

## The Costume Society and the Role of Elected Officers (Trustees)

### 1. The Society

*The Costume Society is a membership organisation and Registered Charity whose aim is to promote the study and preservation of historic dress from all periods of time and from across the world.*

*It values engagement with dress histories by a wide audience of interested individuals and organisations including (but not exhaustively) academics, curators and archivists, designers and makers, collectors and dealers, conservators, re-enactors and performers and those with a passionate interest in the history of clothes.*

The society provides its members with events, visits and activities, an annual conference, a peer-reviewed Journal ('Costume' - published twice a year) and a Members' newsletter ('The Thread' - published every six months)

It communicates to members and non-members through its website, social media platforms and Blog.

The society makes Grants for conservation of costume items in Accredited UK Museums, Research expenses, Museum Work Experience and Awards for excellence in design and making with the Patterns of Fashion and Patterns for Performance Awards and subsidized places for students at its annual conference. These are made possible by the generous bequests of former members.

The activity of the society is delivered through a series of sub-committees which focus on Publications ('Costume'); Programme (Events, Study days and the Conference); Grants and Awards and Communications (Website, Magazine, Ambassador network, Blog and social media).

Representatives of these sub-Committees (Officers) attend the Executive Committee alongside the Membership Secretary, the Honorary Officers (Chair, Vice Chair communications, Vice Chair Grants and Awards, Treasurer and Secretary) and the Elected Officers.

## 2. Elected Officers (Trustees) and the Governance of The Society:

Costume Society Elected Officers (Trustees) provide essential support and inspiration to the Chair, acting as a 'critical friend', as well as being vital links between the Society and their own networks within the broad community of dress historians.

They provide valuable insight into 'local' opinions, and act as ambassadors for the Society.

Elected Officers and Honorary Officers are Trustees of the Charity and have voting rights on decisions affecting the operation of the Society and the discharge of its Charitable Purposes. In these matters they can draw upon the skills, experience and opinion of the Officers responsible for their specific areas of activity.

Elected Officers have an essential approval role in the management of the Society Accounts (prepared by the Treasurer and scrutinized by an independent Accountant).

Being a Costume Society Elected Officer can be very rewarding. Not only will you build up strong relationships with the Society, but you will also be part of the country's many educational charities, shaping and developing the understanding of specific subjects; in our case Historic Dress.

Elected Officers are appointed to serve for a period of three years. It is rare for them to serve an additional term, unless there are exceptional circumstances such as the completion of a project or programme with which they have been involved (in which case they will be co-opted for the period of time necessary to complete the task).

Each Elected Officer is encouraged to take an interest in a specific area of responsibility that aligns with their interests, experience, and the current needs of the Society. Such areas might include The Journal, The Programme (or specific parts of the programme such as the Conference or Study day) Grants and Awards (or a specific grant or award), Bequests, Communications or the Ambassador network.

As a decision maker you will be involved in the approval of the Society Accounts and will be expected to play an active role in decisions about how the Society allocates its financial resources to deliver its priorities and discharge its charitable purposes.

The Trustees meet three times a year (in person or online) as members of the Executive Committee, but there may also be additional Trustee-only meetings (on line or in person in advance of the Executive Committee) where matters may need to be discussed or decisions taken outside the Executive Committee.

Elected Officers are expected to attend the Society's AGM.

Elected Officers are also encouraged to get to know the Society and build up relationships with their peers and Society members by attending Society events.

For general information about the role of a Trustee for a Charity in England and Wales please see the Charity Commission's website <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> also see the Further information section on page 5.

### 3. What happens when I join?

Once your appointment has been formally approved at an AGM, there are a few administrative requirements that need to be undertaken, as well as an induction to welcome you to the Society.

You will be asked to read and sign a copy of the Code of Conduct. This document sets out the conduct that is expected of a Trustee, in line with the Society's own principles and values which are based on the Nolan Principles of Selflessness, Integrity, Objectivity, Accountability, Openness, Honesty and Leadership; the seven of ethical standards expected of public life.

It also reminds Trustees of the requirement for confidentiality – as a Trustee, you will be privy to sensitive information.

You will be provided with a copy of the Conflicts of Interest Policy. This policy outlines our approach to ensuring that decisions taken are seen to be, free from personal bias.

