Governance: How do members of the Oral History Society become Trustees?

Since 2007 the Oral History Society's Trustees have aimed to make the nomination processes to the Committee of Trustees more transparent and in line with other similar organisations. In doing so, and as a registered charity, we try to follow best practice as described by the Charity Commission.

The Society has a maximum of twenty-four Trustees including the Officers, who are responsible for ensuring that the Oral History Society meets the objects set out in our Constitution.

- To further the methods and encourage participation in the practice of oral history in all appropriate fields.
- To encourage the discussion of methodology, technical issues, problems and all relevant matters by the publication of a journal, and by the organisation of conferences, training, meetings, a regional network and other relevant activities

The appointment of Trustees begins with nominations being sought and/or received by the Appointments Committee, which is also known as the nominations' committee and is a sub-committee of the Trustees' Committee. The Appointments Sub-committee is tasked with identifying gaps in the expertise of Trustees and then to advertise for oral historians with those particular skills we have identified as desirable. However, the Charity Commission allows some flexibility in recruiting Trustees see http://www.charitycommission.gov.uk/publications/cc3.aspx#e4 (section E4) and we therefore also directly ask members with particular skills to stand for nomination.

Curriculum Vitae (CVs) of all potential Trustees nominated by the Appointments Sub- Committee are read and discussed by existing Trustees before any recommendations are accepted or rejected. This normally happens at the March and/or June Trustees' Committee. If successfully accepted by the Trustees, any nominee applications are then presented to the Society's Annual General Meeting for ratification.

The process is described in the Oral History Society's Constitution: http://www.ohs.org.uk/documents/constitution.pdf.

Although the role of a Trustee is an important part in the running and direction of the Oral History Society, it is far from being the only role that a member of the Society can play in developing and supporting oral history. We have a number of other groups and levels of activity in a range of settings and we are always looking to develop new areas. So whether you are a freelancer, community based or academic based oral historian we are always delighted to hear from potential volunteers.

The Constitution says on 'The Appointment of Trustees':

(1) The Charity in general meeting shall elect the Officers and the other Trustees. (2) Existing trustees who have attended at least one committee meeting during the previous year will be eligible for re-election unless they indicate otherwise. Those trustees who have not attended any committee meetings in the previous year will need to be re-nominated and will be subject to re-election at the AGM. (3) An appointments sub committee shall be elected at the first committee meeting following the AGM of the Charity. It shall comprise of at least three Trustees. They will be responsible for contacting and recommending possible new Trustees. These recommended new Trustees shall be subject to ratification by the main committee, normally at the nearest meeting prior to the Charity's AGM. The sub committee shall make due reference to the make up of the main committee in respect of the diversity of the wider membership and oral history practitioners. It shall also consider knowledge and skills deficits among existing Trustees All nominations shall be subject to endorsement at the AGM of the Charity.