Selsey Community Forum
Succession Planning Policy

Policy Statement

Succession planning and development is an important part of a Charity's good governance. The foundation of good governance is that there should be a balanced, diverse and effective Board of Trustees which leads and controls the Charity and complies with its legal and regulatory requirements.

Selsey Community Forum recognises that the Charity needs capable Trustees who work together as an effective team and that the Board has a good mix of skills, experience and knowledge. Succession planning is a key responsibility of the Board and helps to ensure that any gaps in skills, experience and knowledge on the Board of Trustees are filled. Board succession planning is an ongoing process and is closely linked to the Charity's purpose, aims and objectives. It is part of everyday thinking so that the delivery of core areas of work remains as unaffected as possible when someone leaves. This means considering the roles of Chair and Trustees as well as staff roles.

General

The role of the Board of Trustees is to determine the vision and strategy, direct, control, scrutinise and evaluate the Charity's activities. This Policy is designed to ensure that Board members have the appropriate skills to carry out their role effectively in order that the Charity is not exposed to any unnecessary risks.

The purpose of this Policy is to ensure that the Board:

a. Comprises a diverse group of competent individuals with the necessary skills and experience to meet the requirements of the role;
b. Remains fit for purpose over time and in light of changing circumstances;
c. Has the skills, experience and knowledge required by the Charity to provide effective oversight of the delivery of the services;
d. Balances the need for continuity with experienced members with the need to refresh the Board for new thinking and independent challenge;
e. Is big enough that the needs of the Charity's work can be carried out and changes to the Board's composition can be managed without too much disruption. A Board of at least five but no more than twelve Trustees is considered good practice.
f. Has adopted a fair, transparent and consistent approach to the recruitment of new Board members;
g. Ensures that new members understand their role and responsibilities in the governance of the Charity, and the Charity's strategies and aims when they join, or before they join, the Charity.

Governance

The Selsey Community Forum Constitution states:

i. Apart from the first charity trustees, every trustee must be appointed by a resolution passed at a properly convened meeting of the charity trustees.
ii. In selecting individuals for appointment as charity trustees, the charity trustees must have regard to the skills, knowledge and experience needed for the effective administration of the CIO.

Section 5.7.3 of the Charity Governance Code for small charities recommends: 'Trustees are appointed for an agreed length of time, subject to any applicable constitutional or statutory provisions relating to election and re-election. If a trustee has served for more than nine years their reappointment should be subject to a particularly rigorous review that takes into account the need for progressive refreshing of the board and is explained in the trustees' annual report.'

Board Composition

The succession planning process will consider:

- The current make-up of the Board of Trustees;
- What skills, experience and knowledge are currently available to the Board from existing Charity Trustees;
- What skills, experience and knowledge are missing;
- What the Charity will need in the future.

When Trustees resign or their term ends, the Board will ensure that those who replace them have the requisite skills aligned with the Charity's purpose, aims and objectives. Gaps in skills will also be filled by building on the skills of the existing Trustees through training and development.

The Board will be made up of Trustees who bring different insights and perspectives to the deliberations and decision making of the Board. Diversity is an important consideration and, in addition to factors such as gender, age and ethnicity, succession planning will take into account any practical or life experience and any special or professional expertise a person has in the area to which the Charity's purpose relates and will be effective in realising its objectives.

The Selsey Community Forum Board of Trustees Skills Matrix sets out the above details and will be reviewed and updated as Trustees leave or join the Board or where skills are enhanced by training and development.

Board Review

A process to review the performance of the Board will be in place to include:

- Compliance with the Charity Commission legal requirements and guidance;
- Compliance with relevant Codes of Conduct;
- Compliance with Policies and Procedures;
- Performance of sub-committees, their terms of reference and composition;
- Adequacy and timeliness of information provided at Board meetings;
- Board of Trustee skills assessment;
- Ensuring existing Trustees are aware of how long more they have left to serve on the Board;
- Discovering if any Trustee is considering resigning sooner than otherwise expected.

Trustees will have:

- A willingness to serve as a Trustee with a heart for the community the Board serves;
- A clear understanding of each other's roles and responsibilities;
- Some shared access to key documents and a shared understanding of organisational processes so one person is not holding key information in isolation;
- Regular meetings;
- A culture of learning, development and upskilling;
- A sensitivity to, and awareness of, circumstances affecting Trustees and staff that may mean someone is not able to commit as they may once have done;
- A collective desire to perform effectively as a Board with the ability to work and serve as a team player;
- A commitment to engage outside support if needed;
- A strong emphasis on forward planning and managing risks.

Emergency Succession Planning

Selsey Community Forum will ensure key leadership and administrative functions can continue without disruption in the event of an unplanned, temporary absence. A Vice Chair of the Board will be identified and named.

New Trustees

Induction is an essential first step in introducing new members to the Charity culture, operations and corporate plans. All new Trustees will receive the documents listed in the 'Being a Trustee' document and should familiarise themselves with the requirements in the Code of Conduct for Trustees. All Trustees will be offered ongoing training and development where available and appropriate, and Trustees shall accept that undertaking training and development is an integral part of their role.

Staff

Succession planning should also consider the potential departure or absence of key employees and the steps that may be needed to maintain continuity of important functions and retain organisational knowledge.

Succession planning for staff may include:

- following the relevant Selsey Community Forum HR policies and procedures where a staffing change arises
- maintaining up-to-date job descriptions and a clear understanding of key duties and responsibilities
- identifying any areas where knowledge, access or responsibility is concentrated with one individual
- putting appropriate arrangements in place to manage workload and maintain essential services during a transition or period of absence
- providing appropriate opportunities for knowledge sharing, handover, training or shadowing
- ensuring important organisational information, records, systems and processes are appropriately documented and accessible to authorised persons
- communicating staffing changes appropriately to employees, volunteers and Trustees, while respecting confidentiality and data protection requirements, and
- where appropriate, offering an exit interview or other opportunity for a departing employee to provide feedback and support an effective handover.

Other Matters

Selsey Community Forum's Trustees have primary responsibility for monitoring the application of this Policy. If appropriate and necessary, this Policy should also be made clear to service users.

This Policy is to be read in conjunction with the Selsey Community Forum HR Policy and Procedures, Code of Conduct for Trustees, Being a Trustee and the Staff and Charity Handbooks.

This Policy is applicable to all the activities in which Selsey Community Forum is or becomes involved; it is to be reviewed and updated as necessary at least annually.

Version Control

Version Number	Date of Update	Amendments
1.0	October 2025	Policy reviewed
2.0	October 2026	Reviewed and updated in line with current guidance