



Oak Tree Animals' Charity

Recruitment Pack: Director



2016 edition



Contents

Who are we?.....	3
Our strategy, vision, values and mission.....	4
The role	5-6
Role description & person specification	7-8
How to apply	9

Who are we?

Oak Tree Animals' Charity (OTAC) was, until recently, known as The Animals' Refuge. It is the home of The National Equine (and Smaller Animals) Defence League, a charity that began life in 1909 in London, leading the campaign for improved working conditions for the 72,000 pit ponies, that worked in our country's coal mines. 106 years later Oak Tree Animals' Charity continues its work, now based just outside Carlisle, as a homing centre for horses, dogs and cats. We also offer a retirement for a small number of field animals who have been resident at the Charity for a significant period of time. We also offer a proactive approach to animal welfare through offering assistance, education and welfare advice within the community.

As one of the main animal homing and welfare charities in the region, OTAC has an important role to play in dealing with abandoned and unwanted animals and has a close working relationship with the city council as well as with other charities in the area. We are also members of the Association of Dogs and Cats Homes (ADCH), and National Equine Welfare Council (NEWC) who set standards for the industry and promote increased professionalism as well as providing networks for shared information and best practice.



At the current time the charity finds new, loving homes for cats, dogs and horses with up to around 90 animals on site at any one time, including a number of horses and other field animals that have been offered long-term residency.

OTAC's land extends to approximately 68 acres, about half of which constitutes the main site, reception buildings, stable yard, kennels and cattery with several sizeable paddocks and fields. The remainder is a ½ mile away, comprising a number of larger fields set aside for equine grazing and hay production, including a barn and a couple of field shelters. The charity employs 20 staff in total, of which most are working full time. The charity is also supported by around 60 regular committed volunteers who walk dogs, socialise cats, clean pens, work in our tearoom/shop, take photographs and fundraise.

Many of the issues we face are similar to others in our field; the numbers of animals being abandoned every year is increasing and the amount of money being received through donations to support our work is falling.

This calls for some keen and innovative thinking, clear leadership and enthusiasm to get involved and make a difference. This is where our Board of Directors will make a real difference to the future of the charity.

Our Vision, Mission and Strategy

Our **Vision** is a world where understanding and empathy ensure that all animals are treated with kindness and respect.

Our **Mission** is to help companion animals in need. Finding them a safe and comfortable home and helping the community to understand their needs, through support and education.

Our **Strategic Priorities** are:

- **Animal Welfare**
- **Education**
- **Engagement with the Local Community**
- **Sustainability**



Our **Values** are:

- We are proud to be non-judgemental and compassionate in our approach to animals and the people who care for them.
- We are forward-thinking and value our work with partner organisations to find effective and informed approaches to animal welfare.
- We aim to find the right home for the animals in our care, providing ongoing support and advice to ensure life-long companionship.

Our strategy is vital. It gives us clear direction, goals to work towards and will help us to measure our progress. It sets out a balance between the care of animals on-site, and support for animals in the community.

Our **Strategy** has 3 main elements: Finance, Operation (Animals / Buildings) & Organisation

Finance: We face big financial challenges. We currently run a deficit budget but we are making changes to address this imbalance.

Operation - Animal Care: Our aim is to help as many animals as we can, in the best way we can, with the resources we have available.

Operation - Buildings and Structures: Many of our buildings and structures are unused or storage space. We are looking to develop these to support income generation.

Organisation: Our long term future needs confidence, respect and support from the community and from local businesses. We are working to develop our professionalism and communication channels in these areas.

The recent change of name of the charity signifies a major step change in our history. It follows a thorough appraisal of our market position and potential efficacy. An organisational restructure has taken place and our Memorandum and Articles updated.

The legal status of the charity has been addressed through a move to incorporation and a commitment to improved communication between trustees, management, staff, volunteers and the community will form the basis of a strengthened way forward.

Transparency will be key in this area. Decisions will be evidence-based so everyone can understand why a decision has been made.

There will be clear direction which will include a complete set of policies and associated procedures to provide defined guidance for everyone involved at the charity.

Finally, codes of conduct will be embedded across the organisation to ensure respect and teamwork.

Help us to Step into the Future

Thank you for your interest in becoming a Director of our Charity.

