

# Railway Paths

Information for prospective trustees



# Railway Paths Ltd

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[www.railwaypaths.org.uk](http://www.railwaypaths.org.uk)

July 2023

Dear Prospective Trustee

Thank you for considering the role of trustee at Railway Paths.

This year our charity is twenty-five years old. From a transfer unused ex-railway land in 1998, we now have an estate that encompasses nearly 300km of public paths on 950 hectares of ex-railway land and circa 750 structures. We lease our land to partners who manage the paths and public access. We fund the maintenance of the structures from the commercial management of the estate and ad hoc grants.

In 2020 we thought we might have to close the charity, but we focussed on rebuilding reserves and developing a clear strategic goal, so that danger has passed. We think that having brought our estate into daily use by the public two things arise:

- the value for off-road travel has been proven and the risk of break-up or demolition is negligible;
- the estate needs to be maintained to the standard of transport infrastructure and funded as such.

Our goal is to have the estate funded and managed as a public asset, either through permanent public sector funding, or by returning it to public sector ownership. We have not been able to establish a strategic dialogue with the Department for Transport, and we doubt this is now possible before a General Election. So we have £1.9m of reserves and a pipeline of commercial activity to fund the charity until the window for meaningful engagement reopens.

We're looking for three new trustees to help us achieve our goals, not only the strategic engagement with the Department for Transport, but also the ongoing objectives of bringing ex-railway assets back into public use and conserving the heritage.

For an informal discussion please contact Melissa Baxter ([melissa.baxter@russam.co.uk](mailto:melissa.baxter@russam.co.uk)) or 07789 985229.

We hope to meet you later in the recruitment process.

Yours sincerely

The image shows two handwritten signatures in black ink. The signature on the left is 'J Vinter' and the signature on the right is 'Terry Levinthal'.

Jeff Vinter  
Chair

Terry Levinthal  
Chair Elect

## Description

The charity owns around 950 hectares of ex-railway land and circa 750 structures which it leases to partner organizations for use as paths nearly 300km in length. It is funded from the commercial management of its estate and ad hoc grants.

## Goals and plans

Railway Paths aims to have its estate funded and managed as a public asset, either through permanent public sector funding, or by returning the estate to public sector ownership. Until that goal can be achieved, Railway Paths will maintain its reserves above the trigger point for an orderly wind-up by the commercial management of its land and property. Its charitable purpose is met by the land leased out for use as a path and the ongoing maintenance of ex-railway structures.

In the year ended March 2023, Railway Paths made an unaudited surplus greater than £750k, bringing reserves to nearly £2m. Annual operating expenditure is around £1m.

## Role of the trustees

The Charity Commission describes the legal role of a trustee in [Guidance Note CC3](#). Railway Paths does not differ from or repeat that law and guidance.

The board meets four times a year: three meetings are online and last up to three hours; one meeting in-person in a central location (loaned/hired as Railway Paths has no offices). Between meetings, trustees are involved in approving and signing legal documents relating to land/property transactions. There are optional site visits in the summer months. In sum, the **time commitment is a minimum of 24 hours per annum** including travel, or up to 60 hours per annum if the trustee chooses to engage in all optional activities.

At every meeting the board considers the inspection and maintenance of structures, the management of the estate, and the charity's resources. On an annual cycle the board approves: strategy, budget & plan; risk, health & safety; audit, annual report & accounts; updates to governance; approval of land/property disposals. Ad-hoc business of the board includes relationships with key partners, new projects, and land/property disputes.

Day-to-day the charity is managed by employed staff working to a schedule of delegation. The trustees are not considered to be key management personnel and their role is non-executive. The trustees are collectively responsible and take decisions collectively, there is a limited delegation for the chair to act on their behalf between meetings.

## Knowledge, skills and behaviours of trustees

The charity's core competencies, mirrored in the board, are:

- conservation, inspection, and maintenance of ex-railway bridges and structures;
- estates management, land surveying and development;
- acquisitions, disposals, project and charity management.

Additionally, to achieve its strategic goal, the charity needs to develop knowledge and skills in:

- working with the Department for Transport at a strategic level (director general &/ ministerial).

The charity does not need to manage beneficiaries/users, volunteers, fundraising, or a public profile.

The style of the board is collegiate, working in a spirit of mutual trust with the employed staff, assured by the transparency of operational information, but a minimal policy framework reflecting the charity's SME scale.

## For more information

[Railway Paths | public routes, roads and paths suitable for cycling, walking, horseriding and wheel-chair use](#)

<https://www.railwaypaths.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/RPL-Annual-Report-and-Accounts-2021-22.pdf>

## How to apply

If you are interested in becoming a trustee at Railway Paths, please provide the following:

- An up to date CV or link to your LinkedIn profile
- A short supporting statement that outlines your motivations for applying

All applications should be sent to **applications@trustees-unlimited.co.uk** with your full name and 'Railway Paths' in the subject line. Alternatively, you can send your application to **melissa.baxter@russam.co.uk**.

## Timetable

We are working to the following timetable:

**Closing date for applications:** Monday 11th September 2023

**Interview with Railway Paths:** Week commencing 25th September 2023

## Contact details

If you would like an informal discussion about the opportunity, or if you have any further questions, please contact Melissa Baxter at **melissa.baxter@russam.co.uk** / 07789 985229.



