



Useful Simple Trust

External Trustee Recruitment

November 2025



usefulprojects

Useful studio

Trustee Role Description

<i>Position:</i>	External Trustee (paid) (3-year contract, renewable once to 6 years)
<i>Commitment:</i>	8-10 days per year
<i>Location:</i>	London, UK
<i>Interviews:</i>	Interviews will be held in January 2026 (First Trustee Board meeting 11 th February)



Who We Are

The Useful Simple Trust brings together 90+ engineers, designers, and consultants united by a shared mission: to transform the built and natural environment to meet the needs of all people and the planet. We are a family of design-led organisations, recently named ‘B Corp of the Year’ at the 2025 British Business Awards.

We exist as a demonstrator of how design businesses can work differently. Where profit isn’t extracted for private gain, there are no human shareholders, and a shared Ethos guides how we work. As a **Social Enterprise, B Corp**, and Employee Benefit Trust, we model a form of steward ownership, with the Trustee Board holding the controlling share on behalf of all employees, ensuring the business remains mission-led for the long term.

 **expedition**

We’re an interdisciplinary community shaped by collaboration and care, with a structure that helps value circulate within the Trust to support people, ideas, and the wider world.

usefulprojects

Through our three companies – **Expedition Engineering**, **Useful Projects**, and **Useful Studio** – we combine technical excellence with creativity and purpose. Our work spans bridges, transport and energy infrastructure, education and housing, climate strategies, and social value frameworks.

Useful studio

We consider both the ethics of the projects we take on and our handprint (the positive and negative impact our work has on people and the planet) and we track both across our portfolio. Our **Impact Reports** and **Climate Transition Action Plan** show how our Ethos comes to life in practice.



The Pheonix, Lewes

Trustee Recruitment

Why We're Recruiting

The Trustee Board is the Trust's core accountability mechanism – a team that keeps us anchored in our Ethos while guiding our evolution.

As we enter a new chapter, we're seeking new trustees who can help shape what comes next. This is part of a planned renewal of the Board, creating space for new ideas, experience, and perspectives to help the Trust continue to evolve.

Our aim is to strengthen the Board's collective insight and ensure it reflects the balance of people, skills, and imagination we'll need in the years ahead. We're looking for individuals who can help the Trust stay true to its mission while thinking boldly about the future of design, business, and stewardship.

What We Are Looking For

This is a chance to join a thoughtful Board of Trustees who hold the Trust's Ethos and mission in balance with its commercial reality. You'll bring independence of mind, sound judgment, and curiosity about how governance can enable rather than constrain.

You'll help ensure the Trust continues to live its Ethos — that decisions, strategies, and projects serve people and planet. Working alongside fellow trustees and the executive team, you'll act as a critical friend and steward: listening deeply, asking good questions, and sharing accountability for the Trust's evolution.

Trustees may occasionally challenge or advise on strategic projects or client relationships where alignment with Ethos is at stake.

You'll bring knowledge, skills, and perspective that help the Board govern thoughtfully and effectively. You may offer strengths in areas such as:

- **Governance, finance, or risk** – guiding organisations with integrity and sound judgment.
- **Commercial awareness** – understanding business models, growth, and financial sustainability.
- **Strategic and systems thinking** – seeing the bigger picture and key interconnections.
- **Sustainability and design** – recognising how creative, systems-led design shapes both the built environment and wider systems.
- **Change and innovation** – bringing entrepreneurial energy and creative thinking.
- **Communication and influence** – able to imagine and convey new possibilities.
- **Ethical leadership** – acting with integrity, care, and accountability.

We're interested in people who bring different kinds of experience and perspective from one or more of the following areas:

- **Credibility working with natural systems and/or regenerative practice** – grounded experience in ecology, biodiversity, nature-based design, or related fields that connect environmental understanding with creative design.
- **Design leadership** – using design to connect creativity, systems thinking, and impact.
- **Mission-led and entrepreneurial leadership** – experience running or advising a purpose-driven business, balancing commercial reality with creativity, and finding opportunity in uncertainty or transition.

You'll be selected not only for what you can do, but for how you think and why you serve. Effective boards hold past, present, and future in balance. You may be motivated to by one of the following mindsets:

- **Custodian** – honouring the Trust's origins and Ethos, learning from its evolution, and protecting its character as a living inheritance.
- **Navigator** – bringing lived experience of leading or shaping organisations; grounded, pragmatic, and willing to face complexity.
- **Imagineer** – contributing to long-term thinking, advocating for ethics, regeneration, and future generations.

Our Current Trustees



CEO – Judith Sykes

Judith is a Senior Director at Expedition and a highly experienced Civil Engineer specialising in sustainable and creative development. Her expertise spans major UK and international masterplanning projects, from urban regeneration to rural community development. A member of the NIC Design Group, she leads on strategies for net zero, biodiversity gain, and social value. Judith is also a Technical Advisor to Homes England and a member of several industry panels, including the ICE Policy Panel and West Midlands Land Disposal Task Force.



Emma Crichton – Chair and External Trustee

Emma is a Chartered Civil Engineer and advocate for globally responsible engineering. Now working independently, she was previously Innovation Director at Engineers Without Borders UK and continues to serve as a Trustee of Azuko. She became an Independent Trustee of the Useful Simple Trust in 2023 and Chair in 2025. An emerging leader, Emma is driving a cultural shift in engineering through initiatives such as the Systems Change Lab, the Global Responsibility Competency Compass, and the Engineering for People Design Challenge, which has reached over 100,000 students worldwide.