With the increasingly challenging funding environment and widening horizons in our animal welfare aspirations it is more important than ever that the charity has strong, professional and committed leadership, guidance and support.

We would greatly value the contribution of those who are able to offer knowledge, experience or skills in areas such as the voluntary sector, preferably at a senior level in:

- financial management and/or accounts,
- animal welfare issues and the rescue environment,
- veterinary medicine
- advocacy,
- marketing & communications,
- fundraising



This is a voluntary position providing a unique opportunity to make a real difference now and in the future. It is an opportunity to help us build on the long history of this charity and shape its development, to create a sustainable future with the welfare of companion animals at its heart.

Role Description

Role Title: Director

Salary Grade: Unpaid - Voluntary role
(Reasonable travel expenses reimbursed)

Responsible to: Chairman of the Board of Directors/Trustees

Overview

To ensure the development and implementation of the strategy to secure the future of the Oak Tree Animals' Charity (OTAC) and the realisation of our vision and mission.

Main Duties & Responsibilities:

- To ensure that OTAC:
 - complies with its governing document, charity law and any other relevant legislation or regulations
 - pursues its objects as defined in its governing document
 - uses its resources exclusively in pursuance of its objects
- To contribute actively to the Board of Directors' role in giving firm strategic direction and agreeing overall policy, supporting a programme of defining goals and target setting, allowing the performance of the organisation to be evaluated.

As part of the Board team

- To safeguard the reputation and values of OTAC
- To oversee the development and effective delivery of the OTAC Strategy
- To connect the organisation with appropriate stakeholders (both individual and organisationally) as and when appropriate
- To represent the organisation and its vision on the local and regional stage
- To protect and manage the property of the organisation and to ensure the proper investment of its funds
- To support and monitor the performance of the General Manager



Commitments of a Director

In order for the Board of Directors to function to its full potential, its members will be asked to abide by the Director's Code of Conduct and commit to the following:

1. To attend quarterly Board meetings programmed during the year
2. To attend and/or chair appropriate sub-committees as and when deemed necessary
3. To prepare for each meeting by familiarising themselves with the agenda and issues to be discussed, including reading any papers circulated in advance of the meeting
4. Actively engage and communicate with everyone at OTAC a supportive way, with respect and through the appropriate channel.
4. To promote and inform others of the work of OTAC
5. To attend appropriate meetings, functions and events on behalf of OTAC, in liaison with the Chairman
6. Where relevant, and in line with the strategic plan, to broker meetings with relevant and beneficial third parties

Please note that deputies are not permitted to attend Board Meetings.

Person Specification

A passion for the work of our charity is the overriding pre-requisite in joining our Board team. If you are comfortable with the level of responsibility and the commitment we are seeking and are able demonstrate skills or experience (both paid and voluntary) in the areas listed below, then we would be delighted to hear from you. Please tell us about your interest by sending us your CV and a covering letter (Of no more than 2 pages A4) which highlights where your skill set matches our current requirements. You will be offered the opportunity to expand on this documentation at informal interview stage.

Essential Criteria

1. Experience, knowledge or understanding of the role and responsibilities of a Charity or commercial Board Member
2. A strong commitment to animal welfare, the promotion of better understanding of companion animals and the desire to be part of creating a better future for those animals that are abandoned and unwanted in society
3. A proven ability to think strategically and creatively and to challenge proposals with clear logical thinking
4. Strong inter-personal and communication skills

And at least one of the following:

- An understanding or experience of animal welfare issues, the rescue environment and the issues facing charities operating in this sector
- An understanding, at a strategic and/or senior management level, of how the voluntary sector operates at the national, Cumbria and local level
- Knowledge and experience in financial management and accounting
- Knowledge and experience in veterinary medicine, preferably in a shelter environment.
- Knowledge and experience of mounting successful campaigns and leading on marketing and communications work
- Strategic understanding of fundraising at a senior level and how a charity develops sustainable new income streams
- Human resource management, employment law and knowledge or experience of how to effectively achieve cultural change

To Apply

You are encouraged to informally discuss your interest in this role with the General Manager, Caroline Johnson on 01228 560082 prior to submitting your CV and letter of application which can be sent by email to **trustees@oaktreeanimals.co.uk**.

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