



# Prospectus

## Information for Potential Trustees

### Introduction

The South West Coast Path Association is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation which was established on 1st January 2015. This replaced the earlier unincorporated Charity of the same name which was set up in 1973. The Charity's Constitution permits it to have up to twelve volunteer Trustees, voted on at the AGM, with the option for the Board to co-opt applicants for any vacancies. The Charity's governing document, its Constitution and adopted Rules as well as other important supporting documents, are on our web-site under key information.

We wish to maintain a Board which can reflect a diverse and appropriate range of perspectives, views, knowledge and experience and to appoint Trustees that complement those we currently have on the Board. The Board needs to work effectively and in a way that reflects the aims of the organisation. Please contact the office or Chairman to see if there are currently any vacancies.

This document describes the role of the Association's Board, the role of a Trustee, a person specification which sets out the type of individuals we are looking for and the recruitment process to follow.

### Role of the Board of Trustees

The role of the Board of Trustees (the Board) of the Association is to oversee the operation of the Charity and ensure its activities are consistent with its Objects. Constitutionally, the Board has the powers to conduct the affairs of the Association, subject only to any directions of an Annual or Extraordinary General Meeting. In order to fulfil this role the Board:

- Agrees a five year Business Plan, with its strategic aims, objectives and actions.
- Approves an annual action plan and resource allocation
- Approves key performance measures, budgets and policies and monitors these
- Regularly considers the Risks to the Charity and agrees actions to mitigate these
- Prepares reports for the membership of the Association (e.g. annual accounts and report)
- Appoints and supervises the Director
- Agrees a Scheme of Delegation for the day to day operation for the Charity including staff management

- Acts as custodians of the Coast Path brand and Association’s reputation
- Ensures compliance with all statutory and regulatory requirements
- Manages itself as an effective Board
- Establishes and delegates to sub-committees (Currently we have three: Membership and Fundraising, Finance and Path Committees feeding minutes and recommendations to the Board)
- Liaises with the membership on a regular basis
- Encourages Trustees to act as ambassadors for the Association, including amongst other things
  - Using organisation networks for the benefit of the Association
  - Advocacy through trustee contacts
  - Business networking and Membership liaison
  - Assisting with fundraising, mentoring staff and supporting roles

The Board normally operates with four officer roles; Chairman, Vice Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer. All Trustees are elected at the AGM by the membership with vacancies being co-opted by the Board during the year. Normally, the Chairman will not serve a longer term than five years, as a matter of good practice. Good practice also requires an induction for new Trustees and review of engagement after the first year.

## **Responsibility of Trustees and Coast Path Management**

Trustees are responsible for Association matters and not the Coast Path itself. The day-to-day responsibility for maintenance and management of the Coast Path lies with the Highway Authorities and National Trust staff. This work is coordinated by the National Trail Officer who is employed by Devon County Council on behalf of the Trail Partnership. (The Trail Partnership is an over-arching body which brings together the many organisations involved with managing the Path.) The Association is an active member of the Trail Partnership and currently represented by the Chairman at a strategic level on the Stakeholder Group plus Chairman of the Path Committee on an operational level on the Delivery Group.

## **Eligibility and Suitability**

This is the baseline and should not be a problem for most people intending to apply. The Charities Act and Protection and Social Investment Act exclude individuals with certain categories making them unfit as a person to serve as a Trustee. The application form includes tick boxes that need to be filled in, as this is checked to confirm the tests are met.

## **Skills and experience of Trustees – ideal board make up**

We aim to recruit a board that is fit for purpose with Trustees that understand the role of the Board and as individuals provide a complimentary range of skills, experience and demographics to deliver our Charitable Objects. Our Business Plan and Governance Structure with its Committees, helps identify the areas where particular skills and experience are required. Charity Commission publication CC3 provides further guidance of the role,

skills and experience required of Trustees. In order to achieve a balanced Board we make an estimate of the level of skills and experience using a matrix of the following questions, asking applicants to self-assess themselves, scoring 0-5 on our application form.

