



POSITION PROFILE

Board Convener



Welcome Note .....	3
The Organisation .....	4
The Role .....	8
The Person .....	10
Recruitment Process .....	11





Dear Candidate,

Thank you for your interest in becoming Convener (Chair) of the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO).

I've had the absolute pleasure of being in the role for nearly 6 years now and will be very sorry to move on in December, when my term-limit is reached. The role of Convener is genuinely a unique opportunity to be part of an organisation at the heart of Scotland's voluntary sector and indeed wider civic society.

SCVO is the national membership organisation for charities, community organisations and social enterprises throughout Scotland. We currently have over 3,000 members and that number is growing every day. We interact with organisations across the sector, beyond the membership and passionately believe that the sector makes Scotland a better place for everyone.

We deliver a wide range of services, influence government, host flagship events such as The Gathering and the Scottish Charity Awards. We publish Third Force News and build digital capacity in the sector, championing digital inclusion, and we also manage grant funding. You can find out more in our newly launched 5-year strategic plan [insert link when published].

Our board is made up of 11 trustees, 6 of whom are elected by our members and 5 of whom are co-opted. With everyone having a three-year term and the option of a second (elections permitting!), I've worked with a fantastic range of different trustees over my time at SCVO. The knowledge and experience they bring to the Board is invaluable, and I know it's much appreciated by the staff team.

SCVO is a trusted organisation, with great credibility and reach. As the Convener of the Board, you can be part of something special and I wish you well with your application.

I would be more than happy to speak with anyone who is interested in applying. You can reach me at [andrew.burns@scvo.org.uk](mailto:andrew.burns@scvo.org.uk).

Andrew Burns  
Convener



Here are some of the things we think you need to know about us:

SCVO is the national umbrella body for Scotland's voluntary sector. We're proud of the voluntary sector community that we're part of and support. We have offices in Edinburgh, Glasgow, and Inverness and we employ around 85 people who contribute to delivering our ambitions as an organisation. Our turnover is around £15m a year.

We have over 3,000 members and supporters across the whole of Scotland, and that number is growing every day. They come in all shapes and sizes from very small, local, volunteer-run organisations to large, national service providers and campaigning organisations, looking for everything from access to specific services to being part of a movement.

We aim to support the sector to achieve its ambitions. SCVO delivers services that the voluntary sector wants and needs, we give the sector a voice at a national level, and we promote and support innovation and improvement.

We firmly believe that a thriving voluntary sector is vital to Scotland's economy and society (we see the sector's amazing work every day!). The voluntary sector has a huge impact on people and places, but it faces big challenges and uncertainties, and experiences the impact of rapid political, economic, social, and technological change.

Our purpose is to support, promote and develop a confident, sustainable voluntary sector in Scotland and our values underpin everything we do. We are:

- Accountable and committed
- Responsive
- Supportive
- Progressive
- Bold

We live those values every day in our work.





## The Power of the Voluntary Sector

Our sector in all its diversity is a powerful force for positive change and a significant part of Scotland's economy. We want to make sure that's recognised and valued.

- Voluntary organisations from village halls to campaigners are vehicles for people and communities to participate in a healthy democracy, create social justice and enhance our quality of life. Voluntary organisations are often the voice of the forgotten; the people who are most impacted but least able to act
- Voluntary organisations play a major role in ensuring a just transition to net zero and tackling the climate and nature emergencies
- Voluntary organisations bring particular strengths to addressing social needs and enhancing our lives, both through their actions and their deep insights. Our volunteers and staff bring time, skills and passion, adding social capital to addressing societal challenges
- Our sector is diverse, complex and often misunderstood and under-appreciated. We must continue to develop our capacity to address multiple entrenched social, economic and environmental problems. Working collectively will enable us to make a bigger difference
- Our sector is the glue that holds communities together. We bring innovative solutions, uphold human rights, support the most vulnerable, engage in prevention, nurture creativity and press for system change. Our diversity is our core strength
- The sector is present in every aspect of our economy from retail to tourism, the justice system to the arts. It brings massive research capacity that is changing people's lives





## What does the future hold?

It is a good time to get involved with SCVO as we have recently launched our new 5-year Strategic Plan and want to build on the great work that's been done, improved partnership working and learning from the last three years, particularly the new ways of working and activities we've adopted during the pandemic. SCVO's 3 key strategic aims are:

### 1. Being an authoritative voice for the voluntary sector

Our sector is facing many challenges. And it has much to bring to the challenges Scotland is facing. SCVO is an effective advocate for the sector on matters that affect us all. We have a responsibility to positively position and influence the role of our sector nationally, and to build trust across sectors. We will speak confidently on the needs of the sector, such as fairer, sustainable funding; proportionate, enabling regulation; a genuine role in strategic decision-making, planning and policy-making.

### 2. Continuing to support a diverse sector

As well as financial resilience, voluntary organisations across the country need the knowledge, skills and confidence to maximise their effectiveness and impact. They need high standards of governance, digital capacity and tools and resources to continuously improve. We know that our sector achieves great things, and we will identify and create opportunities to make the most of that unique role by regularly bringing people together and adding value to their work.

### 3. Continuing to perform well to deliver success

We are a valuable resource for the sector and want to grow and improve what we do. We will be an exemplar of good practice and model it across everything we do, from our own governance to blended working arrangements and becoming a net zero organisation. We are committed to trying new things, adding value and taking informed risks. We will learn from our successes and our mistakes and will share our learning with others.







