



Becoming an ECT Charity trustee

2023



Charity
Making journeys possible

www.ectcharity.co.uk

Welcome

Dear Colleague,

Thank you for taking an interest in joining ECT Charity as a trustee. We believe that the community transport sector is a place where everyone can make a contribution and everyone should feel welcome.

ECT Charity is one of the UK's leading providers of community transport, safely providing almost 360,000 passenger trips for our communities each year. We operate a wide variety of services, each based on a particular local need: from minibuses for community groups to transport for children with Special Education Needs or Disability, from door-to-door services for older and disabled people to buses tackling rural social isolation – and many more.

As a charity, our transport is designed to make a positive difference in the communities we serve – currently Cheshire, Dorset and Ealing, west London.

Our board plays a vital role in our work, providing governance, oversight and support to our leadership team. It ensures that the organisation remains solvent, well run and, most importantly, delivers on our charitable objectives. We're looking to recruit trustees who want to get involved – to bring their skills, experience and ambitions along with them and use their time to help make our board a vibrant and productive one.

This pack is here to help you, providing all the information you need to decide whether becoming an ECT Charity trustee is right for you. If you'd like to take the next step – or have questions – please contact John Chesters on john.chesters@ectcharity.co.uk. We look forward to hearing from you.



David Tinnion
Chair of trustees



John Chesters
CEO

About us

At ECT Charity, community transport is not just a matter of getting people from A to B. Our aim is to make journeys possible for the most vulnerable and isolated people in our communities. Whether it's a GP appointment, a day out with friends, a minibus serving a special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) school or a simple trip to the shops, we connect people with the services that support them to lead active and independent lives, and when regular transport cannot provide the right solution.

We've been doing this for more than four decades – ECT Charity started as Ealing Community Transport in 1979, with a founding mission to provide transport for older and disabled people in Ealing, London. From our headquarters in Greenford, west London, we have expanded our operation to depots in Dorset and Cheshire.

Find out more

You'll get a good sense of the range of support that we provide to our communities from the stories on our [website](#).

Wherever we are based, our instantly recognisable green minibuses can be spotted across the community! Each of our regions offers a different range of services and you can find out more about the specific services available at each of our locations [here](#).

As a leading charity in the community transport sector and one of the largest, we are not only known for the professionalism and commitment of our staff, but also for the innovative contributions we have made to national policy development, including building a sector-leading approach to social value and its measurement – you can find out more about this work [here](#).

During the COVID-19 pandemic, we stepped up to support our communities and partners in the public and third sectors, delivering supplies to vulnerable people. Our focus now is on helping communities adapt and thrive post-pandemic.



ECT Charity today

Our priorities

ECT Charity has emerged from the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic in a good position to deliver on our charitable mission. With the appointment of a new Chief Executive in 2021, plus the emergence of new opportunities and risks, it is also a period of considerable change at ECT Charity.

The priorities, for both the board and the organisation as a whole, are to take a good look at what we are currently contributing as a charity, what we do best and also where we think we can do better. This includes the options for us to build new partnerships and take on new activities, whilst making sure our charitable delivery remains the key focus.

We are also looking at the ways we can improve our governance, and we have reviewed our Articles of Association to better reflect the charity's needs in a modern era. As a part of this, we completed a board skills audit and recruited six new trustees in 2021/22.

Our finances

ECT Charity is in a strong financial position. In 2021/22 our total income was £5.1 million, with a small surplus of £123k alongside a prudent reserves position. The majority of our income comes from delivering community transport contracts for local authorities and transport authorities, who commission ECT Charity to provide high-quality transport services for people unable to use mainstream transport due to mobility or other difficulties. This social enterprise model allows ECT Charity to sustainably deliver its charitable objectives, ensuring we will be able to support our beneficiaries in the long term.

Through the provision of these services and its direct charitable work, ECT Charity generated £607k of social value in 2021/22.

You can see our accounts over the past few years on the Charity Commission's website [here](#).



Vision, mission & values

Vision

Our vision is for inclusion & accessibility for all members of society, whatever their transport needs.

Mission

Our mission is to:

- provide top-quality, safe, affordable, accessible transport services for every community we serve
- collaborate with partners who share our vision for inclusion and accessibility
- be a dedicated and energetic advocate for the positive impact of community transport on the health and wellbeing of individuals, communities and public services around the UK.

Find out more

A more detailed explanation of our vision, mission and values can be found in our publication, [What Matters to Us](#).

