



GROUNDWORK NORTH EAST & CUMBRIA

RECRUITMENT PACK

TRUSTEE

Groundwork North East & Cumbria | Charity Registration number 1017706

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Help us change places and change lives



Steve Roberts



Allison Fellows



Thank you for your interest in the position of Trustee for our Board at Groundwork North East & Cumbria. This is a rare and exciting opportunity to join our Board of Trustees supporting a high-impact charity dedicated to transforming places and lives across some of the UK's most challenged communities.

For over three decades, Groundwork North East & Cumbria has stood for environmental sustainability and social impact. With an annual turnover approaching £9 million, a staff team of nearly 180 and hundreds of volunteers delivering over 200 projects each year, we are making lasting change through local action

Our mission is simple but profound:

- Create Better Places
- Improve People's Prospects
- Promote Greener Lifestyles

We are dedicated to protecting the environment and fostering a future where people and the planet can thrive together. We aim to support communities across the region to achieve their full potential through pride and place no matter the challenges they face.

As an organisation, we are proud to support so many individuals who join us through our projects, to create a cleaner, healthier and more sustainable environment.

We deliver outcomes that matter: energy-saving advice to thousands of households, targeted employment and youth programmes, greener neighbourhoods and stronger communities. Our reach spans everything from climate action and fuel poverty to youth engagement and wellbeing initiatives.

We work closely with local, regional and national partners and play an active role within the Groundwork Federation. Our Board of Trustees shapes our strategy, culture and performance—and its leadership is vital to our ongoing success

We are now looking for new Trustees with the experience, knowledge and passion to support Groundwork to build on our success, working with our partners in the region and the Groundwork Federation as we transform lives in our local communities.

If you believe in harnessing local pride and practical action to make green, fair and resilient communities a reality, we would love to hear from you.

Thank you once again for considering this opportunity. We look forward to your application and the possibility of welcoming you to our Board.

With best regards,

Steve Roberts
Chief Executive

Allison Fellows
Chair of the Board

The Groundwork Approach

The Groundwork movement began over 40 years ago during a time of significant political, social, and economic challenge. It was created as an experiment to help communities adapt to change, work together, and improve their lives and neighbourhoods. That spirit of enterprise, innovation, and collaboration has never been more relevant than it is today.



At Groundwork North East & Cumbria (GNEC), we believe that within every community, however disadvantaged, there is a deep sense of pride, resilience, and potential. Our mission is to harness that pride and unlock that passion, delivering projects and programmes that not only change lives now but also make our communities more sustainable, inclusive, and resilient for the future.

As part of the Groundwork Federation, we are an environmental and community-focused charity, dedicated to creating thriving places where people and nature flourish together. With decades of expertise in environmental and social regeneration, we work across urban coastal and rural communities to tackle inequalities, address climate and nature challenges, and empower individuals to improve their lives, neighbourhoods, and local economies.

We recognise that many people face multiple barriers, from isolation and health issues to limited facilities and employment opportunities. That is why we work with our partners in three core ways:

- > **Creating better places** – transforming neglected spaces into vibrant, accessible, and sustainable environments.
- > **Improving people's prospects** – providing skills, confidence, and pathways into education and employment.
- > **Promoting greener choices** – empowering communities and businesses to embrace sustainable, low-carbon living.



Groundwork NE & Cumbria Candidate Pack
Trustee





Beyond our external impact, we hold ourselves accountable to high ethical environmental, and social standards in our ways of working. As an organisation we commit to:

➤ **We will invest in the places and people that need us most**

Prioritising our resources to bring about lasting change by building skills and capacity within the local communities where we can make most difference.

➤ **We will work with local leaders and listen to local voices**

Ensuring our work is shaped by those it is designed to benefit and adds value to the assets that exist in local areas.

➤ **We will grow a culture of equity and inclusion**

Operating transparently and with integrity and seeking out a diversity of viewpoints, both in the work we do and the people we employ.

➤ **We will be committed to collaboration**

Forging strong partnerships, contributing to a thriving community sector and helping others lead where this will achieve greater impact.

➤ **We will act as environmental exemplars**

Championing practical action to combat the climate and nature emergency and measuring and reducing our own environmental impact.



Strategic Context & Direction of Travel

National Context

The national policy environment entering 2026/27 is characterised by several clear and consistent themes

- ✓ A renewed focus on reducing economic inactivity and improving job quality
- ✓ A shift in health policy towards prevention, neighbourhood delivery and community based support
- ✓ Continued commitment to net zero and climate adaptation, with increasing emphasis on fairness and affordability
- ✓ Recognition of nature as essential infrastructure supporting growth, health and resilience
Growing interest in blended finance, impact investment and place based philanthropy

These priorities cut across traditional departmental boundaries and require integrated, locally delivered solutions.