## Our Governance Structure

The board is made up of up to 11 trustees. Six trustees are elected from our membership, and five are co-opted, including the Convener. The Board of Trustees is supported by two committees - Strategic Resources and Strategic Development. We expect trustees to take part in one of these committees.

## Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging

SCVO is committed to building a workforce of people with a wide range of backgrounds, perspectives and experiences. That means a workforce that includes people of different age groups, socio-economic backgrounds, faith and beliefs. People who are trans, disabled, from minority ethnic backgrounds. People who identify as lesbian, gay or bisexual or another sexual orientation. We welcome applications from individuals from all communities particularly from people with disabilities and people from ethnic minority backgrounds, currently under-represented within SCVO.

This commitment applies equally to our board.

Over the last 2 years, we have been focusing on becoming an anti-racist organisation, including training for all staff and trustees.





As Convenor, you set the tone for how the Board conducts its business. You will promote a culture of constructive challenge amongst trustees, and in providing constructive challenge and support to the Senior Leadership Team. You will work with trustees to ensure they are able to fulfill their roles effectively.

As Convener, working closely with your colleagues on the Board, you'll help influence change, gain new experiences, and build relationships. It can be challenging and will take up some of your time and offer opportunities to build your skills and knowledge to help you carry out your role.

The Convener will also act as an ambassador for, and from time to time as the public face of, SCVO.

## Key Responsibilities:

### Strategic Leadership & Governance

- Provide clear leadership and strategic leadership to SCVO, internally and externally, ensuring the Board operates within the charitable objectives
- Ensure effective stewardship of resources to meet SCVO's charitable objectives
- Ensure SCVO works to its strategic plan and support the Senior Leadership Team in driving and monitoring the delivery of the plan, reviewing strategic priorities where necessary
- Ensure SCVO operates to the highest standards of governance, and its systems and processes adhere to the Scottish Third Sector Governance Code and charity regulation
- Chair meetings of the Board of Trustees effectively and efficiently, bringing impartiality and objectivity to the decision-making process
- Ensure that trustees are fully engaged and that decisions are taken in the best, long-term interests of the charity and its members, and that the Board takes collective ownership of decisions
- Build strong and effective relationships with our members, stakeholders, funders, regulators and Scottish Government whilst being sensitive to the views and experiences of all stakeholders
- Lead a regular review of board structure, role and effectiveness, including regularly appraising the performance of the Trustees and the Board
- Represent the charity at external functions, meetings and events including presenting the Annual Report at the AGM
- Demonstrating a strong understanding of the environment that SCVO works in, including the political context in Scotland





## Relationship with the Chief Executive and Senior Leadership Team

- Establish and build a strong, effective and constructive working relationship with the Chief Executive, ensuring they are accountable for achieving agreed strategic objectives
- When necessary, lead on the recruitment of the Chief Executive
- Liaise regularly with the Chief Executive to keep an overview of the charity's affairs and providing support and challenge as appropriate
- Establish an appropriate relationship with the Senior Leadership Team
- Conduct an annual appraisal of the Chief Executive, in consultation with other trustees.
- Ensure that the Chief Executive has the opportunity for professional development and has appropriate external professional support

## Time commitment

- Regular meetings with the Chief Executive
- Quarterly meetings of the Board of Trustees
- The Board's annual strategy day, which may include an overnight stay
- Attend one meeting of each committee per year
- Ad-hoc meetings of the Board or sub-groups where necessary
- Working groups which progress SCVO's strategic objectives
- Attending key internal and external events such as The Gathering and the Scottish Charity Awards, which may include overnight stays





You will have significant experience of charity governance through participation on boards and be ready to step into the role of chair, if you have not already done so.

With the ability to lead with openness, honesty, integrity and transparency and a clear commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion, you will bring:

- A good understanding of charity governance issues in a complex organisation with a diversity of membership and a wide geographical spread
- Excellent chairing skills (not necessarily at board level) to lead and manage the Board effectively
- The ability to constructively challenge fellow trustees and the senior leadership team ensuring they work collectively in the best interests of SCVO
- Strong interpersonal and relationship building abilities and comfortable in an ambassadorial role
- Relevant experience of delivering significant change programmes, resulting in tangible benefits and outcomes
- Strong commercial acumen and a pragmatic problem solver
- A good understanding of the voluntary sector in Scotland, and the wider context in which it operates
- A keen interest in public policy and understanding of the current and future challenges facing the sector
- The ability to think and act strategically without getting bogged down in operational detail
- Demonstrable tact and diplomacy, with the ability to listen and engage effectively
- Good communication skills with experience of public speaking and stakeholder engagement
- Both a willingness and availability to work with the Chief Executive, providing support and constructive challenge with discretion, including out with the formal meeting schedule if appropriate
- A commitment to SCVO's vision and values and a knowledge of, and empathy with, the role and contribution of the voluntary sector in Scotland



## Remuneration

While this role is voluntary and so unpaid, SCVO will pay all reasonable expenses. That includes travel, accommodation and meals where necessary, and childcare or other care costs.

## The Recruitment Process

Please send a tailored CV and covering letter to [douglasadam@livingstonjames.com](mailto:douglasadam@livingstonjames.com)

We look forward to hearing from you!

