charity is well run and efficient and that professional advice is sought in order to manage risk.
- A duty of prudence in respect of managing the charity’s assets.

- Kent Downs Trust’s Constitution sets out who may become a trustee of Kent Downs Trust, how trustees are appointed and their powers.

In summary, trustees are expected to discharge the following responsibilities:

- To act collectively and effectively to give strategic direction to the work of the Kent Downs Trust, ensuring that the Trust complies with its Constitution, relevant laws and the obligations and memoranda it enters into with its funders and other bodies;
- To help deliver the purposes of the Kent Downs AONB designation and the objectives of the AONB Management Plan, and to do nothing which might bring the designation, Partnership or Management Plan into disrepute;
- To ensure that the Trust has adequate financial resources to undertake its activities and protect its assets;
- To review the risks to which the Trust is subject, take action to mitigate these risks and to ensure sound risk management; and
- To seek assistance from experts in areas where the Trustees lack the necessary skills, and in particular, to work with the Kent Downs AONB Partnership and Unit.

B. Main Duties

The main duties of Trustees fall under four headings: Strategic Direction; Compliance; Prudent management of assets; and Good governance.

1. Strategic direction

Ensure that the Kent Downs Trust has a clear vision, mission and strategic direction, all of which should deliver its charitable purposes, support the purposes of the AONB designation and help deliver the AONB Management Plan. The following are activities which should help Trustees deliver these objectives.

- a) Develop and review on a regular basis the vision, mission and set of values and strategy of the Kent Downs Trust, and ensure that there is a common understanding of these by trustees, staff and volunteers.
- b) Develop a fundraising strategy to support the vision, mission and strategy, and prepare operational plans and budgets.
- c) Seek and consider the views of Trust beneficiaries, and regularly review whether new beneficiaries could be supported.
- d) Regularly review the external environment for changes that might affect Kent Downs Trust (environmental, social, economic, political).

2. Compliance

Ensure that Kent Downs Trust complies with all legal and regulatory requirements:

- a) To ensure, with professional advice as appropriate, that Kent Downs Trust complies with all constitutional, legal, regulatory and statutory requirements.
- b) To understand and comply with the constitution and rules that govern Kent Downs Trust, and to review the constitution regularly (at least every five years) to ensure it is fit for purpose.

3. Prudent management of assets

To be stewards of Kent Downs Trust's assets, both tangible and intangible, taking care over their security, and how they are used:

- a) To ensure that Kent Downs Trust's financial obligations are met and that there are adequate financial controls in place to ensure all money due is received and properly applied, and that all assets and liabilities are recorded.
- b) To ensure that trustees take professional advice when needed, and record the advice received.
- c) To ensure that there is an effective fundraising strategy in place.
- d) To be accountable for the solvency of Kent Downs Trust.
- e) To ensure that intangible assets such as organisational knowledge and expertise, intellectual property, Kent Downs Trust's brand, good name and reputation are recognized, used and safeguarded.
- f) To review the condition and use of any properties and land owned by Kent Downs Trust.
- g) To ensure that the major risks to Kent Downs Trust are regularly identified and reviewed and that systems are in place to mitigate or minimise these risks.

4. Good governance

Ensure that Kent Downs Trust's governance is of the highest possible standard:

- a) To ensure that Kent Downs Trust has a governance structure that is appropriate to a charity of its size/complexity, stage of development, and its charitable objects, and reflects the diversity of its users
- b) To ensure that Board decisions are recorded in writing by means of minutes
- c) To ensure that the Board's delegated authority is recorded by terms of reference for board committees, job descriptions for honorary officers, trustees and any staff, and that reporting procedures back to the Board are recorded in writing and complied with
- d) To ensure the Board regularly reviews Kent Downs Trust's governance structure and its own performance.

- e) To ensure that major decisions and policies are made by the trustees acting collectively
- f) To ensure that the Board has on it the skills it requires to govern Kent Downs Trust well, and that the Board has access to, and considers, relevant external professional advice and expertise
- g) To ensure that there is a systematic, open and fair procedure for recruitment of new trustees and any staff
- h) To ensure that all members of the Board receive appropriate induction on their appointment and that they continue to receive appropriate advice, information and training (both individual and collective)

C. Structure of the Board

As specified in Clause 9(3) of the Constitution, there shall be a minimum of four and a maximum of eleven trustees, with trustees being of three types: trustees appointed by the Trust Board, trustees nominated by the Kent Downs AONB Partnership and the ex-officio AONB Director.

