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trustee focus



JUNE 2007

NEWS

Does your chair know about the new service from CTN, 'chair to chair'? Chairs and vice-chairs will benefit from exclusive web content on our website trusteenet

- a regular e-newsletter for chairs
- an e-network for chairs with a private discussion forum
- the opportunity to become or to sign up for an e-mentor

[Log in](#) or [sign up](#) to [trusteenet](#) to take advantage of these exclusive pages.

'CHARITIES ACT 2006 – WHAT TRUSTEES NEED TO KNOW'

The Cabinet Office and the Charity Commission have launched a plain English guide to the new Charities Act 2006, primarily aimed at those running small charities.

To access the guide, [click here](#)

news and opinion from a trustee perspective

news

The Questions every trustee should ask...

Last Monday, 18th June, CTN held its second Trusteeship Lecture which was delivered by the Chair of the Charity Commission, Dame Suzi Leather. The lunch and lecture was generously supported by CCLA and proved a big hit with over 250 trustees who attended.

Trustees had a chance to network, as well as to attend morning and afternoon seminars on the new Charities Act 2006 (delivered by Ben Harrison of the Office of the Third Sector), Trusteeship and Governance (Jolanta Lasota of the Governance Hub) and Investment (James Bevan of CCLA).

More networking took place at each of the tables over lunch and then Dame Suzi Leather delivered her lecture. She echoed the central theme of the event – the Questions every trustee should ask – and said that she couldn't think of any they *shouldn't* ask. She continued, "In fact, I'd go further and say that I firmly believe a board's prime responsibility is to ask questions, challenge complacency and push boundaries, even – sometimes – at the expense of our own serenity".

Reflecting on the day, Jolanta Lasota said, "It was a very good event with positive, engaged participants. I think they all appreciated the quality of the event and the format."

Click [here](#) to access a copy of Dame Suzi's speech.

CTN chair Charities Act 2006 Regional Events

CTN Chief Executive Karen Heenan and CTN trustees have been active around the regions chairing the series of regional events run by the Office of the Third Sector and the Charity Commission to raise awareness of the Charities Act 2006 and its implementation.

CTN trustee Tim Toghill said of the event he chaired in Bristol, 'The main messages from the delegates were concern over payment of trustees, the test for public benefit and an appreciation of ongoing consultation. The message from the Office of the Third Sector was increasing flexibility, enhancing accountability and reducing red tape. The plain English guide to the Act was well received.' Tim said that the session provided, 'a good summary of the content and implementation of the Charities Act 2006'.

Meet Claire Farmer, CTN's new Head of Operations...

Claire Farmer joined CTN at the start of June 2007 as Head of Operations, having previously worked in a variety of charities, including in the areas of regeneration, supported housing and asylum. She spent 4 years working at the Charity Commission, most of which involved carrying out Review Visits to charities. Claire is also a trustee of Bishop Creighton House Settlement, a multipurpose community centre in Fulham, London.

What was it that made you interested in working at CTN?

I've always enjoyed working with charities, and my time at the Commission gave me a really good understanding of charities and the work of trustees. When I saw this post advertised it seemed like a really great opportunity to bring together my skills and the area in which I enjoy working, and I was very pleased when I was offered the job.

What are you reading at the moment?

I'm part of the way through a collection of Russian short stories, but I really should be reading ['Charities Act 2006: What trustees need to know'](#).

What's the best thing about being a trustee?

Being able to be part of something that you really believe in and responsible for making it even better. Also, sitting around at events gossiping and drinking with the staff.

Any difficulties?

Trying to be an interested, involved and useful trustee without imposing on the staff too much or getting in their way.

If you could recommend two resources for trustees that you have found useful, what would they be?

I really like NCVO's ['Tools for Tomorrow: A Practical Guide to Strategic Planning for Voluntary Organisations'](#), which really does what it says on the tin. Also, the Commission's guidance on risk management (['Charities and Risk Management'](#) available on the Commission's website under Guidance for Charities), which is a very straightforward introduction to risk management for those, like me, who found it a little intimidating.

Free BME Trustee Development Programme Places

The Directory of Social Change is offering practical facilitated workshops for trustees, and those considering becoming a trustee, of BME community organisations. The course offers a support and mentoring package providing participants with the skills to be an effective trustee. Participation is free (with £100 refundable deposit).

The programme looks at the issues that trustees from BME community groups face and offers very practical ways of approaching and dealing with them. The three-hour workshops run consecutively once a week for four weeks. However there is flexibility within the programme.

