

Gregson Community Association: Chair of the Board Candidate Brief and Trustee Candidate Brief

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Gregson Trading Ltd: Director Candidate Brief

Chair's Welcome

The Gregson Community Association (the Gregson) is thriving.

We have been on a remarkable journey since the pandemic. In 2020, the Board made the decision to bring the running of the centre into its own hands after years of operation by management companies. In 2022, we appointed our first Chief Executive, Charles Tyrer, and growth since then has been rapid and inspiring for the charity. We are proud that our community is now in the driving seat of what happens here and we are working tirelessly to welcome more people into the building.

We have a strong and diverse board including a healthy balance of longer-serving members and newer trustees. We have recently set up Gregson Trading Ltd (GTL) to manage the bar and catering aspects of our operation, donating all profits back to the GCA.

As we approach the next phase of development, we are seeking to appoint a new Chair to replace me when I stand down in October, 2024, at the end of four fantastically rewarding years on the board. We are also seeking new Trustees to join the Gregson Board and one Director for the newly established Gregson Trading Ltd. Across all these roles, we are keen to hear from those in traditionally under-represented groups in our community: the Gregson is committed to fully reflecting the rich diversity of our wider community.

This document contains the following information which we encourage you to read and hope you find useful:

- Gregson Overview, Mission, Aims and Values
- Gregson Trading Ltd: Overview
- GCA Trustee Role Description
- GCA Chair Role Description
- GTL Director Role Description
- Who We Would Like to Hear From
- Trustee and Director Eligibility/Conflicts of Interests
- More information and how to apply

Being a successful Gregson trustee, also a GTL director, requires a strong commitment to community and to participatory arts. In return, trustees and directors make an invaluable contribution to our community and are key members of a friendly and committed team. Thank you for your interest in the Gregson. We look forward to receiving your application.

Joe Sumsion,
Chair of the Trustees, on behalf of The Gregson
Community Association

Organisational Overview, Mission, Aims and Values

Our History

For the last 40 years, our charity, the Gregson Community Association (GCA) has been the custodian of the Gregson centre.

In the early 1980's, the Gregson was run by the volunteers who saved the building from closure. Following turbulence in the early 90's the Board decided the centre needed professional management. Management agents were contracted by the charity to run its operation whilst the building remained under the ownership of the GCA.

For decades, the building operated as a remarkably successful grassroots arts and community centre, inspiring thousands of people over those years and developing a strong culture of community involvement and ownership.

The Covid pandemic precipitated the insolvency of the management company running the Gregson. At risk of closure once again, the Board made the decision in 2020 to 'bring back' the Gregson into its own hands and manage its affairs directly.

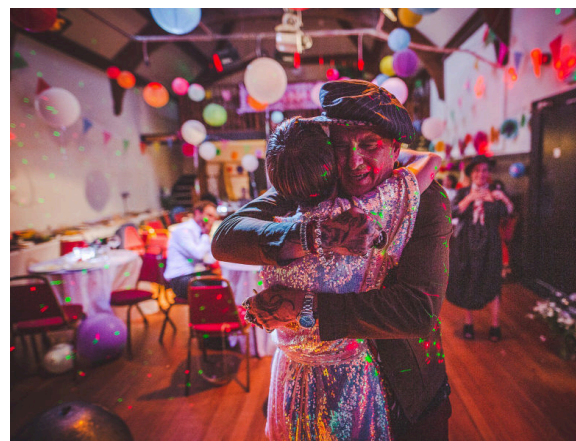
During the pandemic, a crowdfunder raised almost £30,000 and 70 volunteers refurbished the Gregson. For over 9 months, the Gregson was 'kept afloat' by volunteers: the renovations, fundraising, communications and business planning were carried out with no paid staff. This period of adversity demonstrated the level of goodwill and support for the charity.

In 2022 the Board appointed a staff team including the charity's first CEO and embarked on a Trustee recruitment drive, successfully recruiting 6 Trustees. With the Gregson up and running, long-standing trustees stood down and a new Chair and Treasurer were appointed.

