

Trustee Handbook

2024



Welcome Message



Thank you for your interest in joining our Board of Trustees. We are a small but well-established charity directly involved in helping people to escape homelessness for good.

We are fortunate to be governed by a Board of engaged, hardworking and skilled volunteers. Being a Board Member brings the opportunity to be part of our positive impact and to change lives.

I hope that this booklet will provide a good insight into our charity and the role of a trustee. Please do not hesitate to contact me for any further details, now or in the future.

Mark Wakeling
Chief Executive

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Our History



The Winchester Beacon (TWB) is the operating name of Winchester Churches Nightshelter (WCNS) which was set up in 1988 by Churches Together in Winchester. Run by voluntary effort, the charity group used various buildings around the city, including church halls and temporarily vacant properties.

In 1995, we became an independent registered charity moving into our dedicated premises on Jewry Street in central Winchester in 1997. The building, which was owned by Hampshire County Council, has been used as a Victorian gas-works, a Burberry factory, a bakery, a co-operative dairy, a printing works and finally a library store. The Winchester and District Housing Association agreed to develop the site, in a joint venture, to provide a shelter for the homeless on the ground floor and ten low cost studio flats above. The Nightshelter was officially opened on the 14 September 1997 by local Baptist minister, Rev Paul Hills.

We now also manage three offsite properties which together accommodate an additional twelve people. These four-bedroom houses act as a stepping stone to independent living. All of our twenty-two residents are able to benefit from personalised wraparound support to enable them to rebuild their lives.

During the pandemic we adapted our services to ensure that we could stay open. This involved moving to single bedrooms to reduce shared airspace and extending our opening hours so that our residents could 'stay home' during lockdown. These changes lived on beyond the pandemic after we saw the positive impact they had on our residents. It was at this point that we changed our operating name to The Winchester Beacon as we had become so much more than a nightshelter.

The Winchester Beacon is the operating name of Winchester Churches Nightshelter, a company limited by guarantee.

Registered Company number 03928334

Registered Charity number 1080443

Registered office: 20B Jewry Street, Winchester, Hampshire, SO23 8RZ

Our Vision, Mission & Values

Vision: To transform lives, inspire hope and end homelessness.

Mission: To help break the cycle of homelessness by enabling people to rebuild their lives.



Honest and open

We treat everyone with kindness and respect, without prejudice or discrimination.



Safe and supportive

We provide a home where residents can be comfortable and safe and can find the help and restoration of self-esteem they need.



Flexible and caring

We foster collaboration to work as a team with residents, staff, volunteers, the local community and other agencies / partner.

How we Help



Each one of our residents is able to benefit from one-to-one personalised support. Their Support Worker works alongside them to establish issues at a root of, and as a result of, their homelessness. Together, they identify the areas that they need support to help them to meet their goals and rebuild a life away from homelessness.

Residents can access:

- Free counselling and psychotherapy
- Budgeting advice
- Help with substance misuse
- Tenancy and housing support
- Help to find training and employment
- Life coaching
- Ongoing support when they transition to independent living.

Free activities for residents include:

- Gym pass to local leisure centre
- Boxing classes
- Guided cycling club
- Cookery club
- Haircuts.

Larry's Story

Larry, 66, became homeless after his mother passed away. They had been living together in the council house that had been their family home for over 40 years. Originally in Larry's father's name, when he passed away the tenancy moved to his mother. This meant that legally the house could not be passed on again and so Larry was instructed to leave.

"George, my Support Worker at The Beacon, helped me sort out my pension. I knew it was there but I couldn't access it, I didn't know much about the internet so George helped me.

I've moved into my own one-bedroom flat. The Winchester Beacon helped me apply for it and also sorted out furniture and a cooker for me so that I start with what I need.

Having now experienced homelessness, I value having a space in the world even more than I did before. It's easy to worry about how I'll cope living on my own but I'm going to take it as it comes and I know I still have the support of The Winchester Beacon."

The role of a Trustee



Trustees have overall control of the charity and are responsible for making sure it is doing what it was set up to do. Trustees use their skills and experience to support the charity, helping them achieve its aims. The role is unpaid but rewarding (reasonable out of pocket expenses may be claimed) with trustees often having the opportunity to develop new skills. Trustees give as much time and support as they wish, but a minimum time commitment of 7 hours a month is likely to be needed to fulfil the role effectively.

Trustees' 6 main duties

1. Ensure your charity is carrying out its purposes for the public benefit.
2. Comply with your charity's governing document and the law.
3. Act in your charity's best interests.
4. Manage your charity's resources responsibly.
5. Act with reasonable care and skill.
6. Ensure your charity is accountable.