Hayley Cormick – Elected Trustee

Hayley is part of the sustainable masterplanning team Trust, spanning Expedition and Useful Projects, where she makes complex sustainability challenges simple, accessible, and actionable. With a degree in civil engineering and a master's in building science, she combines technical expertise with a creative, human-centred approach to placemaking. A certified Passive House Consultant, Home Quality Mark Assessor, and Code for Sustainable Homes Assessor, Hayley excels at connecting diverse skills across teams to deliver ambitious, integrated solutions for sustainable development.



Frank Jensen – External Trustee

A 3rd-generation leader in Søren Jensen Engineering, Frank was appointed Trustee Board Chair at the Trust in 2023. He is a driver in the advancement of the built environment toward a regenerative future, establishing various investment vehicles supporting startups and launching the Aarhus Center for Regenerative Building alongside Aarhus University and the Aarhus School of Architecture in 2024. Frank serves on advisory boards across business, culture, and nature further to regularly speaking on circularity, absolute sustainability, regenerative design, and digitalisation in the built environment.



Ed McCann – Founder Trustee

Ed is an experienced Project Director and Immediate Past President of the Institution of Civil Engineers. A Founding Trustee of the Trust and Senior Director at Expedition, he was instrumental in growing the practice from a startup to an award-winning consultancy. He has led major projects worldwide, including the Infinity Bridge and London 2012 Velodrome. Committed to advancing industry practice and education, Ed co-founded Constructionarium and the Get It Right Initiative, championing learning, innovation, and improved performance across construction.



Sophie Thomas – Founder Trustee

Sophie is a Founding Trustee of the Trust and Founder of Thomas.Matthews, the award-winning communication design agency that operated from 1998 to 2025. A pioneer in circular design, she has co-founded initiatives including The Great Recovery, Greengaged, estaW Ventures, and the URGE Collective to advance sustainable innovation across industries. Sophie advises global businesses and governments on waste, resource efficiency, and closed-loop systems. A Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Waste Management and RAEng Industry Professor at UCL, she serves on advisory boards such as WRAP and was awarded an OBE for services to sustainable design in 2025.



Seán Walsh – Founder Trustee

Seán is a Founding Director and Technical Director at Expedition, and a highly respected voice in the industry. Over 20 years, he has helped shape the company's evolution while leading technically challenging and complex projects worldwide. His work includes landmark developments such as Commerzbank HQ in Frankfurt, Las Arenas Bullring in Barcelona, Intesa San Paolo in Turin, 55 Baker Street in London, and the Infinity Bridge in Stockton. Known for his practical, collaborative approach, Seán consistently helps clients save time, reduce risk, and make the seemingly impossible possible.



Chris Wise – Founder Trustee

Chris is Co-Founder and Senior Director at Expedition and an award-winning designer known for challenging the status quo and advancing environmentally conscious engineering. Renowned for elegant, simple solutions, he adds value across the lifecycle of projects and drives innovation through research, teaching, and industry initiatives. A Fellow of the Royal Academy of Engineering, Institution of Civil Engineers, and Institution of Structural Engineers, and Honorary Fellow of RIBA, Chris publishes widely, has co-founded initiatives including Constructionarium, Get It Right Initiative, MaGic, and MEICON, and is embedding Regenerative Design across engineering education at the University of Bath.



Volunteering Away Day at Tolworth Court Farm Fields

Terms of Service

External Trustees are appointed for a three-year term, renewable once (a maximum of six years' continuous service). Trustees may stand again at a later date after a minimum three-year gap.

The expected commitment is around 8–10 days per year, including quarterly meetings in London and engagement between meetings as needed. Trustees are remunerated for their contribution.

Our Commitment to Inclusion

The Trust aims to be a community where everyone can be themselves. We know our industry lacks representation and especially welcome applications from people who feel underrepresented.

We encourage people of all backgrounds – including women, culturally diverse communities, people with disabilities, LGBTQIA+ people, all age groups, and those with intersecting identities – to apply.

We believe diversity fuels creativity, strengthens decisions, and makes us better. We are committed to ensuring everyone feels heard, valued, and able to contribute fully.

1. We will encourage the employees of the Trust companies to assume responsibility for maximising their contribution to the business of that Trust company in their capacity as employees, having regard to the interest of future as well as present employees.
2. We will ensure that employees receive information concerning the major policies and actions of the Trust.
3. The purpose of the Trust is to blaze a trail in the field of integrated, intelligent and ethical provision of the human environment.
4. We will aim to do our projects so that they meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs, exemplified by outcomes that are useful, simple, beautiful and good.
5. We will have regard to the benefit of the employees of the Trust companies, where a benefit is something that engenders wellbeing.
6. We will work together across the Trust and with others to achieve the purpose of the Trust.
7. We will aim to provide a stimulating working environment where all can give their best and develop to their full potential.
8. We will actively embrace and seek diversity in both our people and our work.
9. We will educate ourselves and others. To grow the next generation, we will play an active role in framing the educational curriculum, and make time to help deliver it.
10. We will aim to reward employees on the basis of “fair and sustainable” for their field while also recognising their wider collaborative contribution to the Trust.

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Useful Simple
Trust

Purpose-driven consultancy
for our changing environment