Values

Our values are as follows:

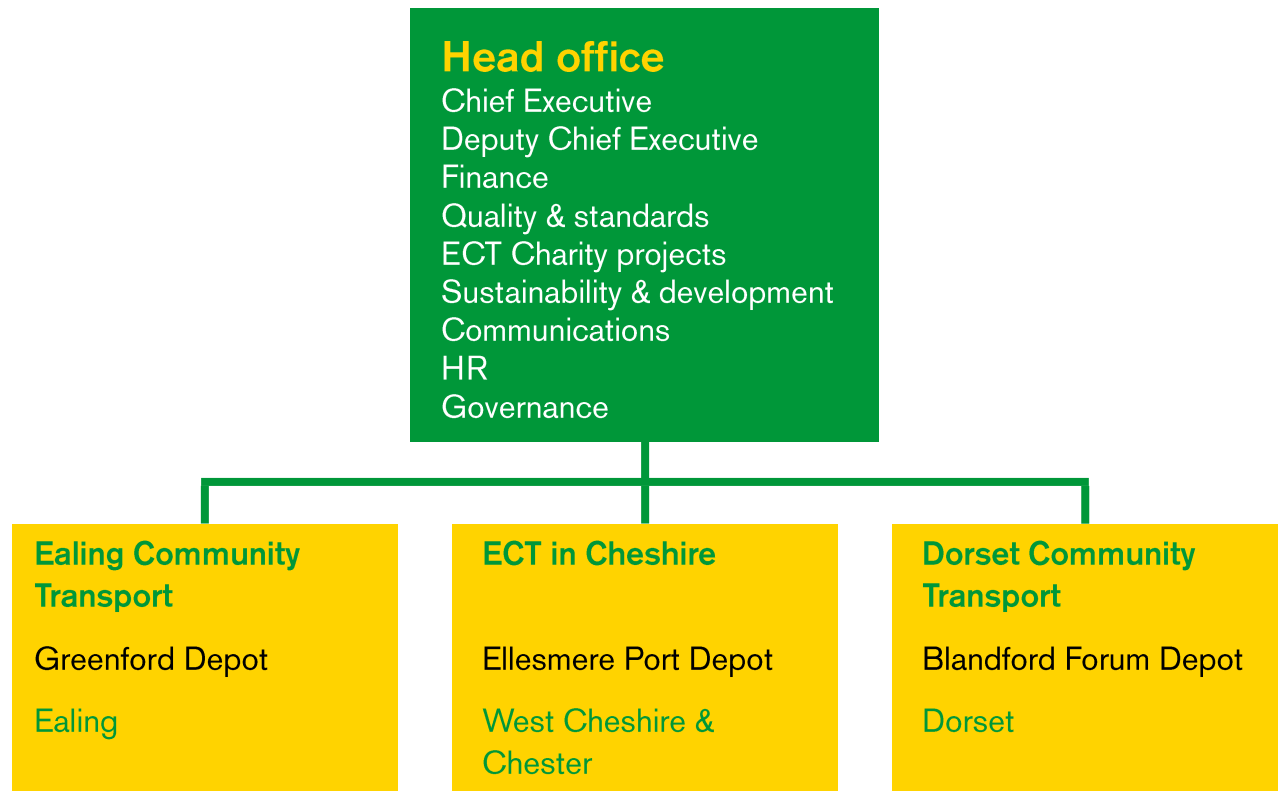
- we care passionately about making a difference
- we always go the extra mile
- we are an organisation that you can trust
- we are flexible, adaptable and open to change
- we believe in collaboration and the sharing of success and ideas.

A diverse ECT Charity

Our aim is to become a truly inclusive organisation with a workforce and board of trustees as diverse as the communities we serve. The range of perspectives and experience diversity brings is an asset to ECT Charity and we want to create an inclusive, welcoming environment. We welcome applicants from all backgrounds and particularly those who share our values but may be new to a role as a trustee.



Company structure



The trustee role and you

About you

ECT Charity is looking for trustees who can make a real contribution – to our governance, to our growth and to the delivery of our charitable mission.

We're looking for trustees who can bring at least one of the following:

- specific professional skills, experience or expertise – financial, legal, HR and so on
- sector-specific knowledge or experience – including transport and health and social care
- a deep understanding of one of the communities where we operate and the beneficiary groups we work closely with.

Most importantly, we want trustees who are keen to be involved, vocal and active. If you possess these qualities and have skills and experience to contribute, we'd like to hear from you. We do not require previous trustee experience and are particularly keen to hear from potential trustees from under-represented groups.

About the role – your commitment

We want all of our trustees to be actively involved but are also aware people may have limited time they can commit. We'd expect you as, a minimum, to attend our four board meetings each year, held quarterly and each lasting two to three hours maximum.

Board meetings are normally held in Ealing, London, but you do not need to be based nearby - remote attendance at these meetings is supported, but we encourage in-person attendance as much as possible as it helps build relationships and understanding. We would particularly welcome trustees located near our depots in Dorset and Cheshire. ECT Charity will pay reasonable travel expenses for you to attend board meetings in person.

Trustee appointments are for a three-year term, with the option to continue for a total of three terms.

We also ask that each trustee joins one of our board committees. These committees each meet three times a year. The committees are:

- Finance – responsible for overseeing the financial leadership of the charity, ensuring its short and long-term viability
- Business Development/Charitable Purposes – supporting the organisation to navigate the challenges of growth whilst retaining a focus on charitable purpose
- Governance – provides oversight of the charity's balance of skills and its diversity, together with developing key policies.

Is this the role for you?

