

Trustee recruitment pack

October 2026



Hello.

Help strengthen the voice and influence of Cornwall's voluntary community and social enterprise sector.

We are delighted that you are interested in joining Cornwall VSF's Board of Trustees at this exciting time for Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly.

Our purpose is to strengthen the voice, capacity and influence of the voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) sector, for the benefit of the people and communities that we serve. We work alongside organisations whose knowledge, relationships and commitment make a difference every day. Our role is to ensure that this collective contribution is recognised, valued and reflected in the decisions that shape public services, communities and lives across Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly.

Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly is home to more than 5,500 VCSE organisations and community groups, employing over 9,600 people and contributing 3.7 million volunteer hours each year. Cornwall VSF works to ensure the voices, priorities, challenges and opportunities of this diverse sector are heard and recognised at local, regional and national levels. Through our strategic and thematic alliances, we bring organisations together to share insight, shape collective action and influence the issues that matter most to the sector and the communities it serves.

Our dedicated Board and Team are committed to their crucial roles in connecting, supporting and promoting the VCSE sector. I have relished the opportunity to chair the Board of Cornwall VSF and as I step down at our AGM in January 2027, I am excited to hand over the reins to a new Chair and up to three trustees to join us for our next chapter.

The sector is responding to sustained cost-of-living pressures, rising demand and increased delivery costs. At the same time, statutory partners are increasingly looking to VCSE organisations to contribute to preventative, community-led services, particularly in health and care.

Financial pressures and competition for funding make this a demanding environment. There are also opportunities to shape how services are designed, how investment reaches communities and how organisations collaborate. Cornwall VSF's task is to help the whole sector participate with confidence, share the enormous impact we have while protecting its independence and sustainability.

Our strategy for 2026-2029 sets out an ambition for a sector that is valued, connected, sustainable and skilled, and for Cornwall VSF to be a credible, independent partner in achieving this.

The information in this brief introduces our organisation, strategic direction and governance developments, alongside the proposed scope of the Chair and trustee roles. It also provides space for the appointment terms, person specification and recruitment arrangements to be confirmed.

We hope you share our excitement and ambition for the future and that you will consider joining us as we continue to deliver support to the VCSE for benefit of the people and communities across Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly.



Mel Colton-Dyer

Chair



About Cornwall VSF.

Cornwall VSF is a membership charity working with, for and on behalf of the voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) sector across Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly. We advocate on issues including funding, commissioning, skills, quality and impact, and help organisations make connections and access support.

Our work spans **leadership and advocacy, partnership and collaboration**, and **capacity building**. We bring together insight from the sector and help statutory partners understand its contribution, the pressures it faces and the conditions it needs to thrive.

We act independently on behalf of the sector. Much of our advocacy involves public bodies, including the NHS, Cornwall Council and the Police. Our ambition is for VCSE organisations to be equitable partners in the design and delivery of services, with community knowledge and lived experience influencing decisions from the outset.



Our members and communities.

Our membership brings together organisations of different sizes and purposes, including charities, social enterprises and community groups. Maintaining meaningful relationships across this diversity is central to our work. We want smaller and grassroots organisations, and communities whose perspectives are less often heard, to have opportunities to shape priorities and participate in partnerships.

How our work makes a difference

- **Leadership and advocacy:** bringing sector intelligence and community perspectives into discussions with funders, commissioners and policymakers.
- **Partnership and collaboration:** convening networks and alliances, developing joint initiatives and helping organisations work together on shared challenges.
- **Capacity building:** supporting training, governance, workforce wellbeing, funding applications and the development of emerging initiatives.

Examples of our wider partnership work include People in Mind, Community Gateway, and the community hub network, and WorkWell. Through these initiatives, we work alongside partners to improve outcomes for communities across Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly. We also support the development of the VCSE workforce through our Learning Academy, providing access to funded training, learning opportunities and professional development.

Our Grassroots Support Programme brings together six partner organisations to make practical support easier to access. It covers funding and financial sustainability, volunteering, organisational development, tools and resources, and learning and peer support.

Our activities.

