

Prefer plain text?

Email:  
[info@trusteenet.org.uk](mailto:info@trusteenet.org.uk)

**Tip:**

When was the last time your trustees actually went to see the work the charity was doing on the ground? If it wasn't recently think about organising for them to visit projects and beneficiaries. It will help them to better understand the work of the charity and keep them motivated to work to continue working for the charity.

news and opinion from a chair's perspective

## It's not easy being chair

Helen Rice talks about how having a mentor has helped her in her role as chair of the Women's Resource Centre [www.wrc.org.uk](http://www.wrc.org.uk).

"I've advised on good governance practices for the last 10 years and spent two years working at the Charity Commission, and I have to say until I took on the role of chair I never really understood how tough it was. I had been a trustee for many years but now I was in a new realm! I found the first couple of months difficult, trying to decide what I was meant to do... it was at this point that I decided I need some support... because it really felt lonely at the top. I had great trustees around me but I knew I needed some external specialist support and decided to use a mentor who had high level governance expertise and whose advice and support I trusted implicitly.

I already knew the mentor professionally and approached them because I trusted and looked up to them. This made it easier as I did not have to go through the "getting to know you" phase. I meet my mentor once every two months and I occasionally call in between that time if I want some reassurance about my actions. Having a mentor makes me feel safe and able to make tough decisions. I believe in continuing development and that I need to be the very best I can be for the charity I volunteer for and for the beneficiaries. The mentoring costs the charity £60 an hour, I have 2hrs every two months before each board meeting and it is well worth every penny!! Having a mentor makes being a chair just that little bit easier and I recommend it to everyone."

## Chairtalk

Chairtalk is a place for a small group of up to ten chairs to meet every two months – to reflect, pool ideas, make sense of what's going on and learn from each other. The group meets from 6 -9 in the evening, and starts with a light buffet.

Chairtalk works on the basis that you get to know and trust the other chairs who are there. This doesn't happen overnight, so chairs are asked to commit to three meetings.

Meetings take place in the comfortable offices of central London law firm Bircham Dyson Bell (just over the road from St James tube), and are co-facilitated by Amanda Falkson and Martin Farrell - both of whom have many years of experience of the voluntary sector.

The fee for three meetings is £300, however, **trusteenetplus** members are eligible for a reduced fee of £210. In addition, any chair that has registered on CTN's website can take part in Chairtalk for the reduced fee of £240.

For more details visit [www.chairtalk.org.uk](http://www.chairtalk.org.uk) or contact Martin on 020 8404 8661 [martin.farrell@get2thepoint.org](mailto:martin.farrell@get2thepoint.org) or Amanda on 0777 557 0208 [amanda@toughatthetop.org.uk](mailto:amanda@toughatthetop.org.uk). For more details about trusteeplus go to [www.trusteenet.org.uk](http://www.trusteenet.org.uk)

## In the Hot Seat

Questions put to Abhi Naha, Chair of Beatbullying, which aims to reduce and prevent the incidence and impact of bullying, (physical, emotional, verbal, genderised, racist, inter-faith, homophobic) between young people. [www.beatbullying.org](http://www.beatbullying.org)

**What attracted you to becoming a chair?** The ability to influence the strategy of Beatbullying and build a strong team of trustee board members.

**How did you become chair of Beatbullying?** Elected by the existing trustee board members.

**Is there anything that would make you an even more effective chair?** A stronger understanding of latest charity governance issues also frequent benchmarking exercises with other charities in a friendly open environment.

**What's the biggest challenge you have faced in your role?** Aligning and communicating the role of the chair in partnership with the CEO. This means taking a less hands on day to day approach and the board members acting as mentors.

**What is the major area of work or issue that you are facing now as chair?** Creating and implementing an expansion strategy for Beatbullying. The Beatbullying staff have done an excellent job in surpassing all their goals and targets, so much so that we now have to choose carefully what we say No to rather than what we say Yes to.

**What do you consider the most satisfying aspect of your role as chair?** Being surrounded by such a talented and giving team of board members. It's amazing to meet up with everyone on Saturday afternoons in our quarterly board meetings and really give 100% of our efforts, skills and contacts to such a wonderful cause of helping young people.

**What do you think is the ideal term of office that a chair should serve?** 3 years.

**What tip would you give to a new chair?** 'Seek first to Understand, Then to be understood' 5th Habit from The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People by Stephen R. Covey.

**If you weren't a chair, what would you do with that time?** Help railway children in Kolkata.

**Does your trustee board have any methods in place for appraising its own performance?** Not yet but working on this.

**Is there any particular publication, course or resource that you have found helpful and would recommend to other chairs?**

'Synchronicity: The Inner Path of Leadership' by Jaworski

## Getting More Women on Board

Women make up 51% of the population, but only 38% of trustees are women. The Women in Governance Project (WingG), run by Richmond upon Thames Council for Voluntary Service, encourages women to

### ANY OTHER BUSINESS?

Do let us have your feedback on this e-newsletter by replying to this email. Let us know if we are getting it right or how we can improve this e-newsletter. Chair focus goes out bi-monthly, and we want as much content as possible to be from you - we would really welcome your ideas and submissions.

This newsletter is sent to you by CTN

3-4 Frensham Suite, Friary Court 13-21 High Street, Guildford GU1 3DG.

If you would prefer not to receive it, please email [info@trusteenet.org.uk](mailto:info@trusteenet.org.uk) and you will be removed from our mailing list.

phone: 01483 230280

website:  
[www.trusteenet.org.uk](http://www.trusteenet.org.uk)

Registered Charity  
1110979

CTN is a limited company registered in England and Wales with Company No 5499220

recognise their experience of using local services as a valuable resource and seeks to equip them with the knowledge, skills and confidence to pursue roles in local governance - school governors, local councillors, charity trustees or members of a local Primary Care Trust decision-making body.

While the project is focused on women, the resources it has created provide universal guidelines about how to attract not just women but diverse groups of men as well. These resources are available on the project's website [www.rcvswing.org.uk](http://www.rcvswing.org.uk) and include -

- **The Good Governance Guide: Getting More Women on Board** – a guide to encourage charities to be more representative of their local populations and to embrace diversity and use it to strengthen decision-making.
- A **Toolkit** of resources which can either be used to help set up a WinG course or as individual units. The Toolkit includes, powerpoint presentations, handouts and exercises.
- Resources on getting volunteers involved and promoting and recruiting trusteeship and other vacancies.

### **DSC trustee conference – Free places!**

A few free places are still available for this conference which is on Friday 14 March (in London). This conference is aimed at new and existing trustees, senior teams and advisors working with trustee boards, and will help attendees address issues of diversity on the board, find new trustees and develop better policies and practices.

For more information go to [www.dsc.org.uk](http://www.dsc.org.uk) or call 08450 77 77 07.

### **Third Sector Performer**

Are you looking for ways to appraise your trustee board, to explore your own developmental needs as a trustee or need help developing job descriptions for senior staff members?

The Third Sector Performer may be able to help you with these areas of work. It's an online tool (created by the Workforce Hub and the Third Sector Leadership Centre) drawing together a range of relevant National Occupational Standards in a single assessment tool that can be used for leadership skills mapping, recruitment, appraisals and to inform training and development programmes.

The tool is in its final stages of development and will be launched in the near future. If you are interested in finding out more go to:  
<http://www.thirdsectorleadership.org.uk/DisplayPage.asp?pageid=10894>

If you would like to be one of the first to use the tool when it is launched please email [claire.f@trusteenet.org.uk](mailto:claire.f@trusteenet.org.uk).