

## **A message from Shireen Chambers, Chair of Trustees**

Thank you very much for your interest in Tree Aid and I hope you will apply for the position of trustee.

Tree Aid has built up a strong reputation internationally as a high performing organisation that is able to deliver on its promises. We are an innovative, knowledgeable and specialist charity focusing on the role of trees in tackling poverty and combatting the climate crisis in dryland Africa. The demand for our work is enormous.

As Chair of Tree Aid, it is my great privilege to provide, with the other trustees, the leadership and guidance to support this work, focusing on its quality and long-term impact.



Given the incredible need for our work, we continue to set ourselves the ambitious targets for expansion and will be developing our next organisational strategy this year. We are looking to build the influence and impact of our work by sharing our experience more widely. For this reason, we are looking for three new trustees to strengthen our Board that offer expertise in either international development, financial management and oversight, and advocacy and policy.

As stated in the material, Tom Skirrow, the Chief Executive, is available for more information and if you then want to talk to me specifically about the roles and requirements, please let him know and I will be in touch.

With best wishes and thanks again for considering serving this organisation, which does such important work in improving the prospects of poor people across dryland Africa.

**Shireen Chambers**  
**Chair of Trustees**



## Tree Aid Trustee role description

### 1. Background to Tree Aid and its work

Tree Aid is a specialist international development organisation headquartered in Bristol, UK with operations in five countries within West and East Africa. We believe that the conservation, restoration and management of trees and forests is essential to create income opportunities for poor communities while combatting climate change and preventing desertification.

Life is tough in the drylands of Africa, home to approximately 325 million people who rely heavily on natural resources through farming for their survival, which, when compounded by growing population, poor access to technology and unsustainable production practices contribute to land degradation.

Tree Aid exists to help communities break the cycle of poverty and environmental degradation in these very poor countries. We work through local partners who understand local challenges and our expert staff offer practical knowledge and policy solutions that support the sustainable use and management of forests and trees.

Our programmes focus on:

- Enterprise development and trade – supporting communities to link with local and international markets and achieve the best price for the tree products they sell.
- Agroforestry and natural resource management – sustainably using resources such as trees, land and water to enable communities to develop while protecting their environment.
- Forest governance – ensuring communities have access to and rights to use the trees that they rely on for their survival.
- Food security and nutrition – using trees to improve resilience and, through education, change behaviour to encourage dietary diversification by consumption of edible fruit, seeds, nuts and leaves as part of a healthy diet.

Last year we reached over 365,000 people and planted nearly two million trees in Burkina Faso, Ghana, Mali, Niger and Ethiopia with a turnover of around £5million.

Tree Aid's Board of Trustees is legally responsible for Tree Aid, its governance, staff and work. It is a company limited by guarantee and so trustees are also directors of the company. The Trustees play a vital role in upholding the vision, mission and values of the organisation, setting strategy, maintaining focus on our charitable objectives and ensuring the resources available are used to the best effect.



The current trustees are:

Shireen Chambers (Chair)	Terence Jagger (Vice-Chair)
Judith Coates (Treasurer)	Nick Pride
Tom De Pass	Liz Davies
Trevor Reaney	Alex Rees
Phillip Songhurst-Thonet	

The Board of Trustees normally meets four times a year and additionally serve on one of the sub-committees including the Finance and Audit committee, Fundraising Standards committee and Nominations and Remunerations Committee.

More details on the charity and our current trustees can be found at <https://www.treeaid.org/about/our-team/our-trustees/>.

## 2. Overall Purpose of the Trustee Role

Trustees take ultimate responsibility for the work that Tree Aid does, and the ways in which it generates and spends its income to achieve its aims. It is a big responsibility, focussing on the strategic direction of the organisation, agreeing plans and budgets, and holding the Chief Executive to account for the delivery of strategy.

It has a legal dimension too, with trustees legally responsible for ensuring that the organisation operates to standards set by Parliament and the Charity Commission.

