

Treasurer

Trustee Information Pack

2024



Welcome

Thank you for your interest in the role of Treasurer (Trustee) at Citizens Advice Esher & District.

We're looking for a motivated finance professional to provide financial direction to our local advice charity and help us improve our long-term financial sustainability.

If you're excited to help us grow and strengthen our resilience so that we meet the advice needs of the diverse communities we serve, we would love to hear from you.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mark Reason', written in a cursive style.

Mark Reason
Chair of the Trustee Board

Our Charity

Citizens Advice Esher & District is an independent charity and part of the Citizens Advice network.

Since 1973, we have been helping the communities of east Elmbridge in Surrey with advice and guidance on issues such as debt, welfare benefits, employment, housing and consumer problems. Our service is available in person, by phone and online. Our main office is in Elmbridge Civic Centre in Esher and we run regular outreaches in Cobham and at local foodbank locations.

We offer free, independent, confidential and impartial advice to individuals on their rights and responsibilities. We value diversity, promote equality and challenge discrimination. We are here for everyone, no matter what their problem.

Last year (April 2022 to March 2023) we helped nearly 2,000 people with more than 6,000 issues. As a result of this work, we secured £694,427 in direct income for our clients and enabled £192,153 in unmanageable debts to be written off.

We have a fantastic, highly skilled team consisting of around 30 dedicated, volunteer advisers and 10 part-time paid staff (or 4.8 full-time equivalent), led by our Chief Executive Elaine Bissell. In this way we provide exceptional value for money.

We do not receive any central government funding, so are totally reliant on local funding and fundraising. We work hard to control and cover our expenditure, but this is becoming more difficult as we face inflationary operating costs at the same time as record numbers of people are asking for our help during the cost of living crisis. We are grateful that Elmbridge Borough Council provides some of the funding we need to cover our modest running costs – but we still need to raise more than £100,000 every year from individual donations, local funders and project partners to keep our vital local service open.

We're ambitious for our future and need equally motivated leaders and strategic thinkers who will help us on our journey, ensuring that we continue to be there for everyone who needs us.

Our Board

The Board of Trustees is responsible for the overall management, governance and strategic direction of the charity, and for developing the organisation's aims and objectives in accordance with governing documents, legal and regulatory guidelines.

Our Articles of Association allow for a minimum of three and maximum of fifteen Trustees, being either:

- elected at the annual general meeting or
- nominated by member organisations or
- co-opted by the Trustee Board.

At present we have ten Trustees, each of whom bring their own skill sets and experiences to the Board. You can see a list of our current trustees at:

<https://www.eshercab.org.uk/about-us/>

The Board meets formally six times a year and is supported by three sub-committees covering Business Planning & Operations, Finance and Personnel. Board meetings are usually held in person at Elmbridge Civic Centre on Monday evenings, lasting around two hours. Quarterly sub-committee meetings are held either in person or online. Most of these meetings take place during the working day (between 9am-5pm), but there is some flexibility around timing. Work in between meetings is usually carried out remotely, with telephone or video meetings as needed.

The Board delegates responsibility for the day-to-day management of the charity to the Chief Executive, who is responsible for leading the paid and volunteer staff and for making and implementing operational decisions.

Collectively, the Board is responsible for shaping strategy and giving direction to the charity, making sure that it is:

- Doing what it was set-up to do
- Complying with the law
- Securing funding to meet current and new demands
- Recognised and valued by local organisations, funders and people.

We give individual roles to most Trustees, fitting in with their own preferences and skill set, so no-one is overloaded and the Board works together as a team.

New Trustees receive induction training for their role and are allocated a mentor from the Board to offer additional support.

Treasurer role description

The Treasurer is an officer of the Trustee Board and not a paid member of staff. The purpose of the role is to ensure that the charity's finances and supporting financial control systems are robust and comply with relevant regulations.

The role works closely with the Chair of the Trustee Board, the Chief Executive, the Practice Administrator/Company Secretary and the volunteer Financial Accountant.

The Treasurer is responsible for chairing the Finance sub-committee, including preparing the agenda and arranging for the production of the minutes of each quarterly meeting,

The duties and qualities listed here are in addition to those of a Trustee (included below for reference).

