

TOOLS FOR SELF RELIANCE (Tools for Self Reliance) TRUSTEE DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

(Some of this information is taken from the booklet Responsibilities of Charity Trustees produced by the Charity Commissioners and The Good Trustee Guide produced by the National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO).

Tools for Self Reliance is both a registered charity and a company limited by guarantee. As a company we have a Board of Directors but as a Charity these people are known as Trustees. In accordance with NCVO recommendations Tools for Self Reliance now usually refers to its Board members as Trustees.

The Board of Trustees is the governing body of a charity and is ultimately responsible for everything that the charity does. The Trustees must act as a group rather than individuals, setting aside personal interests and giving their time to carry out their duties for no payment or gain. The role of the Trustees is that of governance to ensure that the organisation is well managed and not to inappropriately involve themselves in the day to day management of the charity.

Trustees of Tools for Self Reliance are members (who are over eighteen) who are nominated and elected by the membership. Some people are disqualified by law from acting as Trustees. Broadly speaking these people are: a) anyone who has been convicted of an offence involving deception or dishonesty, unless the conviction is spent; b) anyone who is an undischarged bankrupt; or c) anyone who has previously been removed from the trusteeship of a charity d) anyone who is under a disqualification order under the Company Directors Disqualification Act 1986

Trustees should be selected for what they can contribute to the charity. Trusteeship is a serious responsibility and should not be undertaken lightly. Trustees must be willing to give time to the organisation; to read Board papers, attend meetings, and keep themselves informed of the charity's activities. . At present each member of the Board takes responsibility for an area of governance, such as employment or charity law, that they have an interest or experience in and reports on this to the full Board at each meeting. This means that anyone standing for the position of Trustee must attend the six full Board meetings that are held throughout the year .All meetings are held at locations within the UK and Trustees must be available to travel to and from these meetings at reasonable cost. Tools for Self Reliance cannot bear costs of bringing Trustees from outside the UK to meetings.

Trustees should be elected on the basis of their relevant experience and skills. Ideally the Board would be made up of members from all parts of the country who have played an active role within Tools for Self Reliance. It should reflect the Tools for Self Reliance membership, and include people with some experience in business, personnel management, finance, law and overseas development! It is obviously not easy to find an ideal Board and above all enthusiasm and commitment to the Tools for Self Reliance ideals are the main qualities expected of a new Trustee.

Trustees are usually elected to serve a three year term on the Board. After this period they may seek re-election if they so wish. However in order to encourage broader representation and a wider range of skills on the Board, in certain situations, such as when overseas members are living in the UK for a limited period, or someone has particularly sought after skills, they may seek election for a reduced term of office. The membership will be made aware of this before they vote for the person.

If you are considering standing as a Trustee but feel you would like more information, please contact Loraine or Jan at Tools for Self Reliance, Netley Marsh and they will happily answer any questions you may have, or will put you in touch with one of our present Trustees.