

COTSWOLDS CONSERVATION BOARD

Job Description: Board Member

1. Appointment or Election of Board Members

Arrangements for the appointment of Board members are set out in the Board's Establishment Order.

2. The Board's Composition

The Board comprises 37 members: 15 appointed by local authorities, 14 appointed by the Secretary of State and 8 appointed by Parish Councils and Parish Meetings.

Board members are appointed as individuals to the Board. While they may be appointed by a local authority or nominated by an organisation, they are not appointed to the Board to represent that authority or organisation.

The membership of the Board is constructed so that both local and national interests are reflected in its make up.

3. The Board's Purposes and Duty

The Board has two statutory purposes:

- to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)
- to increase the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the AONB

In fulfilling these purposes the Board has a duty to seek to foster the social and economic well being of local communities in the AONB

4. Roles and Functions of all Board Members

The Board can only achieve its purpose effectively if the decisions it takes balance local and national needs, take full account of the statutory purposes of the Board, and lead to realistic actions.

Main Roles:

to help steer the management of the Conservation Board so that it achieves its purposes and in doing so helps deliver its duty

to help steer the management of the Cotswolds AONB so that it delivers wide benefits to its local communities and the nation.

Main Functions:

- influence the Board to help it come to informed and balanced decisions;
- act with independence;
- be committed to working in the best interest of the Cotswolds AONB and the Conservation Board;
- accept collective responsibility for the decisions of the Conservation Board;
- use skills, experience and local, regional or national knowledge for the benefit of the Conservation Board;
- collectively be policy-makers and carry out the principal strategic and corporate management functions;
- collectively participate in the development of policy direction, strategic thinking and innovation within the Conservation Board, through the development of management policy, the management plan and the business plan¹;
- work with Members, staff and stakeholders to apply the principles of sustainable development and the purposes of the Conservation Board to all decision-making;
- seek clarification of policy and action proposals if appropriate;
- approve and monitor programmes to implement the Conservation Board's policies and work programmes;
- challenge proposals that exceed or go against the statutory purposes of the Board and the purposes of the designation of the Cotswolds AONB;
- attend and contribute to regular meetings of the Board, preparing fully in advance of each meeting through reading any papers or briefing material provided;
- be an ambassador for the Conservation Board at the local, national or international level;
- champion the Cotswolds AONB and its Board as an effective mechanism for promoting conservation of the area's natural beauty, increasing public understanding and enjoyment of its special qualities, and maintaining the social and economic well being of local communities.
- help to promote the profile and effectiveness of the family of Protected Landscapes (AONBs, National Parks and Heritage Coasts) through the work of the Conservation Board, co-operative action such as peer support and review, and co-operation with the work of DEFRA, Natural England, the National Association of AONBs (NAAONB), the English National Park Authorities Association (ENPAA), the Association of National Park Authorities (ANPA) and Europarc.

Terms and Conditions

5. The Board's Constitution

The enabling legislation that provided for the establishment of Conservation Boards and defined their purposes and duty was the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. The Board's structure and functions were defined through its own Parliamentary Establishment Order (2004/1777).

The Board has its own Constitution which sets out how the Board operates, how decisions are made and the procedures that are followed to ensure efficiency, transparency and accountability.

¹ Note: A Member's role is to be strategic and not to micro-manage the Conservation Board. Staff are employed to run the business of the Conservation Board, but performance information needs to be available so that Members can be certain that the Conservation Board is delivering against its approved plans.

6. Time Commitment

It is envisaged that members will spend about six days a year working for the Board, although this time commitment may increase if members stand for election and are appointed to the Board's Executive Committee or one of its sub-committees.

7. Operational Base

The Board's offices are in Northleach. The main Board meetings are usually held in the Council Chamber at Cotswold District Council's offices in Cirencester. The majority of Executive Committee, Sub-Committee and Working Group meetings are held in Northleach.

8. Conduct

Board members will at all times maintain the highest standards of conduct and ethics, and show respect for fellow members, staff and the community. A Members' Code of Conduct has been adopted by the Board in accordance with the Localism Act 2011.

The Board is required to maintain and update a Register of Interests of its members. The Register is available for public inspection at the Board's offices. (Details of the Register are set out in Part 2 of the Members' Code of Conduct in the Constitution.)