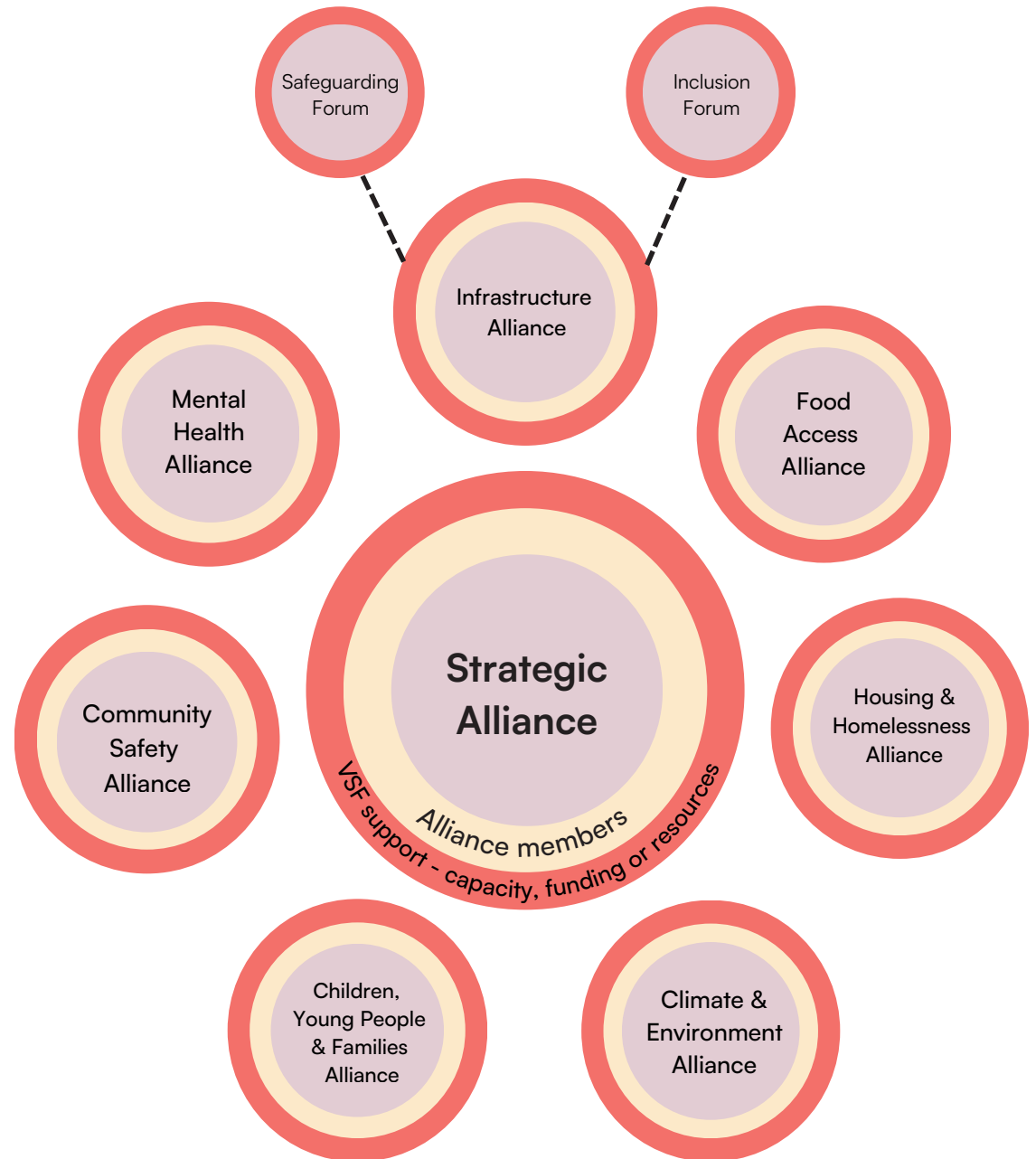
Thematic Alliances

Our thematic alliances bring organisations together around shared priorities, such as ending homelessness, tackling food poverty, or improving support for people with disabilities. By strengthening engagement and collaboration across the VCSE sector, they help organisations work collectively to influence change and improve outcomes for people and communities across Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly.

