



Election of Member Trustees

Our SCIO Constitution calls for a Board of Trustees consisting of between 7 and 13 Trustees, the majority of which must be Members.

No more than 7 Trustees can be Members.

Current Board of Trustees as of 14th October 2023

At the SGM of May 26th 2022, the following Member Trustees were elected: Elizabeth Brough, Stuart Buchanan, Maggie Carson, Rebecca Hackett, Michael Hall, Sara Stevenson,.

Since then

- Elizabeth Brough and Sara Stevenson resigned from the Board of Trustees.
- Maggie Carson became no-longer eligible to be a Member, having moved out of the area. She was subsequently Co-Opted as a Non-Member Trustee by the Board.

The current Board therefore consists of

- Stuart Buchanan, Rebecca Hackett, Michael Hall as Member Trustees.
- Maggie Carson as a Co-opted Trustee.

Election of Member Trustees

4 additional Member Trustees will be elected at the AGM.

These are the candidates for the Board of Trustees. You can read their statements below.

- Andrew Anderson
- Doug Bond
- Alan Cranston
- Willie McGhee
- Howard Royston
- Helen Sang

To help the adjourned AGM on 7th December run more smoothly and ensure it is quorate, we are encouraging AACT Members to vote by proxy ahead of the meeting, irrespective of whether they plan to attend.

(Ben Parker previously put himself forward as a candidate but has withdrawn from the election)

Candidate Statements

Andrew Anderson

I would hereby like to present myself as a candidate to be a Trustee of the Astley Ainslie Community Trust. I have recently become a member of the trust and am someone who is both a former out-patient at the hospital as well as someone who has greatly appreciated being able to walk around the grounds, particularly during COVID. I have recently retired and returned to being based full time in Edinburgh, which I hope gives me the opportunity to be able to contribute to protecting this valuable community asset.

I have worked for the last 20 years for a Dublin based international human rights charity (www.frontlinedefenders.org) which means I have some considerable experience of charity governance. I was responsible as Executive Director for putting in place the relevant policies to ensure we complied with a new Charity law and regulator in Ireland. I was also founding Trustee of a UK based Charity working to support human rights in Sudan, which involved obtaining charitable status and ensuring the required reporting.

I have served on a number of boards including the Tactical Technology Collective, a Berlin based international NGO, and ProtectDefenders.eu a consortium of international NGOs operating an EU funded programme. I was also a member of the Advisory Board of the Centre for Applied Human Rights at the University of York. I am currently a member of the committee of Selkirk Merchant Company.

I am afraid I do not qualify as under-represented, but I do now have the flexibility to devote some time to the role. I have experience in financial management, planning, social engagement and fundraising.

Doug Bond

I have lived in Morningside for 20 years and have a son who attends nursery with the grounds of the Astley Ainslie. Consequently, I am keen to ensure the grounds are best utilised for the benefit of the local community and to support the Astley Ainslie Community Trust in achieving this goal.

I co-founded a successful jewellery business in 2019, where I continue to work as the Operations Director. Starting from scratch we have grown to employ 10 people. As a trustee I would utilise my business experience to take a similar approach of adaptability and willingness to learn, to find solutions to constantly changing challenges. I have broad experience including financial management, legal compliance, and team development.

Previously I spent many years working within the wine trade, including leading training sessions and hosting events. Going further back, I have a degree in History and Philosophy from Edinburgh University. I am confident in my ability to research and communicate across a variety of subjects.

I would welcome the opportunity to serve as a trustee to support the creation of something providing lasting benefit to our local community.

Alan Cranston

Alan Cranston lives just over the road from Astley Ainslie and visits frequently. It is his local birding 'patch' and he especially valued walking there during lockdown, recording almost every day the detail of spring's arrival that year. He is keen to see the whole site retained and enhanced as a community asset and would love to contribute to achieving that.

Alan is a retired senior civil servant, originally responsible for strategy and policy development in the UK departments of employment, and education. His career included two years advising the (then) Czechoslovak government.

Alan served on the RSPB Council from 2004 to 2009, with a main interest in its education and public engagement programmes and, after retirement, for several years enjoyed volunteering on an RSPB reserve. He also served until 2016 as Deputy Chair of British Youth Music Theatre, the leading music theatre company for young people aged 11 to 21. Before moving to Edinburgh in 2017, he was involved in setting up a new local u3a in London, taking a lead on communications, and he is an active member of Edinburgh u3a. Also on moving to Edinburgh, he became a trustee of OneKind, the animal welfare charity. In 2019, he established a new charity, Hen Harrier Action, which campaigns against wildlife crime, leading it for two years before moving on.

