

BucksVision Trustee Recruitment Pack

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WELCOME FROM THE CHAIR

I'm Bob Dean, Chair of BucksVision. Following nearly a lifetime of visual impairment, I have lived experience of some of the challenges people with sight loss face within the education system and the workplace. My career was mainly with an international IT services company where I developed a breadth of experience in various aspects of business development and management.

After I retired fifteen years ago, the opportunity arose to join BucksVision; initially as a volunteer and then as a Trustee in 2012. This enabled me to utilise some of the skills I gained whilst in employment to support BucksVision through the challenges it has faced over the last decade.

Following a long history, the charity is moving into a new chapter and now needs to expand and broaden the skills and composition of the Board of Trustees.

As we seek to grow our fundraising capability and look ahead to a new strategic vision, we are looking for Trustees to bring new talent and ideas to our Board to help us achieve this. We are seeking people with expertise in areas of Fundraising, Marketing, HR and Digital Services.

As a BucksVision Trustee, you are part of a team and will have the opportunity to apply your unique skills and experience while learning from others. Joining our board will give you experience of being in a leadership role; setting a strategic vision; influencing and negotiation; and managing risk while working closely with both passionate staff and volunteers, who often have different perspectives. This is one of the most enjoyable aspects of my role.

This pack will provide information on BucksVision itself, what being a Trustee can do for you and what we are looking for.

I look forward to welcoming you to the team.

WHO WE ARE

BucksVision is your local society, offering support and services to blind and partially sighted people living in Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes.

We recognise everyone's unique experience of sight loss and our focus is on providing the skills and tools people need to live independent lives.

History

We have been helping residents of Buckinghamshire living with sight loss since we were founded in 1911. During those 111 years the number of people needing assistance has greatly increased and our services have adapted to the many changes and innovations in society.

Our Team

Our small team of seven employees work alongside a wonderful team of over 250 volunteers to deliver our services.

Services

Our services include:

Advice & Information - our team can answer questions about all aspects of sight loss and signpost /refer people to other useful organisations.

Resource Centre - staff and volunteers demonstrate equipment and daily living aids to people in our resource centres.

Home Support Services - Befrienders, Readers and Shoppers offer companionship and practical support to people so they can remain independent at home.

Social Activities - volunteer led clubs and activities across the county offer peer to peer support.

Technology Support - volunteers provide help and advice around technology.

VISION

BucksVision is working for the day when all blind and partially sighted people are able to participate fully in our community, enjoying the same opportunities, freedom, responsibilities and quality of life as people who are fully sighted.

MISSION

To make a positive difference to the lives of blind and partially sighted people in Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes, by providing support, advice, social activities and the skills to enable them to reach their full potential and lead independent lives.

VALUES

Service user led: Blind and partially sighted people are at our heart and influence everything that we do.

Collaborative: We work together, within BucksVision and with partners, to ensure that we make the biggest difference.

Innovative: We deal with challenges in a positive and imaginative way to find a way forward.

Inclusive: We include and value people with diverse experience, abilities, and backgrounds.

Open: We are honest, candid, and transparent, working with integrity in all that we do.

STRATEGY AND GOVERNANCE

BucksVision is governed by its Board of Trustees using its governing document, Articles of Association.

Our Chief Executive works alongside the Board to manage our organisation and staff team.

In 2014, BucksVision Board agreed to a legal association with RNIB (Royal National Institute of Blind People), which included significant financial and back office support. However, with a changing charity environment, in March 2021, the Board mutually agreed with RNIB that BucksVision would become independent at the end of the 2021-22 financial year.

It is therefore an exciting time for the charity as we move forward, returning to a fully independent charity as we have been for most of our history.

The Chief Executive and Board have developed a three-year business plan, 2021-2024, setting out how BucksVision will operate as an independent entity. The main priority is to build BucksVision's fundraising capability so that it can replace the financial support that has been provided by RNIB since 2014.

BucksVision's objectives include:

- Providing volunteer led social activities.
- Providing a wide range of outings and experience days.
- Providing information and advice, including demonstrating equipment and devices.
- Providing learning and training opportunities so people can live independently.
- Ensuring that people with sight loss receive the support they need, whether that is through current service provision or through services to be developed.

OUR BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Robert Dean, Chair (joined 2012)

Bob is retired having spent most of his career with an international IT services company. He undertook a variety of management roles, his most recent being in Business Financial Management. Bob became Chair of the Board in 2013.

Ian Laing, Vice-Chair (joined 2010)

Ian first joined our volunteer team in 2009 to support the office staff. Ian's background is in corporate IT services. He was appointed as Vice Chair in 2013.