Each trustee must have:

- A strong commitment to the purposes of the Trust and the time requirement for trusteeship
- Integrity, sound independent judgement and a willingness to speak their mind
- Strategic vision and the ability to think creatively
- An understanding and acceptance of the legal duties, responsibilities and liabilities of trusteeship
- An ability to work effectively as a member of a team and to take decisions for the good of the Trust
- A commitment to inspire participation in the Trust by people and organisations that support its charitable purposes

The board of trustees collectively needs skills and experience in the following areas:

- Public policy, particularly in relation to the environment and protected landscapes
- National and local voluntary sector and the management of volunteers
- National and local government, statutory bodies and collaborative partnerships
- Financial management, income generation and enterprise
- External funding bids

- Human resource management (If/when the Trust employs staff)
- The needs of business, in particular of farming and forestry
- Public engagement and promotion of the Trust's work

D. Governance procedures

These complement the processes described in the Constitution.

1. Election of the Chair

a) The Chair will be elected by the Trustees from amongst their number and will serve for a term of 2 years. Further terms may be served upon re-appointment, subject to a limit of three consecutive terms (i.e. six years), after which there must be a break of at least one term before re-appointment.

b) The role and responsibilities of the chair are described in an Appendix to this document.

2. Board meetings and decision making

Clause 13 to 19 and 24 of the Trust's Constitution specify a number of requirements for trustee meetings and decision making, including how notice is given, the quorum for meetings and delegation to committees. In addition:

a) Meetings are to be held as often as Trustee Board business requires but a minimum of four times a year

b) The date and time of meetings should be arranged to suit most Trustees, but ensuring that no one member is continually prevented from attending meetings

c) Trustees may invite people with expertise to advise the Board to all or part of a meeting and must give five days' notice (by email or post) to other Trustees that they have made the invitation

d) All decisions by the Board are deemed to be taken by all the trustees, acting collectively and as a team. Decisions need not be unanimous; a majority decision is sufficient (except under the circumstances described in Clause 18 of the Trust's Constitution) but the Board is encouraged to seek consensus wherever possible.

e) No decision shall be taken at a meeting unless a quorum is present at the time when the decision is taken. The quorum is three charity trustees, or the number nearest to one third of the total number of charity trustees, whichever is greater, or such larger number as the charity trustees may decide from time to time. A charity trustee shall not be counted in the quorum present when any decision is made about a matter upon which he or she is not entitled to vote.

E. Trustee expenses

a) Clauses 5 and 6 of the Trust's Constitution cover the payments that may be made to trustees. They allow the Trust to reimburse trustees for reasonable expenses incurred in carrying out their duties (5(1a)) but do not allow trustees to receive payment for acting as a trustee.

b) Clause 6 provides scope for the Trust to make other payments to a minority of trustees (such as to compensate them for loss of earnings or for the provision of services to the trust), for which prior approval is needed from the Charity Commission. The engagement of trustees to provide services will only be considered in exceptional circumstances.

c) The Board should draw up a Trustee Expenses and Payments Policy based on the Charity Commission's guidance document CC11 'Trustee expenses and payments'.

F. Trustee induction and training

d) Trustees will receive, and make themselves available for, a comprehensive induction upon joining the Board, arranged for founding trustees by the Kent Downs AONB Unit and thereafter by the Trust Board with the support of the AONB Unit.

e) Trustees will receive, and make themselves available for, such ongoing training and familiarisation of issues as is deemed necessary for them to fulfil their role and responsibilities, as advised by the Kent Downs AONB Unit.

Appendix: Role descriptions for Trustees

Honorary Treasurer – Finance Trustee

Direct Report: Works closely with the Chair, senior staff (if appointed) and the Board of Trustees.

1. Role Summary

- Monitor the financial standing of the Kent Downs Trust and reports to the Board and CEO regarding cash-flow forecasting, income streams, out-going expenses and the overarching strategic management of the organisation's financial resources.
- Oversee the charity's financial risk-management process and report financial health to the board of trustees at regular intervals.
- Act as a counter signatory on payments of funds and applications to funders and ensure that annual accounts are submitted to all relevant regulators in a timely fashion.
- Liaise with external examiners/auditors on financial issues and ensuring that the Trust's finances are responsibly managed/invested for the betterment of the Trusts' work and for the beneficiaries it serves.

