



IMAGE: DORCAS EATCH LRP5 North Yorkshire Moors

INTRODUCTION

The Royal Photographic Society is an educational charity promoting both the art and science of photography. We exist to educate the public, promote the highest standards of photography and encourage the public appreciation of photography.

Membership is open to all, irrespective of experience or knowledge. No qualifications are required to join, simply a passion and love for photography or images, its technologies or applications.



OUR VISION is to be internationally recognised for promoting photography of the highest standards.

OUR MISSION is determined by the charitable objects stated in our Royal Charter:

“ To educate members of the public by increasing their knowledge and understanding of photography and in doing so to promote the highest standards of achievement in photography in order to encourage public appreciation of photography.

IMAGE: CHRISTIAN JAMES WOOD National Theatre

OUR STRATEGIC AIMS ARE TO:

- educate members of the public
- promote the highest standards of photography
- encourage public appreciation of photography.

To support these aims, we need to:

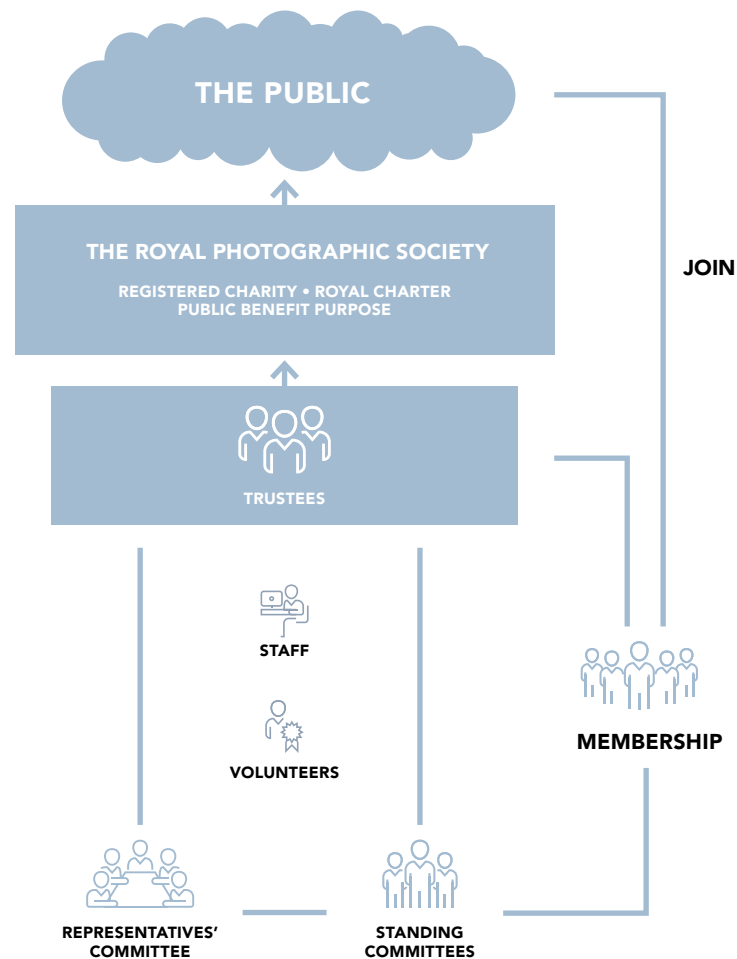
- strengthen our contemporary relevance by building on our rich tradition and extensive history
- diversify our sources of funding.

The RPS is headed by a Board of Trustees which sets the overall policy and direction, working in partnership with RPS staff. The Board of Trustees is also supported by various committees.

Trustees are elected by the membership every two years. Trustees may also co-opt up to three additional members to the Board of Trustees. These are people who bring particular skills or expertise.



IMAGE: KEVIN PIGNEY LRPS Bellowing Stag



TRUSTEES COMPRISE:

President, President-Elect, Treasurer, four others, plus up to three co-opted members. Responsible for the RPS. Set strategy and monitor performance.



REPRESENTATIVES' COMMITTEE COMPRISE:

Chairs of standing committees, Representatives from the Groups, Regions, Overseas members and up to 3 additional members. Plus Volunteer Manager and PAGB (non-voting).



STANDING COMMITTEES COMPRISE:

Awards, Distinctions, Education, Finance, Science, Groups, and Regions.



STAFF

Implement strategy and manage RPS activities. Governance and management of: awards, distinctions, education, exhibitions, finance, IT, communications, membership, volunteers.



IMAGE: ROBIN SINTON ARPS Stokknes



SO YOU WANT TO BE A TRUSTEE?

All charities must be for the public benefit and our Trustees need to know about the objects in our governing document. As a Trustee, you must understand:

- what the RPS is set up to achieve (its purposes)
- who the RPS is there to benefit (its beneficiaries)
- how they will benefit (what the RPS will do for or with them)
- any order of priority to the services and benefits provided
- any restrictions on what the RPS can do or who we can help

Remember, charities also have powers from the Charities Act and other laws. You must only use these powers in ways that further your charity's purposes.

BEFORE YOU START MAKE SURE YOU ARE ELIGIBLE!

You must be aged 18 or over to be a Trustee of the RPS.

Election to the Board of Trustees is open to any member and defined in the By-Laws, but the recommended process for becoming a Trustee is as follows:

You must be a member throughout the election process and duration of time as a Trustee.

1. Read this document and understand the process and the legal, financial, time commitment and other obligations that are attached to the role.

You must be able to provide 10 supporters details who are also current members.

