

PIRC Trustee 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.

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Expectations of a Trustee

We are looking for Trustees who are 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 are 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.

The Board is not expected to be involved in the day-to-day running of the organisation; this is the job of the staff team. However, we hope that you would be able to put time into talking about PIRC's work to future project partners, funders and individuals interested in 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. We will call upon Trustees to help with specific issues or projects. You may be asked to work particularly closely with an internal group or staff member depending on your skill set. We estimate the time commitment is one day per month. We do understand that Trustees are likely to have competing priorities and will always be mindful of this when asking for additional support. The position is voluntary but expenses will be covered. Trustees work alongside the staff and particularly closely with the internal Direction Group. Where possible, we hope Trustees will stay in post for a minimum of three years with a regular review of the role. As this role is for a not-for-profit, it is voluntary and the Trustees will not be paid.

Main responsibilities

- ★ Maintain vision, purpose, goals and values of PIRC
- ★ Advise on and develop strategy
- ★ Establish and monitor policies
- ★ Ensure accountability (ensuring compliance with governing documents and charity law)
- ★ Maintain proper fiscal oversight
- ★ Help with fundraising where appropriate (e.g. attend events or make introductions)
- ★ Support the role of staff
- ★ Maintain effective board performance (including new Trustee hiring)
- ★ Promote the organisation to target stakeholders

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Person specification

- ★ Good judgement and the ability to listen and ask questions
- ★ A good communicator with leadership and interpersonal skills, able to both empower and challenge supportively
- ★ Able to work well as part of a diverse team of trustees and cultivate a positive Board culture
- ★ Committed to PIRC vision, purpose and culture - and its way of working
- ★ Commitment to understanding the legal duties, liabilities and responsibilities of trustees and the difference between governance functions and management functions
- ★ Able and willing to devote the necessary time to the role

Whilst we are looking for certain skills, we also want to cultivate a board with a range of perspectives that stem from different life experiences.

Remuneration

As this role is for a not-for-profit, it is voluntary and the Trustees will not be paid. However if finances are be 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).