2. Main Responsibilities of the Treasurer

In relation to Finance

Budgeting and strategic financial planning

- Ensure all strategic plans are financially appraised and budgets are aligned to both short-term and long-term objectives each year.
- Oversee planning/budgeting processes in participation with the Board and constructively challenge where required.
- Suggest alternative scenarios while evaluating strategic plans as a part of the risk management process.
- Follow SORP (i.e. charity reporting) guidelines to ensure transparency and accountability in relation to resource allocation.

Management Reporting

- Ensure a high standard of management accounting is maintained in order to safeguard assets.
- Prepare and produce management accounts regularly.

Statutory Financial Reporting

- Board level liaison with external examiners/auditors on specific issues in the auditing process and related board representations.

- Guide and advise fellow trustees to formally approve the annual report and audited accounts.
- Explain technicalities of accounts in plain language which is fully understood by the trustees.

Reserves Policy

- Develop reserves policy and safeguard the organisation's finances.
- Keep the board informed of free reserves position regularly and advise to cope with changing circumstances.

In relation to Governance

- Lead the Board's duty to ensure proper accounting records are kept, financial resources are controlled, invested and economically spent in line with governance, legal and regulatory requirements.
- Chair finance committees in line with standing orders and terms of reference and reporting findings/developments back to the Board of trustees.
- Advising on the financial implications of the charity's strategic plans and overseeing the charity's financial risk-management process.
- Lead in the development and implementation of financial reserves, cost management and investment policies.

3. Person Specification

Essential

- Qualified accountant with demonstrated commercial awareness and knowledge.
- Knowledge of charity SORP and impending changes.
- Competent use of IT skills.
- Proven ability to communicate and explain financial information to members of the Board and other stakeholders.
- Analytical and evaluation skills, demonstrating good judgement.
- Understanding and acceptance of the legal duties, responsibilities and liabilities of trusteeship.
- Good communication and leadership skills

Desirable

- Demonstrated knowledge and experience of charity fundraising and finance practices.
- Dedicated to the organisation's cause and objectives and willing to act as the charity's ambassador to external bodies, charities and companies.
- Skills and experience in one or more areas of non-executive governance and management e.g. strategic planning, business management, financial/accountancy, understanding of HR issues, experience of Trusts or other grant giving bodies particularly fundraising and legal knowledge.

- A team-oriented approach to problem solving and to management.

4. Time Commitment

- The Board meets at least four times a year and the Treasurer is expected to be available on at least four additional days or part days in a year, as well as spending the time needed to fulfil the 'back room' financial management duties
- Attendance at award meetings or fundraising meetings is optional

Trustee - Fundraising

The general roles and responsibilities of Trustees are given in the Terms of reference. Supplementary guidance on the Trustee role specialising in fundraising is given below.

Main duties

To advise on developing the Trust's fundraising strategy, and oversee fundraising activities including donor and funder relationship building.

With the Treasurer and AONB's Finance Manager ensure fundraising complies with the Fundraising Regulator and reporting requirements met.

Role description

- a) Support the organisation to develop the fundraising strategy and 2 year plan advising on best opportunities for the resources available.
- b) Ensure fundraising activities are compliant with the Fundraising Regulator
- c) To provide training and support to other Board of Trustee members in relevant areas.
- d) To review and set organisational policies and priorities in relevant areas.

Supplementary experience and skills

- In possession of a relevant charity qualification
- Experience of fundraising for a charity
- Ability to develop and review policy documents
- if capacity allows it would be advantageous if the role could provide direct assistance and/or advice within areas of their speciality – eg high level donor networking, individual giving campaigns, Trusts and Foundation applications etc etc.

Person Specification

Essential

- Experience and a track record in raising funds for a charity.
- Skills and ability to ensure that the organisation complies with relevant legislation and guidelines.
- Desire to contribute actively to the board of trustees' role in giving firm strategic direction to the organisation.

- Understanding and acceptance of the legal duties, responsibilities and liabilities of trusteeship.
- Commitment to the organisations' values
- Leadership skills with the ability to work effectively as a member of a team
- Impartiality, fairness and the ability to respect confidences

Desirable

- A previous advisory role.
- Experience of fundraising strategy development
- Experience of partnership working



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Registered charity number: 118473

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