

# Information Pack - Becoming a Voscur Trustee



**In this information pack, you will find details of becoming a Trustee of Voscur - including a summary of our achievements this year and how to apply.**



Thank you for your interest in becoming a Trustee of Voscur. We're seeking skilled and enthusiastic people, from a range of backgrounds and communities, to join our Board of Trustees and help empower, support and develop local community groups, charities and social enterprises.

Voscur is the support and development agency for Bristol's Voluntary, Community, and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector. We support organisations in and around Bristol to increase their impact and help more local people.

Equality and diversity are very important to Voscur as we serve a very diverse VCSE sector. We are keen to increase the diversity of our Board, and welcome applications from people whose communities are currently under-represented in our team.

We want to hear from you! Please read the information pack and get excited about joining our team. If you have any questions, please contact me at [rebecca@voscur.org](mailto:rebecca@voscur.org) or 0117 909 9949 for a chat.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rebecca Mear". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Rebecca Mear, CEO





## What makes a Voscur Trustee?

- Have you been searching for an opportunity to share and develop your skills, experience, knowledge and connections?
- Do you want to contribute to the development of a thriving voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) sector that empowers people and communities?
- Could you help shape future services that support and develop VCSE organisations?

## Could you be a Voscur Trustee?

As a Trustee, you would work to ensure that the organisation adheres to its charitable objectives, which are to:

- Build the capacity of third sector organisations and support their work
- Facilitate partnership working between third sector, public and other relevant bodies.

The Voscur Board is made up of organisational members (people involved in Bristol's VCSE organisations) and individual members.

There are around six meetings of the Board per year to attend (currently these take place at 4-6pm on weekdays). In addition, we encourage trustees to join one of our two sub-committees (HR and Finance), which each meet for one two-hour meeting per quarter. Therefore, an average commitment for Board attendance is around 20 hours per year.

Trustees can attend in-person or online, thanks to our hybrid working set-up - although we aim to convene as many people in-person for the Full Board meetings as possible. Trustees who face forms of digital exclusion, such as needing a device to read papers on, will be supported by the organisation to get the equipment they need.

We are committed to making adjustments for people who face barriers, therefore are open to hearing from trustees what they require in order to fully participate in the board and organisational governance. Meetings are scheduled taking school holidays and religious festivals into account, and all in-person venues are wheelchair accessible. Previous examples of specific adjustments include: providing large-print papers at board meetings; supporting access to cycle-for-volunteering schemes; catering for religion-related dietary requirements.

## Our current recruitment priorities

We are currently seeking new organisational or individual members to join a team drawn from our membership bringing varied skills and experience. Current Trustees and our CEO are very eager to increase diversity within the Voscur Board.

Applications are therefore strongly encouraged from Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans and Non-binary people; people of faith; and young people as these are currently under-represented on our Board.

We have recently pioneered work to help VCSE organisations understand socio-economic inequalities and therefore are keen to recruit more trustees with personal experience of living in poverty.

We're looking for trustees with these types of skills or experience:

- Commissioning and procurement
- Human Resources
- Communications
- Marketing
- Finance

If you don't have these specialist skills but are passionate about the VCSE sector - we'd still love to talk to you.

As part of our role to create a thriving VCSE sector, we are committed to helping people build experience as part of their personal and professional career trajectories. We are keen to support emerging leaders to engage in our board as a form of development. If this is you, talk to us about best we can support you in that journey.



## The role of Trustees

Members of the Board of Trustees bring their skills and experience so we can develop as a strong organisation that takes care of its resources and people and has high impact. Our Trustees:

- Ensure we deliver our charitable objectives: to support the VCSE sector and to facilitate partnerships
- Participate in Board/subcommittee meetings, general meetings, conferences/events and development sessions
- Receive and approve regular financial reports, and ensure good financial practices
- Contribute to strategic planning and development
- Ensure compliance with relevant legislation and Charity/Companies House registrations
- Regularly review our policies and practices, and act on any new legislation
- Get involved with and/or provide leadership on specific development and initiatives
- Provide guidance on new initiatives and issues affecting the sector

Voscur Trustees:

- Have strategic vision and thinking
- Demonstrate commitment to the organisation
- Are willing to devote time and effort to the organisation
- Act as an effective advocate for the organisation
- Offer sound, independent opinions and provide good judgement
- Think creatively and inclusively
- Speak their mind and provide constructive input
- Understand and accept the legal duties, responsibilities and liabilities of Trusteeship
- Work effectively as a team
- Adhere to the 'Nolan Principles' (the basis of the expected ethical standards) of selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership

If you are interested in joining but don't feel you have all the skills and experience, please contact Dani Oliver ([dani@voscur.org](mailto:dani@voscur.org)) who will put you in touch with either our Chair or CEO, both of whom will be pleased to provide further information to help you decide.

## Our achievements in the last year

Over the past 12 months, Voscur has seen a significant number of changes, including:

- A new CEO.
- A number of new staff, new roles, and new projects.
- New and evolving partnerships
- A new challenge in the form of the Cost-of-Living crisis leading to rising costs and rising demands for the VCSE sector.
- New opportunities and challenges in the wider environment within which we operate.

To get an insight into how we deliver system leadership to the VCSE sector, please see our 2021-22 Impact report here: <https://www.voscur.org/reports>.



## Our future plans and priorities

In March 2023, we held an Away Day with staff and trustees to celebrate our achievements of the past year and coproduce a new strategic plan for 2023-26.

