



The role of a Trustee at The Atkinson Development Trust

A Trustee's role is all about governance through collective decision-making.

Together, our purpose is to:

- **Determine Mission and Strategy**
 - setting The Atkinson Development Trust's direction and determining how it will get there
- **Ensure accountability**
 - being held to account for the actions of The Atkinson Development Trust and holding those who carry out the work (staff and/or volunteers) to account
- **Look after the Trust**
 - ensuring the Trust's renewal (i.e. recruitment, induction and retirement), decision-making and information-sharing processes are effective, group dynamics are positive, and that reflection, learning and development is taking place
- **Safeguard assets**
 - acting as custodian of the assets, tangible (money, property etc) and intangible (the Trust's reputation and name), ensuring that assets are used appropriately and constitutionally and that there are sufficient assets for the Trusts' survival
- **Act as 'boundary-spanner'**
 - linking the Trust to its stakeholders, such as members, the community, funders etc.

What we ask of Trustees

- Strive to attend all meetings, sending apologies to the Chair for absences
- Prepare for meetings by reading the agenda, papers and emails beforehand
- Talk to the Chair before meetings, if needed, to clarify anything
- Arrive on time and stay to the end
- Participate fully in meetings. Contribute positively, be concise, avoid side conversations
- Have the best interests of the Trust/beneficiaries in mind at all times
- Draw attention to any potential conflicts of interest that may arise in meetings
- Fulfil any responsibilities assigned to them at meetings and be prepared to report back

The skills and qualities a Trustee needs

- A strong commitment to the Trust and its aims
- Willingness to devote the necessary time and effort to participate usefully
- An ability to work collaboratively as part of a group
- Willingness to take on agreed actions as an individual that contribute to the collective effort
- Open-mindedness, independent thinking and good judgement
- Willingness to seek constructive debate and dialogue over confrontation
- The ability to communicate clearly
- An interest in the arts and heritage

Best practice

All Trustees must strive to be:

- Committed to the purpose, objectives and values of the Trust
- Constructive about other Trustees' opinions in discussions
- Able to act reasonably and responsibly when undertaking duties and performing tasks
- Able to maintain confidentiality on sensitive and confidential information
- Supportive of the values and ethics of the Trust
- Aware of the importance and purpose of meetings
- Be committed to preparing for meetings adequately and attending them regularly
- Able to analyse information and, when necessary, challenge constructively
- Able to make collective decisions and stand by them
- Able to respect boundaries between executive and governance functions
- Able to attend special events, e.g. exhibition openings, and act as the Trust's representative

What's legally required of a Trustee

- Act constitutionally and within the law
- Act in the interests of the beneficiaries
- Act reasonably and honestly
- Avoid conflict of interest
- Be active – Trustees are still liable for decisions made by other Trustees in their absence
- Act jointly – an individual has no powers on their own unless they have been specifically given them by the Trust (as recorded in the Minutes at a properly convened meeting)
- Have a duty of care – act prudently and reasonably
- Trustees must not delegate control
- Trustees must not benefit personally – unless allowed specifically in the constitution or by law

Additional information

- Information about being a Trustee: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/charity-trustee-whats-involved>
- Trustees will be asked to sign a declaration to confirm that they are not disqualified from acting as a charity Trustee.
- Information about disqualification: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/automatic-disqualification-rules-forcharity-trustees-and-charity-senior-positions>
- Trustees are appointed for a term of two years, by a resolution passed by Trustees at a properly convened meeting of The Atkinson Development Trust.