

# The Oxford Trust

# Appointment of Trustees

May 2026

## Our vision

We believe that Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) hold the solution to some of the world's greatest challenges – from climate change, disease mitigation and environmental degradation to space exploration and social cohesion. The Oxford Trust helps create an environment where STEM-based entrepreneurs can deliver ground-breaking products and services, where success is celebrated and where young people, supported by teachers and families, can have stimulating STEM experiences that develop their understanding, skills, and aspirations.

## Our mission

*Encouraging the pursuit of science*

We follow the mission set down by our founders, the late Sir Martin and Audrey (Lady) Wood, in 1985, adapting to changing environments by staying true to the core principles on how this mission is delivered – being adaptable has served us well.

## Our values

Ambitious, Confident, Collaborative, Agile, Sustainable.

## What do we do?

We own (virtual freehold) the 18 acre science and technology-focused **Wood Centre for Innovation** site in Oxford, part of the globally significant **Headington Science Cluster**, with facilities ranging from co-working and offices to tech workshops and bioscience/materials science R&D labs. This centre helps young science and tech companies to get started and develop in supportive environments, enabling founders to focus on success and growth. Significant additional capacity is being added to the Wood Centre for Innovation through the new Aspen Building currently scheduled for practical completion in July 2026 which complements the existing Linden Building. The site is also the location of Barclays Eagle Lab in partnership with Barclays Bank.

The Trust also has a city centre facility, the Oxford Centre for Innovation, located at the heart of this vibrant city and just a few minutes' walk from the rail and bus stations. This is an office only location focussed more on digital, AI and related technologies. It has a co-working/meeting facilities that complements the one in Headington and is used by clients from both sites.

The surplus created from these centres is directed to our **Science Oxford** branded programmes – STEM education and family/community engagement – including the **Science Oxford Centre** also located on the Wood Centre for Innovation site in Headington, the UK's first hands-on indoor-

outdoor STEM education centre for primary schools and families with primary school-aged children. Together with a growing STEM careers programme for secondary school students, our aim is to help enable future scientists and entrepreneurs start or continue their pursuit of science.

### **Where do we operate?**

Our innovation activities are largely focused on Oxford city and Oxfordshire whilst our education and public engagement programmes stretch across Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire.

### **Who are our current partners?**

We collaborate with a vast array of stakeholders, whether it's for programme development, ecosystem support, local growth initiatives, funding and much more.

- Locally these include organisations such as the EquinOx initiative, both our leading universities, Headington Science Cluster, Advanced Oxford, Oxfordshire and Oxford council, school leaders and subject networks and our volunteer and patron communities.
- National partners include (or have included) Barclays Eagle Labs, Education Endowment Foundation (EEF), British Interactive Science Group (BIG), Primary Science Teaching Trust (PSST), Evolution Education Trust (EET) and many organisations, companies, and individuals.

### **Who and where are our current clients?**

Our innovation centres are currently home to over 25 different companies. More than 50% of these are spinouts from Oxford University – in total they employ over 300 people on the current two sites. Over 50,000 children and young people participate in our *Science Oxford* education and engagement programmes each year. These programmes have a growing focus on reaching pupils from every school in our region which serves a low-income community (>30% free school meals).

### **Why do we do it?**

The Oxford Trust has always been able to act where gaps in competencies and capacities exist that help further our founders' ideals. This means being agile to help facilitate change, enable collaboration and invest where the impact is greatest – together we believe this will help Oxford, Oxfordshire and the region create a better place to work in science, understand science and live sustainably in a knowledge-based economy.

## **Background of The Oxford Trust**

### **Beginnings**

The Oxford Trust is an independent charitable trust that was established in 1985 by entrepreneurs the late Sir Martin Wood and Lady Audrey Wood, founders of Oxford Instruments – one of the UK's first university spinout companies.

From a group of portacabins (affectionately called Science Slum) in Osney Mead, it created the UK's first independent innovation centre which grew over the years helping dozens of tech companies to grow, spinning out its own subsidiaries, and developing a nationally recognised programme for primary science informal learning and STEM careers.

### **Present**

The Oxford Trust is a registered charity, and a company limited by guarantee subject to both charity and company law. Its activities are overseen by a voluntary Board of Directors, also known as

trustees, elected by the members of the company. The day-to-day running of the organisation is delegated to the CEO supported by a Directors Group and wider Senior Leadership Team.

The full Board meets four times a year, and for an additional half day for strategic planning. The Chair, Vice-Chair and sub-committees also have regular meetings with the CEO. The board members represent the charity at various events and meetings with key stakeholders as appropriate.

In 2025/26, the Trust had a turnover of **£4.3 million** with 28 employees and many part-time and volunteer contributors. Whilst the Charity is mainly self-funding, it does receive grants and donations that enhance its education and engagement activities or improves our financial and strategic sustainability.

The Trust is completing a further **£9 million expansion** of its main 18 acre Headington site (and HQ) consisting of the **Wood Centre for Innovation** and adjacent **Science Oxford Centre**, set in 18 acres of woodland.

**Innovation:** The current **Linden Building** at the **Wood Centre for Innovation** is fully occupied by nine science and tech companies and the new **Aspen Building** will almost double the lettable area albeit to a smaller number of larger early stage companies. This completes the c£23 million primary development on this site and gives us the chance to further reflect on our future place in a rapidly changing local, regional, national and global landscape as we help to build and shape the *Headington Science Cluster* with partners. Our city centre Oxford Centre for Innovation has a relatively small, office only, capacity but is an important part of maintaining city wide capabilities.

