Trustee Role Description - Leisure

Board Trustee, advisory to the Centre Manager and Leisure Committee

Location: Board meetings held in the Bristol area (Gympanzees Centre, Aust, South Gloucestershire) or virtually - to be confirmed with the Chair

Time commitment: Board meetings every 6-8 weeks, plus regular advisory contact with the Centre Manager and oversight of the Leisure Committee (estimated additional time to be agreed with the Chair)

Term: Two years, renewable, in line with Gympanzees' constitution

Remuneration: Voluntary, unpaid

Reporting to: Chair of Trustees, working closely with the CEO and Centre Manager

About Gympanzees

Gympanzees is a Bristol-based charity building the UK's first fully inclusive exercise, play and leisure centre for disabled and neurodivergent children and young people aged 0-25, and their families. We exist to tackle poor access to exercise, social isolation and health inequalities by creating spaces and services shaped by lived experience.

We're redeveloping a 43,000 sq ft building on a 14.5-acre site at Brightside Park in Aust, South Gloucestershire - with a gym, swing room, trampoline room, soft play, sensory rooms, an outdoor playground, a café, a shop and more, all designed from the ground up to be fully accessible. The centre is on track to open its doors in Spring 2027.

We've raised or secured £8.96 million of the £11.5 million needed to complete the build and fit-out, and fundraising continues at pace to get the doors open. This is a pivotal moment for Gympanzees: after years of proof-of-concept Pop Up events, we're moving from campaign to construction — and from there, into running a leisure facility for the first time in our history.

The opportunity

This is a new trustee role, created specifically to bring senior leisure sector leadership onto our board as we move from building the centre to opening and running it.

You won't be doing the hands-on operational work - that sits with our Centre Manager, staff team and our Leisure Committee (made up of experienced leisure centre owners and operators who provide practical, day-to-day sector input). Your role is to sit above that: a board-level trustee who brings deep, senior leisure sector knowledge to guide Gympanzees' strategy, governance and decision-making, and who acts as a trusted sounding board and advisor to our Centre Manager as they build and grow the business.

It's a role in two halves. Before we open, you'll help us stress-test our operating model, pricing, staffing and customer experience plans against what really works in the leisure sector.

Gympanzees is a registered charity in England and Wales (charity number 1189375) and is a registered trademark.

After we open, you'll help the board govern a live leisure operation for the first time - interpreting performance, benchmarking against the sector, and supporting the Centre Manager through the challenges of a first-of-its-kind facility.

What you'll do

Before we open

- Bring senior leisure sector experience to board discussions on our operating model, membership and pricing strategy, staffing structure and customer journey.
- Review and challenge our assumptions on capacity, utilisation and commercial income (e.g. classes, room hire, café, shop) ahead of launch.
- Act as a link between the board and the Leisure Committee, helping to shape how their sector expertise feeds into strategic decisions.
- Support the Centre Manager and senior leadership team with advice as they prepare systems, policies and ways of working for opening.
- Help the board understand what 'good' looks like operationally, drawing on your own experience of running or leading leisure facilities.

After we open

- Provide ongoing, advisory support to the Centre Manager - a sounding board for operational and strategic decisions as the centre beds in.
- Help the board interpret operational and performance data (visitor numbers, utilisation, income) in the context of sector norms and benchmarks.
- Oversee, on behalf of the board, the input of the Leisure Committee, ensuring their practical expertise continues to inform how the centre runs and develops.
- Bring an outside perspective on best practice, innovation and risk in the wider leisure sector, and flag opportunities or concerns to the board.
- Contribute fully to all standard trustee duties - governance, strategy, safeguarding oversight and financial stewardship - alongside your leisure specialism.

What we're looking for

This role is pitched at leader level. We're looking for someone who has led a leisure facility, leisure group or leisure service at a senior level - as a CEO, Managing Director, Chief

Operating Officer or equivalent - and who can bring that strategic, whole-business perspective to our board, rather than day-to-day operational involvement.

You'll likely have

- Senior leadership experience running a leisure centre, health club group, local authority leisure service or similar visitor-facing operation - ideally multi-site.

- A strong grasp of the commercial and operational fundamentals of leisure: membership and pricing models, staffing and shift structures, health and safety and licensing, and customer experience.
- Comfort operating at board level - translating operational expertise into strategic guidance and governance input, rather than doing the operational work yourself.
- A genuine interest in accessibility and inclusion, and a willingness to learn about the specific needs of disabled and neurodivergent children, young people and their families.
- The credibility and confidence to be a trusted advisor to a first-time Centre Manager opening a genuinely new kind of facility.

You don't need a background in the disability sector - we'll bring you up to speed on that. What matters most is deep, senior leisure sector knowledge and the judgement to apply it at board level.

What we offer

- The chance to shape the UK's first fully inclusive exercise, play and leisure centre from board level, at the exact moment it moves from campaign to reality.
- A values-led, ambitious organisation - built on Gold Standard Inclusion, Pioneering Co-Creation and Unlocking Potential - with a genuinely warm, collaborative culture.
- A full induction, including access to our governance documents, business plan, and induction training on safeguarding and the sector.

Practicalities

- Trustees are appointed for a two-year term, renewable, in line with our constitution.
- The full Board meets every 6–8 weeks. All Trustees complete mandatory safeguarding training and undergo appropriate pre-appointment checks, including a DBS check at the level for which the role is eligible.
- You'll be asked to declare any conflicts of interest and to agree to our Trustee Code of Conduct.

How to apply

To apply, please send your CV and a covering letter outlining your relevant experience, your interest in the role and why you would like to become a Trustee of Gympanzees to steph@gympanzees.org

Shortlisted candidates will be invited to a face-to-face interview.

Closing date: Thursday 26th November 2026