



# FEDERATION BOARD CHAIR

CANDIDATE INFORMATION

JANUARY 2024



# DEAR CANDIDATE

Thank you for your interest in the role of Federation Chair at Groundwork.

This is a challenging time for society, but a hugely exciting time for our organisation. Groundwork's origins lie in the economic recession of the 1970s and the first Groundwork Trust was established as a radical experiment in bringing together public and private resources to support communities to tackle social and environmental challenges in tandem.

Over the last four decades we've grown to become a federation of 15 independent charities working collaboratively to a common strategy led by our Federation Board. Along the way we've learned what works to help community organisations become more resilient, to help young people face the future with confidence and to help those who are vulnerable or isolated improve their prospects and networks.

This learning enabled us to adapt our services and programmes to support communities through the Covid-19 crisis – providing emergency grants to local organisations, helping young people stay connected and finding innovative ways to encourage people to enjoy the natural world. It has also put us at the forefront of delivering services to those most impacted by the cost of living crisis – helping people reduce their energy bills, providing 'warm hubs' and delivering activities that keep children and young people fit, fed and focused.

The experimental approach and entrepreneurial spirit that characterised Groundwork's early years needs to be embedded in the way we apply ourselves to the challenges ahead. Our aim is to help people take practical action on challenges that might seem overwhelming – poverty, health inequality, climate change – creating a future that is both green and fair, that puts communities in control of the decisions that affect them and that sees us all living healthier and more sustainable lifestyles.

Groundwork UK – our national body – exists to manage programmes, campaigns and networks that support the wider federation in improving the lives of hundreds of thousands of people each year.

We're a small team with a busy and diverse workload. Knowing we have an engaged and committed Chair leading a knowledgeable, diverse and supportive board is a huge help in ensuring the Groundwork whole is greater than the sum of its parts.

I hope you'll want to join us as we set out on the next exciting phase of our organisational journey.

**Graham Duxbury**  
Chief Executive



# GROUNDWORK

Groundwork was established in 1982 as a radical experiment to bring together communities, business and government in a joint effort to improve the quality of life and promote sustainable development in places that had become run-down and neglected.

We work with people who are facing multiple challenges and in places that are lacking social infrastructure and economic opportunities. We have four decades' experience of building partnerships to address these challenges in three connected ways.

**We help people improve their prospects** – increasing confidence, skills, wellbeing and employability and helping those out of work find jobs in the green economy

**We help people create better places** – making communities greener, healthier and better prepared for the future and enabling people to work together to bring about change in their local area

**We help people protect the planet** – supporting people and businesses to reduce their carbon footprint, cut waste and take practical action to combat the climate and nature emergencies



“If people are living in an environment that is degraded and disintegrating through a lack of investment, it’s very easy for that to spill over into their whole life view and to erode their aspirations and hopes. Conversely, what we found in Groundwork in the early days, in a very difficult period, was that actually if you do start getting things right in that way, you can make tremendous progress very rapidly and really begin to turn things around.”

**John Handley, Groundwork Executive Director, February 1982**

# WHY OUR WORK IS NEEDED...

- > The number of people not working due to long-term sickness has been rising since 2019 and now stands at more than **2.5 million**
- > More than **6.5 million** households are experiencing fuel poverty with **21.5%** of excess winter deaths attributable to cold homes
- > Almost **3 million** people in the UK used a food bank in the last year and **40%** of people report feeling worried about being able to afford food
- > **2.8 million** people in the UK do not have any publicly accessible green space within a 10-minute walk of their home
- > **40%** of people from ethnic minority backgrounds live in the most greenspace-deprived areas, compared to **14%** of White people
- > More than a **million** adults and nearly **three-quarters of a million** children in the UK live in neighbourhoods where air pollution is double recommended levels
- > More than **40%** of adults in the UK report feeling anxious about the environment and globally **60%** of children and young people say they are extremely or very worried about climate change



# OUR MISSION

## GROUNDWORK SUPPORTS PRACTICAL ACTION TO CREATE A FAIR AND GREEN FUTURE IN WHICH PEOPLE, PLACES AND NATURE THRIVE.

We believe that working with local communities and businesses to help them build their capacity and resilience is vital if we are to tackle hardship, achieve a just transition to net-zero and help nature recover in a way that reduces inequality and leads to better work and healthier, happier lives.