**Education & Engagement:** Demand for our ‘**Science Oxford**’ branded education programmes, where almost 50% of our staff are focused on, continues to be strong across both primary and secondary levels. A full review of strategies is on-going to ensure we are aligned with the needs and expectations of schools, students and parents in our region (Ox/Bucks) and particularly the East Oxford arc where some of the most disadvantaged communities are located.

We continue to embrace the full purpose of the Charity and galvanise together behind a coherent mission and vision and agree a rolling three-year strategic plan. However, there is much more to do as we look further forward, and we are refreshing the strategy to reflect changing dynamics and needs. This will build on 13 extraordinary years of development under our current CEO who retires in September.

## The role of a trustee

New trustees will join The Oxford Trust (TOT) board of directors as we complete our latest investment in our Wood Centre for Innovation site and work with a new CEO to develop the next 3-5 year strategic plan.

We are currently looking to appoint **two new trustees** with the following areas of lived experience and expertise.

- **Secondary School STEM education**
  - Teaching qualification with leadership experience within secondary education.

- Knowledge and experience of the state secondary science curriculum, with an understanding of STEM careers education, employer engagement, and the Gatsby Benchmarks.
- Strong local (Oxfordshire/Buckinghamshire) networks and established relationships with secondary schools to help guide the Trust with effective engagement with school leaders, teachers, and students.
- Preferably with experience of working collaboratively with schools, multi-school partnerships, and external organisations to support STEM engagement and careers-related activities.
- **Primary School STEM education**
  - Teaching qualification with leadership experience within primary education.
  - Experience of working with/within primary schools to support STEM engagement, enrichment activities, and informal learning opportunities linked to the national curriculum.
  - Strong local networks and the ability to help the Trust's team build relationships with primary schools and key stakeholders, creating opportunities to engage new schools and expand participation.
  - Helping the Trust's understanding of the role and influence of Multi-Academy Trusts (MATs) in shaping school engagement, priorities, and STEM education strategies.

Our ambition is for The Oxford Trust Board to represent and reflect the diversity of our communities and stakeholders, so we are keen to hear from people from under-represented groups, in particular people with lived experience of disability and a younger demographic.

Trustees will be expected to fulfil their duties and responsibilities for the effective governance of the charity. Trustees will also support, and where appropriate, challenge the CEO and help ensure that the Board functions as a unit and works closely with the entire senior team of the charity to achieve agreed objectives. They will be a politically aware, strategic thinker, familiar with the local economic and political landscape. Most importantly, they will have demonstrable interest in the sciences, education and entrepreneurship, and a clear commitment to diversity.

They will act as an outstanding advocate for the organisation and be the public face of the Charity in partnership with the CEO and Senior Leadership Team. The trustees will have the knowledge and understanding to maintain an oversight of the Charity's positioning within the area of their expertise, provide both a local and national perspective and contribute well informed views and a commitment to best practice within the scientific and educational arenas.

We are looking for trustees who can give advice to the Board on the integrity, strategic direction and quality of the Charity's work, providing access to useful and diverse contacts for the Senior Leadership Team. A trustee's ability to contribute in this way will often, but not always, draw on professional and/or practitioner experience at a senior level.

#### **Principle responsibilities of a trustee**

Trustees are collectively responsible for the Charity and using their individual best judgement to ensure that the charitable purpose of The Oxford Trust is upheld, its broad purposes are achieved and that it always complies with the law and meets its contractual obligations. The four areas below provide the balance between conformance and performance.

**Policy formulation and foresight:** Positioning the Charity in its broad political environment and ensuring the overall direction and control.

**Strategic thinking:** Maintaining a strategic overview of the work of The Oxford Trust, giving direction to the development of the Charity's work and ensuring everything the Charity does is consistent with the purposes of the organisation as set out in the Articles of Association.

**Monitoring management performance:** Ensuring that appropriate management and financial objectives are set, and performance is monitored, whilst not micro-managing the executives from the boardroom.

**Accountability:** Accepting legal responsibility for the work of the Charity and ensuring that the Charity complies with the Charities Act 2011, the Companies Act 2006, and any other relevant legislation and regulations. While their creative focus should be on issues of strategic organisational and financial development, trustees should also familiarise themselves with the frontline activities of the Charity in order to be supportive and critical friends to the operational plans developed and implemented by staff and volunteers.

## **Term of role**

### **Term:**

Trustees: this post is voluntary and for an initial term of three years with the potential to hold office for up to two further terms.

- **There are (typically) four two-hour in-person board meetings per year plus one strategic planning half-day.**
- **Participation in the Education committee may require additional four two-hour commitments, although some maybe held in a remote (Teams) environment.**

## **How to apply**

Please provide an application letter that sets out your skills, experience and why you want to join our charity board. A CV or LinkedIn profile is optional. This should be sent to

[CEO@theoxfordtrust.co.uk](mailto:CEO@theoxfordtrust.co.uk)

If you would like to have an informal and confidential discussion before applying, please contact: [ceo@theoxfordtrust.co.uk](mailto:ceo@theoxfordtrust.co.uk) to be connected to current trustees as appropriate.

## **Timelines:**

Applications must be received by **26<sup>th</sup> June, 2026** and will be reviewed by the Board within the following week.

A successful applicant/s will meet with the Chair of Trustees, Vice Chair of Trustees, committee chair (as appropriate) and CEO in person, where possible, with a view to the term of office beginning as of **September 25<sup>th</sup> 2026** (AGM & Board Meeting) or as mutually agreed.