

St Sidwell's Community Centre



Trustee Recruitment Information Pack 2026

Join our Board of Trustees

St Sidwell's Community Centre is seeking to appoint two new Trustees. Our Board of Trustees works together with Centre staff to ensure that the charity is working to sustain the highest standards of governance, meets our strategic aims, and operates in line with our core values. We are both a registered charity and company limited by guarantee. This means our Trustees are formally Company Directors as well as Charity Trustees.

St Sidwell's Community Centre

St Sidwell's is a vibrant community centre in the heart of Exeter. We are an independent charity that provides opportunities for people of all abilities and ages, and from any background, to meet and work together. The community centre was first established as a Healthy Living Centre in 2001 and became an independent organisation in 2007. We are based in an area of Exeter with a history of high levels of social deprivation – one half of Sidwell Street is in an IMD (Index of Multiple Deprivation) 2 area, and the other half IMD 4.

Our **vision** is for an inclusive Exeter with thriving, interconnected communities.

Our **mission** is to provide safe and welcoming community spaces and opportunities for people from different backgrounds to connect engage and grow.

Our aims are to **deepen belonging, build autonomy, and grow resilience.**

Our key charitable objectives are:

- to strengthen and support the local neighbourhood
- to address health inequalities – supporting physical and mental health and wellbeing
- to promote inclusion.

St Sidwell's is open to all, but we specialise in working with people facing barriers to participation. Our community centre is vital for so many local people: we meet people where they are and find the support they need - providing purpose and structure, social networks and mutual support - building the infrastructure for longer-term resilience while also providing more immediate help.

Our volunteering programme is at the heart of our work. We currently have over 250 active volunteers across the organisation. Most of our volunteers do 1 or 2 regular shifts each week, but some are here more often, and others on a more ad hoc basis. All our volunteers are offered a free meal in our café as part of their shift. We typically receive over three new volunteer applications per week. We were awarded a three-year grant by The National Lottery Community Fund – Reaching Communities programme earlier this

year to support the development of our Volunteer and Support programmes. Our volunteers are supported to get involved in all areas and at all levels of our organisation including:

- **Community food projects:**
 - **The Sidwell Street Café;** our **community café** serves 250+ people each week and provided over 5000 free meals in the last year- both to our regular volunteers and to other members of the public. The café has always been the heart and soul of the community centre. It provides an important meeting and social space for the community - alongside affordable, home-cooked nutritious meals and delicious treats.
 - **The Sidwell Street Bakehouse** was set up in 2019 to help provide more volunteer opportunities in food, to create more trading income for the community centre and to improve access to more nutritious bread. From its origins in a converted office, it has grown to take on a disused shop front on Sidwell Street. It now operates under our wholly owned trading subsidiary - St Sidwell's Trading Company which has its own Board of Directors. It focuses on sourdough bread and treats, using local, organic and stone-ground flours.
 - The **Exeter Community Fridge** moved to St Sidwell's in November 2024 from its original site in Exeter Library. It has quickly become a much-valued resource by the community - and we now have volunteers who help coordinate and stock the fridge with surplus food.
- **Community gardening project:** we manage the grounds of the community centre from a planting perspective! We grow fruit, veg, and ornamental plants - as well as managing the space for the benefit of wildlife. We also support other community gardening initiatives locally (48 participants in the past year).
- **Free English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) Classes:** we provide free ESOL classes to the local community (200+ learners each week over 17 different classes) alongside other integration support for refugees and migrants. We work closely with Devon County Council, and local partners.
- **Community support:** we provide wellbeing, employment and other one to one support (20+ individuals per week) to our volunteers and the wider community - we have formalised this support over the past two years in response to demand by creating a Wellbeing and Support role. We are creating new volunteer roles to support this programme, with our TNL Community Fund Reaching Communities funding.

- **Space for the community:** we provide space and rooms for community groups to support new groups to grow, while enhancing the range of activities and support on offer within the community centre (103 different groups used our space last year through 1400 bookings).

Our Values

Our values are centred around:

- Inclusion
- Empowerment
- Equity
- Compassion
- Sustainability
- Respect

These values guide the efforts of all staff and trustees at St Sidwell's Community Centre.

Trustee St Sidwell's Community Centre

Overall role

The Trustees are responsible for the effective governance of the charity.

