TRUSTEE RECRUITMENT

Position: Finance Trustee

Location: Flexible, quarterly board meetings at Bore Place, Chiddingstone, Kent

Salary: This role is unremunerated, however, reasonable expenses may be covered

OUR CHARITY

The Commonwork Trust is a UK charity committed to sustainable living, environmental education, and social justice.

Situated at Bore Place, a 500-acre regeneratively managed historic estate in Kent, the charity was established in 1976 by Neil and Jenifer Wates. Its focus is on organic farming and regenerative land management, whilst supporting people to live happy, fulfilling and sustainable lives.

"When Neil and I set up Commonwork in 1976, we saw it as an exploration of what it would be like in practice to live and work sustainably, recognising that 'all waste is a misplaced resource' and that we are all interconnected. We intended the farm, our core activity, not only to generate profit to help finance the educational work, but itself to be part of the process of discovery. And we were convinced that everything we did had to embody the principle of 'learning by doing'; risky, but in the end the only effective way."

Jenifer Wates
Emeritus Trustee and co-founder of The Commonwork Trust at Bore Place

To learn more about the Commonwork Trust, including our mission, vision, and strategy, visit our website: www.boreplace.org

JOIN OUR BOARD

Being a Finance Trustee for the Commonwork Trust is an opportunity to make a tangible difference in areas that matter—regenerative farming, sustainability, and education. Whether you're experienced or exploring your first Trustee role, you'll work alongside a passionate team committed to inspiring sustainable living and fostering community impact.

The following outlines what's involved in being a Finance Trustee and how your expertise can contribute to our success.

The Role

We are seeking a Finance Trustee to strengthen the Board's financial oversight and governance capabilities.

This individual will bring both technical accounting expertise and a collaborative, strategic mindset to help guide the charity's financial sustainability and risk management.

Following an initial six-month period, the successful candidate will assume the role of Vice-Chair of the Finance & Risk Committee, supporting the Committee Chair and providing continuity of leadership on financial and audit matters.

You will play a key role in ensuring financial integrity across the charity and its trading subsidiary, Commonwork Organic Farms Ltd, and work closely with the Chief Executive and Finance Director.

What We Are Looking For

We are looking for a qualified accountant (ACA, ACCA, CIMA, or equivalent) with senior experience in finance, audit, or risk management.

You will bring:

- Strong technical accounting and financial analysis skills.
- Experience in board-level financial oversight or charity governance.
- Understanding of risk management frameworks and internal controls.
- The ability to communicate financial information clearly to non-specialists.
- Integrity, sound judgement, and a collaborative approach.

Experience in one or more of the following areas would also be valuable:

- Charity or not-for-profit finance
- Property, land or asset management
- Agricultural or environmental organisations

Key Responsibilities

As Finance Trustee, you will:

1. Provide Financial Leadership

- Oversee and scrutinise management accounts, budgets, and forecasts.
- Support the Finance Director in developing and maintaining robust financial policies, controls, and reporting processes.
- Ensure compliance with charity SORP, statutory accounting requirements, and internal governance frameworks.
- Guide the Finance & Risk Committee in identifying and managing financial and operational risks.

2. Strengthen Strategic Direction

- Contribute to the development of the Trust's strategy and long-term financial plans.
- Provide a financial perspective on investment, fundraising, and partnership decisions.
- Promote sustainable financial practices aligned with the Trust's mission.

3. Uphold Good Governance

- Ensure timely and accurate submission of accounts, returns, and audit materials.
- Act as a mentor and sounding board for the Finance Director and CEO on strategic financial issues.
- Support the Finance & Risk Committee Chair and, after six months, deputise in that capacity.

4. Act as an Ambassador

- Represent the charity's financial stewardship to external stakeholders, partners, and funders.
- Advocate for the Trust's mission and help strengthen its financial and reputational resilience.

How to Apply:

To express your interest, please send a cover letter and CV to

jobs@boreplace.org

Background Information for Prospective Trustees:

1. Organisational Structure
2. Commitment
3. Responsibilities, Liabilities and Protections
4. Person specification
5. Appointment Process

1. ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

Commonwork Trust (Registered Charity Number 1160725 & Company Limited by Guarantee 09254227)

The Commonwork Trust owns the Bore Place estate and is responsible for delivering the objects of the charity which are to apply the capital and income of the Charity towards such charitable purposes or charitable activities as the Trustees may direct.