Current Success and Looking to the future

Now, the GCA is thriving with the charity managing its affairs directly. Propelled by an ambitious Board, the charity has an equally ambitious staff and volunteer team driving it forward.

The GCA has managed change and mitigated risks with impressive results since taking over the running of the centre. This has been achieved with meticulous planning, a flair for ambition and by paying close attention to risk. From employing no staff in 2021, the charity now prides



itself on being an excellent employer and employs 15 people. Since 2021, the charity has increased turnover by 600%, transforming income from £86,000 to almost half a million pounds in 2024.

What's most exciting about increased turnover is increased activity, the centre is busier than ever:

- We are now home to over 60 community groups, CICs and Charities (31 started in 2023)
- We are powered by 107 volunteers (71 volunteered for the first time in 2023)
- Last year we held 2,351 events - performances, gigs, activities for young people, arts and craft sessions and cinema screening. We delivered events with partners across the city as well as community organisers and artists.

In 2023, our 40th anniversary year, our achievements were acknowledged by our local MP who awarded us with an Early Day Motion from the Houses of Parliament.

But in a challenging landscape, post pandemic and during a cost of living crisis and recession we must continue to adapt. We face major challenges as the owners of a large Victorian building that is creaking under the strain of increased use. We must face challenges head on and tackle them as exciting opportunities to develop over the next three years. Our 2024-2027 Business Plan articulates how we will do this. By 2027 we must:

1. **Transform our building, the Gregson Community and Arts Centre for the next generation**
2. **Address the Climate Emergency**
3. **Become financially robust**

We know that if we are to be successful we must tackle our challenges with a joined up approach - they are all linked.

Over the next three years we will continue to develop people, creativity and community spirit here in Lancaster and will save a vital community asset for our city. The Gregson Community and Arts Centre will remain a beacon of creativity and community activity. The physical building will be environmentally efficient and will have facilities that make it more inclusive and allow the centre to match the ambitions of the incredible people that make things happen here.

The charity is now in a stable position. This offers us a unique opportunity to plan for the future and ensure the charity is thriving for another 40 years and beyond.

If you believe in the importance of creativity and community life, we invite you to get involved.

Vision for 2027

Transform our historic building and spaces into inspirational contemporary places that enable our community to thrive

Mission:

For people to be in the driving seat of their community events and cultural experiences

Aims:

- Secure the Gregson Community & Arts Centre for the next generation - ensuring it's a contemporary and pioneering building.
- Address the climate emergency, through creative and community activity and through the choices we make when refurbishing our historic building.
- Become financially robust so our community can remain in the driving seat of our charity.
- Empower our community to try out and sustain ideas.
- Be a safe space for all in Lancaster that pursues diversity, equity and inclusivity in everything we do.

Values:

- We are friendly and make everyone feel welcome and supported
- We challenge oppression and prejudice, and promote diversity
- We are creative and find new ways of making voluntary and community action effective
- We are dynamic and work with purpose to get things done and to achieve lasting impact
- We are community focused and locally relevant
- We are environmentally conscious
- We are inclusive and accessible
- We support local emerging artistic talent and the development of the Lancaster region's creative ecology.

Gregson Trading Ltd: Overview

The GCA has followed the example of many other successful charities in setting up a wholly owned subsidiary to handle its trading activities. Members approved this at the 2022 AGM. This means that the profit-making trading arm can transfer its profits to the charity after the year end, otherwise the charity would be liable to pay corporation tax on these profits if they were made within the charity's immediate structure. Gregson Trading Limited (GTL) will begin active trading on 1st April, 2024.



On the surface, there will be no apparent difference in operations after 1st April, but underneath there will be two companies:

- The Gregson Community Association Limited (GCA): a charity, which will have a subsidiary called:
- Gregson Trading Limited (GTL): a limited company wholly owned by GCA.