What this means in practice is: helping people get jobs and supporting the growth of the green economy; reducing the waste of energy, food and water; creating and maintaining biodiverse, accessible green spaces; supporting businesses to be more successful and responsible; and empowering communities to take action to improve their health and wellbeing and the local and global environment.

The way we work:

- > connects people with each other, with opportunity and with nature
- > builds knowledge and confidence so that people feel more in control of their future
- > delivers social, economic and environmental outcomes in an integrated way



# OUR GOALS

## COLLECTIVE DELIVERY PRIORITIES

Groundwork is a federation, with each member responding to the needs of local communities and the priorities of local partners in their area.

Working together as a network helps us share learning and good practice, operate at greater scale and ensure communities everywhere are able to benefit from our expertise and services.

Our collective effort over the next period will be focused on achieving the following goals.

01. **TO HELP MORE PEOPLE OVERCOME  
HARDSHIP AND ISOLATION**
02. **TO HELP BUILD THE GREEN ECONOMY**
03. **TO HELP THOSE WHO MOST NEED IT  
CONNECT WITH NATURE**
04. **TO HELP MORE PEOPLE AND PLACES  
RESPOND AND ADAPT TO CLIMATE CHANGE**



OUR STRATEGY:

**OUR GROUNDWORK 2028 STRATEGY SETS OUT HOW WE WILL SUPPORT PRACTICAL ACTION TO CREATE A FAIR AND GREEN FUTURE IN WHICH PEOPLE, PLACES AND NATURE THRIVE OVER THE NEXT FIVE YEARS.**



# OUR STRUCTURE & GOVERNANCE

Groundwork is a federation of charities working locally and nationally to transform lives in the UK's most disadvantaged communities. We harness the passion, skills and experience of more than 1,200 employees and 150 volunteer trustees across the UK to deliver projects, programmes and services that respond to the needs of local communities and add value to the priorities and plans of our local partners.

## The Groundwork Trusts

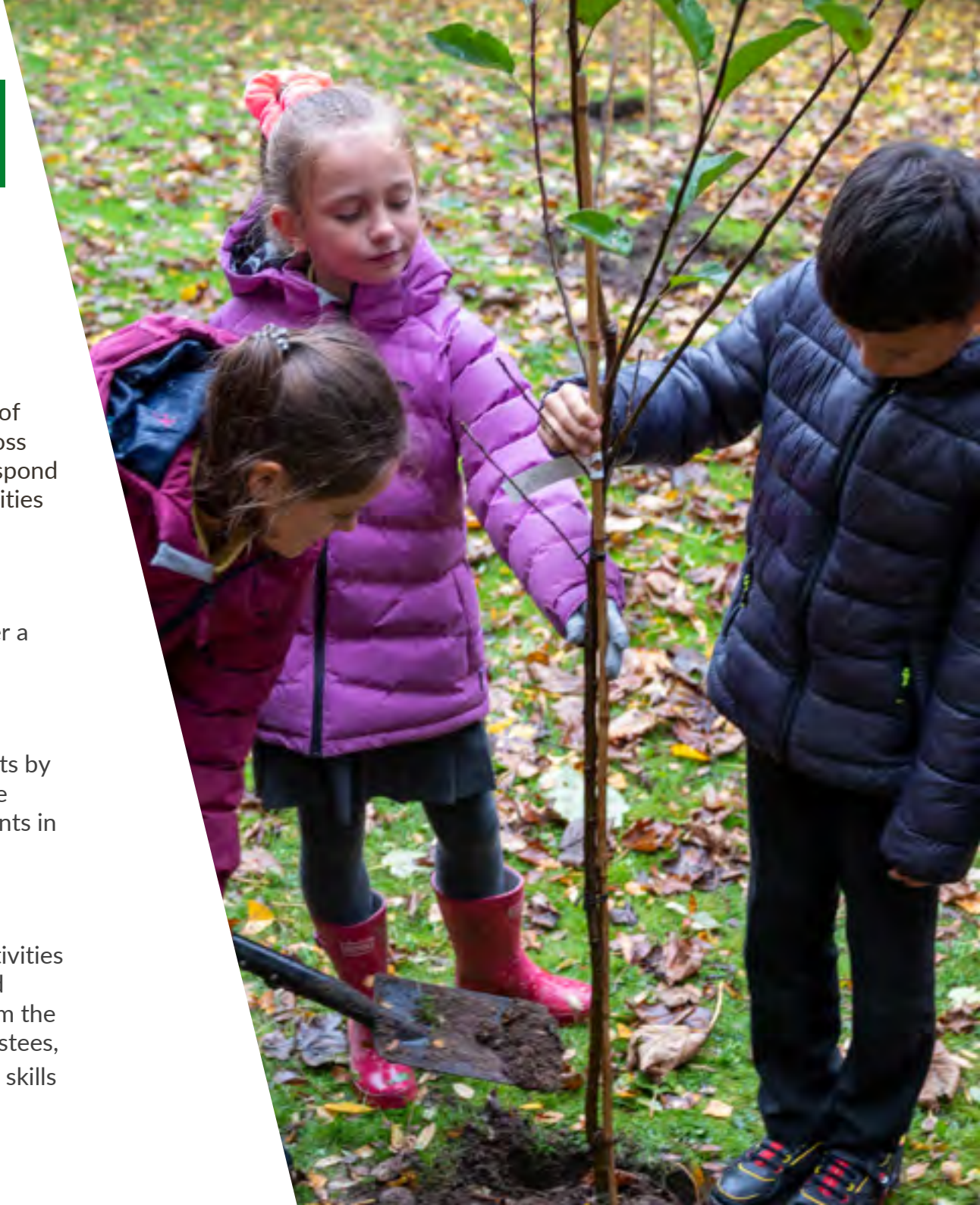
Groundwork Trusts are independent charities, working under a common brand to a single federation strategy.