The Trust has a trading subsidiary, Commonwork Organic Farms Ltd, which has a separate Board of Directors (company 1977080). The ‘farming’ and ‘financial’ Trustees for the Commonwork Trust also sit on the Commonwork Organic Farms Ltd Board.

The Chief Executive (Anna Bullen) of Commonwork Trust and Commonwork Organic Farms Ltd attends trustee meetings. The Trust’s Senior Management Team consists of Venue and Marketing Director, Education and Community Director, Head of Development, and Finance Director, who attend trustee meetings as required.

The Trust sets Annual Strategic Aims and Objectives in February each year which the Management Team develop into annual work programmes.

2. COMMITMENT

As Finance Trustee, you are expected to:

- Attend quarterly Board meetings (3–4 hours each) at Bore Place, Kent
- Attend Finance & Risk Committee meetings (typically quarterly) - remote attendance possible
- Be available for occasional consultation or project input between meetings.

Additional requirements include:

- Being consulted on major issues arising between meetings which need the agreement of all trustees
- Working with the CEO on key projects or initiatives
- Participating in activities as agreed at trustee meetings
- Attending outside functions representing the Trust as agreed

Trustees are asked to make a minimum commitment of three years.

3. ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Trustees are the governing body of the Commonwork Trust and are entrusted to look after the resources of the charity and to utilise their assets in the interests of the beneficiaries of the charity, and in accordance with the governing documents.

New trustees' attention is drawn to the Trust's Articles of Association and the following publications by the Charity Commission in particular:

- **The Essential Trustee - what you need to know**
- **Charity trustee – what is involved**

Main role:

To work with the other trustees and staff to develop the policies and strategies for the Trust, and to ensure that these are being effectively implemented by the Commonwork Trust Chief Executive.

All trustees will be expected to have:

- A commitment to the work of the Trust and its constituent parts
- A willingness to devote the necessary time and effort to the role
- An understanding and acceptance of the legal duties, responsibilities and liabilities of the role
- Relevant experience and expertise in one or more of the organisation’s areas of work
- Financial experience
- An ability to contribute to the development of the Trust's policy and strategic vision
- An ability to work effectively with others and to reach decisions through consensus

Tasks:

- To ensure that the Trust pursues its objectives as defined in its governing documents, and applies its resources exclusively to meet these objects
- To contribute actively to the trustees’ role in giving firm policy and strategic direction, and evaluating performance against agreed priorities
- To ensure that the organisation complies with governing documents, charity law, company law and any other relevant legislation or regulations
- To be accountable to legal bodies such as the Charity Commissioners, to beneficiaries and other stakeholders including staff
- To ensure the financial stability of the Trust through scrutiny of quarterly management accounts, development of annual budgets, and actively participating in identifying new sources of finance including charitable funding for each part, as appropriate
- To promote the work of the Trust through external networks and contacts
- To protect and manage the property of the charity and to ensure the proper investment of Trust funds
- To appoint the Chief Executive and support him/her/them in fulfilling their role
- Provide advice and guidance on new initiatives
- Offer special expertise on certain topics

Liabilities and Protections

Trustees are protected by the Trust's indemnity insurance, provided decisions are made in good faith, within the law, and in line with the governing document. While trustees can be held personally liable for decisions, this risk is minimised by acting responsibly and adhering to the Trust's legal framework.

The Trust is also a Company limited by guarantee 09254227.

5. APPOINTMENT PROCESS

Send to people expressing interest	• Covering letter/email • Trustee recruitment pack • Other information as requested
Interested individuals to provide	• CV • Letter of interest • References
Shortlist using person spec form if appropriate	Trustees
Informal interview	Invite on site to meet staff and trustee
Observer status	If both parties keen to proceed, invite to attend one or two trustees' meetings as an observer. Candidates will receive all necessary papers and be encouraged to participate in discussion, though not in formal decision making. All information (written and during discussion) will be deemed confidential and not for circulation.

For further information please see our website

www.boreplace.org

and/or contact Anna Bullen (Chief Executive)

Tel: 01732 463255

Email: anna.bullen@boreplace.org