



TRUSTEE RECRUITMENT PACK

2023

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WELCOME FROM THE CHAIR

Veterans With Dogs is the first UK organisation that specifically trains and provides assistance dogs for mental health, for current and former member of the British Armed Forces. We help Veterans with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), and other mental health conditions, manage their symptoms more effectively and enable them to lead more independent lives.

We develop therapeutic assistance dog partnerships for mental health through our comprehensive training programme PALS (*Partner Animal Life Skills*).

Veterans with assistance dogs have partnerships that they can depend on to help them recognise earlier the increasing symptoms of their difficulties. The dogs are trained to intervene with interruptive behaviours to help their Veteran with emotional regulation, grounding, and to remain safe, to name but a few.

The PALS (*Partner Animal Life Skills*) Programme to train and provide assistance dogs for mental health is just one adjunct to treatment that is having a profound effect on helping Veterans to increase their quality of life and regain independence.

We are extremely proud of the partnerships that our programme has produced with the help and support of a passionate and dedicated team of volunteers. The charity provides the support, induction, training and development opportunities to enable our volunteers to manage their charitable activity effectively.

A key priority for the organisation now is to develop long term sustainability and hopefully bring in new funding from a diverse range of sources.

We are in a strong position for additional trustees to join VETERANS WITH DOGS, ensuring we achieve our strategic goals, aims and vision for the organisation.

The trustees support and monitor the work of the charity with the aim of enabling the organisation to continue develop and grow whilst delivering the services and support our Veterans need to increase their quality of life and regain independence'

Helena Campbell
Chair of the Board of Trustees



INTRODUCTION

The VETERANS WITH DOGS was founded in 2012 and registered with the Charity Commission in 2015.

The concept of Veterans With Dogs came from recognising the value that dogs can bring to general well being and our health'. It is from first hand experience that through working with dogs in a mental health environment that gave us the impetus to form a non-profit organisation.

Previously there was no formal recognition of the work that dogs can do for the benefits of mental health in the UK, and our role has been to develop this understanding in a way that can bring added value to people whose lives have been affected by trauma and service-related difficulties. In our case, those of our armed forces personnel.

We have been working collaboratively with other agencies in an attempt to 'get things right' and we had the benefit of Dogs for Good as mentors with wider encouragement from Assistance Dogs UK.

Our goal was for our programme to bring formally recognised Assistance Dogs for mental health into main focus; with the acknowledgement and acceptance of Assistance Dogs (UK), and (Europe).

In 2022 we became fully accredited members of Assistance Dogs International.



▶ AIMS

To improve quality of life for Veterans through the companionship of dogs by providing training, education and support services including, but not limited to, Assistance Dogs, companion animals and pets.

▶ MISSION

To support current and former members of the British Armed Forces, whose psychological or physical well-being may have suffered due to difficult past experiences and challenging life circumstances, via engagement with dogs.

▶ VALUES

VWD recognises the therapeutic bond that exists between Veterans and their dogs, as social support, providing non-judgemental companionship and enhancing quality of life.

Veterans' health and well-being, and that of their dogs, can be promoted through engagement in ownership activities, via participation, and in a network of strong mutual support.

The quality of Veterans' lives, and that of their dogs, is central to what the charity stands for.

▶ PHILOSOPHY

At Veterans With Dogs, we believe that if we are to ask a dog to improve the life of someone in need, then that dog firstly should be able to stand firmly and confidently on its own four feet in the world, and secondly that dog deserves to lead only a truly happy life.

Therefore, rather than focus only on teaching our dogs to perform tasks on command, we ask them to engage with us in learning and provide them the tools to say yes or no to every interaction. By doing this, we develop a bond of trust like no other. We educate both people and dogs to enrich the lives of one another.

We believe strongly in the *Bond* and living and working with dogs as a partnership. The *bond-based* approach is a philosophy rooted in the belief that mutually beneficial relationships are those in which trust, respect and confidence combine to form deep and lasting connections. This in turn results in truly authentic assistance from the canine companion when it is most needed and cannot be prompted.

Our dogs are educated using Bond-Based Option Learning (BBOL)[™], a system of learning and working together developed exclusively by Veterans With Dogs. BBOL[™] is an educational protocol based on social learning which focuses on giving the person the skills to understand their dog and its specific needs and also on giving dogs the skills and information they need to appropriately control their own behaviour rather than training them to respond robotically to cues or commands.