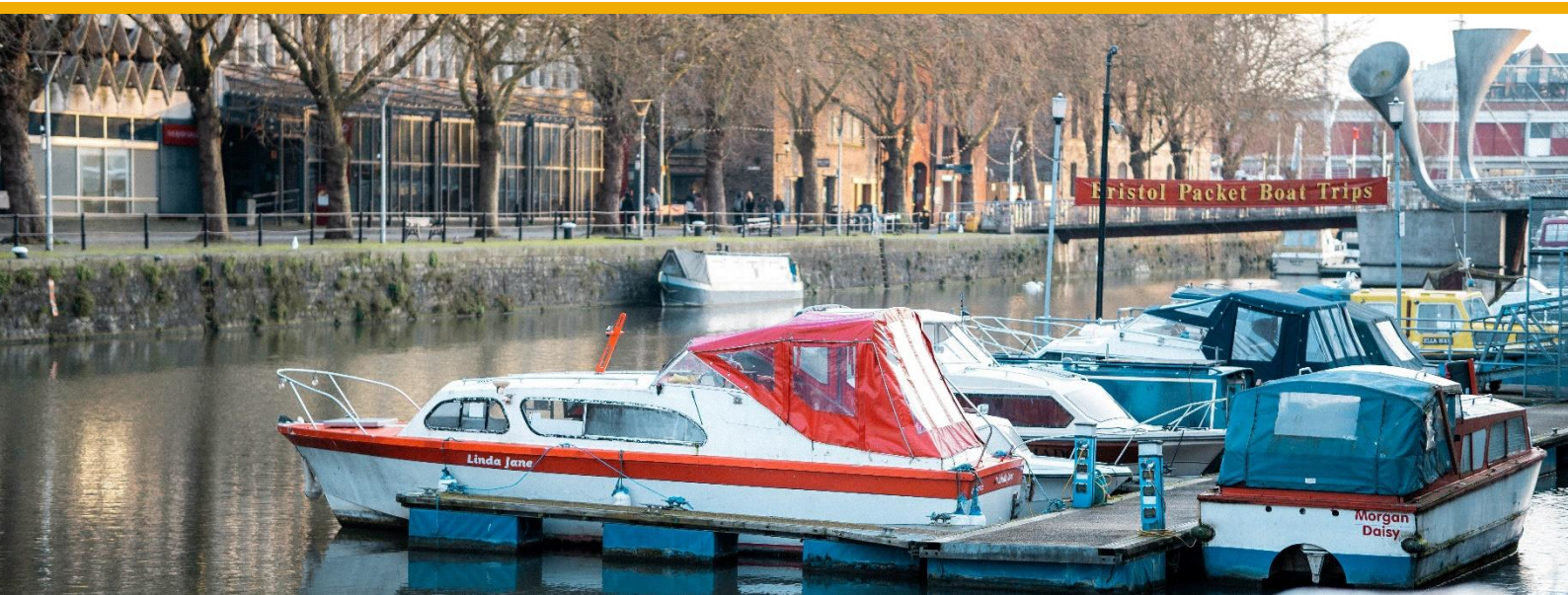
We are evolving as an organisation, and what the VCSE sector needs from us is changing in parallel.

At its core, we aim to redefine our organisational mission with a more explicit focus on how we tackle poverty and inequality, working with communities.



## Services to support and assist our members and the wider sector include:

- Hosting a range of online training and learning opportunities through the VCSE Academy and other peer support networks.
- Capacity Building 1-1 advice and support for community groups and voluntary organisations on issues ranging from governance to fundraising to staff and volunteer management.
- Providing free learning events and peer support sessions.
- Designing and delivering systems to understand the issues faced by communities on the ground and the role the VCSE sector plays in responding to this.
- Advocating for the VCSE sector's impact to be understood by key partners, and for the VCSE sector to be an equal partner in shaping policy and developing solutions-focused systems, based on their insight and expertise.
- Regular two-way communications to ensure the insight of the VCSE sector is integral to developments and plans within the city.
- Hosting partnerships for VCSE sector organisations to work more effectively together, and in partnership with other sectors.
- Job and volunteer role advertising.
- A refreshed membership package for VCSE organisations.



## How to become a Voscur Trustee

It's simple when you decide to nominate yourself to become a new trustee:

- Have an informal discussion with our Chair, Lin Whitfield or CEO, Rebecca Mear. (Contact [dani@voscur.org](mailto:dani@voscur.org) to arrange)
- Complete and return the nomination form and your CV to [personnel@voscur.org](mailto:personnel@voscur.org) by 5pm on 31<sup>st</sup> May 2023.

Induction of new Trustees will take place at a time to suit their availability, as they are co-opted.

Training and guidance will also be available for new Trustees. Nominations are included in the papers for the AGM and Members are asked to vote to confirm new Trustees.

Should the number of nominations exceed the number of Trustees required, additional information about a selection process will be provided.

New Trustees will be co-opted, which means that they will be appointed to the Board by the Trustees at their first meeting, and able to contribute to decision-making with equal standing. As a result, we are keen for newly selected Trustees to start their induction as soon as it is convenient for them to do so. At our AGM, traditionally held in late November, co-opted Trustees will need to stand for election by the Members of Voscur, in order to confirm their position as Trustees.

We very much hope you will consider applying to join the Voscur Board and to working with us as we reimagine the sector and work towards a brighter, sustainable future.

