

Dear member

As part of the AGM we elect trustees. Trustees play a valued and essential role in any charity but in a small charity like the VRA they are even more involved in a day-to-day operations and leading change. It can be a very rewarding role and it's a great way to put something back into the industry, raise your profile and gain new skills for your CV.

The time commitment is around a day per month. There is more detail in the attached role profile but I've set out more information about how these tasks are carried out in a practical way below:

- Attending trustee meetings and strategy sessions is an important aspect of being a trustee. Many of these are held on zoom and occasionally face to face meetings which are generally held in London. Typically, meetings are within normal working hours or extend just outside these so, on occasion, you are likely to need the support of your employer if you have one.
- Being part of at least one of our subgroups such as marketing, membership, events, research, quality standards or one that may be developed in future, are what makes the VRA work seamlessly.
- Undertaking work between meetings on agreed projects is essential, however we encourage you to get involved with projects of interest to you so it extends your work experience ideally.
- Being the nominated trustee for a number of corporate members and facilitating their engagement with the VRA is a new initiative that helps these very important members to maximise the value of their membership by engaging with us.
- Representing the VRA at occasional events and/or on relevant external groups is encouraged.
- Promoting vocational rehabilitation and the VRA to colleagues, contacts and more widely helps us build our membership and the associated value of the VRA.
- Discharging the usual duties expected of all charity trustees nicely depicted below in this diagram from the Charity Commission.

The Governance Jigsaw – The Essential Trustee (CC3)



It's about knowing:

- what your charity can and can't do within its purposes
- how your charity is fulfilling its purposes and benefiting the public
- what difference your charity is really making

It's about being:

- familiar with your governing document
- up to date with filing accounts, returns and any changes to your charity's registration details
- aware of other laws that apply to your charity

It's not about being:

- an expert - but you do need to take reasonable steps to find out

It's about:

- making balanced, informed decisions
- recognising & dealing with conflicts of interest
- ensuring trustee benefits are allowed
- being prepared to question and challenge
- accepting majority decisions

It's not about:

- preserving the charity for its own sake
- serving personal interests

It's about:

- managing risks, protecting assets (reputation) and people
- getting the resources your charity needs
- having and following appropriate controls and procedures
- dealing with land and buildings
- responsibility for, and to, staff and volunteers

It's about:

- using your skills and experience
- deciding when you need advice
- preparing for meetings
- getting the information you need (financial, management)
- being prepared in case something does go wrong

It's about:

- meeting legal accounting and reporting requirements
- being able to show that your charity complies with the law and is effective
- being accountable to members and others with an interest in the charity
- ensuring that staff and volunteers are accountable to the board
- welcoming accountability as an opportunity not a burden

To find out more about the duties of a charity trustee please read the [Essential Trustee: what you need to know, what you need to do](#) from the Charity Commission.

The trustee nomination form is [here](#) but if you are interested in becoming a trustee and would like to discuss it further please do get in touch. If you aren't ready to be a trustee but would like to get involved with the VRA then we are always keen to include members within groups and projects. This again can be a great way to engage with others in the industry and develop your skills but with less of a time commitment. I can be reached at enquiries@vrassociation.org.uk

Kind regards

Deborah Edwards
Chair

Trustee of the VRA – Role Profile

The duties of a trustee are as follows.

- Ensuring that the organisation pursues its stated purposes, as defined in its constitution, by developing and agreeing a long-term strategy.
- Ensuring that the organisation complies with its constitution, charity law, company law and any other relevant legislation or regulations.
- Ensuring that the organisation applies its resources exclusively in pursuance of its charitable objects (ie the charity must not spend money on activities that are not included in its own objects, however worthwhile or charitable those activities are) for the benefit of the public.
- Ensuring that the organisation defines its goals and evaluates performance against agreed targets.
- Safeguarding the good name and values of the organisation.
- Ensuring the effective and efficient administration of the organisation, including having appropriate policies and procedures in place.
- Ensuring the financial stability of the organisation.
- Protecting and managing the charity's funds.

In addition to the above statutory duties, each trustee should use any specific skills, knowledge or experience they have to help the board of trustees reach sound decisions. This may involve scrutinising board papers, leading discussions, focusing on key issues, providing advice and guidance on new initiatives, or other issues in which the trustee has special expertise.

Person specification

- Member of the VRA.
- A commitment to vocational rehabilitation and the VRA.
- A willingness to devote the necessary time and effort.
- Strategic vision.
- Good, independent judgement.
- An ability to think creatively.

- A willingness to speak their mind.
- An understanding and acceptance of the legal duties, responsibilities and liabilities of trusteeship.
- An ability to work effectively as a member of a team.
- A commitment to Nolan's seven principles of public life: selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership.