

How to become a BSBI Trustee

The Board of Trustees welcomes an interest of BSBI members to strengthen governance through the key role of being a Trustee. Becoming a Trustee can be very rewarding, in using your skills and experience to help guide and direct strategy for a charity and cause you care about. Equally there are responsibilities and time commitments that come with the role. This note provides a guide to these and the steps you can take to find out more.

The first thing you'll need to understand as a Trustee is how BSBI is set up. BSBI is a registered charity and limited company. The BSBI Articles of Association (AoA) set out the purpose of the Society and the overall structure of its organisation and activity to achieve its purpose. The AoA states that the Society is to be governed by a Board of Trustees, each Trustee to serve for up to 3 years and to be elected by BSBI members. A Trustee may stand for re-election twice and so serve for a total of nine years.

Trustees are elected at the BSBI Annual General Meeting (AGM) or may be co-opted by the Board between AGM's. Any member can be nominated and seconded to stand for election as a Trustee. A nominee must be willing to serve as a Trustee, if elected, and meet the minimum requirements set out for all charities and limited companies. The role is voluntary.

It is good practice to talk with existing BSBI Trustees and/or others who have experience of being a Trustee, or of governance, to find out about the role and of their experience. There is also much very useful information about becoming and being a Trustee available online (see links below).

If you wish to be nominated as a potential BSBI Trustee, the Chair of the Board of Trustees would invite you to talk over the role and your potential candidature with one or two fellow Trustees. This offers an opportunity to explain what the current needs of the Board of Trustees are and for you to share how you may be able to strengthen governance as a Trustee. You will need to complete a written declaration to confirm your eligibility and acceptance of responsibilities ahead of any election as well as provide a brief statement (max 200 words) about why you want to stand and what you can offer, so members can see this when they vote.

BSBI is committed to sustaining a working environment free from discrimination and that offers opportunity for all. In line with best practice, the Board of Trustees is looking to strengthen its membership through greater diversity and welcomes interest from everyone, regardless of age, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, disability or faith. As a guide to the current diversity of membership, the Board of Trustees at September 2023 consisted of;

- 5 females, 5 males,
- 1 individual born in the 1940's, 4 in 1950's, 2 in 1960's, 2 in 1970's and 1 in the 1980's.
- 10 individuals described as White British (8 individuals with British nationality, 1 with dual British/American nationality, 1 with dual British/Australian nationality).

The Board also looks to have an appropriate mix of skills and experience to govern the charity effectively. While current Trustees offer a range of expertise and backgrounds, the Board would be strengthened by persons with skills, knowledge or experience in one or more of the following areas: finance, administration, communication and marketing or plant recording. As well as Trustee vacancies, from November 2023 we are also looking for an Honorary General Secretary and an Honorary Treasurer. For role descriptions please see the

[vacancies page of the website.](#)

All nominations by the Board will be made on merit, following a fair and transparent process. In line with the Equality Act 2010, however, the Board may employ positive action where candidates from underrepresented groups can demonstrate their ability to perform the role equally well. Trustees will be elected from nominated BSBI members, as vacancies occur, at an Annual General Meeting.

Because BSBI operates across different countries, it has to comply with Company and Charity Regulation and Legislation in each. As well as being registered with the Charity Commission (England and Wales) and Office of the Scottish Charity Regular, BSBI has applied to register with the Charities Regulator, Ireland: An Rialálai Carthanas and awaits an invitation to apply from the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland. However, guidance for Trustees and Governance is broadly similar for each. For more information, see the Charity Regulator information below.

If you wish to know more about becoming a BSBI Trustee, and if you decide to seek nomination please contact the Hon. Gen. Secretary well ahead of any election:

hongensec@bsbi.org

Further Information

Dates and details of nominations for election are posted on the BSBI website [AGM page](#).

The Articles of Association and other important documents, can be found on the '[About BSBI](#)' page.

Charity Regulator Information:

Here are some links you may wish to explore;

i) Charity Commission for England and Wales

'The essential Trustee: what you need to know, what you need to do'

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/866947/CC3_feb20.pdf

'5 minute guides'

[Charity Commission guidance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

Charity Governance Code (England and Wales)

[Home — Charity Governance Code](#)

ii) OSCR – Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator

'Guidance and good practice for Charity Trustees'

<https://www.oscr.org.uk/guidance-and-forms/guidance-and-good-practice-for-charity-trustees/>

‘Good Governance’

<https://www.oscr.org.uk/managing-a-charity/Trustee-duties/good-governance/>

iii) The Charity Commission for Northern Ireland

‘Trusteeship’

<https://www.charitycommissionni.org.uk/start-up-a-charity/Trusteeship/>

iv) The Charities Regulator, Ireland, An Rialálai Carthanas

‘Who is a Charity Trustee?’

<https://www.charitiesregulator.ie/en/information-for-charities/who-is-a-charity-Trustee>

‘Charities Governance code’

[Charities Governance Code Charities Regulator](#)