Each thematic alliance is chaired by a leader of a community organisation in Cornwall, voted in as Chair by members of the alliance.

Alliances receive support from Cornwall VSF in the form of a dedicated Strategic Partnership Manager. We also add communications support and financial remuneration for their time and commitment to the cause.

[Read more here](#)





At place.

12 x Community Area Partnerships (CAPs)

3 x Integrated Care Areas (ICAs)

Community Hub Network:

- Approx. 50 hubs across Cornwall
- Funded by ICB and managed by Volunteer Cornwall with support from Cornwall VSF
- Network of local place-based VCSE organisations
- Shared learning, good practice and peer support
- Advice and support to local people
- Evaluation report found hub network relieves pressure on the NHS.

Projects.

We come together as a sector to identify emerging trends and issues that require action. Pooling our limited resources, we work together on key projects and campaigns. These often align with our thematic alliances — for example food poverty, climate and environment.

[Find out more about projects we are working on here](#)

Services.

The VCSE sector is uniquely placed to deliver health and wellbeing services rooted in local knowledge, trusted relationships and community need. Cornwall VSF coordinates partnerships both within the sector and with organisations such as the NHS Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Integrated Care Board and Cornwall Council to design and deliver services locally. Through this work, we strengthen connections between communities, the VCSE sector and public services, promoting greater integration at every level. Together, we are helping to address health inequalities and improve outcomes for people and communities across Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly.

[Find out more about services we are involved in here](#)

VCSE Learning Academy.

Our VCSE Learning Academy offers funding for organisations to enhance training opportunities for staff and volunteers.

It also offers training for senior managers and leaders in the VCSE sector. This includes funding for qualifications at Level 3 and above.

We offer training for community workers. This training is for people in roles such as community workers, support workers, and social prescribers.

It can fund courses delivered at a time and place that is convenient to its learners. This could include online and distance learning.

93%

Participants rated training as extremely or very helpful in their work/ volunteering

814

Number of individuals accessing training and development

220

Number of organisations accessing Learning Academy

120

Different courses accessed

80%

Training spend delivered by VCSE providers

76%

Training spend delivered by Cornish providers.



Sector wellbeing.

Our workforce is the most important asset our VCSE sector has and keeping them healthy and well is a priority for Cornwall VSF.

Working with Cornwall Council, we partnered with [Care Coins](#) to provide free access to a range of health and wellbeing benefits, including counselling and Mental Health First Aid courses for anyone working or volunteering in Cornwall's VCSE sector.

These are all led by qualified professionals and we want to continue to expand this to include a wider wellbeing offer.

Championing the VCSE.

Our communications team champions the incredible work of the VCSE sector through Cornwall VSF's communications channels, including its [website](#), social media platforms and regular email newsletter.

Our newsletter reaches more than 940 sector colleagues, providing updates on news, events, resources, funding opportunities, and job and trustee vacancies.

We showcase VCSE organisations through [video case studies](#), highlighting their impact within communities while providing valuable assets that can support funding applications, partnership development and organisational visibility.

We also support partners with communications, marketing and branding, helping them raise their profile, strengthen their messaging, and engage effectively with their audiences. This includes promoting initiatives, developing campaign materials, advising on brand consistency, and amplifying key messages through our networks.

In addition, our CEO regularly visits member organisations to hear directly about their work and impact. These visits are captured through photographs, videos and case studies, which are shared across our communications channels to celebrate achievements, increase awareness and showcase the difference the sector makes across Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly.

Our purpose and vision.

Our vision is a VCSE sector that is valued, connected, sustainable and skilled.

Cornwall VSF exists to be a **visible, credible and collective partner** for the VCSE sector, strengthening its voice, investment, capacity and influence for the benefit of Cornwall's people and communities.

- We communicate and celebrate the impact of the VCSE sector
- We strengthen and amplify the voices of our members
- We develop and foster meaningful connections across sectors and within the VCSE sector.

Our strategic outcomes 2026 - 2029.

1. A VCSE sector that is valued, trusted and embedded within decision-making at system and place level.
2. Stronger collaboration and coordination, reducing duplication and increasing sector impact.
3. A more capable, resilient and skilled VCSE workforce.
4. Sustainable organisational infrastructure, underpinned by diversified income and robust governance.
5. Clear, credible evidence of sector impact influencing funding and policy decisions.



