

Taunton Heritage Trust Role of Trustee – FAQ's



- **How many hours per year will I need to commit?**
A – There are four Board meetings per year which normally last between two and two and a half hours. In addition, we ask Trustees to sit on at least one Committee, some of which meet quarterly and some twice per year. Committee meetings normally last between two and two and a half hours.
- **Is there any additional time commitment over and above meetings?**
A – Trustees are asked to gain a general understanding and familiarity with the Taunton Heritage Trust and preferably the wider Almshouse movement in addition. Depending on your particular area of interest – pastoral, housing, the elderly etc, you may be asked to assist with the recruitment process of new Residents, attend the occasional Resident's coffee morning, or for example, be part of the working group involved in the development of additional almshouses for the Trust.
- **What time of day are the Board and Committee meetings held?**
A – The majority of meetings are held on a Tuesday morning in Taunton commencing at 0930 hours. This is under review and so please get in touch if the current meeting times would be a barrier to you becoming a Trustee.
- **What transferable skills am I likely to develop?**
A – A broad range of skills, some of which are as follows - Familiarity with the charitable sector, an understanding of how a Board of Trustees operates, the opportunity to be part of the strategic decision-making process and influence the direction of the Trust, the ability to develop team building skills and to use your diversity of thought and experience for the benefit of the Trust.
- **Are travel costs remunerated?**
A – Yes – Trustees are able to claim travel costs of £0.45 per mile to attend meetings or when incurring any travel cost whilst travelling to an event whilst representing the Trust. This includes the cost of public transport.
- **Does the Trust have an induction process?**
A – Yes. Each newly appointed Trustee meets with the Chief Officer at the Trust's offices, has the opportunity to meet the Staff team and have a walk around one of the almshouse sites. At this stage the Trustee is given a comprehensive induction pack. In addition, the newly appointed Trustee would have the opportunity to meet with the Chairman, and depending on the specific area of interest/committee involvement, will have the opportunity to shadow a relevant member of Staff.

- **Do I need to be proficient in all areas of the Trust's business, ie Finance, before becoming a Trustee?**

A – No, collectively our Board of Trustees have a range of skills and experience and you would not be expected to be proficient in all areas. As Trustees become more familiar with the workings of the Trust, their skills often develop in new areas for them. We are looking for enthusiasm, empathy and a sharing of the ethos of the Trust!

- **How are Trustees expected to prepare for meetings?**

A – Agendas are prepared in advance by the Chief Officer and a pack of papers are made available to Trustees at least five days ahead of each meeting. You can receive these by email or by paper.

- **What will the process for Trustee recruitment be?**

Anyone interested in becoming a Trustee will be invited to the office for an informal chat to gain an understanding of the work of the Trust, the specifics of the role of Trustee and the required level of commitment. If still interested, individuals will be asked to complete a brief application form, explaining their reasons for wanting to be involved and what they feel they can bring to the Trust. Applications will be considered by the Appointments Committee and will be assessed in

- **What are the issues of the day for the Taunton Heritage Trust?**

A – The Taunton Heritage Trust has a long history and has been operating in one form or another in Taunton since the 1600's. However, as a charity and housing provider, we are conscious of the need to ensure the Trust's relevance and viability well into the twenty-first century and beyond. Finding a solution to solve the housing crisis for the elderly is high on the national social agenda, and almshouses are seen as part of the answer in that they provide a "scaffolding" around an individual, enabling them to live independently in their own home for longer. Due to the increasing need for our type of accommodation, the Trust is in the process of developing additional almshouses and replacement offices for the Staff team, having secured a town-centre site for this purpose.

The successful completion of this ambitious project, the continuing provision of quality almshouse accommodation to our existing Residents, and the requirement to provide "relief in need" through our Grant Scheme, are all top of the agenda for 2020!