

Being a TRUSTEE for THE MOORLAND MOUSIE TRUST

Interested in becoming a Trustee?

- Firstly, send an email or post a cover letter and copy of your relevant CV to ponyofficer@moorlandmousietrust.org.uk or Linzi Green, Exmoor Pony Centre, Ashwick, Dulverton TA22 9QE. Applicants are also welcome to organise a suitable time to have an informal telephone chat or to visit the Centre.
- Secondly, you will be invited to meet with the General Manager, Linzi Green and local trustee Barry Hitchcox at the Exmoor Pony Centre.
- Prospective trustees will then be given an induction pack to include: full set of most recent Annual Accounts, Business Plan, Charity Memorandum and Articles of Association, DBS form, Conflict of Interest form and a copy of the Trustee Indemnity Insurance policy.
- Prospective Trustees will then be invited to join a trustee meeting.
- Successful applicants will be inducted by current trustees and onsite at the Exmoor Pony Centre with the General Manager.

What is involved?

- **Attending meetings at the Exmoor Pony Centre, TA22 9QE**
- **Attending teleconference calls**
- **Supporting local trustees, staff and volunteers in the running of the Exmoor Pony Centre**
- **Promoting the charity locally through networking and attending events**

Before you say “yes, sign me up” here is some information about the roles and responsibilities of a trustee, you can find out more by visiting the Charity Commission website. There is also a FAQs section below specific to the Moorland Mousie Trust’s organisation. We would also draw your attention to our ‘Report of the Trustees for the year end 31 March 2016’ which can be found at the start of the Annual Accounts 2015-16.

What makes a TRUSTEE?

Information taken from <https://www.gov.uk/topic/running-charity/trustee-role-board>

About charity trustees

Trustees have overall control of a charity and are responsible for making sure it’s doing what it was set up to do. They may be known by other titles, such as:

- directors
- board members
- governors
- committee members

Whatever they are called, trustees are the people who lead the charity and decide how it is run. Being a trustee means making decisions that will impact on people’s lives. Depending on what the charity does, you will be making a difference to your local community or to society as a whole.

Trustees use their skills and experience to support their charities, helping them achieve their aims. Trustees also often learn new skills during their time on the board.

Before you start - make sure you are eligible

You must be at least 16 years old to be a trustee of a charity that is a company or a charitable incorporated organisation (CIO), or at least 18 to be a trustee of any other sort of charity.

You must be properly appointed following the procedures and any restrictions in the charity's governing document.

You must not act as a trustee if you are disqualified under the Charities Act, including if you:

- have an unspent conviction for an offence involving dishonesty or deception (such as fraud)
- are bankrupt or have entered into a formal arrangement (eg an individual voluntary arrangement) with a creditor
- have been removed as a company director or charity trustee because of wrongdoing

There is lots of useful guidance on the Charity Commission website.

You can also search for Moorland Mousie Trust Charity information such as previous accounts by searching our charity number 1116710.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-essential-trustee-what-you-need-to-know-cc3>

The Essential Trustee 6 main duties



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

Making decisions as a trustee

Charity trustees make decisions about their charity together, working as a team. Decisions don't usually need to be unanimous as long as the majority of trustees agree. They're usually made at charity meetings.

When you and your co-trustees make decisions about your charity, you must:

- act within your powers
- act in good faith, and only in the interests of your charity
- make sure you are sufficiently informed, taking any advice you need
- take account of all relevant factors you are aware of
- ignore any irrelevant factors
- deal with conflicts of interest and loyalty
- make decisions that are within the range of decisions that a reasonable trustee body could make in the circumstances

You should record how you made more significant decisions in case you need to review or explain them in the future.

Chair and treasurer trustee roles

Some trustees have special roles, such as the chair and the treasurer. They are known as officers. You must comply with any specific provisions in your governing document about officers. Officers don't automatically have any extra powers or legal duties than the other trustees, but may carry out specific roles or have specific responsibilities delegated to them. Don't forget - all trustees remain jointly responsible for the charity. For example, all trustees share responsibility for finances (not just the treasurer).

When trustees can be personally liable

It's extremely rare, but not impossible, for charity trustees to be held personally liable:

- to their charity, if they cause a financial loss by acting improperly
- to a third party that has a legal claim against the charity which the charity can't meet

Understanding potential liabilities will help you to protect yourself and your charity by taking action to reduce the risk. This includes complying with your duties. It also includes deciding whether your charity should become incorporated (for example as a company or CIO).

FAQs

Can I claim expenses? Our current board of trustees do not claim any expenses due to the difficult financial position of the charity however in certain circumstances expenses would be paid to trustees.

What is the risk to me? There is more information above and on the Charity Commission website in the rare case of a trustee being held personally responsible. The Moorland Mousie Trust has an indemnity insurance policy to cover trustees. A copy of which will be supplied to incoming trustees.

Would I need to complete a 'Conflict of Interest' form? Yes, in order for the board to be made fully aware of any relevant associations with other similar organisations or of any personal relationships with somebody associated with the charity or a similar organisation.

Why would I need to fill in a DBS form (disclosure barring service – formerly CRB)? The charity asks all trustees, staff and volunteers to undergo a DBS check as standard.

Do I need any specific qualifications or equine experience? No, just an enthusiasm for our charity and a willingness to participate in matters for the board of trustees.