Our values.



The way we work with the sector and our partners is underpinned by the following values which have been co-designed by the sector.

We expect our Board and staff to demonstrate these values and behaviours and to lead by example:

Compassionate — valuing people, relationships and lived experience

Integrity — acting transparently, ethically and courageously

Inclusive — ensuring equity, accessibility and representation

Innovative — adapting and evolving to meet changing need

Sustainable — planning for long-term impact, financial stability and environmental responsibility.

We pride ourselves on being an organisation that cares about our team. Each colleague is allocated resources to ensure they have bespoke professional development and can access wellbeing support that is right for them.

We try our best to create a learning culture where compassionate and considered feedback and challenge is encouraged.

Our priorities.

Leadership and advocacy

Ensure the VCSE sector has a strong, informed and credible voice with funders, commissioners and policymakers.

We represent the interests of the sector by gathering and sharing insight, evidence and intelligence from VCSE organisations and the communities they serve. Through our advocacy and engagement work, we amplify VCSE and community voices, ensuring they influence local, regional and national decision-making. By championing lived experience and sector expertise, we help shape policies, funding priorities and services that better meet the needs of people and communities across Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly.

Activities include:

- VCSE Advocates — supporting sector representatives to ensure VCSE voice is strong across all relevant public boards, forums and groups
- Influencing investment decisions with wider public sector partners
- Embedding VCSE and community voice in system-level decision making
- Publishing intelligence and insight about the VCSE to influence partners.



Partnership and collaboration.

Strengthen collaboration within the VCSE sector and across different sectors, convene cross-sector networks and partnerships, develop joint projects and opportunities for collaborative working across sectors. Strengthen the evidence base demonstrating the scale, value, quality, and impact of the VCSE sector.

Activities include:

- Convening and facilitating the Strategic and Thematic Alliances
- Testing a VCSE Provider Collaborative model to increase investment to the sector and smaller grassroots organisations
- Develop and manage VCSE partnerships e.g. People in Mind and Grassroots Support programmes.

Capacity building and sector development.

Provide advice and bespoke support, signpost, provide investment and training opportunities, support community asset development and sector funding applications.

Activities include:

- Providing resources to support sector to bid for funding and investment
- Continue to provide funding for and broker training and development for the sector through our Learning Academy
- Provide funding and resources to support workforce wellbeing through our Care Coins programme
- Develop strong impact measurement, evaluation and social return on investment data.

Organisational sustainability wellbeing and communication.

Ensure Cornwall VSF is financially resilient, well-governed, effective and efficient and a safe, supportive and happy place to work.

Activities include:

- Diversify income streams and review membership offer
- Invest in our team and board
- Improve internal and external communications.

[Read more about our strategy here.](#)

Our finances.

Cornwall VSF remains in a strong financial position, with reserves of £4.1 million and £2.8 million held in the bank at the end of March 2026. This provides a solid foundation for the continued delivery of services, programmes and VCSE sector grants over the coming year and beyond.

Looking ahead, Cornwall VSF forecasts reserves of £3.6 million by the end of March 2027, including approximately £3.0 million in cash balances.

During 2026/27, around £0.6 million of brought-forward restricted grant funding is expected to be distributed through planned grant activity. At the same time, unrestricted reserves are forecast to increase by £0.15 million to £0.55 million, further strengthening the organisation's financial resilience and supporting its long-term sustainability.