## Groundwork UK

Groundwork UK supports the activities of Groundwork Trusts by running programmes, initiatives and campaigns that generate national resources for local delivery and support improvements in quality and impact.

## The Groundwork Federation Board

The Groundwork Federation Board is responsible for the activities of Groundwork UK and for our federation-wide strategy and programmes. The majority of its members are appointed from the boards of Groundwork Trusts. A number of independent trustees, including our Chair, are co-opted by the board to broaden its skills base or to enable us to benefit from specialist expertise or networks.



# FEDERATION BOARD CHAIR ROLE DESCRIPTION

This is a key role at Groundwork suitable for a high calibre candidate who may already have board level experience. The role of Groundwork Federation Chair involves:

- representing the whole of Groundwork to external partners and funders
- championing and steering federation-wide strategies, plans and processes
- leading a board that is legally responsible for the activities and assets of Groundwork UK
- managing a board comprising members nominated by Groundwork Trusts and members co-opted for their skills and experience.

The Federation Chair is seen by all parts of Groundwork – and by external stakeholders – as representing the Groundwork mission, brand and values. The Chair is also responsible for ensuring that the federation functions and services by Groundwork UK align with the needs and aspirations of Groundwork Trusts. This combination of leading and supporting demands a high level of emotional intelligence and the ability to promote consensus and collaboration.

**Over the next five years Groundwork collectively will be focused on:**

- helping more people overcome hardship and isolation
- helping to build the green economy by
- helping those who most need it connect with nature
- helping more people and places respond and adapt to climate change.

We will be doing this against a backdrop of political change, financial uncertainty and polarised public debate, but knowing that our work to help people address both cost of living pressures and the climate crisis have never been more urgent or more in demand.

**The Federation Chair will lead Groundwork through this period of opportunity and challenges.**



**IN ORDER TO DO THIS EFFECTIVELY THE CANDIDATE WILL NEED TO POSSESS SOME OR ALL OF THE FOLLOWING:**

- a clear passion for the work Groundwork delivers and a demonstrable commitment to the organisation's mission and values
- a desire and ability to understand the realities of local delivery in disadvantaged communities
- an understanding of the policy landscape and marketplaces within which Groundwork operates
- an ability to build and develop networks in the business, policy or political spheres to support Groundwork's mission
- a collaborative, consensual approach and an ability both to support and to challenge executives across Groundwork to deliver improvements in performance and impact
- experience of chairing high level meetings, setting strategic direction and monitoring Board performance.



# HOW TO APPLY

If you are interested in this fantastic opportunity, please submit an application with the following:

- An up to date CV with details of two referees (we will not contact them without your prior consent)
- A supporting statement which outlines your motivations for applying and how you meet the criteria for the role

Please send all applications to [applications@trustees-unlimited.co.uk](mailto:applications@trustees-unlimited.co.uk) with your full name and 'GROUNDWORK' in the subject line.

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

## Closing date for applications:

Monday 18th March 2024

## Interviews with Groundwork:

Week commencing 15th April 2024 (dates TBC)