See Charity trustee: What's involved (CC3a) GOV.UK (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/charity-trustee-whats-involved>)

Role of a Beacon Trustee

The duties of a TWB trustee are:

- Ensuring that the organisation pursues its stated objects, as defined in its governing document, by developing and agreeing a long-term strategy.
- Ensuring that the organisation complies with its governing documents, charity law, company law and any other relevant legislation.
- Ensuring that TWB applies its resources exclusively in pursuance of its charitable objects (ie the charity must not spend money on activities that are not included in its own objects, however worthwhile or charitable those activities are)
- Ensuring that TWB defines its goals and evaluates performance against agreed targets.
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- Ensuring the effective and efficient administration of the organisation, including having appropriate policies and procedures in place.
- Ensuring the financial stability of the organisation.
- Protecting and managing the property of the charity and ensuring the prudent and proper investment of the charity's funds.
- Following proper and formal arrangements for the appointment, supervision, support, appraisal and remuneration of TWB Chief Executive.

Role of a Beacon Trustee (continued)

In addition to these statutory duties, each trustee should use any specific skills, knowledge or experience they have to help the board reach sound decisions. This may involve scrutinising board papers, leading discussions, focusing on key issues, providing advice and guidance on new initiatives, or other issues in which the trustee has experience.

The Board Members are trustees of the Winchester Churches Nightshelter (Charity Number 1080443) regulated by the Charities Commission and Directors of the Winchester Churches Nightshelter limited company. (Company Number 3928334). This is a company limited by guarantee. Company activities are regulated by the prevailing Companies Act that is in force. TWB has Trustee Liability insurance in place with a limit of indemnity of £500,000. The liability of Board Members is limited to not exceed one pound as stated in our Memorandum of Association.

During 2023 our Memorandum of Association Articles are being updated to reflect the wider support services that we can now offer and to reflect our aims to increase support beyond those who are homeless, to those who are adversely impacted by the cost-of-living crisis.

Person specification

- A commitment to the organisation.
- A willingness to devote the necessary time and effort.
- Strategic vision.
- Good, independent judgement.
- An ability to think creatively.
- A willingness to speak their mind.
- A understanding and acceptance of the legal duties, responsibilities and liabilities of trusteeship.
- An ability to work effectively as a member of a team.
- A commitment to Nolan's seven principles of public life: selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty, and leadership.

Meetings and conduct of business

Board meetings are governed by TWB constitution. Meetings currently take place on a Wednesday evening between 6pm-8pm in central Winchester location or online using Zoom. Meetings take place approximately every 8 weeks, or as required by prior arrangement.

Quorum is a minimum of 3 members or 10% of the Board, whichever is greater. Each member has one vote and decisions are made on a majority basis.

The following sub-committees are in operation, reporting to the Board on a regular basis: Audit & Risk (Finance), Audit & Risk (Health and Safety/Safeguarding), Working groups are established as necessary to manage specific initiatives.

Recruitment and training

New Directors are recruited based on the needs of the Board and the skills and experience of the available applicants. Applications from existing volunteers are encouraged but it is important to recruit from a broad range of skills and backgrounds. The Board is committed to increasing diversity and ensuring that our members reflect the needs of our service users.

Prospective Board Members will be invited for a tour of TWB and discussions with the Chief Executive, Chair and other current Board members. This may be followed by invitation to join Board Meetings as an observer, and to participate in a volunteer taster event to get to know TWB in more detail. An application for membership will be subject to references and must be reviewed and approved by the Board. A DBS check will be completed as a matter of routine.

TWB will support the training and development of all trustee/directors and all Board members are encouraged to participate in the training resources that are available. TWB is a member of Homeless Link and the National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) who offer a variety of online and in person training, including trustee induction, finance and effective governance.

To find out more visit: <https://www.homeless.org.uk> and <https://www.ncvo.org.uk>

Succession planning

One third of members will retire on rotation each year, based upon the longest length of service. The retiring members are eligible for re-election. Members generally serve for no more than three terms, unless specifically agreed by the Board. The Board will review the skills and experience of the members annually. Consideration will be given to succession planning, especially with regard to ensuring that the Board maintains a wide and relevant skill base and an even distribution of roles and responsibilities.

Board Members

Read more about our current Board Members and staff on our website: <https://winchesterbeacon.org.uk/who-we-are/our-staff-directors-and-patrons/>