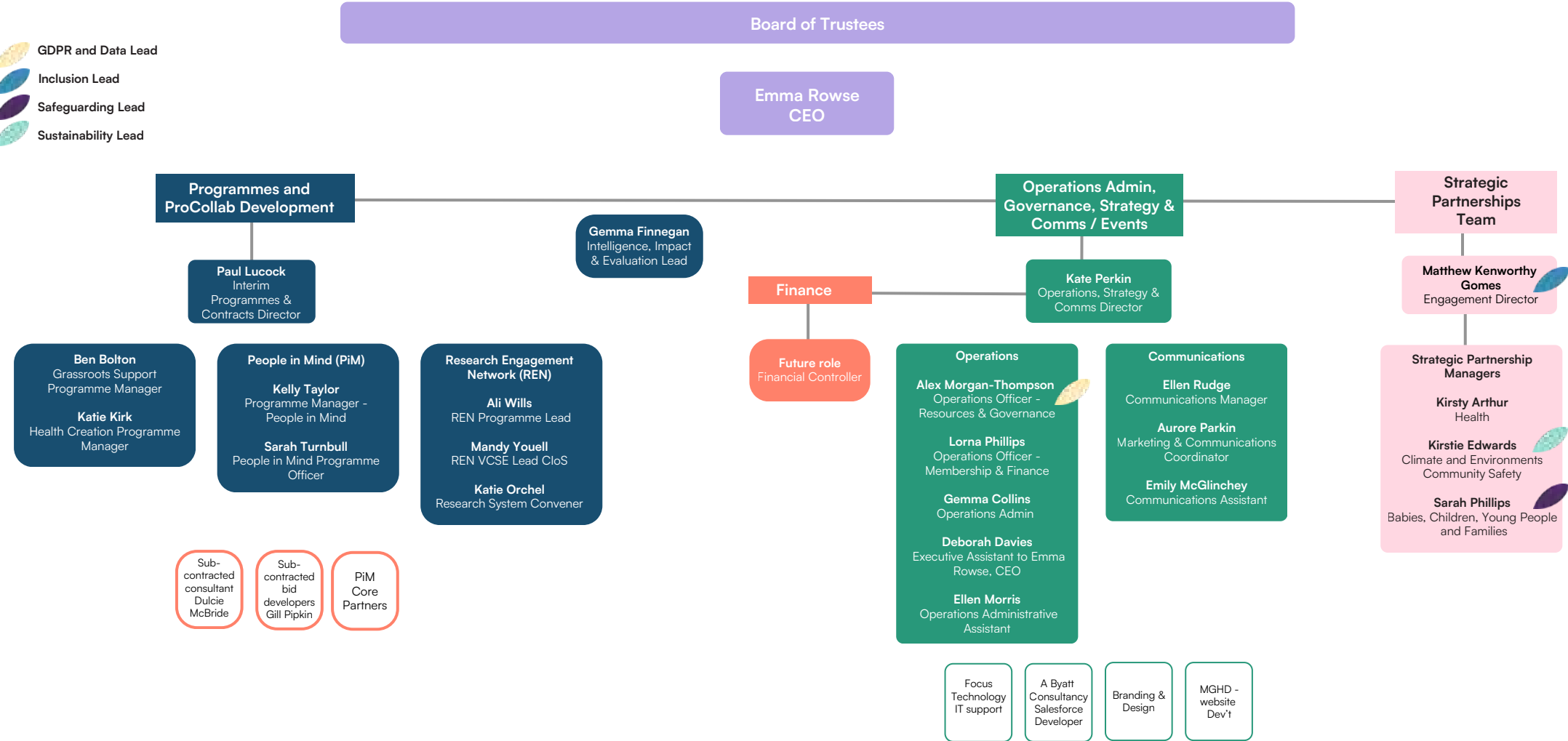
Our Team.

Cornwall VSF is led by our CEO, Emma Rowse who leads a team of 24 paid members of staff.

Cornwall VSF Organisation Chart October 2026



- GDPR and Data Lead
- Inclusion Lead
- Safeguarding Lead
- Sustainability Lead



We are proud to be a **Disability Confident Committed** employer. By being an accredited **Real Living Wage employer**, we have made a commitment to pay our staff a real Living Wage and helped launch a campaign to make Cornwall a Real Living Wage place.



Our trustees play a vital role in ensuring Cornwall VSF is governed effectively and remains focused on the needs of the people and organisations it exists to support: the VCSE sector.

As the organisation's governing body, the Board is responsible for providing strategic leadership, oversight and accountability. Trustees bring a diverse range of skills, knowledge and experience, helping to guide our work and ensure we deliver on our mission to **connect, support and promote** the VCSE sector across Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly.

