

ROLE DESCRIPTION AND PERSON SPECIFICATION FOR THE RHS PRESIDENT

Overall Purpose

The President acts as the figurehead of the Society, providing leadership and direction to the Society's trustees to enable them to fulfil their responsibilities for the overall governance and strategic direction of the RHS and representing the Society externally as appropriate. The President oversees the development of the organisation's aims, objectives and goals in accordance with the Charter and Bye-Laws and other regulatory and legal guidelines and provides support and guidance to the Director General to ensure that trustee decisions are acted upon and that the Society is managed in an effective manner.

Accountability

The President is accountable to Council and the Members of the RHS and, as a trustee, more generally to the Charity Commission and the public at large.

Main Responsibilities

The main responsibilities of the President are to:

- Oversee, in a non-executive capacity, the development, delivery and review of the Society's strategy, structure and policies
- Ensure that the RHS functions within the legal and regulatory framework and in accordance with the Society's Charter and Bye-laws
- Provide support and guidance to the Director General in the implementation of the Society's strategy and policies and monitor his/her performance
- Achieve the optimal composition of Council and lead the succession process for the Director General at the appropriate time
- Ensure the smooth functioning of Council and of relationships between Council and the Executive team
- Ensure that the Society manages its resources carefully and applies them exclusively in pursuance of its objectives
- Uphold the fiduciary duty invested in the position, undertaking such duties in a way that adds to public confidence and trust in the charity.

Main Duties

The main duties of the President are to:

- Oversee the development of the future direction of the RHS and the delivery of the remainder of the Strategic Investment Programme, including the Executive strategic plans and policies as well as the annual budget

- Promote the RHS and decisions of Council and to act as an ambassador and public face for the Society
- With the support of the Treasurer, oversee sound financial management of the Society's resources, ensuring expenditure is in line with objectives and that investment activities meet accepted standards and policies
- Monitor the work and activities of the Society including approval of the annual accounts and undertaking an annual review of the Society's performance
- Support the Director General and other members of the Leadership Team and, through them, the Society's staff in the achievement of their work.
- Consider any other matters that affect the work, performance and reputation of the RHS

Carrying out the Role

The President is expected to commit an average of one to two days per week to the RHS, which will vary over the course of the year, and to:

- Chair meetings of Council which are held typically six times each year including an annual overnight "away day". Agree and manage the agendas for these meetings, ensuring that trustees have the necessary information and time for discussion of complex or contentious issues and that the style and tone of the debate invites open discussion and promotes effective decision-making. Promote a culture of collegiality, challenge, openness and trust with opportunities for full and frank, but constructive, airing of views.
- Chair the Society's Annual General Meeting and ensure effective communication between the Members and Council.
- Meet regularly with the Director General to give support and guidance and act as a sounding board and mentor
- Actively support the fundraising activities of the Society; develop and build relationships with current and prospective donors
- Represent the RHS from time to time at functions, external events and meetings both in the UK and occasional trips abroad
- Serve, at the request of Council, on Committees of the Society and specifically to act as Chairman of the Horticulture Board which currently meets four times each year.
- Attend, as an ex officio member and when appropriate, meetings of the Commercial Board; the Nominations, Appointment and Governance Committee; the Audit & Risk Committee; the Investments Committee and the People and Remuneration Committee
- Ensure that processes are in place to review periodically the performance of Council and each governance committee
- Make recommendations to Council for the appointment of Vice Presidents
- Maintain absolute confidentiality of sensitive/confidential information received in the course of undertaking the role of the President and/or a trustee of the Society.
- Act in the best interests of the RHS at all times.

Term of Office

The President is appointed for a term of one year, expiring at the end of the AGM in the year following their election. The term is renewable, by election, for up to five years unless the members agree (exceptionally) to elect the same individual for up to a maximum of two further one year terms. The President shall hold office from the end of the AGM at which s/he is declared elected.

Ideal Skills, Experience and Abilities

- Able to demonstrate a passion for and some knowledge of horticulture and gardening
- Experience of successful leadership and board-level decision-making within a sizeable and complex organisation in business and/or the not-for-profit sector
- Experience of and skill in chairing meetings with a broad agenda and in obtaining consensus.
- Able to work as part of a team and to lead that team and/or intervene as appropriate
- Proven commercial and financial acumen with an ability to think strategically and exercise independent judgement
- Experience at Board level of large project evaluation and performance management
- Success in building, protecting and enhancing the reputation of an organisation with external bodies, the media, customers and the public
- Ability to communicate effectively, including public speaking to large groups and talking to the media, and to act as an organisation champion with a variety of stakeholders
- Effective, engaging and approachable with people at all levels, both internally and externally
- Capacity to command respect and to exercise authority
- Possession of a network of contacts with the capacity to make relevant new links for the RHS
- Comfortable with fundraising and networking
- Director experience of good corporate and charity governance and in particular an understanding of the legal duties, responsibilities and liabilities of trustees
- Able and willing to give an average of one to two days per week to Society business with no significant potential conflicts of interest