



Trustee for the Thames Chase Trust with a local authority background

The Thames Chase Trust is seeking to recruit a new trustee to join its board. The board already has the benefit of members with a wide range of commercial, educational, and charitable experience.

However the Trust needs to recruit a trustee whose background and experience will enable him or her to assist the board with its ongoing relationships with local authorities as well as fulfilling the traditional role of a trustee.

Background information:

The Thames Chase Trust manages and promotes the Thames Chase Community Forest.

Community Forests were set up about 20 years ago in areas of countryside with a high proportion of degraded land, too few trees and not enough open space for people to enjoy.

Thames Chase Community Forest has within its borders 40 square miles of countryside encompassing parts of the London Boroughs of Havering and Barking and Dagenham, and Thurrock and Brentwood councils.

16% of the countryside in Thames Chase is made up of former landfill sites, and 20 years ago only 8% had tree cover. In the last 20 years close on 2 million trees have been planted, landfill sites have been restored to mixture of meadows, hedges and woodland, all with engagement from local communities.

Formally managed and funded by a Joint Committee of the 4 local authorities in which TC is situated and Essex County Council, Thames Chase Community Forest is now managed by the Thames Chase Trust and funded by small grants from three of those authorities. Throughout the 20 years, funding has never been sufficient to create or improve enough green spaces for people and wildlife. Progress has always relied on leveraging in funding from outside bodies.

Creating new available open space for people, is not enough. The community needs to know where to find it and to be encouraged to get out and enjoy the variety of countryside that is out there. With that in mind, a centre for the Community Forest was created close to Upminster in what was a former traditional collection of farm buildings. The board of trustees is responsible for managing this facility.

**Job Description:**

Trustees have a very specific role to play in managing a charity. This role is common to all charities. Anyone not familiar with the role can find information about the duties of a trustee on the Charity Commission's website.

The Trustee we are seeking to recruit, will need to be prepared to take on these responsibilities.

In addition to the above the board is looking to recruit someone who has a very good understanding of the way in which local authorities function, in particular in relation to planning, countryside management or administration at the highest level.

The board would expect the successful candidate to have been a service director, deputy CEO or CEO, or to have worked with an organisation that required interacting with local authorities at that level.

Time commitment:

The board of trustees meets formally at quarterly intervals. Normally in the afternoon at the Forest Centre situated close to Upminster. However, since the Trust is a relatively small one, and has only two paid members of staff, trustees are expected to attend meetings and generally make themselves available to assist on other occasions. On average, probably no more than half a day per week, including fulfilling some tasks from home.

The trustees are looking for candidates who live within 10 miles of the Community Forest to enable them to carry out their duties without long travelling time.

In summary:

The Thames Chase Trust is responsible for an exciting project that, after a period of uncertainty caused by the difficult financial circumstances in which local authorities have found themselves, is once again making progress. Any trustee who joins us is likely to find the project intriguing and absorbing. He or she will also find themselves part of an enthusiast and hard working team, all dedicated to improving countryside for wildlife and people.