Our Board is currently made up of **nine trustees**, whose collective expertise and commitment help Cornwall VSF remain a strong, effective and trusted champion for the sector.



Board recruitment.

We are seeking people with the passion, drive and commitment needed to help us achieve our mission.

We have identified priority areas to complement our existing strengths; In our Chair, we are seeking someone who brings experience in chairing ideally either charity or public sector board, or who brings significant experience as a charity trustee with committee chair experience. Ideally someone who is well networked across the Cornwall system.

In addition, as Chair or a new trustee, you may bring experience in one (or more) of these areas:

- Legal
- Communications / marketing / member engagement
- HR / people and culture
- IT / digital
- Contracts / commissioning
- Business development / income diversification.

The Chair and trustees work together to provide strategic direction and oversight, with the executive team responsible for operational delivery. Each appointment offers an opportunity to strengthen the conditions in which the wider VCSE sector can thrive.



Support and inclusion.

We welcome applications from people with the skills, experience and commitment to help shape the future of Cornwall VSF. We are committed to building a diverse and inclusive Board and particularly encourage applications from people who are disabled, from Global Majority communities, and from LGBTQ+ communities, as these groups are currently underrepresented at Board level.

Previous trustee or board experience is welcomed but is not essential. We are committed to supporting and developing all trustees, ensuring they have the knowledge, confidence and resources needed to fulfil their responsibilities effectively and make a meaningful contribution to the organisation.

We are also keen to hear from people who work directly with communities at a grassroots level, whether in a paid or voluntary capacity. In particular, we would welcome representation from a younger trustee. As a supporter of the Young Trustees Movement, we recognise the unique insights, perspectives and lived experiences that younger people bring to governance. Their involvement helps strengthen decision-making, challenge traditional assumptions and ensure our Board reflects the diverse communities we serve.

All appointed trustees receive a comprehensive induction and ongoing support. Cornwall VSF, in partnership with Public Leaders Appointments, also provides fully funded trustee training, which trustees are expected to attend as part of their development and induction into the role.



The Chair role.

The Chair will lead the Board and work closely with the Chief Executive to help Cornwall VSF fulfil its purpose and deliver its strategic priorities.

The role combines leadership and effective governance with support for the organisation's relationships, independence and credibility across Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly.

Lead an effective and inclusive Board

- Create the conditions for informed discussion, constructive challenge and clear collective decisions
- Encourage trustees to contribute their experience and perspectives, and support Board development and succession planning
- Help the Board maintain attention on strategic priorities, delivery and the needs of members and communities.

Support the Chief Executive and strategic delivery

- Build an open and constructive relationship with the Chief Executive, combining support with appropriate challenge
- Maintain a clear distinction between the Board's governance role and the executive team's operational responsibilities
- Help the Board assess progress, respond to changing circumstances and make considered decisions about opportunities and risks.

Strengthen governance and organisational resilience

- Support scrutiny of financial sustainability, income diversification, organisational capacity and risk
- Guide the Board's consideration of governance developments, including proposed arrangements for member influence and oversight of collaborative initiatives
- Promote transparent decision making and the identification and management of conflicts of interest.

Champion the purpose of Cornwall VSF

- Work with the Chief Executive and trustees to build trusted relationships with members and partners
- Support Cornwall VSF's independent advocacy and its ambition for equitable VCSE participation in public service design and delivery
- Model the organisation's values and encourage meaningful participation by people with different backgrounds and experiences.



Trustee roles.

We are seeking up to three new trustees to contribute to the next stage of Cornwall VSF's development. Trustees will bring their perspectives and experience to the Board's collective decisions, helping the organisation remain responsive to members and partners and effective in delivering its strategy.

Contribute to strategy and oversight

- Help shape Cornwall VSF's direction and assess progress against its strategic priorities
- Prepare for and participate in Board meetings, contributing informed questions, constructive challenge and considered judgement
- Bring relevant experience and insight to discussions about sector needs, partnership opportunities and organisational development.

Support sound governance and resilience

- Contribute to scrutiny of finances, performance, organisational capacity and risk
- Support the Board's consideration of member engagement and the proposed governance developments
- Identify and declare conflicts of interest and contribute to transparent and accountable decisions
- Participate in agreed committee or working group activity, drawing on individual skills and interests.

