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news and opinion from a trustee perspective

What can CTN do for you?

ctn is launching its first survey of trustees to find out just what services and support you want us to offer.

By responding to the survey, you will help us tailor our work to meet your needs. In addition, the more responses we get the better the evidence we will have to go to funders to demonstrate that we need funding to help us support trustees – and you all know how helpful that is.

To take part in the survey, click on this link

http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=qZXX7TGSATaNOvL1lfy4YQ_3d_3d. It shouldn't take any longer than 5 minutes to complete. You can also access the link through the news page of our website www.trusteenet.org.uk.

News from the Charity Commission

The Charity Commission has launched a new service enabling you to complete your charity's Annual Return or Update online. It can also be used to keep your Register details up to date, submit your trustee annual report and accounts or just to write to the Commission.

The Charity Commission says the service is free, fast and available 24 hours a day, with immediate email confirmation that your information has been received. To access the online service visit www.charitycommission.gov.uk and click the relevant link in the Online Services box.

Do post your comments and experience of using the service on our trustee online forum pages at www.trusteenet.org.uk/forum.

HIDDEN NETWORKS

Do you know of any trustee networks that aren't listed on our website? If you are involved with a network that is not listed, do get in touch and we can promote your events. Email info@trusteenet.org.uk or call 01483 230280

ctn events

9th November – Lunch and Lecture at York Racecourse

Following a very successful lunch and lecture in London earlier this year, we are holding a second event in York, with the generous support of CCLA. **Julia Unwin, Director of the Joseph Rowntree Foundation and former Charity Commissioner**, will be giving the keynote lecture after a delicious sit-down lunch. Before and after the lunch and lecture, there will be seminars on investments, trusteeship and governance and the Charities Act 2006. Book a place by completing the booking form which is attached to the news item at www.trusteenet.org.uk.

The event costs just £25, but places are free for **trusteenetplus** members. So, if you are not already a **trusteenetplus** member, this is a

great reason to join. For just £40 for your first year, you can come along to this event and also benefit from a year's subscription to **governance** magazine and trustee indemnity insurance. Sign up for membership through our website at www.trusteenet.org.uk.

11th December – Newcastle-upon-Tyne

We are just putting the final details together for an event in Newcastle. Rumour has it that it will involve a medieval hog roast and mulled wine, as well as a lecture and seminars by interesting speakers on useful topics. If you are in the area, keep that date free and we'd love to see you in Newcastle.

Watch out for more events in 2008 – It's **ctn's** 10th anniversary year and as well as holding our lunch and lecture there will be a range of other exciting events.

And don't forget to share our invitation to these events with your fellow trustees or board members.

The questions every trustee should ask... on governance

The Governance Hub gave a presentation at CTN's lunch and lecture event in June, focusing on the questions every trustee should ask on governance.

Questioning is essential for collective decision-making – it ensures that there is clarity, a shared understanding, open communication, a healthy debate, inclusion and buy-in to the decisions of the board. Questioning can be informal, through the day-to-day business of the board, or it can be more structured through a board review exercise.

Further, the Governance Hub identified 20 questions for trustees to assess their own individual performance on the board. Here are five key questions:

1. Do I have a copy of the organisation's governing documents?
2. Am I clear about the organisation's aims / purpose?
3. Do I know what the organisation's legal status is?
4. Do I know what my personal liability is as a trustee?
5. Am I sufficiently informed about activities of the organisation to take part in decision-making?

If you would like to see a copy of the Governance Hub presentation, click on the following link –

<http://www.trusteenet.org.uk/files/The%20questions%20every%20trustee%20should%20ask%20-%20trusteeship%20and%20governance.pdf>

Meet Paige Sinkler, ctn's new Deputy Chief Executive...

Paige Sinkler joined **ctn** in July. She has always worked in the charitable and public sector, most recently for the Big Lottery Fund, and is an active committee member of her local National Childbirth Trust. Paige will be focusing on developing CTN's membership scheme, **trusteenet**, to make it as relevant and useful to you as possible, as well as looking at organisational development and other issues.