Why become a trustee? Haroon, one of our existing trustees explains his commitment:

“Becoming a board trustee of a charity has benefits that are far reaching and beyond the obvious bringing a priceless sense of gratification and fulfilment from seeing your involvement turned into real impact.

Trustees do not just help a charity in traditional ways - volunteering time or making a donation brings benefit, but one that is usually short-lived. As a trustee, you will have a fundamental and long-lasting impact. Applying whatever skill, vision, energy or expertise you bring as a trustee can benefit a charity at a level that significantly amplifies any other form of contribution.

Working with other skilled trustees from a diverse background, all of whom have the unified objective of ensuring the charity is positioned to do as much good as possible is hugely rewarding. It is also lots of fun, engaging with intelligent and passionate people from walks of life you would not ordinarily intersect.



Haroon Sana
ECT Charity
trustee

Very rarely are people presented with stimulating challenges and decision-making roles where self-interest is not on the agenda. Such is the value placed on being a trustee, that often this can create personal career opportunities, as employers recognise and applaud the willingness to freely give your time, the diligence and commitment shown in being a charity trustee.

Being able to apply your career or personal skills towards the stewardship of a charity adds a wonderful new dimension to your strategic thinking. As a powerful collective, the board creates opportunities for individuals to flourish and take real ownership, whilst championing each other to bring their best to the table. Understanding, observing and developing your personal strengths in a new environment not only benefits the charity but is empowering and nurtures personal growth.

Whereas the responsibility is very real, being a trustee doesn't feel like hard work because the end goal brings value far in excess of the effort we contribute as trustees.”

The role of a trustee

Driven and inspired by our mission and values, you will help us build on our legacy and track record, ensuring that we maintain our reputation for best-in-class services while building social value through our charitable activities. To understand our approach and the difference that our services make, you can watch 'Jean's story' [here](#). We suggest you also explore our work on proving the social value of community transport in [Why Community Transport Matters](#).

The role of the trustee is to ensure that ECT Charity complies with its legal obligations, ensuring that good practice is followed at all times in relation to the governing documents, charity law, company law and any other relevant legislation or regulations. But more importantly to us, we want you to be a part of what we do. We want you to use your professional and personal skills and help us to be better and do more for our communities.

ECT Charity's trustees have ultimate responsibility for the organisation, including finance, organisational strategy and employees. Trustees are accountable to Companies House, The Charity Commission, funders, beneficiaries and other regulatory authorities.

A trustee has three main responsibilities:

- 1 Fiduciary responsibility, ensuring that it remains solvent, holding the organisation in trust and ensuring public confidence.
- 2 To determine the overall direction of the organisation, ensuring it is well-run and delivers the charitable outcomes.
- 3 To provide leadership.

Trustees are appointed for an initial three-year term, with the option of extending this to a maximum of nine years. The position of trustee is on a voluntary-basis and is unpaid.



Additionally, each trustee will work together with the other trustees, to hold ECT Charity in “trust” for current and future beneficiaries by:

- ensuring that the charity has a clear vision, mission and strategic direction and is focused in achieving them for the benefit of the public in accordance its Articles of Association
- being responsible for the performance of the charity and for its corporate behaviour
- ensuring that the charity complies with all legal and regulatory requirements;
- acting as guardians of the charity’s assets (both tangible and intangible), taking all due care over their security, deployment and proper application
- ensuring that the charity’s governance is of the highest possible standard.

In addition, the trustees are responsible for the recruitment of ECT Charity’s Chief Executive and for on-going monitoring of their work in the day-to-day running of the organisation.

In addition to the statutory duties outlined above, trustees are expected to use their specific skills, knowledge and/or experience to assist the board in reaching sound decisions. This may involve:

- scrutinising board papers
- leading discussions
- focusing on key issues
- providing guidance on new initiatives
- attending board committees relevant to their skills and experience
- providing advice in their specialist area, supporting the CEO and staff team
- taking advice from ECT Charity’s key stakeholders, including transport scheme members, employees and/or key clients such as local authorities
- any other issues in which the trustee has special expertise.



The trustees must:

- use reasonable care and skill in their work as trustees, and use their personal skills and experience as appropriate in order to ensure that the charity is well-run and efficient
- consider seeking external professional advice on all matters where there may be material risk to the charity, or where the trustees may be in breach of their duties
- ensure that ECT Charity is and will remain solvent
- use charitable funds and assets reasonably, and only in furtherance of ECT Charity's charitable objects as set out in the Articles of Association
- avoid undertaking activities that might place ECT Charity's funds, assets or reputation at undue risk
- take special care when investing ECT Charity's funds or when borrowing funds for the charity to use.

For further general information on the roles and responsibilities of a charity trustee, please refer to The Charity Commission's guidance [here](#). All trustees are accountable to Companies House, The Charity Commission, funders, beneficiaries and other regulators.

We would like to thank you for your interest in taking on the challenging and rewarding role as one of our trustees.

Take the next step

If you have questions: If you want to know more about becoming an ECT Charity trustee – please contact John Chesters on john.chesters@ectcharity.co.uk.

If you want to apply: You can apply online [here](#).