The Secretary will organise an induction for you, where the Secretary, Chair and Treasurer will run through the Society's governance structure, the role of the Trustees, and go through a few practical scenarios that you might come across during your time on the Committee.

### 4. Key Functions – Elected Officer (Trustee's) Role

The key functions of a Trustee's role within the Society are:

- to provide constructive input into the strategic development of the Society
- to review the performance of the Society with the Chair and the other Trustees, ensuring the long-term success of the Society
- to promote the Society amongst your personal and professional networks
- to support the Society by providing advice and ideas and by taking an active interest in the life of the Society including supporting the delivery of its charitable obligations
- to represent the Executive Committee as requested by the Chair

The National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) expresses the legal duties of a trustee as:

- Ensure your charity is carrying out its purpose for the public benefit (section 4 of CC3)
- Comply with your charity's governing document and the law (section 5 of CC3)
- Act in your charity's best interest (section 6 of CC3)
- Manage your charity's resources responsibly (section 7 of CC3)
- Act with reasonable care and skill (section 8 of CC3)
- Ensure your charity is accountable (section 9 of CC3)

[https://knowhow.ncvo.org.uk/governance/board-responsibilities/legal-duties-of-trustees?gclid=CjwKCAjw87SHBhBiEiwAukSeUT59CXaHzthx53bo9TpdIm1CXt1kA4A0vIx\\_W3z5UIA\\_z2Skmq4ISBoCITAQAvD\\_BwE](https://knowhow.ncvo.org.uk/governance/board-responsibilities/legal-duties-of-trustees?gclid=CjwKCAjw87SHBhBiEiwAukSeUT59CXaHzthx53bo9TpdIm1CXt1kA4A0vIx_W3z5UIA_z2Skmq4ISBoCITAQAvD_BwE)

5. What we need you to do:

- Attend the three annual meetings of the Costume Society Executive Committee (Sept, Jan, and May held either on line or in London and the AGM – for which travel expenses are reimbursed) and any Trustees meetings which are required in addition to these. Additionally, you may be included in email and telephone discussions outside these meetings.
- Vote on the Executive Committee’s proposals, projects and financial decisions.
- Serve as a trustee, as defined by the Charities Commission, with the responsibility for the Society’s financial health (held jointly with the other 8 trustees).
- Contribute new ideas and fresh thinking about the Society's future playing an active part in sub-committee activities as required.
- Promote the Society and support the delivery of its charitable aims.
- Assist in expanding the Society's membership and audience.
- Be a member of appointment panels for posts within the Society’s Executive Committee and Sub Committees

6. What a typical meeting might look like?

Every meeting will include standard items that help shape the discussions you will have. Items that you will see on every agenda include:

Reports from the Chair, Treasurer, Membership Secretary, and the representatives of the sub-committees.

Detailed plans for the development of the Society’s Programme of activities

Discussion documents provided by the sub committees with recommendations for the development of the Society’s activities

Matters which Elected Officers wish to discuss should be notified to the Secretary in advance on the meetings and any discussion documents circulated to all attendees when its place on the agenda has been confirmed.

7. Qualities we seek:

- Enthusiastic and dynamic commitment to the Society's goals.
- An interest in or connection with clothing/costume/fashion, ie, design or production, collection or curation, studying or teaching, publishing or writing.
- Knowledge of and previous participation in the events or the activities of the Society, or similar societies, groups or organisations would be an advantage.
- Be a current member of the Society.

## 8. Equality and Diversity

The Society is committed to working towards equality, diversity and inclusion in all that it does. This includes the governance of the Society and the membership of the Executive Committee and sub committees.

However, currently these committees are predominantly white and female.

We welcome applications from all suitably qualified candidates and are keen to receive expressions of interest from Black and Minority Ethnic people and those who identify as Male.

## 9. Further Information

The NCVO Charity Ethical Principles guidance

<https://www.ncvo.org.uk/policy-and-research/ethics/ethical-principles>

The Charity Governance Code for Smaller charities

[file:///C:/Users/Chris/Downloads/CGC-for-smaller-charities%20\(1\).pdf](file:///C:/Users/Chris/Downloads/CGC-for-smaller-charities%20(1).pdf)