Treasurer main duties and responsibilities

Financial accounts

- Every quarter, review entries on Xero made by volunteer Financial Accountant (unless a specific query arises in the meantime)
- Review quarterly management accounts prepared by volunteer Financial Accountant before submitting report to the Trustee Board
- Every quarter, review 'green' sheet prepared by volunteer Financial Accountant before submitting sheet to national Citizens Advice
- Ensure that year-end accounts are prepared to in compliance with SORP (Statement of Recommended Practice) Accounting for Charities and submitted by the deadline to Charity Commission and Companies House, and make arrangements for them to be independently examined as required

Budgets and planning

- Prepare annual budget and obtain Trustee Board sign off each March
- Review and update forecast of annual outturn
- Prepare and submit annually a two-year financial business plan

Financial control and compliance

- Comply with the charity's financial policies and procedures
- Comply with Information Assurance and GDPR policies and requirements
- Liaise with the CEO to prepare costings for any funding bid applications
- Ensure capital expenditure authorisations and limits are followed, and prepare expenditure justifications where appropriate

- Ensure that money received is spend only on the purposes for which it was given and ensure that reports and accounts demonstrating this are submitted to funders
- Submit regular financial reports to national Citizens Advice as required, and meet all financial obligations of the Citizens Advice Membership scheme

Relationship with Trustee Board

- Provide financial advice as required to the Chair and Trustee Board
- Explain, guide and advise the Board on the key assumptions and financial implications of the budget, operational and strategic plans
- Keep the Board informed about its financial duties and responsibilities
- Ensure that all Board members have a clear understanding of the accounts presented at meetings
- Ensure that the organisation has an appropriate reserves policy and a realistic budget that meets the service's needs
- Provide input to the risk register process
- Present accounts at the Annual General Meeting in an accessible way
- Chair the Finance sub-committee, preparing the agenda and arranging for the production of the minutes for each quarterly meeting
- Provide input for the Financial Management section of the annual Trustee Board Leadership Self-Assessment

Treasury

- Act as key contact on the charity's bank accounts
- Transfer money between savings bank accounts to optimise interest income
- Maximise the interest on savings by comparing available interest rates
- Review investments (in conjunction with other trustees)
- Review and update cheque signatory and electronic payment authorisation
- Authorise salaries and PAYE payments to HMRC

Other (annual)

- Review reserves policy
- Prepare salary review (in conjunction with Personnel Committee)
- Review office insurance policy
- Review Gift Aid claim prepared by volunteer Financial Accountant

Treasurer personal skills and qualities

You'll need to:

- understand and accept the responsibilities and liabilities as trustees
- have recognised professional financial qualifications or experience
- have some knowledge or experience of charity finances, fundraising and pension schemes
- be familiar with Xero accounting systems and spreadsheets (or similar)
- have the skills to analyse proposals and examine their financial consequences
- be able to explain complex financial information in an accessible way
- be able to exercise good independent judgment and if necessary to make difficult recommendations
- work effectively as part of a team
- have the time and flexibility to respond to the demands of the charity
- have the ability to work to timetables and deadlines
- be willing to learn about and follow the Citizens Advice aims, principles and policies, including confidentiality and data protection
- represent Citizens Advice professionally at all times

Special requirements

As the Treasurer of the Trustee Board has authority to sign cheques and authorise invoices, the role holder is required to apply for a basic disclosure check via www.gov.uk/request-copy-criminal-record

Trustee role description

Trustee main duties and responsibilities

- Maintaining an awareness of the business of the charity
- Taking responsibility for ensuring own learning and development
- Regularly attending, preparing for and taking a full part in meetings
- Actively contributing to setting policy and strategic direction, defining goals, setting targets and evaluating performance
- Monitoring whether the service complies with its governing document, whether it meets Citizens Advice standards and how well the advice needs of the local community are being met
- Monitoring the financial position of the charity and ensuring that it operates within its means and objects, and that there are clear lines of accountability for day-to-day financial management
- Supporting the development of the charity through participation in agreed projects
- Actively seeking to further the strategic objectives of the charity, and acting in the best interests of the charity at all times
- Maintaining confidentiality about any sensitive/confidential information received in the course of duties as a trustee.

Trustee personal skills and qualities

You'll need to demonstrate the following experience, skills and understanding:

- Commitment and availability to attend trustee board meetings
- Effective communication skills and willingness to participate actively in discussion
- Willingness to gain knowledge of local needs and resources
- Commitment to the aims, principles and policies of the Citizens Advice service, including those relating to equal opportunities, independence and research & campaigns
- Willingness and ability to act in the best interests of the charity
- Ability to understand and accept responsibilities and liabilities as a trustee and an employer
- Numeracy to the extent required to understand the charity accounts
- Willingness and ability to learn, and to develop and examine own attitudes
- Ability to think creatively and strategically, and exercise good, independent judgement
- Ability to work effectively as a member of a team

What difference will you make?

Your leadership and commitment can help us to meet the changing advice needs of our community in these challenging times.

In return for your time you will enjoy the benefits of:

- Joining a friendly, committed and engaged Board, which is keen to welcome new members.
- Receiving full training - new trustees are allocated a mentor as part of our induction process and have access to bespoke Citizens Advice leadership training.
- Building on valuable leadership and governance skills to add to your CV.
- Making a positive impact in your community.

Time Commitment

On average our Trustees spend around 6 - 10 hours every month on Board work. For Board officer roles – such as Chair, Vice-Chair and Treasurer – the time commitment will be more. For the Treasurer, we estimate the time commitment to be around 1-2 hours each week.

