

COTSWOLDS CONSERVATION BOARD

Board Member Role Profile

1. The Conservation Board's Purposes and Duty

The Cotswolds Conservation Board was established by Parliament in 2004, became fully operational in 2005 and 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

2. Appointment or Election of Board Members

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

3. 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. All Board members are collectively responsible for decisions and should apply policies consistently. Whilst Board members are drawn from three groups or sectors they work and act as one Board.

4. Roles and Functions of all Board Members

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

Main Roles:

- To guide the management of the Conservation Board so that it achieves its two purposes and in doing so helps deliver its duty.
- To guide the management of the Cotswolds AONB so that it delivers wide benefits to its local communities and the nation.

Main Functions:

- To be an ambassador for the Conservation Board and its ambitions and policies at the local, national or international level;
- To champion the Board as an effective mechanism for the conservation and enhancement 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;
- To champion the Board's Management plan, policies, advice and guidance, programmes and grants within their own individual networks;
- To be collectively responsible for decisions and contribute towards the overall strategic direction of the Conservation Board and management of the AONB through the development of policy, the management plan and business plan ¹;
- To collectively participate in the development of policy direction, strategic thinking and innovation within the Conservation Board;
- To influence the Board to help it come to informed and balanced decisions, contributing knowledge, skills and advice from the local, regional and national perspective;
- To work with Members, employees and stakeholders to apply the purposes of the Conservation Board and the principles of sustainable development to all decision-making;
- To approve and monitor the implementation and achievement of the Board's ambitions, policies and programmes;
- To challenge internal and external proposals that exceed or go against the statutory purposes of the Board and the purposes of the designation of the AONB;

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. Board members are expected to be familiar with the Conservation Board's legislative framework.

6. Time Commitment

It is envisaged that members will spend, on average, one day per month for the Board, although this time commitment may increase if members stand for election and are appointed to the Board's Executive Committee, one of the Working or Steering Groups or the Finance & Governance Sub-Committee.

Board members are expected to attend and contribute to regular meetings of the Board, preparing fully in advance of each meeting through reading any papers or briefing material provided.

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.

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 at locations within the AONB or virtually.

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.

Board members are required to follow the "Seven Principles of Public Life" set out by the Committee on Standards in Public Life (copy attached at Annex A). It is essential that members are, and are seen to be, honest, objective and impartial in the exercise of your duties. You must not allow your judgement or integrity to be compromised or permit there to arise any reasonable grounds for suspicion as to the compromise of your judgment and integrity.

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 or are commercially confidential such that harm would occur.

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 of the Constitution.

Board members should not speak on behalf of the Board on matters of media interest unless using an approved statement or with approval in advance from the Chief Executive, Communications Officer or Chairman.

9. Conflicts of Interest

A Board member must ensure that no conflict arises, or could reasonably be perceived to arise between their public duties and their private interests – financial or otherwise.

The Board is required to maintain and update a Register of Interests of its members within 28 days of a change. The Register is available for public inspection. Details of the Register are set out in the Members' Code of Conduct in the Constitution.

Board members must declare any personal, prejudicial or business interests which may, or may be perceived to, conflict with your public duties or influence your judgements in performing your functions. Members must ensure that entries in the Register of Interests are kept up to date. Should a particular matter give rise to a conflict of interest you are required to follow the Board's rules on disclosure of interests and possible withdrawal from the matter.

10. 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 review and agree its Scheme of Members' Allowances on an annual basis, determining 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.

11. Gifts and hospitality

Board members must not accept any gifts or hospitality which might, or might reasonably appear to, compromise your personal judgement or integrity or place you under an improper obligation or bring the Board into disrepute. Members must never canvass or seek gifts or hospitality. Members must comply with the Board's Constitution on the acceptance of gifts and hospitality. All gifts over £25 should be declared.

12. 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.

13. Vacation of office for failure to attend meetings

If a member of the Board fails to attend three consecutive meetings from the date of his/her last attendance of any meeting of the Board, its committee, sub-committee or working groups (unless the failure was due to some reason approved by the Board before the expiry of that period) the person would cease to be a member of the Board.

14. Politically Restricted Posts

Section 13 (4) of the Establishment 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.

May 2020

Annex A

THE SEVEN PRINCIPLES OF PUBLIC LIFE

Selflessness: Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest.

Integrity: Holders of public office must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.

Objectivity: Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.

Accountability: Holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.

Openness: Holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.

Honesty: Holders of public office should be truthful.

Leadership: Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.