

PIRC Trustee Chair Role Description

About PIRC

At the Public Interest Research Centre (PIRC), we believe social change requires deep shifts in society's thinking. We must reform laws and technology but neither is sufficient to solve entrenched social problems. Rather, we need to change public discourse: the stories we tell ourselves. Around the world, we are seeing campaigns that tap into powerful stories (about identity; belonging; a rosy future or the ideal past) win over campaigns led by cool economic facts or detailed policy ideas. It is clear: stories have power.

Our team has experience in participatory facilitation, qualitative and quantitative research and graphic design, working from the beautiful [Machynlleth](#) in mid-Wales. Registered as a charity in 1971, PIRC has focussed on a number of issues over its life. Since 2010 we have built the organisation around a new focus: to equip civil society with the research insights, tools and knowledge to communicate strategically, to bring about lasting change.

We are currently playing an active role in understanding the dominant stories in the UK and Europe and how to shift them. We work on issues as diverse as [nature conservation](#), [LGBTI equality](#), and the [economy](#). We do this through running participatory workshops and by conducting quantitative research to assess how people think about issues and react to the way these issues are framed.

In 2015, the team moved to working non-hierarchically, whilst still relying on support and guidance from a Board of Trustees. This means that every team member has equal input into the direction and running of the organisation and we share administration and project work. The development of our flat structure, organisational culture and democratic decision-making is critical to PIRC's work.

Our Approach

Frames are both mental structures through which we view the world and communication tools we use to engage with other people. *Framing* is the art of using *frames* towards some goal.

In recent years, we've seen the power of framing to both dispossess and empower. Many politicians and much of the mainstream media cast the already marginalised as undeserving: disempowering people and deepening divisions within communities. But we've also seen the power of story to transform society for the better. For example, during Ireland's equal marriage referendum, the 'Yes' campaign told a powerful story of the Irish people as generous, inclusive and fair. Its authenticity and the engaging methods used to tell it resonated, bringing about an historic 'yes' to equality.

By understanding framing—how these stories interact with our thinking—campaigners and activists can craft their communications to create sustainable social change.

We advocate an approach that can be adopted by grassroots groups with limited financial resources, who often find themselves excluded by this type of framing work. These groups often comprise people most affected by social, environmental and economic injustice - the people who tend to hold the more systemic analysis and authentic stories we're most in need of.

PIRC Trustee Chair Role Description

Expectations of the Chair

We are looking for a Chair who is excited and motivated by PIRC's approach and work; willing to offer their time, experience and creativity to help us develop as an organisation; and is interested in supporting the team. It is important to us to act in line with our [values](#): we see it as important for both staff and Trustees to develop a supportive and compassionate culture in all aspects of our work.

You will be expected to attend 4 board meetings each year in the UK (location to be agreed, at least one in Machynlleth) that usually last between 2 and 4 hours. You will also be asked to support the staff with additional tasks and play a role in liaising between staff and Trustees. The position is voluntary but expenses will be covered, the time commitment works out at approximately 1-2 day a month. Where possible, the Chair will stay in post for a minimum of three years with regular review of the role.

Main responsibilities

- ★ Ensuring the Board and staff team are working and acting in line with the [values of PIRC](#)
- ★ Maintaining the vision, purpose and goals of PIRC
- ★ Leading Board meetings (the chair leads meetings and facilitates discussion, enabling and encouraging all Trustees to participate)
- ★ Select, manage and support the staff through the appropriate core group (for example liaising with the internal People Group to feed into appraisals, feedback, and employment issues)
- ★ Developing an effective board (recruitment, capability, communications etc)
- ★ Taking an active role in identifying and securing new sources of funds
- ★ Advise on and help develop strategy
- ★ Establish and monitor policies
- ★ Ensure compliance with governing documents
- ★ Ensure accountability and compliance with the law
- ★ Maintain proper fiscal oversight
- ★ Dealing with conflict on the Board if necessary
- ★ Sitting on appointment and disciplinary panels when necessary (The Chair represents the board on appointment and disciplinary panels)
- ★ Respect the role of staff
- ★ Maintain effective board performance (including new Trustee hiring)
- ★ Promote the organisation including occasional spokesperson duties at events
- ★ Help develop leadership within the staff team and the internal flat structure of the organisation

PIRC Trustee Chair Role Description

Person specification

- ★ Committed to PIRC's vision, purpose and culture and its way of working. Able to communicate this enthusiasm to others
- ★ A good understanding and acceptance of the legal duties, liabilities and responsibilities of trustees and clear on the difference between governance functions and management functions (training will be provided in this)
- ★ Able to work well as part of a diverse team of trustees with particular strengths in facilitation and good organisation
- ★ Strong strategic awareness of the communications and campaigning world / or systems change and experience of high level strategy development / or grassroots organising.
- ★ A good communicator with leadership and interpersonal skills, able to both empower and challenge supportively
- ★ Willing to engage with contacts and/or fulfil an ambassadorial role for the benefit of PIRC ideally with fundraising connections
- ★ Able and willing to devote the necessary time to the role

We are looking for a Chair with good judgement and a range of experience they can bring to the role. Whilst we are looking for certain skills, we also want to cultivate a board with a range of perspectives born of different life experiences.

Remuneration

As this role is for a not-for-profit, it is voluntary and the Chair will not be paid. However if finances are a barrier to your participation we would like to discuss how we could remove them.

Liberation

PIRC is actively committed to providing equal opportunities for everyone regardless of their background. We value diversity and lived experience and recognise that there are many people and communities who are underrepresented in positions such as these. We particularly encourage applications from Black, Asian and minority ethnic people; disabled people; people with mental health conditions; people from the LGBTI community; and people who identify as working class (or have done in the past).