

Role Description – Grants Panel Member

Introduction

Heart of Bucks (“HOB”) is a registered Charity and Company Limited by Guarantee, and the role of Grants Panel Member is a voluntary one.

Grants Panel Members are vital to the independent scrutiny of Heart of Bucks’ Grant making, and form a key part of our community focussed funding programmes.

Our Grants Panels promote and contribute to the aims and charitable objectives of Heart of Bucks by considering and discussing grant applications, and reaching fair and consistently reasoned decisions as to whether they should be approved.

The Purpose of the role

To act collectively with the Chair of the Grants Committee and other Panel Members, to, as far as practicable:

- ensure that all funding applications to Heart of Bucks are scrutinised independently.
- ensure that funding decisions are made fairly, based on consistently reasoned decisions as to whether they should be approved.
- ensure that all grant awards have the potential to achieve the aims and objectives of the relevant Fund and, in doing so, will achieve value for money.
- identify reasons for rejection of an application when appropriate, in order that constructive feedback can be provided to the applicant.

The Commitment

Panel members are asked to commit to at least three years’ service but will normally serve for a maximum of nine years.

Heart of Bucks currently runs four General Fund panels per year, and six to eight smaller, topic specific sub-panels throughout the year.

There is no expectation that panel members attend all the panels and sub-panels, but we ask that you aim to attend at least one main panel meeting plus one other sub-panel or two main panel meetings per year, plus periodic training/workshop days.

General responsibilities

Panel Members are expected to undertake the role in a way that adds to public confidence and trust in the Panel and in particular to:

- Work with the Chair and other Panel Members to scrutinise grant applications that have been assessed by Heart of Bucks Grants Team.
- Declare any Conflicts of Interest that they may become aware of, at the earliest opportunity.
- Prepare for, attend, and contribute to Panel meetings.
- Apply their own experience, expertise, and knowledge to support the work of the Panel.
- Endeavour to ensure consistency of decision making, acting impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence, without discrimination or bias.
- To approve or reject grants and/or make recommendations as appropriate, in accordance with the powers delegated by the Board and within the confines of funding scheme criteria.
- Maintain absolute confidentiality with regard to any sensitive information received in the course of undertaking duties as a Panel Member.
- Ensure as far as possible, that Heart of Bucks investment avoids duplication and always represents best value.
- Refer any concerns or issues to the Panel Chair in the first instance.

Other Activity

Panel Members will have the opportunity to visit funded projects and see first-hand the impact of the funding they have agreed.

Panel members will also be invited to Heart of Bucks events throughout the year.

Training workshops will be held periodically to help maintain current knowledge and understanding of Buckinghamshire's Not-for-Profit sector and the issues facing our various communities

Support and Review

Panel members will be provided with a thorough induction to help you get up to speed with our work and feel confident in your role. You will be supported with on-going training and development appropriate to your role.

Eligibility

Whilst this is not a Trustee position, Heart of Bucks adopts the Charity Commission's eligibility criteria for Panel membership:

- a. You must be at least 16 years old.
- b. You must not be disqualified under the Charities Act, i.e., you must not:
 1. Be disqualified as a company director.
 2. Have an unspent conviction for an offence involving dishonesty or deception (such as fraud).
 3. Be an undischarged bankrupt (or subject to sequestration in Scotland), or have a current composition or arrangement including an individual voluntary arrangement (IVA) with your creditors, and/or
 4. Have been removed as a Trustee of any charity by the Charity Commission (or the court) because of misconduct or mismanagement.

Membership of the Panels is personal and cannot be transferred to any other person.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

Panel Members are expected to demonstrate the following personal competencies and to have the capacity to apply these to the work of the Panel:

Competency	Essential (E), Desirable (D)
A genuine interest in the charitable sector in Buckinghamshire and of the issues facing our communities.	E
The ability and inclination to keep their knowledge up to date with the relevant issues.	E
Have empathy with the vision, mission and aims of Heart of Bucks and a way of working that demonstrates this.	E
Be able to analyse and evaluate project information, as well as other evidence in support of project applications.	E
An ability to understand and critique financial data for project bids.	D
Take an active part in discussions and challenge constructively but be sensitive to and respectful of other Panel Members' views.	E
Accept collective responsibility for decision making.	E
Be able to exercise sound and independent judgement.	E
Always maintain absolute discretion with regard to confidential and/or sensitive information regarding the grant applications or Heart of Bucks business.	E
Have personal credibility to act as an ambassador for Heart of Bucks with the organisations who receive or may apply to us for funding.	E
An understanding of how grant making can act as an agent for change.	D

Specialist experience

Heart of Bucks aims to appoint panel members who hold a broad range of knowledge and experience, but also to seek individuals who may have more specialist knowledge that can enable them to make a particular contribution to panels that are considering more specialist funds. For example, those involved with the provision of Arts and Culture or specific forms of Health care.

The knowledge, skills and experience in the list below are relevant to the Foundation's main areas of activity. They are represented across the charity's Board and staff, who apply them at an operational level.

It is desirable for Panel Members to have knowledge and understanding of one or more of these areas, and we aim to ensure the Panel, as a whole, possesses most, if not all of them:

- Voluntary and Community Sector service delivery, especially in front-line services.
- Charity finances and funding models.
- Equal, diversity and inclusion (EDI).
- Community development.
- Networks/alliances/partnership working.
- Policy and research.
- Social/political environment.
- Monitoring and evaluation/insight.
- Risk management.
- Education sector.
- Health, welfare, and disability.
- Sport and leisure.
- Arts, Heritage and Cultural activity.