Spaces are limited – book now to ensure your FREE place by contacting Kajol, Grants Programme Manager, on 020 7391 4819, or email programmemanager@dsc.org.uk.

TRUSTEE TIPS

Having a policy of recruiting a chair from outside brings in new ideas

COULD YOU OFFER MENTORING SUPPORT?

Mentors are also required for this programme - contact Kajol using the details opposite.

GOVERNANCE HUB PARTNERSHIP PROGRAMME

If you are a trustee of an umbrella organisation or federated charity, you may be interested in applying for the Governance Hub's small grants Partnership Programme, which aims to improve governance in such organisations at a national, regional and local level.

The closing date is 23 August 2007. Click here for the [framework](#) and [application form](#) or contact Alison Taylor, Implementation Manager at alison.taylor@ncvo-vol.org.uk.

TRUSTEE TIPS

Make time every so often to meet fellow trustees outside of trustee meetings. This helps you to get to know each other better and gives you the chance to discuss things in a different context.

Poll results – what you think about those burning issues...

CTN runs regular polls on trustee.net which give us a snapshot of trustees' thoughts on current issues. Here are the results of our last three polls...

Trustee Indemnity Insurance

Trustee indemnity insurance is currently a much-debated issue, following the changes introduced in the Charities Act 2006 which makes it much easier for charities to buy it on behalf of trustees. We asked 'will you use the new power of the charities act 2006 to purchase trustee indemnity insurance through your charity?' 38% said yes, 35% no, and 27% were unsure. Which pretty much reflects the current state of debate on the issue and the differing views we come across in our conversations with trustees at events and seminars.

Should trustees be paid?

A more clear-cut response was provided by the responses to our question, 'should trustees be paid?' with the majority (63%) saying that they should not be. 25% felt that trustees should be paid and only 7% were unsure, so this is an issue where it seems views are more firmly held.

And finally, on a more prosaic note, we asked 'How did you hear about trustee.net?' and it turns out that most of you knew of us through another website or word of mouth.

If you think we have missed out on a central question which you would like to see asked in one of our polls, please email your suggestions to kathy.b@trusteenet.org.uk

Network News

Two face-to-face networks are featured below. If you would like your network to be featured here next month, just email your news and events to kathy.b@trusteenet.org.uk

The Shropshire Charity Trustee Network

The Shropshire Charity Trustee Network is free to join and offers a regular newsletter and programme of meetings. The Network is open to all charity trustees, management committee members and company directors of registered charities, community groups, voluntary organisations and not-for-profit companies based in the county. Future events include:

6.00-8.30pm Wednesday 12 September 2007 - Management Committee Roles and Responsibilities course.

An introduction or reminder of the basics about governing documents, committee and individual roles and responsibilities. At the Community Council of Shropshire's offices, Shrewsbury Business Park. A small fee is payable.

6.30-8.30pm Tuesday 18 September 2007 – Effective Decision Making

Being held at the Sundorne Sports Village. Free to attend but prior booking required.

w/c 3 December morning meeting on Trustee Annual Reports plus lunch

Contact VSSU at the Community Council of Shropshire 01743 360641 email jean.garner@shropshire-rcc.org.uk

The Honorary Treasurers' Forum

The Honorary Treasurers' Forum held an interesting meeting on the 10th May when the theme of the meeting was Trends in Fundraising and Fundraising Regulation. There were excellent presentations from Lindsay Boswell, Chief Executive of the Institute of Fundraising, Jon Scourse, Chief Executive Fundraising Standards Board and Dr Richard Marsh, ImpACT Director. The meeting was very successful.

The next meeting of the Forum is on the 17th October when the theme will be "Investments" and again some very interesting speakers are being lined up. The meeting will be in central London starting at 2.30 and finishing at 4pm.

The Forum has just registered as a charity and the Trustees are about to produce a strategy to take the organisation forward. If any Treasurer is interested in joining the Forum please can they contact Les Jones, email: LDjones1000@aol.com or phone 0118 9412365.

CTN promotes face-to-face trustee networks and there are a number of active networks listed on our website. To find out if there is one near you, go to our [networks](#) page for a listing. If you find that there isn't one, why not start one of your own? For advice on how to do it, just download our helpsheet '[How to set up a network](#)'.

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 kathy.b@trusteenet.org.uk and you will be removed from our mailing list.

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