



## Trustee Role Description

### Overview of the Linnean Society

The Linnean Society is the world's oldest active society devoted to 'the cultivation of the science of natural history in all its branches'. As a charity, we deliver a range of scientific, education, public engagement and heritage programmes aimed at enabling people to understand, value and protect nature. We disseminate informed knowledge about the natural world through our peer-reviewed journals, and our globally significant collections are available for education and research. As a diverse, international membership organisation, we welcome all those who share our vision, mission and values to join as Fellows and Associate members, and support the Society as advocates and champions of our work.

### What it's like to be a Trustee

*"Being a Trustee is a wonderful opportunity to have a voice and bring a range of perspectives, experience, and backgrounds to the organisation's forward thinking, contributing with the decisions and plans. It is a great opportunity to be involved with a well-established society, and to learn and expand your views by working closely with the staff and other Trustees."*

Dr Blanca Huertas, member of Council and  
Senior Curator of Lepidoptera at the UK Natural History Museum

### Trustee Responsibilities

The board of Trustees is elected from the Fellowship, and Trustees are both jointly and individually responsible for the overall governance and strategic direction of the Society, its financial health, the probity of its activities and developing its aims, objectives and goals in accordance with the governing documents, legal and regulatory guidelines. Additionally, they are custodians of the Society's outstanding and internationally important collections.

The Society is working towards a Council membership of 15 Elected Trustees and up to three additional co-opted Trustees<sup>1</sup>. The rules governing Trustee powers, election and voting are outlined in the Bye-Laws, Standing Orders and Schedule of Matters Reserved to

---

<sup>1</sup> The amended Bye-Laws, in which the number of Trustees is reduced from 20 to 15, were approved by the fellowship in 2023 and expected to be operational in 2024.

the Council. On becoming a Trustee, individuals agree to abide by a code of conduct and declare any conflict of interests.

The statutory duties of Trustees include:

- Providing strategic direction to the organisation, setting overall policy, defining goals and setting targets and evaluating performance against agreed targets.
- Ensuring the Society complies with its Charters and Bye-Laws (including pursuing the objects as defined in it), charity law, company law and any other relevant legislation or regulations.
- Maintaining financial stability of the organisation, managing risk, protecting and managing any charity property, approving budgets and ensuring the proper investment of the charity's funds.
- Delegating authority to committees with clear and transparent terms of reference; ensuring appropriate reporting, reviewing and monitoring procedures are in place.
- Appointing, appraising and dismissing a Chief Executive Officer responsible for the efficient day-to-day management of the Society.
- Acting as an ambassador for, and safeguarding the good name and values of, the Society.

#### Additional responsibilities

Trustees may be asked to undertake additional individual responsibilities that may include:

- Acting as a President or Treasurer (both of whom have their own role descriptions)
- Acting as a Vice-President
- Chairing, or being a member of, a committee
- Sitting on ad hoc groups or panels
- Reviewing awards, grants or similar
- Advising staff on areas that fall within their area of expertise
- Acting as a spokesperson for the Society
- Chairing an event

#### Practical details

- Collectively, the Trustees are frequently referred to as 'The Council'. The terms 'member of Council' and 'Trustee' are used interchangeably.
- The Society is based in Burlington House, London. Trustees are expected to visit at least once during their term of office to meet staff and see the collections.
- Council meetings are normally held in person, although hybrid meetings are possible for those who are unable to travel to London.
- There are normally four Council meetings a year. These are held in the third week of January, fourth week of March, fourth week of June and third week of October. They usually start at 10.30 and finish at around 15.30.
- Trustees are expected to attend the AGM to meet the fellowship.
- Trustees are volunteers and are not remunerated for their contributions to the Society, other than out-of-pocket expenses.