

ROLE DESCRIPTION FOR A SECRETARY

The overall role of a Secretary is to:

- Maintain an overview of the organisation's affairs
- Ensuring its organisational administration is managed effectively
- Ensuring that proper membership records and decision-making procedures are maintained.

The secretary has many responsibilities some of which may be delegated by mutual consent to other trustees or members of the management committee.

General responsibilities

- To ensure that the organisation complies with its governing document, charity law, company law and any other relevant legislation or regulations.
- To ensure that the organisation pursues its objects as defined in its governing document.
- To ensure the organisation applies its resources exclusively in pursuance of its objects (A charity must not spend money on activities which are not included in its own objects, no matter how worthwhile or charitable those activities are).
- To contribute actively to the management committee/board of trustees' role in giving firm strategic direction to the organisation, setting overall policy, defining goals and setting targets and evaluating performance against agreed targets.
- To safeguard the good name and values of the organisation.
- To ensure the effective and efficient administration of the organisation.
- To ensure the financial stability of the organisation.
- To protect and manage the property of the organisation and to ensure the proper investment of any funds.

In addition to the above statutory duties, each trustee/management committee member should use any specific skills, knowledge or experience they have to help the board of trustees reach sound decisions. This may involve scrutinising board/committee papers, leading discussions, focusing on key issues, providing advice and guidance on new initiatives or other issues in which the trustee has special expertise.

Additional duties of the secretary

Either personally or by delegation, the secretary should:

- Receive agenda items from other trustees/committee members/staff

- Prepare agendas in consultation with the chair and chief executive (if applicable)
- Circulate agendas and supporting papers in good time
- Make arrangements for meetings: book the room or venue, equipment, organise refreshments, dietary requirements etc.
- Ensure there is proper access and appropriate facilities for disabled people
- Check that a quorum is present
- Minute the meetings and circulating the draft minutes to all trustees
- Ensure that the minutes are signed by the chair once they have been approved
- Check that trustees/committee members and staff have carried out action agreed at a previous meeting
- Circulate agendas and minutes of the annual general meeting and any special or extraordinary general meetings

In organisations which are companies, act as company secretary where this role is not delegated to a member of staff. This includes ensuring that annual returns are submitted to Companies House/The Charity Commission as applicable.

Sit on appraisal, recruitment and disciplinary panels as required

Secretary person specification

- Commitment to the organisation
- Willingness to devote the necessary time and effort
- Strategic vision
- Good, independent judgement
- Ability to think creatively
- Willingness to speak their mind
- Understanding and acceptance of the legal duties, responsibilities and liabilities of trusteeship and, if applicable, being a Company Secretary
- Ability to work effectively as a member of a team
- Organisational ability
- Knowledge or experience of business and committee procedures
- Minute-taking experience, if this is not being delegated to staff

Nolan's seven principles of public life: selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership

the Secretary is responsible for:

- Ensuring meetings are effectively organised and minuted
- Maintaining effective records and administration



Supporting rural community-owned businesses

- Upholding the legal requirements of governing documents, charity law, company law etc (where relevant).
- Communication and correspondence
- It is important to note that although the Secretary ensures that these responsibilities are met, much of the work may be delegated to paid staff or volunteers.
- Given these responsibilities, the Secretary often acts as an information and reference point for the Chair and other committee members: clarifying past practice and decisions; confirming legal requirements; and retrieving relevant documentation

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