Alan has broad leadership skills: strategy, policy and delivery and working collegiately. He is IT literate and has developed and managed websites. He has some limited experience of community buyouts, having supported and worked with the Langholm Initiative during and after their successful buyout of local moorland. Though not an expert, he has been involved in nature conservation for many years. His interests include birding, nature and nature conservation, philosophy, theatre and the arts in general.

Willie McGhee

Willie is a practicing forester who has worked in commercial and community forestry since 1990. He was drawn to ecology after working on a land use survey of the Isle of Skye and graduated from Edinburgh University with a degree in Ecological Science, Forestry Honours. After university he worked as a forest surveyor and in 1994, he and others created Borders Forest Trust (BFT). Willie was BFT Director until 2011. Willie also worked overseas in forestry projects until 2016, since when he has been a forest manager with Highland Perthshire Communities Land Trust (HPCLT).

He was Chair of Scottish Power's Green Energy Trust (2002-2018), founder and Director of the Southern Upland Partnership (1999-2004), a Trustee on the Scottish Forestry Trust (2003-2012), a Director of the Millennium Forest for Scotland Trust (1996-2006) and served on two Forestry Commission Advisory Panels (Native Woodland – 1996-1999, Forests for People- 2000-2006) and is a Director of the Forest Policy Group (2008-present). He is currently the Chair of the Community Woodlands Association (2022-present) and is an active campaigner for community land ownership. He is a member of AACT and served as AACT co-chair, with Akiko Kobayashi

until 2020, working through the Executive Committee to get the AACT Feasibility Study funded and completed.

Howard Royston

Whilst I am some way from the preferred demographic for a Trustee role, I hope that my working background might be of use to the AACT. I am 70 years old and retired from my post as Head of Estates for NHS Lothian in 2016. One of my responsibilities was for a site similar to AAH. This was a hospital property of 90 Hectares with many Listed buildings adjacent to the village of Broxburn in West Lothian. I was responsible for the provision of facilities for continuing care patients, closure, preservation of the site and its buildings, and finally, with particular relevance to AAH, it's sale.

There is a formal responsibility upon NHS Bodies to dispose of any property where there are no current or planned healthcare purposes, and to achieve best overall value for money upon its disposal. There is also a requirement to explore the Planning Regime before marketing the site. On an extensive and important site such as AAH this will be achieved by a Master Planning Process. A successful Master Plan achieves buy-in from stakeholders, such as AACT, and is likely to be acceptable to Planning Authorities. I hope that my familiarity with the process would help AACT to maintain a beneficial relationship with the NHS during this process.

The AACT has achieved much to be proud of in terms of, local involvement, public access, conservation etc, and has a vision for the future of the AAH site. Given the current uses and facilities on the site, it is obvious that closure is not imminent, I believe that it is important that AACT develops a mature and frankly, robust working relationship over the next years. On behalf of the Community, we need to know about, for example; security, asbestos, at-risk trees, contaminated ground, conditions of buildings and infrastructure, timescales for future building closures, ecological surveys, site risk register, etc. We should get to a position whereby it is better and easier for the NHS to keep us involved and informed on such matters.

I bought my house at 17a Cluny Place whilst working for the NHS, and moved in full time shortly after my retirement. Before gaining my NHS experience I was a Director of a Chartered Surveying Practice with offices in Glasgow and Edinburgh.

Helen Sang

Many people have contributed to developing the AACT, investigating the history of the site, exploring its natural history, consulting the local community to identify their views for the future and developing plans based on these views for when the NHS leaves the site. I would like to join as a Trustee to contribute to the future work of the AACT based on these past contributions, with the aim of readying the Trust to respond to the opportunities of taking the site back for community benefits. The site was given to the people of Edinburgh to support health and recovery from illness and is a remarkable greenspace within the city. There are also opportunities to work with partners to utilise current buildings that are in good order and build new ones on the footprints of buildings that cannot be repurposed, to provide buildings that have an element of social good in their uses.

I am recently retired from the University of Edinburgh (professor of genetics) and so have time to devote to this very important goal. I was consistently successful in my research career in winning

grant funding. I am comfortable with public speaking as I was very involved in public engagement relating to my research (e.g. Edinburgh Science Festival, Café Scientifique, Roslin Institute Open Days). I also have experience of senior level committee work, for example as the Honorary Treasurer and a Vice President of the UK Genetics Society (Trustee positions) and on numerous committees of the UK Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council (the major UK Government funding body for biological research), including as a Council member, the overall guiding body of the BBSRC. I am therefore used to interacting with officials in government and hopefully have skills that I can apply to support the work of the AACT.