2. Read through the RPS Governance documents including the Charter, By-Laws and Rules.

You must not act as a Trustee if you are disqualified from doing so (unless authorised by a waiver from the Charity Commission).

3. Email the President: president@rps.org.

For more information about the reasons for disqualification, please visit www.charitycommission.gov.uk

OTHER DOCUMENTS TO READ:

RPS Strategic Plan, Annual Report and Accounts, Election Procedure, Trustees Code of Conduct, RPS Royal Charter.

WHAT DOES THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES DO & NOT DO?

- The role of the Board of Trustees is strategic, rather than operational. There is no remit to manage day-to-day activities.
- The function of the Board of Trustees is to set strategy, create a policy framework for the work of staff and to oversee the charity's finances.
- Both the Board of Trustees and individual Trustees have responsibilities in law and are accountable for any deficiency in the management and control of the charity. These responsibilities cannot be delegated.
- The Trustees are ultimately responsible for ensuring that there are effective procedures and controls in place and that there is an up-to-date risk management system in place.
- In law, Trustees are "collectively and individually responsible for all decisions" by the Board.
- The powers and responsibilities of the Board of Trustees are set out in the RPS Charter and By-laws.



IMAGE: HTTET AUNG Myanmar's Novice Buddhist Monks

HOW LONG DO TRUSTEES SERVE FOR?

After an election of individuals to the Board of Trustees, the term of office is for a period of two or four years. Trustees may serve as Trustees (if re-elected) for up to 3 terms (i.e. 12 years maximum).

HOW MUCH TIME DO TRUSTEES COMMIT A YEAR?

- At least six meetings of the Board of Trustees take place each year – usually one day meetings, held at a venue in Bristol or London.
- Preparation time before meetings – reading and absorbing the agenda and associated papers.
- Attendance at the AGM once each year. Trustees are also invited to award ceremonies and exhibitions which take place from time to time.
- Occasional consultation of members of the Board of Trustees by phone or e-mail may be necessary on occasions where a speedy response is required.
- Though not obligatory, Trustees may be asked to serve on working groups and attend additional committee meetings – this may require a further 4-6 days per year plus preparation time.
- Those elected as Chair, Vice-Chair or Treasurer must be able to give more time.

DO TRUSTEES RECEIVE ANY SUPPORT OR TRAINING?

- While being legally responsible for the actions of the charity, the Trustees delegate the operation of the charity to the staff who are responsible for managing the charity's affairs through the charity's line management structure.
- The managers and other senior staff provide reports, statistics and advice to the Board of Trustees.
- A training and induction programme is provided.
- There is no remuneration for the role, but reasonable expenses are covered in line with our expenses policy.



WHAT ABOUT CONFLICTS OF INTEREST?

All Trustee decisions must be made solely in the interests of the RPS and its charitable purpose. Trustees should make a clear distinction between the interests of the RPS and their personal, professional, and business interests. This includes avoiding both actual and perceived conflicts of interest. All RPS staff, volunteers, and Trustees should recognise and disclose any conflict of interest.

The RPS aims to ensure that all such conflicts are seen to be properly managed or avoided – both financial and non-financial.

There is an opportunity to make a Declaration of Interests on appointment and at each Trustee meeting to protect the integrity of our decision-making process. Conflicts which are not managed effectively may cause serious damage to the reputation of the charity and of the individuals concerned.

Not all conflicts can be predicted at the start of a Trustee meeting and so all Trustees must be prepared to make a declaration and withdraw from a discussion during the business of the meeting as appropriate.

WHAT DO OTHER PEOPLE SAY?

Being a Trustee is tough. It carries legal responsibility and is not something that people enter into lightly. The word 'Trustee' is significant because we are entrusted to take decisions and look after funds and resources for and on behalf of our members and beneficiaries.

In a recent Trustee Week initiative, this is what some people tweeted about being a Trustee...

- “ I can use my Marketing and Comms skills to contribute to a cause I really care about.
- “ I use my finance skills for a local charity. Great to give something back.
- “ To actively work for causes I care about and help a great organisation to achieve its potential. It's not easy but I love it.
- “ Get to put your skills & experience to new use, in a different context, and (cliché klaxon) to make a difference.
- “ A way to use my skills, questioning mind and experience to help make an organisation stronger so it can help more people.
- “ Chances to learn and grow. Giving back to community. Cross pollination across orgs and sectors.
- “ Enjoy collective decision making, use my skills, love networking, gain knowledge and insight, made great friends.

I THINK I CAN HELP

At the RPS we particularly look for people with skills in the following areas and preferably in an international or non-profit context:

- **Marketing and Communications**
- **Finance**
- **Human Resources**
- **Law**
- **Governance and Company Secretarial**
- **Strategy**
- **Curating and Gallery or Museum Management**
- **Fundraising**
- **Higher and Further Education**
- **Science, especially Imaging Science**

Why isn't the Board of Trustees made up of amateur and professional photographers?

Running a charity can be complex, demanding and very challenging. We have identified the core skills our Board of Trustees needs for the RPS to uphold its worldwide reputation and achieve its purposes. We love to talk about photography but unfortunately that has to wait until everything else has been dealt with.



WHAT NEXT?

If you are interested in becoming a Trustee of the RPS and you have specific skills or experience in the disciplines listed above, then please do start the conversation with us by the methods outlined on our website.

**THANK YOU FOR
TAKING THE TIME TO
READ THIS AND I HOPE
TO MEET YOU SOON.**

CHAIR OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

The Royal Photographic Society

president@rps.org

IMAGE: AVINASH SOOD LRPS Flurry of Colour