Candidate Information Pack

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For the role of Trustee (Finance)

Friends of Westonbirt Arboretum

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A Welcome from Martyn Smith, Chair of Trustees

I very much welcome your interest in exploring the possibility of joining the Friends of Westonbirt Arboretum (FoWA) as a voluntary Board Trustee.

FoWA works closely with Forestry England to preserve, enhance and develop the unique landscape of Westonbirt, The National Arboretum. First established in 1985, the charity now employs 17 members of staff and serves more than 39,000 members.

In December 2019, we launched our new joint 10-year vision with Forestry England, to be a 'world leader in trees, inspiring people through Conservation, Education and Participation.' A key part of the vision is the delivery of long-term plans to develop the site further. The Friends play a significant role in fundraising and income generation to support this vision and provide grants to Forestry England and other third parties. The Board and the CEO have embarked on a period of strategic change and transformation. This is an exciting time for both the charity and the Arboretum.

To realise our vision the charity relies on the support and guidance of a dedicated and skilled Board of Trustees, who are actively involved in the strategic direction, governance and decision-making of the organisation and are fundamental to ensuring the charity is well governed.

I hope this pack will give you the information you need to help decide whether to take your application further. Please get in touch if you have any other questions.

Best wishes,
Martyn Smith, Chair of Trustees, FoWA

Background to FoWA

FoWA is a registered charity based at Westonbirt, the National Arboretum, in Tetbury, Gloucestershire. We were set up in 1985 when a small group of enthusiasts decided they wanted to help preserve and develop this unique landscape of over 15,000 trees and 600 acres of woodland.

Our vision is to support Westonbirt to be a world leader in trees, inspiring people through education, participation and conservation.

Our mission is to support Westonbirt to connect people with trees to improve the quality of life.

Our charitable aims are to further public enjoyment and knowledge of this world-renowned tree collection and to secure its sustainable future. We do this by engaging, informing and increasing membership and by giving financial and practical support to the management and development of Westonbirt, The National Arboretum.

Westonbirt Arboretum is not only an important environmental and educational resource for those who live locally but performs work that has national and international benefits. At Westonbirt Arboretum, Forestry England train expert arborists who will help care for woodlands and forests across the UK and take part in climate change research that benefits worldwide environmental understanding. The Friends charity supports these efforts through grant making and income generation while broadening understanding through our communications.

The Friends of Westonbirt Arboretum is registered with the Charity Commission (no. 4965522) and Companies House (no. 293190) as a non-profit making company limited by guarantee. The charity also has a separate enterprise trading arm and is responsible for the onsite shop. The profits from the shop are given out in grants each year to support development at the arboretum.

Under charity law, we are overseen by a voluntary Board of Trustees. The trustees hold responsibility for the charity's direction, policies, key strategies, budget, staffing levels and how our performance is measured.

Day-to-day management responsibilities are the responsibility of the charity's Chief Executive Officer.

The charity operates in a formal partnership agreement with Forestry England who own and run the site and day to operations of the tree care and visitor attraction.

Trustee Role Description

As a member of the Board, each Trustee will ensure that the organisation is:

- achieving its objects defined in its Articles of Association
- operating within relevant legal, financial and regulatory requirements
- effective in pursuing its strategic priorities and realising best practice.

Responsibilities

Trustees have and must accept ultimate responsibility for directing the affairs of the charity, and ensuring that it is solvent, well run, and delivering the charitable outcomes for the benefit of the public for which it has been set up. Trustees provide the organisation with strategic leadership and maintain a governance perspective.

Compliance

Trustees must ensure that the charity complies with charity law, and with the requirements of the Charity Commission as regulator; in particular they must ensure that the charity is accountable by preparing reports on what it has achieved, Annual Returns and accounts as required by law.

Trustees must ensure that they do not breach any of the requirements or rules set out in the charity's governing document, and that it remains true to its charitable purpose and objects.

Trustees must comply with the requirements of other legislation and other regulators which govern the activities of the charity such as the fundraising regulator.