What was it that made you interested in working for ctn?

The opportunity to help trustees become confident and informed about

KEEP YOUR DETAILS UP
TO DATE

If your details have changed,
log in to
www.trusteenet.org.uk to
update them.

Signposting

For more information on governance issues, try the following websites...

The Governance Hub - www.governancehub.org.uk

NCVO (the National Council for Voluntary Organisations) - www.ncvo-vol.org.uk

The Charity Commission - www.charitycommission.gov.uk

Charity Trustee Networks - www.trusteenet.org.uk

their roles was too good to pass up, as it means supporting charitable work across the country whilst also working directly with people. I also enjoy the nuts and bolts of organisational management, so the job was the perfect mix for me.

What is the best thing about being a trustee?

The opportunity to develop services and resources that truly help people through challenging times in their lives.

Any difficulties?

Everyone wants more on offer, but very few volunteer to help make it happen!

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

I find Charity Commission information booklets extremely useful and very accessible, answering all the obvious questions as well as the more complex ones, without being patronising.

So what are you reading at the moment?

Christmas catalogues... trying to find something for everyone prior to December 24th!

The new Charity Tribunal

In early 2008, a new independent Charity Tribunal will be established, which will be able to review any decision made by the Charity Commission.

The draft rules for the Tribunal are currently out for consultation, so if you would like to contribute to their development, go to the Ministry of Justice's website at <http://www.justice.gov.uk/publications/cp1907.htm>. CTN will be submitting a response and we will take into account any views on the forum pages, so do post your comments there. The consultation closes on 7th November 2007.

The voice of trustees

ctn is seeking to speak up on your behalf. With a plethora of national policies and developments underway at any one time, we aim to identify the important issues that will affect you in your role as a trustee, to gather your perspectives and to represent those to the decision-makers.

What we hear from you is that you are busy people. After all, "if you want something doing, ask a busy person". That is certainly true of so many trustees who volunteer in that role on top of many other commitments – both personal and professional. And we understand the challenge of trying to keep on top of national policies and initiatives that are relevant to you.

Our aim is to do this for you, making sure that the perspective of trustees is considered when policies, laws and regulations are being made. To do this we need to know what you think about particular subjects and what issues are causing you difficulties.

There are a number of ways that we seek to find out what you're thinking:

- **Our polls.** These change every two weeks and give us a snapshot of what trustees think or do on particular subjects, so please do take part.
- **Consultations.** There are many consultations going on at any time.

This newsletter is sent to you by **ctn**

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

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you know through our website and e-newsletters, and will invite you to respond. The more trustees that respond the better **ctn** will be able to represent accurately your views and needs.

- **Website forums.** We initiate online discussions on consultations and we look at postings to identify those issues that are affecting trustees.
- **Networks.** If, through your trustee network, it becomes clear that there is an issue that is causing you difficulty, either let us know yourself or encourage your network organiser to let us know.
- **Surveys.** You've seen the details in this newsletter about our current survey. From time to time (though not too often, we know how annoying that can be) we will invite you to take part in short surveys on topics relevant to trustees and trusteeship.
- **Feedback.** Please do tell us if there is something that is causing you difficulties or stress as a trustee. We will seek to help where we can, but if a number of trustees are having the same problem we will look into what resources we can find or develop to address those needs.

We want to let you know what we do with the information you give us. So keep an eye on our website because you could find that, as a result of you telling us something, there is a new link or resource or event being organised.

Network Events

Please go to www.trusteenet.org.uk for more details of these events

17 October - Honorary Treasurers' Forum – Central London meeting on Investments

25 October – Vale of Glamorgan Trustee Network Meeting

8 November – Birmingham – Trustee Network Open Session – Governance Q & As

5 December – Bromley Finance Forum – Full Cost Recovery

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 the **networks** page on our website 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](#)'.

Any other business?

Do let us have your feedback on this e-newsletter by replying to this email. From now on we will continue to send **trustee focus** out to you bi-monthly. Let us know if we are getting it right or how we can make it better. We would really welcome your ideas and submissions.