GTL's business will cover the bar and the café, with scope to develop other income streams within the ethos of the Gregson as appropriate. Making GTL a wholly owned subsidiary of GCA means it will always function within the ethos and strong community principles of the Gregson. GCA must always act in the best interests of the charity. The GCA Board will therefore closely monitor the performance of GTL, ensuring it is an on-going concern and that it functions in the best interests of the charity.

The GTL Board comprises GCA Chair, GCA Treasurer, the GCA CEO, at least one other GCA Board member alongside two additional external directors with experience relevant to the business of GTL.

GCA Trustee Role Description

The duties of a trustee are as follows:

- Ensuring that the GCA pursues its stated objects (purposes), as defined in its governing document, by developing and agreeing a long-term strategy

- Ensuring that the GCA complies with its governing document, charity law, company law and any other relevant legislation or regulations
- Ensuring that the GCA applies its resources exclusively in pursuance of its charitable objects (i.e., the Charity must not spend money on activities that are not included in its own objects, however worthwhile or charitable those activities are) for the benefit of the public
- Ensuring that the GCA defines its goals and evaluates performance against agreed targets
- Safeguarding the good name and values of the GCA
- Ensuring the effective and efficient administration of the GCA, including having appropriate policies and procedures in place
- Ensuring the financial stability of the GCA
- Protecting and managing the property of the Charity and ensuring the proper investment of the Charity's funds
- Following proper and formal arrangements for the appointment, supervision, support, appraisal and remuneration of the Chief Executive Officer

In addition to the above statutory duties, each trustee should use any specific skills, knowledge or experience they have to help the Board of trustees reach sound decisions. This may involve scrutinising Board papers, leading discussions, focusing on key issues, providing advice and guidance on new initiatives, or other issues in which the trustee has special expertise.

Person specification

- A commitment to the GCA
- A willingness to devote the necessary time and effort
- Strategic vision
- Good, independent judgement
- An ability to think creatively
- A willingness to speak their mind
- An understanding and acceptance of the legal duties, responsibilities and liabilities of trusteeship
- An ability to work effectively as a member of a team
- A commitment to Nolan's seven principles of public life: selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership.

We are keen to attract a diverse selection of new trustees and are particularly looking for people with skills and experience in one or more of the following areas:

- Property Management
- Financial Management/Accounting
- Marketing and Communications
- Environmental Responsiveness to the Climate Emergency
- Commercial law, especially for SME's
- Active community members and those passionate about the GCA.

GCA Chair of the Board Role Description

In addition to the general responsibilities of a trustee, duties of the chair include the following:

- Providing leadership to the GCA and the Board, ensuring everyone remains focused on the delivery of the organisation's charitable purposes in order to provide greater public benefit
- Chairing and facilitating Board meetings
- Giving direction to Board policy-making
- Checking that decisions taken at meetings are implemented
- Representing the GCA at functions and meetings, and acting as a spokesperson as appropriate
- Bringing impartiality and objectivity to decision-making

With the Chief Executive Officer:

- Planning the annual cycle of Board meetings and other general meetings where required
- Setting agendas for Board and other meetings
- Developing the Board of trustees including induction, training, appraisal and succession planning
- Addressing conflict within the Board and within the GCA, and liaising with the Chief Executive Officer to resolve this
- Liaising with the Chief Executive Officer to keep an overview of the organisation's affairs and to provide support as appropriate
- Leading the process of supporting and appraising the performance of the Chief Executive Officer
- Sitting on appointment and disciplinary panels

Person specification

In addition to the person specification for a trustee, the chair should have the following qualities:

- Excellent leadership skills
- Experience of committee work
- Tact and diplomacy
- Good communication and interpersonal skills
- Impartiality, fairness and the ability to respect confidences.
- It is desirable that the Chair has knowledge of the third sector, experience of financial planning and/or fundraising, and a wider involvement with the voluntary sector and other networks.

