

The role of ILPA trustee

Members of ILPA's committee of trustees are trustees of ILPA as a charity, and directors of ILPA Ltd, a company Ltd by guarantee, not having a shareholding capital.

The role of the trustee is:

- to set the strategic direction for ILPA
- to ensure that ILPA is charting the course that it has set, and
- to hold the secretariat, and those acting on behalf of ILPA, to account (governance)

This entails taking decisions on ILPA's stance, and taking action when faced with new challenges. It also involves scrutinising whether ILPA is complying with its legal obligations, being efficiently managed, and being satisfied of ILPA's financial health and whether it is functioning as well as it might to deliver on its objectives. Those objectives are set out in full in ILPA's Memorandum and Articles of Association and are summarised as follows, to:

- promote and improve the advising and representation of immigrants
- provide information to members on domestic and European immigration, refugee and nationality law
- secure a non-racist, non-sexist, just and equitable system of immigration, refugee and nationality law

Liability of trustees is limited and they are only liable if they are found to have been negligent.

The way in which the committee of trustees conducts its business is set by the committee, so what follows is a description of what happened to date, a new committee may change it.

Tasks and time commitment

In an average year the committee meets around 10 times, the meetings usually take place on the third Tuesday of a month but are not every month, and all meetings now take place by Zoom. Ideally all trustees attend all of the meetings. One of the meetings in a year is usually an 'away day', which in previous years has taken place in London but in recent years has been a zoom meeting. It is a great opportunity for the trustees and staff of the secretariat to get together and focus on (amongst other things) reviewing our legal and strategic priorities, reviewing our risk register, management accounts, fundraising strategy and examining the feedback from members via the annual members' survey.

All trustees are additionally expected to attend the AGM which happens in November.

The trustee meetings start at 6pm and usually run for approximately 2 to 2 1/2 hours. Papers are circulated on the Friday before a meeting. There is a fair bit of reading and it is sensible to allow 2 hours or so to go through the papers before a meeting.

Effort is made to make traffic between the meetings manageable and of course trustees see what is circulated to the working groups they choose to be on. Individual trustees are identified with responsibility for particular areas of ILPA's work (eg as a link person for a particular working group or project, or the person to lead on ILPA's involvement in a piece of litigation) and those identified are included in discussions with convenors of working groups etc.

Trustees may be asked if they would like to represent ILPA at official functions/speaking to the press.

Trustees act as ambassadors for ILPA and are very well placed to introduce people to the work of ILPA, to promote ILPA, and to put forward ILPA's views.

Specific functions within the Committee of Trustees

- the Treasurer and at least one other Trustee are signatories on ILPA's bank account together with the Chief Executive.
- The Committee of Trustees approves the budget and accounts each year (usually at Trustee meetings)
- The Chair provides line management for the Chief Executive; other Trustees may be asked to provide cover in the Chair's absence.
- The Secretary reviews membership applications.
- The meetings are minuted by our executive assistant.

Skills and attributes

One of the attractions of being on the Committee of Trustees is that you can use a wide range of your skills, but a willingness to learn, to research and hunt out information from others is as important as having specialist knowledge.

Being on the committee is also an opportunity for you to learn new skills. There are opportunities for training, both formal and informal. (ILPA conducts a skills and expertise audit of its Committee of Trustees every year).

What we value in a Trustee:

- Reliable - able to do what you say you will do, when you say you will do it.
- Responsive - willing to respond promptly to requests, even if it is just to say you *cannot* help.
- Team players - able to work with others to come to agreement.
- Willing to take responsibility - as a Trustee of ILPA
- Having a broad interest in immigration law beyond their specialist area of practice
- Having an interest in ethical questions, and standards in the profession.

We also ask that in standing for a position of trustee you consider being a trustee for a minimum of three years, subject to the annual election process.

Additional note on the post of Treasurer: The Treasurer of the Association can be a Member of ILPA but can also be a non ILPA Member selected on the basis of their relevant skills and experience. The Treasurer is appointed for a three year term. We have a more detailed role description for the post of Treasurer.

Skills that are always useful (these skills can be learned or developed)

- ability to represent ILPA and be its public face, confidence in dealing with a wide range of people
- experience in 'strategic planning' ie setting objectives and monitoring progress against them
- negotiating skills, and experience in looking at agreements/contracts
- experience in human resources and line management
- being financially literate and experience in working with funders such as charitable trusts.

For further information do not hesitate to get in touch with the Chef Executive, a member of the secretariat or a current Trustee. info@ilpa.org.uk