Remain connected to the purpose and membership

- Keep the interests of Cornwall VSF and the people and communities its work benefits central to Board discussions
- Listen to different perspectives and support meaningful member participation in shaping the organisation's work
- Champion Cornwall VSF's purpose and values and contribute to relationships across the sector where appropriate.



Appointment terms.

Time commitment and practical arrangements

Chair of Trustees

The Chair undertakes a range of responsibilities including Cornwall VSF Board and external system meeting commitments. As well as providing support for the CEO with regular 121s, annual appraisal and board feedback. CEO support is delivered Monday-Thursday or during the evenings. An estimated time commitment is broken down below:

- Board preparation and reading - 14hrs
- 4 x formal board meetings per year -10hrs
- 4 x informal board meetings per year - 4hrs
- 6 x Cornwall Leadership Group meetings per year and prep - 30hrs
- 2 x board development/strategy sessions per year and prep - 10hrs
- CEO support - 36hrs
- Training and development - 6hrs
- Trustee support and liaison - 24hrs
- Attendance at strategic events - 40hrs.

**Total commitment per month =
2 days per month**

Trustees

Trustees are expected to attend board meetings and strategy/ development days and to have read papers in advance. They may get involved in the Finance and General Purposes Committee which meets quarterly. In addition they may meet with members of the executive team to support in areas of specialist interest/ expertise and attend member events. An estimated time commitment is broken down below:

- Board preparation and reading - 6hrs
- 4 x formal board meetings per year - 10hrs
- 4 x informal board meetings per year - 4hrs
- 4 x Finance and General Purposes Committee meetings per year and prep - 12hrs
- 2 x board development/strategy sessions per year - 6hrs
- Ad hoc support for executive or stakeholder networks - 15hrs
- Training and development - 6hrs.

**Total commitment per month =
0.5 days per month**

What's in it for you?

Becoming a Cornwall VSF trustee offers valuable personal and professional rewards. You will contribute your skills to a passionate Board and dedicated staff team, gaining insight into strategic charity leadership while working with a diverse group of people with the same common goal.

This is an incredibly exciting time for new trustees to join Cornwall VSF's Board, and you will have the opportunity to attend events and network across the VSF community, including with our stakeholders and members, thereby extending your own networks and ultimately strengthening and growing the work we do on behalf of people and communities across Cornwall and Isles of Scilly.

How to apply.

If you are interested in these opportunities, we encourage confidential conversations with our recruitment partners Public Leaders Appointments: Anna Jay - Managing Director: anna@publicleadersappointments.com

Applications to be submitted to: applications@publicleadersappointments.com

- Please include your CV (no more than two pages)
- A supporting statement, (no more than two pages), explaining your motivation for applying and how your experience, skills and lived experience meets the requirements set out in this pack
- As part of Public Leaders Appointments' commitment to inclusive recruitment, we invite candidates to complete a short, confidential equality monitoring questionnaire. Participation is voluntary and the information is kept separate from the selection process. It is used only for anonymised reporting and to help us evaluate the reach and inclusivity of our recruitment work. Equality monitoring form: [PLA Diversity Insights — Equality Monitoring — Fill in form](#) (Please use code: VSF-BOARD-26).

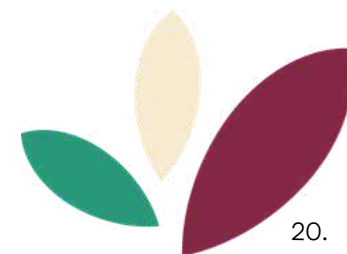
Recruitment timetable:

Closing date: Thursday, 19 November

Trustee interviews (online): 2 - 4 December

Chair candidates (online or in-person): 27 November - 10 December

Charr interviews (in-person Newquay): Thursday, 10 December.



Supporting information.

- Cornwall VSF website: cornwallvsf.org
- Cornwall VSF [our strategic priorities 2026 - 2029](#)
- Cornwall VSF [impact report 2022 - 2025](#)



Thank you for your interest in joining our Board.