Board members will have such rights of access to such documents, information, land and buildings of the Board as are necessary for the proper discharge of their functions and in accordance with the law. The Director may refuse inspection of documents where the documents are, or in the event of legal proceedings would be, protected by privilege arising out of a solicitor and client relationship.

Board members will not make public information which is confidential or exempt without the consent of the Board or divulge information given in confidence to anyone other than a Board member or officer entitled to know it. (For these purposes, "confidential" and "exempt" information are defined in the Access to Information Procedure Rules in Part 3 of the Constitution.)

9. Allowances

The determination of allowances and other benefits for Board members is governed by the Local Authorities (Members Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 (SI 2003/1021).

The Board will decide the types and levels of financial allowances and/or expenses to enable Board members to participate fully in Board activities while being sufficiently economical to avoid damaging the Board's activities or becoming a financial reward for members.

10. Disqualification of members

A person is disqualified from becoming or remaining a member of the Board if s/he holds any paid office or employment, appointments to which are, or may be, made or confirmed by:

- a) The Board or any council by whom a local authority member of the Board is appointed;
- b) Any committee or sub-committee of the Board or of any such council;
- c) Any joint committee on which the Board or any such council is represented;
- d) Any parish council for, or parish meeting of, a parish the whole or any part of which is comprised in the Cotswolds AONB;
- e) Any committee or sub-committee of any such parish council or parish meeting;
- f) Any joint committee on which any such parish council or parish meeting is represented;
- g) Any person himself holding an office or employment which disqualifies him from becoming a member of the Board.

A person is also disqualified from becoming or remaining a member of the Board if s/he holds any employment in a company which would be under the control of the Board.

Proceedings for disqualification are set out in the Order and the Local Government Act 1972, Section 92.

11. Vacation of office for failure to attend meetings

If a member of the Board fails throughout a period of six months from the date of his/her last attendance to attend any meeting of the Board, its committee, sub-committee, joint committee or any advisory body or meeting, s/he shall, unless the failure was due to some reason approved by the Board before the expiry of that period, cease to be a member of the Board.

12. Politically Restricted Posts

Section 13 (4) of the Order and Sections 1 to 3 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 provide that a person shall be disqualified from becoming or remaining a member of the Board if s/he holds a politically restricted post under the Board or any other local authority in Great Britain.

Politically restricted posts include head of paid service, statutory or non-statutory chief officers, monitoring officer and any post specified by the employing authority in accordance with the Act.

13. Person Specification

Successful candidates for appointment as a Board member will:

- have an appreciation of the English countryside from the point of view of someone who lives or works in it, or simply as someone who enjoys its qualities and wants to see it managed effectively;
- have a good knowledge and an appreciation of the strategic issues facing the Conservation Board;
- be able to see more than one side of every argument and take a balanced view;
- have excellent interpersonal and communications skills;
- be ready to contribute to discussions on how an AONB is managed for the benefit of local people, visitors who come to enjoy it, and for the nation as a whole;
- have the ability to examine and understand recommendations put forward by the Board's staff and Executive Committee;

- have an understanding of how to be an effective committee member and how committees work together to reach decisions;
- be able to take on board briefing material relating to issues affecting local countryside and its communities, draw conclusions from it, and use it effectively in discussion;
- have some time every quarter to attend Board meetings and occasionally other events associated with the management of some of England's finest countryside;
- have an awareness of social inclusion and diversity issues in relation to the Conservation Board;
- be prepared to undergo training in order to be a more effective Board member;
- not necessarily hold qualifications in countryside related subjects.

It is desirable that members should have experience or knowledge of one or more of the following:

- landscape;
- climate change;
- natural history/biodiversity;
- countryside recreation/tourism;
- land use/land management;
- agriculture/forestry;
- conservation;
- rural economy;
- rural society/culture/heritage;
- government policies for the countryside;
- sustainable development;
- national, regional and local policies for rural areas.

Successful candidates are unlikely to:

- be so focused on single issues that they cannot see the bigger picture;
- believe that those who live in urban areas cannot, by definition, understand or appreciate the countryside;
- believe that the needs of conservation, recreation, and economic growth automatically conflict with each other

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