Chair

Candidate information pack

Cambridgeshire Community Foundation

For a better county

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About Cambridgeshire Community Foundation

Cambridgeshire Community Foundation is the charity for Cambridgeshire, working towards a better quality of life for people across the county. We identify the most critical needs of local communities, raise funds and award grants to non-profit organisations that make a big impact in addressing those needs.

Over the past 22 years, we have awarded grants totalling over £40 million through over 10,000 grants and built a permanent endowment worth £16 million. From 2025 to 2026, we awarded almost £3.5 million in grants. We work with local businesses, individuals, councils and the NHS. We distribute grants to projects across the county, addressing issues including health and wellbeing, homelessness, social isolation, education, and the environment, among others.

The need to support Cambridgeshire's communities has never been greater. Our Community Needs research identified substantial inequalities of income, deprivation, education, and health between the most and least deprived local communities.

Our work depends on the generosity of our donors; therefore, we are determined to grow local philanthropy. Whichever causes our donors choose to support, we ensure their money is managed responsibly and has maximum impact, with as much or as little involvement from our donors as they wish. Our financial governance, policies and controls mean we are accountable, trusted, independent and apply sound judgement to all of what we do.

Cambridgeshire Community Foundation's team comprises of 11 dedicated staff members, supported by 16 Trustees and about 20 volunteers, including our President, Vice-Presidents, and Ambassadors. Moreover, we are part of a national network of 47 quality-accredited Community Foundations.

Our strategy

We strive to continue growing the Foundation, to increase the available funding for the diverse range of causes within our community. We are focused on growing our profile, donor development, and strengthening the Foundation's capacity, systems and processes to respond flexibly to the ever-changing priorities and needs of our local community.

Strategic aims for 2025-28

1. To grow our philanthropy and impact through growth in donor income.
2. To understand Cambridgeshire communities' needs and act on vital issues to deliver targeted positive impact and measure this.
3. To be a fantastic support to the region's charities and community organisations through effective, accessible and inclusive grant-making.
4. To reinforce the Foundation as the charity for Cambridgeshire, strengthening recognition, trust and engagement across donors and communities.
5. To develop our excellent organisational capability, through staff, volunteers, Trustees and resources, to deliver our strategic goals.

Becoming Chair - Our offer to you

By becoming Chair of the Foundation, you will join the largest placed-based grant maker in the county. You will support and shape our work and strategic direction to ensure that we are providing the best possible support to local non-profit organisations and our community. You'll bring your unique perspective to board discussions and help us innovate in ways that truly reflect the communities we serve.

The role is a great way to get involved in your local community and be part of a network of people and organisations who want to make a positive difference.

The role also offers professional development opportunities, including:

- Strategy and leadership in the not-for-profit sector
- Non-executive director experience
- Skill development, including influencing and negotiation, and managing risk.

As Chair, you will be part of a team and will have opportunities to apply your unique skills and experience while learning from others. Working closely with a passionate team of people who have different perspectives is one of the most enjoyable aspects of the role.

Our Chair position is available to people of all ages, backgrounds, and skills and we welcome applications from all in our community. It is particularly important for us to have a diverse Board of Trustees, for strong representation of the communities that we serve through our work. People identifying as disabled, from Cambridgeshire's minority ethnic communities and from areas outside Cambridge are currently under-represented on our Board so we particularly welcome applications from those groups.

Successful applicants are expected to be co-opted onto the Board in early 2027, before being formally ratified as Chair of the Board of Trustees at the AGM in autumn 2027.

Role description

Purpose of the role

The Chair of Trustees provides strategic leadership to the Board and works in close partnership with the Chief Executive to advance the mission of Cambridgeshire Community Foundation. The Chair ensures effective governance, supports high-quality decision-making, and represents the Foundation externally to key stakeholders, donors and partners.

Key responsibilities

Board leadership and governance

- Lead the Board in setting and maintaining the Foundation's strategic direction
- Ensure strong governance, compliance, and adherence to charity law and best practice
- Promote a culture of openness, challenge, and constructive debate
- Ensure the Board operates effectively, with the right balance of skills, diversity and independence
- Oversee trustee recruitment, succession planning, and performance

Relationship with the Chief Executive

- Act as a trusted sounding board and line manager to the Chief Executive
- Support, challenge and appraise the Chief Executive's performance
- Maintain appropriate separation between governance and operational management
- Provide guidance during periods of change, growth or risk

Meetings and decision-making

- Chair Board meetings and ensure agendas focus on strategic priorities
- Ensure timely and effective decision-making
- Facilitate contributions from all trustees and manage conflicts constructively
- Ensure committees are effective and aligned with Board priorities