Regional Devolution

Devolution is reshaping the commissioning and funding landscape across the North East and Cumbria. The North East Combined Authority, in particular, has set out a long-term vision to make the region the home of real opportunity, underpinned by:

- ✓ Integrated employment and skills systems
- ✓ Inclusive economic growth
- ✓ Prevention-led approaches to health and wellbeing
- ✓ Net zero delivery that supports jobs and reduces inequality

Our Strategic Role

Groundwork North East and Cumbria positions itself as:

- ✓ A trusted delivery partner translating policy into neighbourhood-level impact
- ✓ A system partner able to work across silos and reduce duplication
- ✓ An innovator, testing and scaling new approaches grounded in community need
- ✓ A steward of place, combining environmental, social and economic outcomes



Operational Delivery Programme

Our delivery plans for 2026/27 are structured around six interconnected thematic areas

- ✓ Youth
- ✓ Employment
- ✓ Nature Based Solutions
- ✓ Energy Efficiency
- ✓ Land Management
- ✓ Health and Wellbeing



Each theme is delivered in a way that reflects local need, aligns with regional strategies, and contributes to national priorities. Together, they form an integrated offer that enables us to support individuals, strengthen communities, and enhance the natural environment

United Nations Sustainable Goals

We actively contribute to achieving the SDGs by embedding the principles into our work, ensuring that we drive positive change in the communities we serve. Our key areas of impact include:



Rooted in our communities and aligned with regional and national priorities, we are well placed to deliver meaningful change. Across our core themes, we will build on proven strengths to deepen partnerships, grow impact and respond to emerging opportunities.



Trading Company

We also operate a Trading company which is home to two successful enterprises. We worked in partnership to design and build both sites, securing funding for these fantastic facilities which support our ethos and generate income back into the charity.

Our Greenhouse Business Centre situated on Greencroft Industrial Park in Anfield Plain. The Greenhouse was built in 2006 to be the first commercial eco building in County Durham. Ideally located, just 10 miles from Durham Centre and 15 miles from Newcastle, we offer high quality office space as well as meeting and conferencing facilities, within a unique, eco-friendly, professional environment. The Greenhouse is ideally suited for start-ups or small to medium size enterprises looking for a place to grow.