John Crowther, Treasurer (joined 2014)

John is a qualified accountant and came to BucksVision after retiring from Action for Blind People in November 2014, where he was Director of Finance & Resources, then Deputy Chief Executive.

Peter Robbins (joined 2009)

Prior to his retirement Peter was a Consultant Workshop Manager. Peter has lived experience of sight loss and has been involved with our services at a local level for many years.

Seema Flower (joined April 2018)

Seema has been blind since an early age and has built a successful chain of businesses and property portfolio. Her business Blind Ambition, a disability training consultancy, has been running for 25 years.

Jan Antosiewicz (joined January 2019)

Jan joined shortly before he retired from his position of Social Services Manager, based at Stoke Mandeville Hospital. Jan has in depth knowledge and experience of the sight loss sector both personally and professionally.

Jeremy Browne (joined February 2019)

Jeremy has been blind from early childhood and is a retired family lawyer. Jeremy has skills in negotiation and conflict resolution and is confident in challenging the status quo.

ROLE OF A TRUSTEE

We need passionate Trustees, who represent the diverse community we support, to bring their experience and skills into our organisation to enable us to provide an accessible, effective and appropriate service to our members.

Role Requirements

- Ensure the organisation complies with its governing document, charity law, company law, and other relevant legislation.
- Ensure that the organisation pursues its objectives as defined in its governing document.
- Contribute actively to the role of Trustee by using your skills to help shape the strategic direction of the organisation.
- Ensure the effective and efficient administration of the organisation.
- Ensure the financial stability of the organisation.
- Protect and manage the property of the charity and ensure the proper investment of the charity's funds.
- Monitor the performance of the executive against the organisation's strategic and operational plans.
- Contribute to the identification and monitoring of risk.
- Use any specific skills, knowledge or experience to help the Board reach sound decisions.
- Scrutinise Board papers, ask appropriate questions and challenge constructively.
- Participate actively in discussions, providing advice and guidance on issues you have relevant expertise in.

- Maximise your networks and identify opportunities that will benefit BucksVision.
- Build constructive and positive relations with other Trustees and staff with a willingness to listen and understand.

The Charity Commission provide guidance on various aspects of Trusteeship including what's involved in being a Trustee.

Person Specification

Knowledge and experience

Highly desirable

- Knowledge and experience of Fundraising, Marketing, HR or Digital Services (see page 11 for more information).

Desirable

- Knowledge of the charity sector.
- Knowledge/experience of the disability sector.
- Experience of project planning.
- Understanding of risk management.
- Knowledge of networking and local business communities within Buckinghamshire.

Previous experience of being a Trustee is not required as training and support can be provided.

Skills and abilities

- Able to distil complex information and bring a pragmatic approach to its application.
- Effective communication and interpersonal skills.
- The ability to galvanise external relationships and build support for BucksVision is highly desirable.

Personal style and behaviour

- Independent, strategic, and innovative thinker.

- Willing to debate constructively and challenge rigorously while working to achieve a shared consensus.
- Collaborative team player.
- Exercise sound judgement.
- Commit to the values of BucksVision; lead by example in upholding these values and demonstrate the utmost integrity.

Required Commitment

- The current Board are flexible about meeting times and the method of meeting with options to meet both in person and virtually.
- While we adapt to our new independent status the Board is meeting monthly. Ideally potential Trustees should be able to commit to attending at least four meetings a year.
- You may be required to attend events from time to time including fundraising events.
- Between meetings you may be required to review documents and correspondence via email.
- Reasonable expenses incurred will be reimbursed.

Safeguarding

All Trustees should ensure that they are aware of their safeguarding responsibilities and take responsibility for promoting and safeguarding the welfare of children and adults. This will include undertaking a DBS check.

Terms of Appointment

All Trustees are expected to abide by our terms of appointment, which will be discussed during induction, and to declare as appropriate their business interests.

BucksVision Trustees are also Company Directors. We are, therefore, unable to progress applications from an individual who is disqualified from becoming a Company Director.

WHAT ARE THE BOARD SEEKING?

The present Board of Trustees has a wide range of experience and skills, but a recent skills audit identified the need to recruit within the following key areas.

Fundraising

With the charity becoming independent from RNIB the Board's focus is on building our fundraising capability. We welcome people with experience of fundraising to help us do this; particularly anyone who has established local networks and experience of trusts and grants application processes.

Marketing

We would welcome applications from people who have proven experience of marketing and advertising, to support and advise staff on how to reach and connect with diverse communities within Buckinghamshire.

