

Jenny Bowley

Trustee

I first became a trustee just before my 30th birthday and at the time, I wasn't even sure what a trustee was!



I had been a volunteer for various organisations for some years and wasn't scared with putting my name in the hat to help out, but being a trustee was different.

I was a trustee for our local village hall. The hall owned a few buildings and some land in our small village. Looking back on my three years we were a dynamic group made up of people who were using the buildings and land. This worked well as it helped with any issues where one group might want preferential treatment to another. Whilst I was the representative for the youth group I ran, I was also a user of the hall as a local. I attended the parish council occasionally, my eldest went to beavers and then cubs, my youngest to the toddler group. Over the years we used the hall for our parties and even our wedding reception! I was trustee for three years and in that time supported the day-to-day work of the hall as well as the change of use of another building.



I learnt a lot about committees, land ownership and management, as well as meeting needs, fairness and finances. For me the knowledge was important but more significant was learning how to communicate and work with a group of people who I normally wouldn't have been sat round a table with.

Since my first role I was parent governor for two years and then last year I took up a new trustee role. This time I was actively searching for one, as I wanted to give back to my local community. I have moved since my first role so it was important to me that I found a charity that would help me meet new people, use my skillset and access the meetings and activities. In my search there was a role I was keen on, but all the trustee meetings were in the working day which didn't work for me.

I love the charity I support and am passionate about their aims. It is rewarding and I feel challenged in a different way.

My advice to others would be to find a role in an area you are passionate about as this will make it much more interesting and rewarding. Be honest with yourself and the charity about what you can commit in time to the project. Don't be afraid to put yourself out of your comfort zone as this is often where we learn the most. Being a trustee is very rewarding.