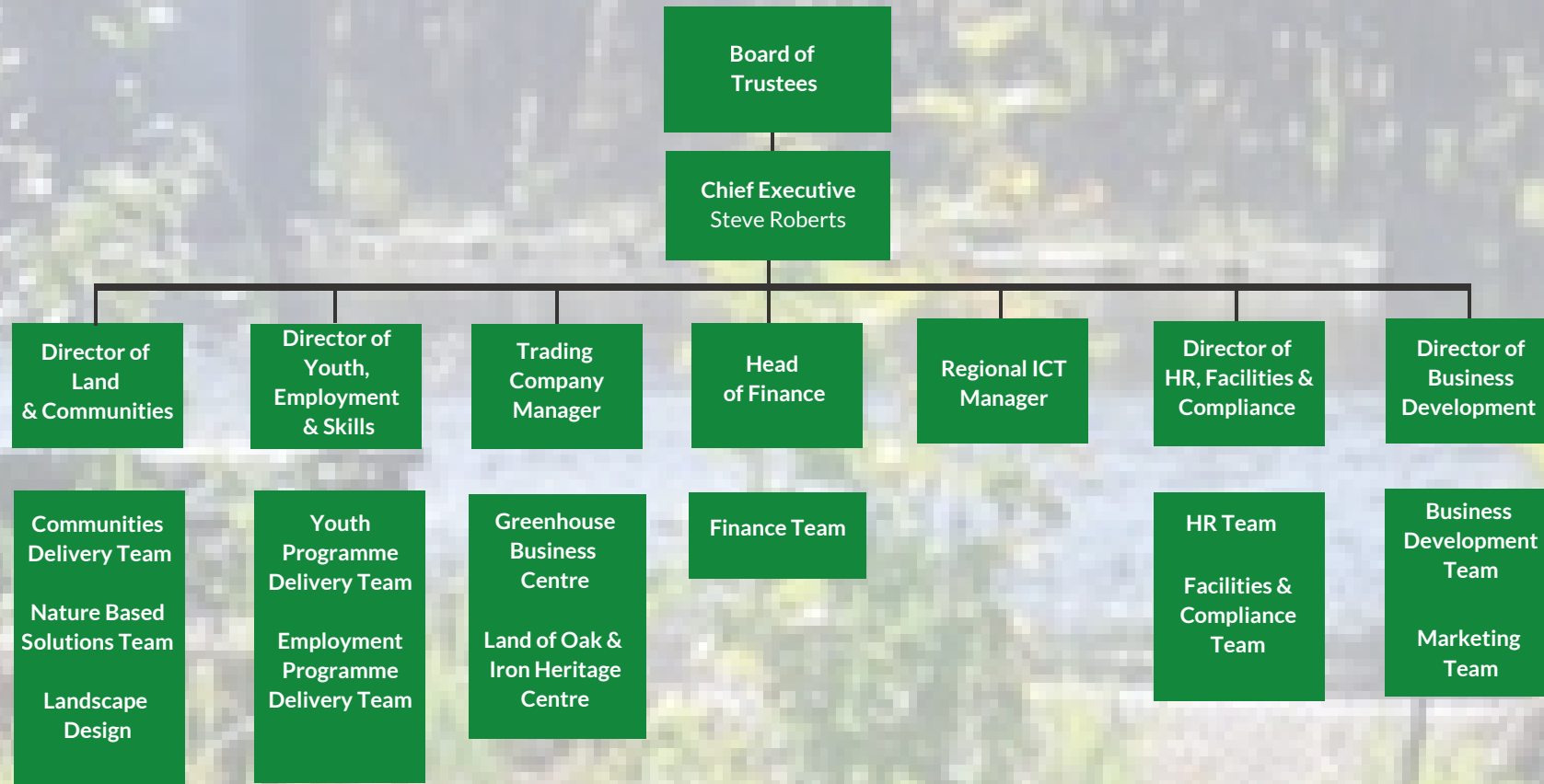


Land of Oak & Iron Heritage Centre

Completed in 2018, our Land of Oak & Iron Heritage Centre is set within the beautiful steep-sided Derwent Valley with an abundance of natural woodland, rare and iconic wildlife. It covers a 177km² area surrounding the Derwent Valley including Consett, Rowlands Gill, Prudhoe and Wickham. From here we deliver a range of activities and projects engaging people with their local heritage. You'll find our Café Shrub located in the Heritage Centre, our fresh, seasonal ingredients and produce have been locally sourced wherever possible to showcase what the Land of Oak & Iron and the wider North East region has to offer. We also support and promote smaller businesses in the region from here and encourage them to grow with us.