Trustees must act with integrity in the charity's best interest and avoid any personal conflicts of interest or misuse of charity funds or assets.

Duty of Prudence

Trustees must ensure that the charity is and will remain solvent.

Trustees must manage charitable funds and assets responsibly, and only in furtherance of the objects.

Trustees must avoid undertaking activities that might place the charity's endowment, funds, assets or reputation at undue risk.

Trustees must take special care when investing the funds of the charity or borrowing funds for the charity to use.

Duty of Care

Trustees must use reasonable care and skill in their work as trustees, using their personal skill, knowledge and experience as needed to ensure that the charity is well-run and efficient.

Trustees must consider taking external professional advice on all matters where there may be material risk to the charity, or where the trustees may be in breach of their duties.

In addition to the statutory requirements set out by the Charity Commission (above), Trustees of FoWA are expected:

- to work together to provide clear strategic direction to the charity, setting overall strategy and policy, agreeing goals and targets with the Chief Executive, and evaluating performance against agreed targets
- to be collectively responsible for the actions of the charity
- to represent the charity at functions and meetings as appropriate
- to declare any conflict of interest while carrying out the duties of a trustee
- to attend meetings, and to read and be familiar with papers in advance of meetings
- to serve on panels and attend panel meetings as appropriate
- to keep up to date about the activities of the charity and wider issues which affect its work

Trustee Person specification

All trustees of FoWA must have:

- integrity
- a commitment to the organisation and its objectives
- an understanding and acceptance of the legal duties, responsibilities and liabilities of trusteeship
- a willingness to devote the necessary time and effort to their duties as a trustee
- strategic vision
- good, independent judgement
- an ability to think creatively
- willingness to speak their mind
- an ability to work effectively as a member of a team

Finance Trustee Person specification

Essential

- A recognised professional accounting qualification (e.g. ACA, ACCA, CIMA or equivalent).
- Significant senior-level finance experience.
- Ability to interpret complex financial information and communicate insights clearly to non-financial audiences.
- Experience of strategic financial planning, financial oversight and risk management.
- Strong analytical skills and sound judgement.
- Ability to provide supportive challenge and independent perspective at Board level.
- A commitment to the values, vision and objectives of Friends of Westonbirt Arboretum.
- An understanding of, or willingness to develop understanding of, trustee responsibilities and charity governance.
- Ability to work collaboratively and constructively as part of a Board.

Desirable

- Experience of serving on a Board or committee.
- Experience within the charity sector.
- Knowledge of investment oversight, audit, governance or enterprise activities.

- Experience supporting organisational transformation, growth or strategic change.

We are seeking an individual who can strengthen the Board's collective capability by bringing substantial financial expertise and strategic insight. The successful candidate will be comfortable asking challenging questions, scrutinising financial information and contributing to major strategic decisions, while recognising the distinction between governance and operational management.

This role would suit a senior finance professional who wishes to use their expertise to support a well-established charity making a significant contribution to one of the UK's most important arboreta and environmental resources.

Trustees will also need to complete an eligibility form (available **here**) prior to appointment.

CODE of CONDUCT

FoWA has a Code of Conduct in place which all Trustees are required to sign up to on joining the Board. The full document can be made available on request.

Details and how to apply

Time Commitment

- Four Board meetings per year (approximately three hours each).
- One annual strategy meeting.
- Reading papers and preparation in advance of meetings.
- Attendance at Finance and Risk Panel meetings or other relevant committee meetings as required.

Please send a CV and cover letter stating

1. Why you are interested in applying for the role
2. How your skills and experience are relevant to the role
3. How you can add value to the Board
4. Any other relevant information.

to our Board Secretary, Jo Cummings at:

All applications will be treated as confidential.

Closing date is 24 August 2026.
Shortlisted candidates will meet with the CEO and FD on 1 September 2026 and interviews with Chair and other trustees will be held on 25 September 2026.

Trustees are eligible to claim reasonable expenses for attending to the charity's business, including travel expenses for attending meetings.