

# Becoming a Trustee

## Background

As an independent organisation The London Library has always been self-governing. Today the Library is a registered charity with a general annual turnover of £4 million. Its long-term strategic governance is in the hands of a body of volunteer Trustees drawn from the membership. All members are welcome to volunteer for trusteeship.

This leaflet briefly explains what is involved; if you have any further questions please do not hesitate to contact the Director, Philip Marshall, on 020 7766 4712 ([director@londonlibrary.co.uk](mailto:director@londonlibrary.co.uk)).

## How many Trustees are there?

At any one time, there must be no fewer than 12 and no more than 16 Trustees including those appointed as Chair of Trustees and Treasurer.

## What is the role of the Trustees?

The Trustees are legally responsible under the Charter & Byelaws for the government and control of the Library. They must work collectively:

- to ensure the long-term well-being and effectiveness of the Library for present and future generations of users;
- to ensure that the Library's assets are safeguarded, its financial responsibilities met and its resources applied appropriately in pursuance of its declared charitable aim; and
- to ensure that the Library functions within the legal and financial requirements of a registered charity.

## What are the main tasks?

The issues concerning Trustees vary from year to year but the key tasks are always:

- to approve strategies, policies, plans and budgets to achieve the Library's aims and monitor performance against them
- to appoint the Director (Chief Executive), monitor his or her performance and provide appropriate support;
- to agree or ratify decisions on matters which might create significant risk to the Library, financial or otherwise;

## What sort of commitment is involved?

Trustees serve a four-year term and may be re-elected for a second term of no more than four years thereafter. Trustees are expected:

- to attend trustee meetings regularly and contribute appropriate skills, interests and knowledge;
- to reflect the Trustees' agreed policies and concerns whenever acting as a representative of the Trustees; and,
- to champion the cause and reputation of the Library, identifying and engaging potential new supporters.

The Trustees hold **four routine board meetings a year** (usually February, May, July and October) and others may be called if needed. Board meetings are held at the Library or an adjacent venue on a weekday at 4.30 pm and last about two hours. Trustees are usually also asked to join one or two of the standing committees (Buildings & Facilities, Development, Finance, Membership, Collections and Nominations) or to lead a short-term advisory group exploring a particular issue. Each committee generally meets four times a year. Trustees are expected to attend the AGM each autumn and are strongly encouraged to attend fundraising and membership recruitment events.

### **What sort of expertise is needed?**

All sorts of people make good trustees and a wide variety of knowledge and experience can be put to the service of the Library. First and foremost, it is important that you should be able and willing to:

- think strategically about the long-term interests of the Library;
- listen to others' views and contribute your own to help reach decisions collectively;
- collaborate effectively with the Library's professional staff; and,
- promote the Library and help find new members and supporters

We are keen to achieve greater diversity among our Board of Trustees so we welcome applications regardless of gender, ethnicity, religion, disability, sexual orientation or age. While we are interested in some particular skills and experiences that are sometimes associated with professional qualifications, no specific educational or professional qualification is required in order to become a London Library trustee.

### **Am I eligible?**

Candidates for trusteeship must be full members of the Library aged 18 years or over who are not disqualified from acting as a Trustee by virtue of section 178–180 of the Charities Act 2011. Those disqualified include:

- anyone who has an unspent conviction for an offence involving deception or dishonesty;
- anyone who is an undischarged bankrupt;
- anyone who has been removed from trusteeship of a charity by the Court of the Commission for misconduct or mismanagement;
- anyone under a disqualification order under the Company Directors Disqualification Act 1986; and,
- anyone who has entered into a composition or arrangement with their creditors which includes an individual voluntary arrangement (IVA) and is currently on the Insolvency Service Register.

### **How do I volunteer?**

An application form and further information are available from our website (please click on 'Work for us') or by emailing [director@londonlibrary.co.uk](mailto:director@londonlibrary.co.uk). Applications need to be submitted by **Monday 6 May (at midnight)**

The Nominations Committee reviews all of the submissions and creates a shortlist of applicants who seem to match the Library's particular needs most closely. Informal interviews are held for these applicants to discuss the responsibilities of trusteeship and what they have to offer in more detail. Following this process, the Nominations Committee recommends to the Trustees the most appropriately qualified candidates to be put forward for election by members at the AGM which takes place in the autumn.

**Interview dates:** June tbc