Specifically, the Board is responsible for:

- the overall governance and strategic direction of the charity;
- its financial health;
- the probity of its activities; and
- ensuring the organisation's aims, objectives and goals are in accordance with its governing document, and legal and regulatory guidelines.

In all this we have an absolute focus on the impact of what we do for the people whom we serve and work with, in the drylands of Africa.

## 3. Commitment

Trustees are expected to attend three board meetings and a strategy day each year. You will also be expected to serve on a Board sub-committee, and staff may seek to consult with you on your particular expertise.

Trustees may be asked to represent Tree Aid at outside meetings with potential donors or influencers, and to attend or work alongside Tree Aid staff at events and receptions.

## 4. Main Responsibilities of a Trustee

With other trustees to hold Tree Aid 'in trust' for current and future beneficiaries by:

- Ensuring that Tree Aid has a clear vision, mission and strategy , and is aligning all its resources towards achieving these;



- Being responsible for the performance of Tree Aid and for its corporate practice;
- Ensuring that Tree Aid complies with all legal and regulatory requirements;
- Acting as guardians of Tree Aid's assets, both tangible and intangible, taking all due care over their security, deployment and proper application;
- Ensuring that Tree Aid's governance is of the highest possible standard;
- To hold the Chief Executive accountable for the achievement of the organisation's goals, and to provide the Chief Executive with regular, constructive feedback on leadership, management and overall achievement.
- Through a recruitment committee, to appoint the Chief Executive, to set their terms and conditions and to ensure that the organisation and the appointee invests in ongoing professional development, and considers succession planning for the Chief Executive.
- Working in partnership with other trustees, the Chief Executive and other senior staff;
- Ensuring that Tree Aid follows best practice and professional standards in its marketing and fundraising.
- With the Chair, to review regularly the board's performance and your own performance as a trustee.

All trustees should be aware of, and understand, their individual and collective responsibilities, and should not be overly-reliant on one or more individual trustees in any particular aspect of the governance of the charity. For example, a Trustee is expected to be able to read the financial accounts to a level that they can ask questions and comprehend answers of a general nature and to ask if she or he needs support in this area.

All trustees will undergo an induction upon appointment and should seek ongoing training to remain alert to, and aware of, their duties and responsibilities, and of the environment in which they operate.

It is essential that trustees avoid any personal or professional conflict of interest.

Since Tree Aid is a company limited by guarantee, trustees (directors) also have specific legal duties under the Companies Act 2006. Information on these is held by the Tree Aid Director of Finance and Resources but can be found at [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/352237/The\\_Companies\\_Act\\_2006.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/352237/The_Companies_Act_2006.pdf)

## **5. Trustee Accountability**

As the board is responsible and liable for the governance and functioning of the charity, it is accountable in varying degrees to a variety of stakeholders, including: beneficiaries, funders, the Charity Commission, Companies House and other regulators.



Furthermore, there is a growing demand within the sector and the wider general public for charities to be open and accountable for their actions and inactions. Trustees need to consider the wider implications of the decisions they make, and to communicate widely the formal reasons behind such decisions or actions. Above all else, trustees must adhere to any legal and regulatory requirements applicable to the charity's activities.

**PERSON SPECIFICATION FOR NEW TRUSTEES**

(E= Essential and D = Desirable)

**Knowledge or experience**

To have strong experience, skills and / or knowledge in at least one of the following areas (E):

- International Development (current best practice and strategic developments in the sector).
- Finance, audit and corporate governance
- Campaigning, Public Policy and Advocacy
  
- Knowledge of West Africa (D)
- Previous service as a trustee or board member of a charity (D)
- Experience of strategic leadership (D)
- Change management (D)
- Charity business models (D)

**Other requirements**

- Commitment to Tree Aid's vision, mission and values (E)
- Sufficient time available to contribute effectively (E)
- Ability to engage in committees and / or other support activity (E)
- Willingness to use skills and contacts for Tree Aid's benefit (E)
- Prepared to assist fundraising through personal introduction and influence (E)
- Ability to communicate effectively with staff and stakeholders (E)
- A basic level of financial literacy (D)
- A willingness to undertake training in areas where this would be useful (E)