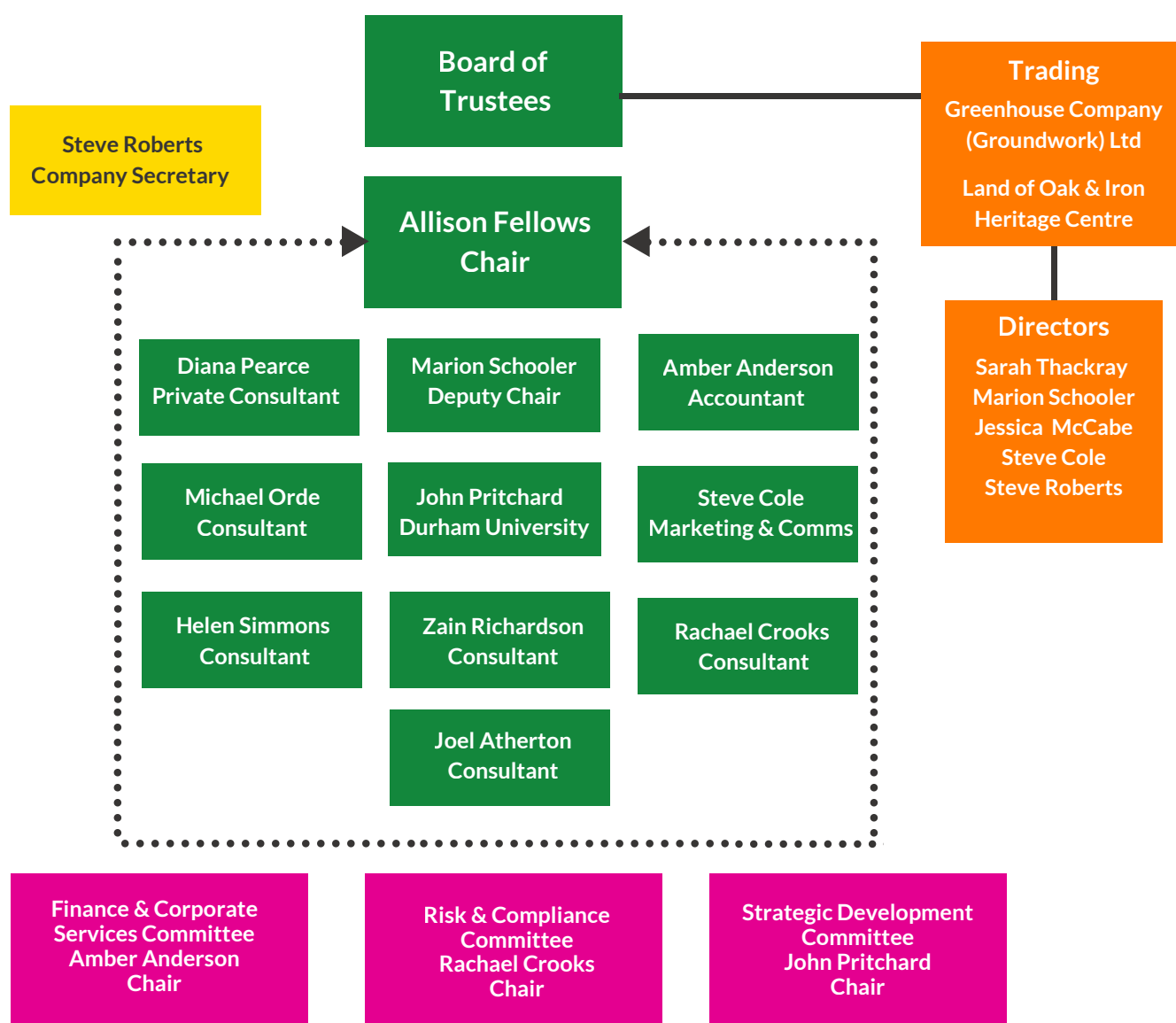
Organisation Structure Chart



Our Board of Trustees

We are governed by a Board of Trustees who along with our Chief Executive and Executive Management Team, determine policy and the strategic direction of the charity. Our board work as an effective team, using the appropriate balance of skills, experience, backgrounds and knowledge to make informed decisions and through its leadership support Groundwork's behaviour, culture and overall performance; all of which are critical to our success.

Board Structure Chart



What will you gain from being a Trustee

Becoming a Trustee at Groundwork NE & Cumbria is a rewarding opportunity to make a meaningful difference while developing both personally and professionally.

As a Trustee, you will :

- > **Make a real impact** – Contribute to an organisation that is improving lives, strengthening communities, and creating greener, more sustainable places across the North East and Cumbria.
- > **Develop strategic leadership skills** – Gain experience in governance, decision-making, and shaping the long-term direction of a significant regional charity.
- > **Broaden your perspective** – Work alongside a diverse group of Trustees and senior leaders, bringing different skills, experiences, and insights.
- > **Enhance your professional development** – Build skills in areas such as finance, risk, strategy, safeguarding, and organisational performance.
- > **Use and grow your expertise** – Apply your professional or lived experience in a meaningful way while learning from others.
- > **Expand your network** – Connect with leaders across the voluntary, public, and private sectors.
- > **Give something back** – Play a vital role in supporting communities facing disadvantage and environmental challenges.
- > **Gain insight into the charity sector** – Develop a deeper understanding of how impactful, community-focused organisations operate and deliver change.

This is a voluntary role, but the personal satisfaction, influence, and experience gained can be significant.



How will you support our beneficiaries

As a Trustee, you will play an essential role in ensuring Groundwork NE & Cumbria continues to deliver meaningful, lasting impact for the people and places we serve. You'll support our beneficiaries by:

- > **Providing strategic direction** – Helping to shape the organisation's vision and priorities so that services respond to the needs of communities, particularly those facing disadvantage.
- > **Ensuring strong governance** – Making sure the charity is well-run, accountable, and focused on delivering safe, effective, and high-quality services.
- > **Maintaining financial sustainability** – Overseeing the responsible use of resources so that support for beneficiaries can continue and grow long into the future.
- > **Championing impact and outcomes** – Monitoring performance to ensure programmes genuinely improve skills, health, wellbeing, employment opportunities, and environmental quality.
- > **Promoting equity and inclusion** – Supporting a culture where everyone has fair access to opportunities and services.
- > **Safeguarding people** – Ensuring robust safeguarding practices protect children, young people, and vulnerable adults involved in our work.
- > **Acting as an ambassador** – Raising awareness of Groundwork's work, strengthening partnerships, and advocating for the needs of local communities.
- > **Offering constructive challenge and support** – Using your skills and judgement to help the organisation continuously improve and maximise its impact.