Score Min/Max 0-5

- Affinity with the Coast Path
- Awareness of the Association— its aims and objectives
- Interest/experience of public rights of way matters
- Understanding of the obligations of charity trusteeship/legal governance
- Involvement with other charities/voluntary orgs/National Trust etc.
- Public Sector/Local Authority/Highway Authorities
- Commercial/Business experience/Tourism links
- Fund-raising/grant applications
- IT knowledge
- Marketing
- Public Relations and Social Media
- Commerce/finance/accountancy
- Planning Policy and Development Management Control
- HR/Personnel or staff management
- Corporate/Strategic management, Risk Analysis and mitigation

We look at the combined scores from existing Trustees and calculate an average score to assess the skills and experience we currently have and to understand where certain gaps may occur to aid Trustee recruitment. However, with the limitations of self-assessment and not to place too great an emphasis upon this audit, we also look at the degree and depth of experience (superficial or expert) provided in key areas that a potential Trustee may offer. So while they may appear weak in certain areas (say Public Sector) the strength they bring (say Finance or Legal) may influence recruitment decisions.

## **Tenure**

The Association's constitution does not stipulate terms of tenure or length of service for Trustees.

## **Board Meetings**

At present the Board meets as a group four times a year, to help enable them to fulfil their responsibility to govern and supervise the Association. Meetings are normally held on a weekday at the office at Lee Mill Bridge, with one or two meetings elsewhere, to include site visits.

Full Board meetings primarily help set policy, agree strategic direction, manage risks and monitor the progress of Business Plan work actions. In addition there are currently conference calls which have formal meeting status to deal with the amount of development

work being undertaken. The Challenge and other events take place each year plus site visits or workshops may be appropriate for Board members.

Committees with their own terms of reference are established for Trustees to contribute to specific operational areas such as Membership and Fundraising, Finance, Path Committee, with working groups to focus upon an area of work such development control planning advice, youth project and guide production,

## **Person specification**

All Trustees need to have certain qualities, such as integrity and commitment. In addition we look for the following qualities, skills and experience in the trustees we appoint:

### **Essential – needed by all Trustees**

- A passion for walking the South West Coast Path and for the coastal landscape
- A willingness to commit up to 12 days a year to the Charity (some meetings are conference calls)
- General skills: ability to scrutinise Board papers; contribute to discussions; focus on key issues;
- An ability to think strategically
- An understanding and acceptance of the legal duties, responsibilities and liabilities of trusteeship
- Good team worker
- Good judgement; ability to make and accept collegiate decisions; demonstrable selflessness;
- integrity; objectivity
- Willingness to represent the Association externally at meetings/events

### **Highly desirable – some of these needed**

- Experience of organisations and partners of the Association relating to the Path.
- Access to networks or contacts and a willingness to use them on behalf of the Association
- Knowledge of Public Rights of Way legislation and matters effecting the Coast Path
- Experience of working with public sector Highway Authorities, Natural England or DEFRA
- Experience as a non-executive director or trustee
- An ability to understand financial information and sound business/commercial skills
- Experience of managing/governing significant organisational growth
- Sufficient experience to advise on policy and hold staff to account in (any/some of) the areas of finance; marketing; public affairs; communications; conservation; PROW management; legal; investment; information; fund-raising; health and safety; human resources.

- Experience of Tourism Industry in the South West and also marketing and communication.
- Ambitious on behalf of the Association

#### Desirable—some added value provided

- Willingness to give time outside Board meetings
- Willingness to fund-raise
- Experience as a CEO of a business or charity

### **Background Reading—key information about us**

You will find several documents on our web-site which gives you a good picture of the recent activities and challenges facing the Path and Charity. These are all at [www.southwestcoastpath.org.uk/keyinfo](http://www.southwestcoastpath.org.uk/keyinfo). Included are our Governing Document or Constitution, the Rules, the most recent Annual Report for AGM, plus the latest Impact Report.

### **How to Apply and Recruitment Process**

People who are interested in volunteering as a trustee are asked to call the Director or Chairman for a confidential informal discussion about any vacancies and the recruitment process. Following this if a vacancy exists person will be asked to complete an Application Form which can be found on the Association's web-site. The form includes a declaration of competency and also two references. If you have trouble finding the form, please contact the office ([hello@southwestcoastpath.org.uk](mailto:hello@southwestcoastpath.org.uk)). Completed forms can be either posted or e-mailed back to the Association's office. An interview with the Director plus two Trustees will be arranged and they will then make a recommendation to the Board to consider co-option.

### **Document History**

This document was last updated July 2017

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