▶ OUR STRATEGY AND AMBITIONS

Our main objectives in the wider context continue to be the promotion of the health and well-being of our Veterans, and that of their dogs. The strategies we are using to meet these objectives include:

- Developing the UK's first assistance dog programme designed specifically to meet the needs of serving and ex-forces personnel with mental health difficulties.
- Providing a source of support and a sense of belonging so that we can engage with Veterans on a one-to-one basis.
- Providing accessible activities for Veterans – with achievable objectives and structure designed to improve general functioning.
- Focusing on encouraging participation in activities to raise self-esteem and self-worth.
- Working in partnership with other agencies to secure the widest range of services possible are available that best matches the needs of Veterans, where their needs cannot be accommodated by the charity. This may mean referrals to other agencies as and when appropriate.

Our intended strategic outcomes:

- Achieve and sustain standards of organisational excellence to “lead from the front”.
- High satisfaction levels of service users with positive outcomes.
- Increased independently generated and sustainable revenue with the achievement of financial stability and probity.
- Improved staff knowledge and skills through recruitment and retention.



RECRUITMENT PROCESS

We are keen to broaden the skills and recruit new people to strengthen the existing board and drive VETERANS WITH DOGS forward. VETERANS WITH DOGS is seeking to appoint new trustees to join its trustee board and be formally appointed as soon as practicable after the recruitment process is complete.

We will endeavor to follow the recruitment timetable as outlined below:

- ◆ Closing date for applications:
Open
- ◆ Shortlisting of candidates for interview:
Ongoing
- ◆ Interviews with the Chair, a trustee and CEO/Head of Finance and Resources:
Ongoing
- ◆ Formal appointment of new trustees:
Ongoing
- ◆ Subsequent board meeting:
TBA
- ◆ **To apply, please send a letter of application along with an up to date CV to chrissie.maclellan@veteranswithdogs.org.uk**

BACKGROUND

Salary:

Unpaid – Trustees can claim out of pocket expenses incurred in travelling to meetings

Time Commitment:

Four Board meetings per year, plus additional subcommittees as needed

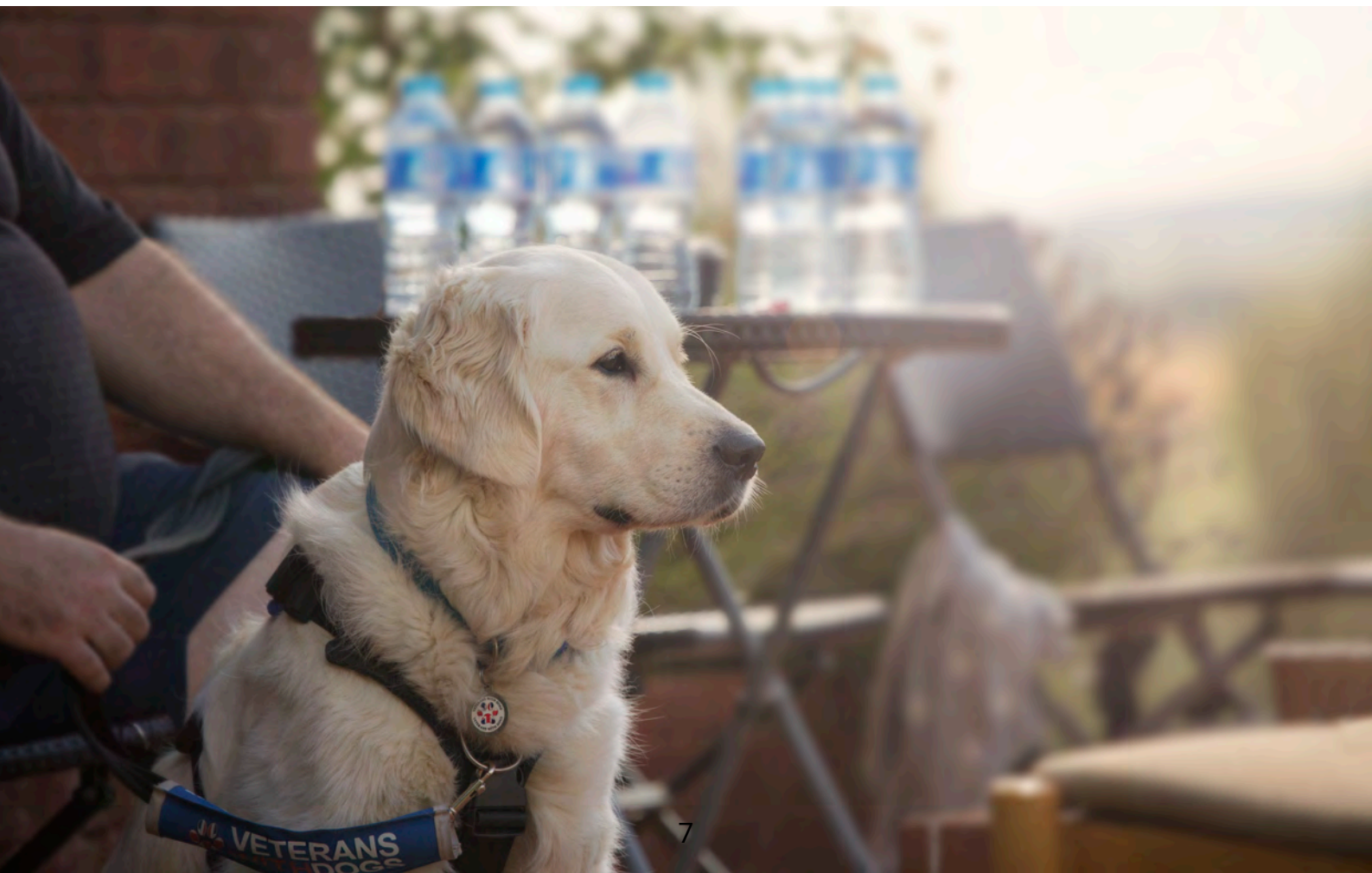
Location:

The Charity is registered at

2 Northleigh House, Thorverton Road Exeter, Devon EX2 8HF, however meetings may also be held at alternative locations as required.

Closing Date:

Open



Who are the charity trustees?

The Charities Act 1993 defines charity trustees as those responsible under the charity's governing document for controlling the administration and management of the charity. This is the case regardless of the terminology used to describe the role. For Veterans With Dogs, the charity trustees will be known as the trustee board.

The trustee board comprises:

- ♦ The Chair
- ♦ A maximum of nine appointed trustees
- ♦ Presently, there is a Chair and four trustees on the board.

The role of the board of trustees

The trustee board must always act in the best interests of VETERANS WITH DOGS, exercising the same standard of duty of care that a prudent person would apply if looking after the affairs of someone for whom they have responsibility. The trustees must act as a group and not as individuals.



Duties of a trustee board member The duties of a trustee board member are to:

- ♦ Ensure that VETERANS WITH DOGS complies with its governing document (its constitution), charity law and any other relevant legislation or regulations.
- ♦ Ensure that VETERANS WITH DOGS pursues its objects as defined in its governing document.
- ♦ Ensure VETERANS WITH DOGS applies its resources exclusively in pursuance of its objects. For example, it must not spend money on activities which are not included in the objects, however worthwhile they may be.
- ♦ Contribute actively to the board of trustees by giving firm strategic direction to VETERANS WITH DOGS, setting overall policy, defining goals, setting targets and evaluating performance against agreed targets.
- ♦ Safeguard the good name and values of VETERANS WITH DOGS.
- ♦ Ensure the financial stability of VETERANS WITH DOGS.

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 leading discussions, identifying key issues, providing advice and guidance on new initiatives, and evaluating or offering advice on other areas in which the trustee has particular expertise.

Minimum time commitment

- ♦ Four Board meetings per year
- ♦ Trustees are expected to attend an induction session at VETERANS WITH DOGS prior to their first board meeting
- ♦ Trustees are also expected to prepare for and attend all board meetings which are held four times per year which normally last approximately three to four hours
- ♦ VETERANS WITH DOGS may appoint additional sub-committees and a trustee may be asked to act as a Chair for one of the sub-committees
- ♦ Trustees may be asked to attend two to three external events per year.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

As a member of the trustee board, you will share responsibility for the overall direction, vision and strategy of VETERANS WITH DOGS. We are looking for candidates who can bring innovative ideas, enthusiasm, and excellent judgement to help deliver our objectives. You will be prepared to assist our charity in taking on any future challenges and play a key role in our success.

Successful candidates must be able to demonstrate:

- ♦ A commitment to the mission of VETERANS WITH DOGS
- ♦ A willingness to meet the minimum time requirement
- ♦ Integrity
- ♦ 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 and to take decisions for the good of VETERANS WITH DOGS.

Recently the board conducted a skills analysis and now wish to appoint additional trustees. We would be particularly interested to hear from people who have held a position of responsibility in the third sector and/or private sector with an expertise in one or more of the following areas:

- ♦ Finance: financial management and charity accounting experience with a ACA/ACCA/CIMA chartered accountant qualification. Risk and charitable governance experience desirable.
- ♦ Fundraising/Income Generation: commercial acumen, broad networks and connections.

If you do not have expertise in the above areas but feel you have other qualities which would be of interest, please do get in touch.



**FINANCIAL
MANAGEMENT**



**CHARITABLE
GOVERNANCE**



**HUMAN RESOURCES
AND EDUCATION**



LEGAL



**IMPACT & INCOME
GENERATION**



**COMMUNICATIONS
AND ADVOCACY**

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