Through your leadership and oversight, you will help ensure that Groundwork NE & Cumbria continues to transform lives, improve environments, and build stronger, more resilient communities.

[Read about our 2023/2028 Strategy here](#)

[Groundwork-Federation-Strategy.pdf](#)

[Take a look at our 26/27 Business Plan here](#)

[Business Plan](#)

The Role of A Trustee

Our Trustees play a vital role in guiding the charity's overall governance and strategic direction, helping to ensure the organisation is well managed, financially sustainable, and operating in line with its charitable purposes and legal responsibilities.

Working collectively as a Board, Trustees support and safeguard the charity's values, reputation, assets, and long-term future, while helping to ensure we continue to make a positive difference for the communities we serve.

Trustees are also encouraged to use any specialist knowledge, professional expertise, or lived experience they may have to strengthen the work of the Board and support the ongoing development of the organisation.

A detailed role description is provided with our recruitment pack, with a summary of the role provided here



> Governance and Strategy

- Ensure the charity pursues its charitable aims and objectives and contribute to the development of its long term strategy
- Support effective governance, decision making and organisational leadership
- Ensure the charity complies with its governing document, charity law, company law, and all other relevant legislation, regulations, and regulatory requirements

> Financial Oversight and Risk

- Oversee the financial health, sustainability and resources of the organisation.
- Approve annual budgets, accounts and financial plans
- Monitor financial performance, risk, and organisational impact against agreed priorities and objectives

> Leadership and Accountability

- Monitor organisational performance and progress against strategic goals and agreed outcomes
- Safeguard the integrity, reputation, and long-term future of Groundwork NE & Cumbria
- Maintain confidentiality and declare any conflicts of interest appropriately
- Support appropriate arrangements for the recruitment, appointment, support, appraisal, and remuneration of the Chief Executive

> Safeguarding Responsibilities

Trustees collectively ensure:

- Appropriate safeguarding policies, procedures, and practices are in place
- The welfare of children, young people, and vulnerable adults is prioritised
- Safeguarding concerns are managed appropriately and reported where necessary

> Board Participation

- Attend and actively contribute to Board and committee meetings
- Apply your skills, knowledge, experience, and judgement to support and challenge



The Person

We are seeking someone who can bring the following skills, knowledge and experience to our Charity:

- **Commitment to our charity's aims and values** - A genuine passion for improving communities, supporting people facing disadvantage, and enhancing the environment.
- **Strategic thinking** - The ability to think beyond operational detail, contribute to long-term planning and direction.
- **Good communication and interpersonal skills** - The ability to listen, engage and communicate effectively with a wide range of people, contributing clearly and constructively to Board discussions and building positive relationships.
- **Good judgement and integrity** - A willingness to act in the best interests of the charity and make balanced, informed decisions.
- **Collaborative approach** - The ability to work constructively with fellow Trustees and the executive team, offering both support and appropriate challenge.
- **Understanding of governance** - An appreciation of the role and responsibilities of a Trustee, or a willingness to learn.
- **Commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion** - Supporting a culture where everyone is valued and has fair access to opportunities.





How to Apply

Trustee appointments are subject to the following checks:

- Declaration of eligibility to be a Trustee
- Declaration of conflict of interests
- Satisfactory References
- Satisfactory Enhanced DBS check

Trustees are also required to undertake Safeguarding training.

If you would like to discuss the role in more detail with our current Chief Executive, Steve Roberts on 07827 891846 or via email steve.roberts@groundwork.org.uk

To apply for this post, please contact hr.northeast@groundwork.org.uk for an application pack



Groundwork NE & Cumbria
@GWKNEC





CHANGING PLACES
CHANGING LIVES

Groundwork NE & Cumbria strive to have a diverse and inclusive workforce that is representative of the communities we serve. We want you to be yourself at Groundwork and we value everything that makes you unique. We recognise and celebrate your difference and together we make Groundwork a special and great place to work. As a Disability Confident employer we offer a guaranteed interview to applicants with a disability who meet the essential criteria for the role.

At Groundwork we ensure that we provide a safe environment for adults, children and young people to take part in any activity or service that we organise. We are committed to creating a culture that promotes safeguarding and the welfare of all children, young people and adults at risk. Our safer recruitment practices support this by ensuring that there is a consistent and comprehensive process of obtaining, collating, analysing and evaluating information from and about candidates to ensure that all the people we appoint are suitable to work with our children, young people and adults.

Join our team

Groundwork NE & Cumbria

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