

# Volunteer Role: Chair of Trustees

## 24 month term



## Join the Board of a fast-growing children's book charity

The Children's Book Project is a young, rapidly growing charity set up to tackle book poverty nationwide and to improve the social, emotional and educational outcomes of children and young people across the UK.

The charity is proud of the significant impact it has had since formation both on its core audiences (over 1.2m books gifted to targeted babies, children and young people) and amongst its volunteers (the charity won a Queen's Award in 2020). Our activity has gained significant momentum in the past two years due to increased public awareness of poverty across the UK and of the value of reuse as well as considerable support from a wide array of organisations.

Following two successful years in post, our Chair of Trustees is moving on and we seek an energetic and supportive new Chair for our next phase of growth.

Our three-year plan outlines our key ambitions for this period:

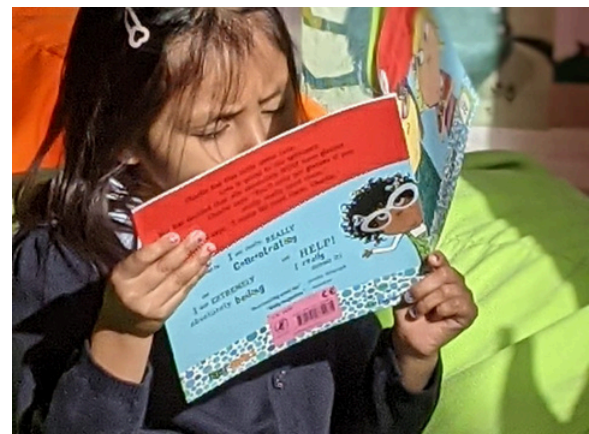
**1. We want to change mindsets:** normalise and facilitate book donation for book buying families across the UK via nationwide partnerships, endorsements and a donation network. We need to become a trusted, go-to destination for pre-loved books.

**2. We will proactively collaborate:** Across all our operations to identify where our work can amplify or dovetail the work of other charities seeking to support the same audiences. In doing so we will amplify the impact of our programmes and generate improved funder ROI though we must be wary of our profile being diminished.

**3. We need to build authority:** raising our profile via 3rd party relationships, research and shared impact and as part of this to ensure the value of our activity is fully understood.

We will continue to focus on developing a sustainable funding model, will continue to conduct various strands of research that evidence impacts amongst our beneficiary audiences, seek to raise our profile further within the publishing and educational sectors and to develop a robust national programme of delivery.

We are keen to continue to collaborate with youth-facing agencies and with other charities in the sector and want to ensure the continued relevance of our offer amongst our key audiences.



## About us

OECD research has shown that reading for pleasure is the single biggest indicator of a child's life outcomes, more than their family circumstance or parents' educational background or income. Being read to, sharing a book with an adult or reading independently helps children to develop socially and emotionally, offers escapism and a chance to become immersed in new worlds. It is this immersion in books that drives a child's literacy development, their confidence in themselves as a reader and invites them to see the world differently.

However, against a backdrop of widespread school and public library closures and increasing public hardship, hundreds of thousands of children live in homes without very few books of their own. By age 11, those from book-poor homes (those with fewer than 10 books) are found to be 12 months behind their peers in terms of literacy and language development. These children have fewer chances to chat with their parents about what they see in the illustrations of a beautiful picture book, to recite new facts by heart or to identify with characters in a favourite story.

The Children's Book Project is a grassroots charity that seeks to tackle book poverty and give every child across the UK the chance to choose and own their own books. From three UK HQs our volunteers recycle pre-loved books that are gifted to targeted organisations that in turn put on inclusive book gifting events for children to choose and take home books that they feel excited about.

## Who are we looking for?

The Chair will provide inclusive leadership to the Board of Trustees, ensuring that each Trustee fulfils their responsibilities for effective charity governance and their engagement with our disparate activities including regionally, operationally and from an audience perspective.

We would like our Chair of Trustees to help us to widen and manage our external relationships with corporate organisations and public bodies proactively and consistently and to advocate on our behalf.

The Chair will also support the executive team, acting as a mentor to and building a solid working with the Chief Executive.

In summary, the Chair of Trustees will take responsibility for the following areas:

1. **Governance:** Ensure the charity operates within its charitable objectives, follows governance best practice and complies with regulatory requirements
2. **Strategy:** Help define the charity's objectives and vision and ensure these are regularly reviewed
3. **Finance:** Ensure the Charity's sustainability and accountability, including regular review of risks
4. **Mentorship:** Act as a mentor to the executive team where relevant
5. **Ambassadorial:** Act as an ambassador and public face of the charity together with the CEO

## Who are we looking for?

We welcome prospective candidates from a wide range of backgrounds and experience including: *Charity governance; Commercial acumen, Finance & accounting; Fundraising; Human resources; Legal; Sector expertise (e.g. literacy, social policy or publishing); Experience in scaling a charity.*

Any applicant should be legally eligible to stand as a registered Company Director and Charity Trustee. Having had previous experience as Chair of a voluntary organisation is an advantage.

We also hope that the Chair will bring the following strengths to the role:

- **Knowledge of the role of books** in children's lives and the impact of book poverty.
- **Commitment to the charity's aims**, objectives and values.
- **Strong leadership, people management skills** and the ability to chair meetings effectively.
- **Willingness to promote the charity** in the best interests of all stakeholders.
- **Strategic vision** and understanding.
- **An understanding of trustees' legal duties**, responsibilities and liabilities
- **A strong grounding in charity finances** (or a commitment to gaining this)
- **An understanding of the Third Sector** (and a commitment to expanding this).
- **Integrity, objectivity, accountability, and honesty.**

As we actively seek to increase the diversity of our trustee board, we welcome any candidate who can contribute diversity to the Board in its widest sense, including diversity of background, life experience and career. We know that different voices, ideas and perspectives will enable us to better tackle book poverty and deepen our impact. If you like the sound of this role but don't quite meet all of the criteria, we still encourage you to apply. We are very open to first time trustees joining the board.

We particularly encourage applications from candidates who have childhood or adult experience of life on a lower income, and from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME), LGBT+, disabled and socially diverse candidates.



## What are the requirements of the role?

The Chair of Trustees should expect to serve for an initial 24 months with a peer review after 12 months. It is anticipated that the time commitment should be voluntary, on average half a day per week though this will vary according to the time of year.

The Board meets three times annually at the charity's premises in W10. In addition to conducting necessary preparation for these meetings and for submission of its Annual Report the Chair may attend further planning sessions arranged by themselves with wider members of the team.

A summary of the charity's financial position is circulated monthly by its finance team and the Chair should allocate time to review and properly understand this with the support of the Finance Director.

There could be occasions when extra time will be required (e.g. to support the recruitment of new Trustees, during the planning of new projects, property negotiation or dealing with any particular difficulties that arise).

## How to apply or find out more

Please send your CV and a brief covering letter (in any format e.g. letter, video etc) to Lisa Harrington, Trustee, c/o [tracy@childrensbookproject.co.uk](mailto:tracy@childrensbookproject.co.uk). Closing date for applications is 5th November 2024. Please also contact Tracy if you have any informal questions about the role before applying.