External representation and stakeholder engagement

- Act as an ambassador for the Foundation across Cambridgeshire and beyond (including within the UK Community Foundations network)

- Build and maintain relationships, where needed, with key donors, partners, local authorities, and stakeholders
- Support fundraising efforts and help unlock new funding opportunities where appropriate
- Enhance the Foundation's profile, credibility, and influence

Financial oversight and risk

- Ensure robust financial oversight in partnership with the CEO/Finance sub-committee Chair
- Maintain oversight of risk management frameworks
- Ensure the Foundation operates sustainably and in line with its charitable objectives

Person specification

Essential experience

- Senior leadership experience (e.g. CEO, Senior Manager, Chair, NED or equivalent)
- Experience of governance and working with boards
- Strong strategic thinking and decision-making capability
- Experience of stakeholder engagement and relationship-building
- Financial literacy and ability to oversee budgets and risk

Desirable experience

- Knowledge of the charitable, philanthropic or community foundation sector
- Experience of fundraising or working with donors
- Understanding of Cambridgeshire's communities and needs

Personal qualities

- Credible, independent and values-driven leader
- Strong interpersonal and influencing skills
- Collaborative yet appropriately challenging
- High integrity and sound judgement
- Commitment to inclusion, equity and community impact

Key relationships

- Chief Executive and senior leadership team
- Board of Trustees and sub-committee Chairs

- Donors and fundholders (where needed)
- Local authorities and strategic partners (where needed)
- Wider voluntary and community sector

Essential

- Are passionate about making a difference
- Commitment to the vision, mission, and values of the Foundation
- Leadership skills
- Tact and diplomacy
- Good communication and interpersonal skills
- Impartiality, fairness and the ability to respect confidences
- Experience of committee work
- Confidence, warmth, passion with an ability to engage
- Passion for and commitment to the Foundation's purpose
- Personal gravitas to be part of a significant, high-profile regional organisation
- Willingness to devote the necessary time and effort
- Strategic vision and good, independent judgement
- An understanding and acceptance of the legal duties, responsibilities, and liabilities of trusteeship
- commitment to diversity, inclusion, sustainability, and equality in all aspects of the Foundation's work

Desirable

- Experience at a senior legal level within a business, public sector or charitable organisation, or as a professional advisor
- Successful track record of achievement through their career
- Experience of charity governance and working with or as part of a Board of Trustees
- Experience of one or more of grant-making; marketing and communications; public relations; business development or fundraising; community engagement: human resource management; Artificial Intelligence and digital.

Terms of office

Term

The charity's board members serve a three-year term and are eligible for re-appointment for one additional term of three years.

It is intended that the successful applicant will co-opted onto the board in early 2027 before becoming chair in autumn 2027 when the current chair steps down.

Remuneration

The role is not accompanied by any financial remuneration, although expenses for travel may be claimed.

Location

The charity works across Cambridgeshire. Board meetings may be held at our office in Cambridge or at other locations across the county. Remote attendance is usually available and some sub-committee meetings are conducted exclusively online.

Time commitment

Approx. 1-2 days per month (flexible, with peaks)

There are four board meetings per annum, with one of these including the Annual General Meeting and usually a further annual strategic awayday

The chair is an ex-officio member of the 4 sub-committees which also meet four times per annum.

Recruitment process

To register your interest, please send a copy of your latest CV or biography, together with a supporting statement explaining the following:

- Your motivations for applying for the role
- How your skills, knowledge and experience match the requirements sought
- What you might additionally bring to the role.

To ensure fairness to all applicants, the shortlisting will be based solely on the information that you supply. Therefore, it is important that you provide as much information as possible regarding why you wish to apply and what you think makes you a suitable applicant.

Cambridgeshire Community Foundation is an equal opportunities organisation and welcomes applications from all in our community. It is particularly important for us to have a diverse Board of Trustees, for strong representation of the communities we serve. Your ideas and insights will directly shape our work and future. We work in ways that fit your life including in-person meetings, online sessions, or a hybrid mix of both.

Your application should be emailed to Michael O'Toole, CEO, at:
michael@cambscf.org.uk

Application deadline: 31st October 2026 at 5pm

Interviews will commence in November 2026

Induction

As part of the induction process, we offer a period of shadowing the outgoing chair before taking on the role. This can be discussed as part of the recruitment process.

All Trustees will be supplied with a welcome pack, containing essential information and forms to be completed. Induction meetings with fellow Trustees and the Senior Leadership Team will also be offered. Trustees are encouraged to take part in further training, with opportunities publicised at Board meetings

Thank you for your interest in the role and we look forward to receiving your application.