Key responsibilities:

1. To ensure that the organisation pursues its objects as set out in the governing documents, and acts at all times in the interests of its beneficiaries.
2. To ensure that the organisation fulfils its legal and best practice responsibilities, in line with agreed policies, as an employer (e.g. in respect of health and safety, safeguarding, insurance, equality, inclusion and diversity etc.) and as a charitable company.
3. To ensure that all money and assets are prudently managed and used in pursuit of the objects of the organisation.
4. To ensure that the organisation accounts for its activities to its key stakeholders.
5. To work collectively and democratically with other members of the Trustee Board.
6. To ensure the organisation manages its affairs reasonably and properly, taking account of the risks it faces.
7. To work in the interests of the organisation, and not for personal gain.
8. To take proper professional advice on matters in which the Board does not have competence.
9. To act as an ambassador for the charity and its core values.

Specific tasks:

1. To attend meetings of the Board of Trustees and an Annual General Meeting:
 - a. read papers in advance of meetings
 - b. contribute to democratic decision making in the best, long-term interests of the charity
2. To work collaboratively with other trustees to form an effective governing body.
3. To contribute to development and oversight of the strategic direction of the charity.
4. To participate in one board committee.
5. To support the appointment of the Centre Manager and be involved in the appointment of other senior managers as appropriate.
6. To support the appointment of new trustees and support their induction.
7. To participate in regular board reviews:
 - a. the board incorporates the right balance of skills, knowledge and experience needed to govern and lead St Sidwell's Community Centre.
 - b. information and training is available to support trustees,
 - c. the board represents our community well and that at least a third of the trustees are regular volunteers in line with our governing documents.
8. To represent the organisation at particular occasions, in liaison with senior managers.
9. To keep informed about the activities of the organisation and wider issues which affect its work.
10. To participate in other tasks as they arise from time to time.

Person Specification

Required

1. A strong commitment to the aims, ethos and policies of the organisation.
2. Ability to communicate clearly and effectively.
3. Experience or understanding of development and delivery of strategy.
4. Ability to maintain appropriate confidentiality.
5. Strong networking capabilities that can be utilised for the benefit of the charity.

Desirable

1. Experience of operating at a senior strategic leadership level within an organisation.
2. Experience of charity governance and of working with, or as part of, a Board of Trustees or similar.
3. Strong networks within the community and voluntary sector.
4. Good connections with local government and charity funders.

5. Knowledge of legal and Charity Commission requirements of charities and charitable companies.
6. Specialist skills in areas that can support our work, for example, marketing, communications, finance, fundraising, people management.
7. Knowledge and experience of adult safeguarding.

Other information

Remuneration

This is a voluntary role.

Term Trustees serve a three-year term with the possibility of re-appointment by our members at the Annual General Meeting.

Time commitment

As a rough guide, Trustees are expected to commit sufficient time to prepare for bi-monthly board and committee meetings, an annual board away day and induction and training.

Commitments include

- 6 in person board meetings per year: 2 hrs per meeting
- 4-6 committee meetings per year: 2 hrs per meeting
- Annual General Meeting: currently held at the Centre in November
- Annual Trustee Awayday
- Participating in working groups, ad hoc meetings and Centre events: as required

Expenses

All reasonable travel and other associated expenses will be reimbursed in line with St Sidwell's travel allowance policy.

Recruitment process

1. Please reach out to our Chair of Trustees or Centre Manager in the first instance for an informal discussion.
Chair - Heléna Holt: helena@stsidwells.org.uk

Manager – Iona Collins: iona@stsidwells.org.uk

2. Following this discussion, we will provide you with an application form that will help us understand:
 - a. How you meet the person specification
 - b. How you would use your knowledge and experience to help St Sidwell's Community Centre
 - c. Why you would like to join the board

There will be an option to submit the application via video or voice note. Applications will be reviewed by the Board of Trustees as part of the selection process.

3. Interview
4. Invitation to attend first board meeting as an observer

If you need any support applying, or to make this process more accessible, please do let us know so that we can make reasonable adjustments.

Induction and probation

The following activities will form part of the induction process. A probation review will take place after 4 months. The induction and probation review will be managed by the People Committee:

- Meet staff and key volunteers;
- Be invited to do volunteer shifts with different projects in the Centre (if their schedule allows);
- Be invited to join working groups and other trustee activities that align with their interests;
- Become familiar with the strategy and financial plans for the charity and trading company;
- Be introduced to policies and other key documents;
- Become familiar with biographies of trustees and staff members;
- Identify any additional skills/training they may wish to acquire.

Additional Documents

Our Annual Accounts and Report are available here:

https://register-of-charities.charitycommission.gov.uk/en/charity-search/-/charity-details/4036680/accounts-and-annual-returns?_uk_gov_ccew_onereg_charitydetails_web_portlet_CharityDetailsPortlet_organizationNumber=4036680

You can read our strategy overview here:

St Sidwell's Centre

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**St. Sidwell's
Community
Centre**

<https://stsidwells.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2026/07/SSCC-26-29-Strategy-overview.pdf>