Human Resources

Becoming independent from RNIB will mean establishing an independent HR structure; the Board would value the skills of someone with a background in HR and people management.

Digital Services/Inclusion

The global Covid-19 pandemic led to many organisations adapting their services. We expanded our digital and virtual opportunities to remain connected to our membership which identified barriers to digital inclusion within our sight loss community. Going forward we recognise the importance of continuing to remain digitally inclusive so we welcome interest from anyone with current experience of digital inclusion and/or delivering digital services.

TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

At BucksVision, all staff and volunteers are expected to complete training prior to and within three months of starting their role.

Volunteer Induction training

Following your recruitment, we will invite you to Volunteer Induction Training. During this induction you'll learn about different eye conditions; how to confidently provide sighted guiding to someone with sight loss; our volunteer policies and procedures and meet other new volunteers.

Compliance training

Every new volunteer and staff member is expected to complete our compliance training modules. These modules are Privacy & Security Basics training and Safeguarding training.

You complete these modules in your own time by reading the information provided.

Trustee Induction

You will receive training and support to assist you with becoming a Trustee.

We also have other development and learning opportunities that you can access during your time with BucksVision. You might find this to be suitable at the beginning of your role or you might like to attend once you're more settled and interested in developing your skills further. Some examples of development training we offer are Volunteer Refresher Training, First Aid Training and Dementia Awareness.

APPLICATION PROCESS

To apply to become a BucksVision Trustee, please send a copy of your CV along with a covering letter to Alison Deuchars, adeuchars@bucksvision.co.uk by Monday 7 March 2022.

In your covering letter, please consider and answer the following, preferably keeping to under 300 words per question.

1. Based on your understanding of our organisation and the role of Trustee, what do you understand may be the biggest risks and opportunities facing our organisation?
2. Focusing on an area in which you have particular expertise (and for which we are recruiting) please tell us what is your ambition for BucksVision in this area? For example, what do you think our priorities should be and what strategies could we deploy to achieve them?
3. What personal qualities do you think make a really good Trustee – and which personal qualities do you feel you would bring to the role?

Please provide the names of two referees in your covering letter. They will need to have known you for at least two years and be aged 18+. They cannot be a family member/partner or live in the same household as you.

Candidates will be shortlisted for interview once the closing date has passed and invited to attend an interview with a recruitment panel.

Following a successful interview your application will be put before the Board for formal appointment. New Trustees will be required to undertake a DBS check and invited to an Induction session.

Once you officially become a Trustee of BucksVision, the Charity Commission and Companies House will be informed.

If you would like more information or would like to discuss the role in more detail before applying, please get in touch with Alison Deuchars, adeuchars@bucksvision.co.uk, 01296 487 556.

OUR APPROACH TO DIVERSITY

BucksVision is a charity supporting a range of individuals and communities across Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes.

As an organisation, we are committed to reflecting the diversity of the communities that we help.

We take an equity approach in our programmes and activities and are particularly interested in supporting those whose voices are less heard, to be involved in the organisation at all levels. This includes within the context of the Trustee board.

We welcome applications from those people who reflect the diversity of the work that we do and have first-hand experience of sight loss. As noted in this Trustee pack, previous board experience is not necessary.

The board and the staff team can offer training and support to those who would like to take on their first Trustee role.

We believe that diversity in the workplace creates dynamic, relevant organisations, fostering spaces for innovation and creativity. We recruit candidates irrespective of protected characteristics, and we particularly welcome applications from those who are underrepresented on charity sector boards.

OTHER WAYS YOU CAN GET INVOLVED WITH BUCKSVISION

Volunteering is an invaluable way of offering your support, but there are other ways in which people can help us.

Donate

Donations both large and small make a big difference. You can donate online or by card or cheque. We also welcome regular donations.

Fundraise

There are lots of ways you can fundraise and make an enormous difference – whether it is in your local community, at work or taking on one of our challenge events. Download our pack for more information.

Leave a gift in your will

Our work is made possible thanks to the generosity and kindness of people leaving us a gift in their Will. Get in touch for advice on how to make a change to your Will.

Fundraising is vital to BucksVision; with it we can continue to provide practical and emotional support to people living with sight loss.

Thank you for your interest in becoming a Trustee of BucksVision.

Our volunteers support and involvement means we can continue to make daily life better for people with sight loss. We simply could not do it without our volunteers.

If you would like to find out more about volunteering in general with BucksVision, please do not hesitate to contact our Volunteer Manager using the details below.

01296 487 556

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bucksvision.co.uk

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