In addition to preparing for the six Trustee Board meetings each year and chairing the quarterly Finance sub-committee meetings, the Treasurer will be expected to liaise with the Chair of the Trustee Board, Chief Executive and volunteer Financial Accountant on a regular basis, and arrange for the year-end accounts to be independently examined. Occasionally, the Treasurer may be asked to attend public or private events such as fundraising events.

Also, you may be asked to work on specific projects, give additional support to staff or undertake training relevant to your role.

See the 'More information' section on page 12 for further details about being a Trustee.

Membership

Trustees (including the Treasurer) are officially drawn from among the Members of the charity, so successful candidates to become Trustees will be appointed as Members first. The Members have a formal role (under company law and our Articles of Association) of overseeing the interests of the charity at a high level. They are responsible for:

- attending and voting at annual or extraordinary general meetings (AGMs and EGMs)
- deciding on significant changes such as revisions to the Articles of Association or changing the name of the charity
- electing Trustees (and if necessary, removing them)
- receiving and adopting the annual report and financial statements, and
- deciding what should happen to the assets of the charity if it had to be wound up.

How to apply

To apply, please email your CV and covering letter setting out your suitability for the role to:

Berenice Chandler
Practice Administrator
chandlerb@eshercab.org.uk

Following an initial discussion with one of our Trustees, you may be invited to attend a Board meeting and interview panel. Two references will be required.

Some Trustee roles (for example, the Chair and Treasurer) are subject to a DBS check.

We are keen to achieve a more diverse Board and welcome applications from all sections of the community and different backgrounds who will bring enthusiasm and a fresh perspective. Experience of Citizens Advice work is not required.

Any questions?

To find out more or arrange an informal chat about the role with one of our current Trustees, please email chandlerb@eshercab.org.uk

We look forward to hearing from you.

More information

1. Terms of office

You will either be elected by our charity's Members at an AGM, or co-opted by the Trustee Board. If you are co-opted, Members will be asked to elect you at the following AGM. Your initial elected term will be three years and you will be eligible for re-election for further periods of three years.

Officers, which includes the roles of Chair, Vice-Chair and Treasurer, are subject to annual election by the Trustee Board and cannot hold office for more than eight consecutive years.

2. Can anyone be appointed as a charity Trustee?

No. There are a number of reasons why people cannot act as a charity Trustee. The following are listed by the Charity Commission as reasons which disqualify someone from acting as a charity Trustee:

- A. Unspent conviction for any of the following:
- An offence involving dishonesty or deception
 - Specified terrorism offences
 - A specified money laundering offence
 - Specified bribery offences
 - The offence of contravening a Charity Commission Order or Direction

- Offences of misconduct in public office, perjury, or perverting the course of justice
- Aiding, attempting or abetting the above offences

B. Other non-financial disqualifying reasons:

- Being on the sex offenders register
- Unspent sanction for contempt of Court
- Disobeying a Commission Order
- Being a designated person (under specific anti-terrorist legislation)
- Being a person who has been removed from a relevant office
- Director disqualification

C. Other financial disqualifying reason:

- Insolvency

3. Can anyone be appointed as a Trustee of Citizens Advice Esher & District?

In addition to the points listed in 2 above, you cannot be a Trustee of Citizens Advice Esher & District if you are under 18 or if you are a paid or voluntary worker for the charity, and unless you are a Member of the charity.

4. Expenses

This is a volunteer role and will not be remunerated; however, reasonable travel expenses will be reimbursed.

5. Learning and development

Training for your role will be provided along with a full induction programme.

6. Political impartiality

An important part of the Citizens Advice principle of impartiality is that all staff and volunteers are seen to be upholding the principle of party political impartiality. To avoid possible misunderstanding or possible conflicts of interest, there are guidelines on staff and volunteers taking part in party political activities. If you currently hold, or are intending to stand for local or national party political office, we will expect you to tell us about this if shortlisted for interview.

7. Location

Our bi-monthly Board meetings are held in person at Elmbridge Civic Centre on Monday evenings, usually lasting around two hours. Quarterly sub-committee meetings are held either in person or online. Most of these meetings take place during the working day (between 9am-5pm), but there is some flexibility around timing. Work in between meetings is usually carried out remotely, with telephone or video meetings as needed.

8. Time commitment

On average our Trustees spend around 6 - 10 hours every month on Board work, including reading agenda papers and attending meetings. The time commitment for Board officers may be more. For the Treasurer, we estimate the time commitment to be around 1-2 hours each week.

In addition to the Trustee Board and Finance sub-committee meetings, the Treasurer will be expected to liaise with the Chair of the Trustee Board, Chief Executive, Practice Administrator and volunteer Financial Accountant on a regular basis, and arrange for the year-end accounts to be independently examined. Occasionally, the Treasurer may be asked to attend public or private events such as fundraising events.

9. Conduct and declaration of interests

All Trustees are required to agree to abide by the Trustees' Code of Conduct and to declare as appropriate their business interests.