

**Trustee – Role Description**

**About the Trust**

**Background**

The Charles Plater Trust (<https://www.plater.org.uk/>) is a small but respected, charitable grant-maker supporting work in the fields of UK social action, Christian lay leadership and applied research.

Following the sale of Plater College in Oxford in 2005 the Charles Plater Trust was established to further the original aims of the college in championing the pursuit of social justice through education. This was to be achieved by providing grants to charities motivated by the Catholic social teaching, with funds derived from the investment of the capital sum from the sale of the college. Grants are made through open competition, connecting directly to the Plater College vision. The Trust aims to fulfil the charitable aims of its late founder, Fr Charles Plater SJ, a Catholic priest who was inspired by the 1891 papal encyclical *Rerum Novarum* and became part of the Catholic Social Movement in the Church that was growing in Europe from the early twentieth century onwards.

Today the Trust is currently managed by a board of ten trustees, led by its chair Bishop Richard Moth (please see <https://www.plater.org.uk/about/governance>). Trustees are appointed, subject to endorsement by the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of England and Wales (CBCEW), to provide non-executive strategic leadership of the Charles Plater Trust (CPT), sharing collective responsibility with fellow trustees and honouring Charles Plater’s vision.

Since it was registered with the Charity Commission in 2006, the Trust has awarded over one hundred grants. Some of these have been small grants (up to £5,000) to local, grass-roots organisations, whilst others have been large grants (up to £60,000) to large, well-established charities and educational institutions. In total, the Foundation has awarded over 3.5 million in grants since inception.

The Trust is currently seeking two additional trustees to join the Board and is particularly looking for individuals with one or more of the following:

* experience working within the UK social action charity sector in a front line capacity;
* experience in major donor fundraising
* experience in grant making and the evaluation of the impact of grant making.

The Trust will also consider applications from potential trustees, with experience outside of the above areas, but with an interest in the work of the Trust and its charitable endeavours.

**Grant Making**

The Trust currently supports charities, CICs and Universities through two main strands of grant making:

* Small Grants- grants of up to £5,000 in the areas of social action and Christian lay leadership
* Large Grants - grants designed to provide larger scale funding of up to £60,000 to those projects that are providing innovation and transformation in social action, Christian lay leadership and applied research.

The Trust is a non-solicited funder and goes out to the charitable sector to seek out projects of interest in its key areas of strategy.

**CST Principles**

In keeping with the vision of Fr Charles Plater SJ , the Trust continues to be a funder that is distinctive in its approach to grant-making by seeking partners, whether faith based or non-faith based that can evidence alignment with the principles of Catholic Social Teaching (CST). The Trust wants to extend engagement with CST and to utilize the resource of CST within its chosen fields so as to make a tangible and lasting impact. The Trust also places influence on wider policy and practice at the forefront of its grant making​.

In terms of geography, the Trust supports English and Welsh wide projects.

**Role Description**

The trustees have overall control of the governance of the Trust and are ultimately responsible for the charity.

The Trust has an expendable endowment of some £7.8 million and Trustees are advised by their investment consultancy managers, Netwealth.

The Board meets in person three times per year (for up to three hours) and, enjoys an annual away day too. In addition, trustees are also asked to attend key events such as the annual awards ceremony and to participate in governance and grant matters remotely between meetings serving on either the grant making committee or finance committee. We estimate the total time commitment to be about ten - twelve days per year.

Specific responsibilities of trustees include:

* reviewing and setting the strategic aims for the Trust
* reviewing progress against the strategic aims
* setting annual budgets for grant-making and management
* considering operational and financial risks
* authorising grant programmes
* approving and assessing grants
* approving the investment policy and reviewing investment performance and risk
* approving annual accounts and annual report.

**Person Specification**

The Foundation is seeking to appoint at least two trustees with skills and experience that can help us achieve our objectives, who can bring energy, enthusiasm, and commitment to the role and who will broaden the diversity of thinking on our Board.

Individuals should have the ability to exercise good, independent judgement and provide a willingness to participate actively in discussion and debate.

Knowledge of the process of charitable grant-making would be beneficial for the role but is not essential.

**The Trust is committed to supporting people in need regardless of their faith identity, and there is no requirement that trustees should be practising Catholics. However all trustees are required to show deep commitment to putting Catholic social teaching into practice and be supportive of the Catholic Faith.**

An induction process will be available to the selected individual(s).

**Legal Responsibilities**

The overriding duty of all trustees is to advance the purposes of the Trust and to follow the legal and regulatory duties as outlined by the Charity Commission [guidance](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-essential-trustee-what-you-need-to-know-cc3/the-essential-trustee-what-you-need-to-know-what-you-need-to-do#trustees-duties-at-a-glance) – which, in summary, are as follows:

### **ensure your charity is carrying out its purposes for the public benefit;**

### **comply with your charity’s governing document and the law;**

### **act in your charity’s best interests;**

### **manage your charity’s resources responsibly;**

### **act with reasonable care and skill;**

### **ensure your charity is accountable.**

The expectation is that a minimum initial period of three years would be served, with the potential to extend as required/preferred.

## Equal Opportunities

We welcome applications from people of all backgrounds. Our definition of diversity encompasses responding to issues around race, ethnicity, faith, disability, age, gender, sexuality, class and economic disadvantage and any social and institutional barriers.

Trustees are committed to diversity and inclusion, believing that diverse boards strengthen society. We strive to remove the barriers that prevent people from applying to become trustees and welcome people with a wide range of skills and lived experience

**How to Apply**

**Closing date:** **4th April 2024**

To arrange an informal conversation about the role, please contact Philomena Cullen, Trust Manager, by email in the first instance (plater@cbcew.org.uk).

To apply for the position, please email a letter of no more than two sides of A4 to Philomena Cullen (plater@cbcew.org.uk) showing how you satisfy the required skills and experience, together with a copy of an up-to-date CV.

The Trustees seek to make an appointment at the earliest opportunity and will assess applications as they arrive.

First round of Interviews will be: **Monday 14th April 2025** in central London.