

Green Southwell

Invitation for expressions of interest in becoming a Trustee of our charitable incorporated organisation

Here at Green Southwell, we're looking for trustees as we set up as a charitable incorporated organisation.

We want to formalise our governance to help raise funds for sustainable development of the town and surrounding villages, and to ensure good governance of those funds.

We are starting small, and actions will remain proportional to the time, skills and resource available.

We are looking for up to 7 Trustees with experience in finance, marketing, social marketing, energy and environmental activity and activism. Please email expressions of interest and any questions to hello@greensouthwell.org.uk by 14th February 2020.

FAQ

What is a charitable incorporated organisation?

This is a type of charity that is incorporated, so its trustees have limited liability. CIOs must be registered with and send annual reports to the Charity Commission. Becoming a CIO is usually the most straightforward way to set up an incorporated charity.

Who has voting rights?

There are two types of CIOs, defined by the breadth of membership. An Association CIO has a membership wider than trustees, whilst only trustees have voting rights in a Foundation CIO.

Green Southwell does not currently have formal members, and so proposes to set up as a Foundation CIO. This has the option of changing constitution to become an Association CIO if a way to formalise membership becomes evident and desirable to fulfil the CIO's purpose.

Why a charity?

There is a question of whether it would be more sustainable to go green on the basis of social entrepreneurship rather than relying on grant applications. However, we do not have the capacity at present. Perhaps if a large enough project emerges, that will be the time for a community benefit co-op to begin trading.

Will trustees be paid?

Trustees are asked to fulfil their duties on a voluntary basis.

For other activities, we believe that economic development is an important element of sustainable development. A CIO can contract others or employ staff in its name, including trustees where it goes beyond their role as trustee, provided it meets certain criteria in the Charities Act.

What are your regulatory responsibilities?

CIOs must produce accounts under charity law, not company law. This allows smaller CIOs (income below £250,000) to produce simpler receipts and payments accounts.

All CIOs must register with the Commission, regardless of their income.

Members of a CIO may either have no liability at all or (like a company) limited liability for its debts.

Because they have additional legal protection, members of a corporate body (Company or CIO) must comply with extra regulations.

Unlike companies, CIOs do not have to register with Companies House and will not be fined for administrative errors like late filing of accounts, but some breaches of the CIO Regulations are legal offences.

How will you measure impact?

A CIO needs to keep a formal record of impact.

Green Southwell currently keeps an informal record, and would need to consider how impact is measured on a project-by-project basis. Trustees will be asked for guidance on this.

What is the purpose of Green Southwell as a CIO?

Having reviewed the guidelines, our working description of our purpose is:

- For the public benefit, to promote the sustainable development [what] of Southwell, Nottinghamshire and surrounding villages [where], in particular but not exclusively by [how]
- the preservation, conservation and the protection of the environment and the prudent use of natural resources;
- advancing the education of the public in subjects relating to sustainable development and the protection, enhancement and rehabilitation of the environment

Sustainable development means “development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”

We will welcome Trustee's views on this, and are particularly interested in the potential for incorporating the need for community resilience and social justice into actions that protect and enhance the environment.

What does the formal purpose mean in practice?

Our role is to inspire action and support for environmental action, and to provide innovative, exciting yet practical projects that enable local residents and businesses to take meaningful action to protect and enhance the environment for the benefit of the public both today and for future generations.

What is the geographic reach of Green Southwell?

We don't want to step on others' toes, but equally we know that this CIO could be a useful way to help surrounding villages, for example we have had interest in the Solar Streets project from a 7 mile radius. Projects may differ in their geographic reach for a number of reasons, but we will need to specify a geographic reach to the Charity Commission on incorporation. The current proposals for consideration by Trustees are the Minster School Catchment area, or the communities served by the Bramley newspaper.