



Small Changes By Multiple People Make Big Difference

Make a Big difference by becoming a Trustee at Plas Derw Trust

About us

Plas Derw Trust was set up in 2005 to provide outdoor and environmental education and to promote sustainable living in North East Wales. It grew from a partnership between Flintshire county Council the former Welsh College of Horticulture and the Former Forestry Commission network group Impio. It achieved charitable status in 2006 and is also a registered company limited by guarantee. The charitable status allows to apply for grants to fund specific projects and the company status allows to trade as a not for profit company.

Our staff

The day to day running of the trust is the responsibility of the operations manager who is supported by an administration assistant and we have 1 Forest School practitioner employed to meet contact commitments. The training company employs a training coordinator who delivers training and performs administration tasks.

Current Trustees

Following the death of a trustee we currently only have the bare minimum of 3 trustees and 1 company secretary and therefore would like to expand and broaden the Board of Trustees.

How we operate

We do not receive any core funding so are solely reliant on grant funding, contracts and our small business operations. This places pressure on staff to fund their own roles and can lead to cash flow issues at times.

Examples of recent grant funded project

Project: Wild Wellbeing

Funder: Children and Young Peoples fund Community Foundation In Wales

Budget: £9,846

A 6week forest school-based project which aimed to improve wellbeing in participants of Junior age from primary schools in areas of deprivation

Project: Forest Therapy

Funder: Bupa Uk Foundation

Budget: £19,500

12month project to offer 24 week or Forest Therapy sessions. Based on shin yoke the Japanese practice of Forest bathing in conjunction with mindscape psychology who will deliver a talking therapy exercise

Examples of contracts held

Project: Flintshire Eco Champions

Funder: Flintshire County Council

Budget: £10,000

To deliver the Flintshire Eco Champions project to 15 school over 18 months



Project: Contact Nature
Funder: Contact A Family
Budget: £9,000

To deliver 12 contact nature session across Wales includes sub-contracting leaders to deliver sessions.

Example of small business operations

Stream	Price	Avg profit margin
Birthday parties	£170	22%
Holiday Club	£70 / £25	37%
Home school	£8.50	13%
School Trips	from £350	37%
Plas at the back Workshops	£35	60%

SWOT Analysis

Strengths	Weakness	Opportunities	Threats
Experienced Staff	Minimum Number on Board of trustees	Potential to relocate to Deeside learning Hub	Other organisations operating Forest School / outdoor education in the area.
15 years of operations	Staff at capacity due to low financial reserves restricting their hours	Outdoor Learning suite for pre 16 learners - potential to work with schools	Reoccurring Low staff morale could lead staff to departures
Good reputation with our customers	Operation manager self-taught- no formal Quals has diverse responsibilities- Sales, marketing, finance, compliance HR,IT	Potential to diversify training to include Climate change / Green champion training	Funding is harder to secure
Sole provider of Forest School Training in the area	Networking - time to build new relationships	To assist Local authority, implement new curriculum with Outdoor learning training	Rising running costs and increased cost of employment could affect sustainability of the Trust
Good partnerships and relationships with other organisations	Accessing on-going funding		2 x trustees are post retirement age.



Why we need you

We are looking for additional trustees to assist the current Board in driving financial sustainability and implementing new income streams.

Finance - Recent changes in employment law and increased running costs have added pressure to financial reserves. Working on contracts that pay retrospectively has created cashflow issues which have negatively impacted staff morale, mainly the operations manager who runs the monthly payroll and monitors all financial aspects of the trust alongside all her other duties, therefore we are particularly keen to secure a treasurer who can take on financial planning and monitoring.

Business Development - The Trust has the potential to diversify its training but staff are already at capacity and hours are restricted by funds in the bank, a trustee who has experience of business development could help with securing investment from corporate sponsorship or other suitable streams would help us.

Human Resources – We currently pay for HR services on a multi-year contract a trustee with HR experience could save us £140 per month in the future. HR experience would also be beneficial for staff.

Marketing PR- Current staff do not have qualification or experience with marketing and promotion and public relations and would benefit from support in this area to make sure the Trust is promoted to its full potential to service users.

Education / childcare As a registered childcare provider with the CIW a trustee with experience of children regulations would be a welcome addition to the board. As provider of outdoor education, a Trustee from an education background could support staff in networking and maximising our services to meet the needs of schools and other educational setting.

The Environment – As the UK strives to meet carbon reduction commitments business will need support to understand the issues of Climate Change and Sustainable Development. Funding in this area is increasing and someone with expertise in this area could help build on current Eco based projects.



Being a trustee

Here are some common questions or preconceptions

“I don’t know what a trustee is?”

Many people are interested in becoming trustees but don’t necessarily understand what it entails you can find official information about the roles and responsibilities of Trustees at www.gov.uk/topic/running-charity/trustee-role-board

Plas Derw Trustees meet on a regular basis at mutually beneficial times at the office in Northop. Trustees support the staff to meet the aims of the Trust.

“Trusteeship is just for senior professionals or retired people.”

Trusteeship is not a ‘closed shop’ or only for older or retired professionals, a diverse board of trustees improves sustainability and resilience and a range of skills and backgrounds can bring many benefits to our charity.

“My employer won’t want me to be a trustee.”

Some people worry that their employer won’t support them giving their time to be a trustee but often the opposite is true. Many employees will give their staff a set number of paid hours per year to fulfil trustee obligation such as attending meeting and preparing for AGM’s. Plas Derw usually hold meeting late afternoons every other month but we also have a modern constitution which allows us to have e: meetings whereby email whats app correspondence can constitute a formal meeting.

“I could be personally liable if I make a mistake.”

This is a common concern but one which rarely materialises a strong board and happy team mean all obligations are easily met.

How to apply

Complete the Trustee application form and return to

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