GTL Director Role Description

The duties of a director are as follows:

- Ensuring that GTL acts in accordance with the objects of the charity that it has been created to serve
- Ensuring that the company functions according to its governing document by developing and agreeing long-term strategies, whilst complying with all appropriate legal requirements.
- Ensuring that GTL defines its goals and evaluates performance against agreed targets
- Safeguarding the good name and values of the company
- Ensuring the effective and efficient administration of the company, including having appropriate policies and procedures in place

- Ensuring the financial stability and future financial success of the company

Person Specification

- A commitment to the GCA
- A willingness to devote the necessary time and effort
- Strategic vision and ambition
- Industry knowledge and a proven track record in the hospitality/catering sector
- Good, independent judgement
- An ability to think creatively
- A willingness to speak their mind
- An understanding and acceptance of the legal duties, responsibilities and liabilities of being a company director
- An ability to work effectively as a member of a team
- Commercial acumen

We wish to attract a director with proven experience in achieving success in the bar/catering sector, ideally who understands strategy and also has practical, hands-on experience to share. Directors need to share our commitment to attracting and maintaining a diverse clientele, in line with The Gregson's standing as Lancaster's only community-run pub and café bar.

The Commitment

There are currently six GCA board meetings scheduled each year along with an AGM and an away day in January. The newly formed Gregson Trading Limited is due to meet six times this year. Board meetings take place in the evening in Lancaster and generally last for two hours.

In addition, trustees are encouraged to contribute to working groups which fit their interests and experience. Whilst all trustees monitor performance, we have adopted a trustee portfolio approach whereby individual trustees also take responsibility for oversight of particular aspects of the charity's work.

Most trustees are able to attend the majority of meetings in any one year, with an expectation that all trustees will attend at least 50% of the meetings. It's expected that trustees will have read and considered all papers ahead of meetings.

Lots of communication within the board is carried out by email: whilst in some weeks there is little communication, trustees are asked to check emails every other day and say when they will be unavailable, for example on holiday.

The role of Chair has significant extra responsibilities: the current Chair estimates the overall commitment of the role is in the order of 6-8 hours per week.

Trustee and Director Eligibility

To be a director/trustee of the Gregson Community Association Ltd or a Director of Gregson Trading Ltd you must:

- Be at least 18 years of age on the date of appointment;
- Be a member of the Gregson Community Association on the date of appointment, and;
- Not be disqualified from being a company director or a charity trustee.

As part of the recruitment process we will carry out checks to ensure you are not disqualified from being a director/trustee before recommending you for appointment.

If you would like to become a GCA member you can do so by visiting the [membership page](#) on our website.

Conflicts of Interest

Please consider before you apply to be a director/trustee whether you have any personal interests which may prevent you from fulfilling your role as a director/trustee. You will have a responsibility under the Code of Conduct which all directors/trustees are asked to sign to declare conflicts of interest and circumstances which others might judge to be a conflict of interest. For further information about the requirements and responsibilities of being a trustee, please see guidance from the [Charity Commission for England and Wales](#).

More Information and How to Apply

We want you to make an application in a way that works for you. All you have to do is email your application as follows:

- to be a **GCA Trustee**, email our Secretary, [Emma Rucastle](#) - e.rucastle@gregson.co.uk, with "Trustee Application" as the subject line
- to be a **GTL Director**, email GTL Chair [Helen Jackson](#) - h.jackson@gregson.co.uk, with "Director Application" as the subject line

Please include a CV (including two referees, one of whom should be a professional reference) and **one** of the following:

- A letter of application (no more than 2 sides of A4)
- A voice recording that is no longer than 5 minutes
- A Video that is no longer than 5 minutes

Everyone will be considered equally, regardless of how they choose to apply.

Application Deadline: 5.00 pm, Friday 19th April, 2024

We plan to carry out interviews between late April and mid-May, working around applicants' commitments.

If you think this could be for you and would like an informal chat with a member of the Gregson team before you apply please contact one of the following:

- GCA Chair, **Joe Sumsion** - j.sumsion@gregson.co.uk
- GCA Treasurer and GTL Chair, **Helen Jackson** - h.jackson@gregson.co.uk
- GCA Chief Executive, **Charles Tyrer** - c.tyrer@gregson.co.uk