



EAST LOTHIAN CLIMATE ACTION NETWORK
ROLE DESCRIPTION: BOARD MEMBER AND CHARITY TRUSTEE

Organisation: East Lothian Climate Action Network (ELCAN SCIO #SC055099)

Roles available: We are seeking up to five new Board members, including people who can contribute in one or more of the following areas:

- Treasurer including financial governance
- Human Resources and Organisational Development
- Board Meeting Facilitation
- Youth Representation
- Renewable / Community-Owned Energy and Heat
- Sustainable food growing including local food systems
- Sustainable Transport, including Active Travel
- Community Resilience and Climate Change Adaptation

Time commitment: Approximately one day per month on average. This includes one evening Board meeting every two months (occasionally in person), preparation and follow-up, potential participation in other ELCAN circles (see Our Way of Working below), working groups, and community events.

Location: Meetings are generally held in venues across East Lothian or online.

Remuneration: The role of Board member is voluntary. Reasonable expenses will be reimbursed in accordance with ELCAN's expenses policy.

Term: Board members are normally appointed for a three-year term.

About ELCAN

East Lothian Climate Action Network is a membership-based Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO) working to support collaborative, community-led action on the climate and nature emergencies. ELCAN's charitable purposes include:

- advancing education and increasing individual and collective understanding of the climate and nature emergencies;
- supporting the development and sharing of the knowledge and skills needed to build resilient communities across East Lothian;
- advancing environmental protection and improvement for the public benefit;
- raising awareness and understanding of environmental issues;
- encouraging and enabling community-led action to improve the local environment and strengthen local resilience; and
- supporting local, community and volunteer action to build just, thriving and resilient communities.

ELCAN hosts the East Lothian Climate Hub, one of Scotland's regional network of community-based Climate Action Hubs. The Hub supports communities and organisations across East Lothian to connect, learn, collaborate and take practical action.

ELCAN developed as a community network from 2018 and became an independent SCIO in 2026 following a period of incubation by Lower Impact Living CIC. ELCAN now employs a growing staff team and delivers a mix of core Climate Hub activities and additional funded projects.

ELCAN has individual voting members and associate members, including community groups, charities and other organisations. Its work is guided by its charitable purposes, [Mission Statement & Manifesto](#), [constitution](#) and [Our Way of Working](#).

The Board

ELCAN's Board is its legally accountable body of charity trustees. Board members share collective responsibility for ELCAN's governance, strategic direction, finances, legal compliance, organisational health and delivery of its charitable purposes. Trustees make decisions collectively and are expected to act in the best interests of ELCAN and the communities it serves.

The Board's responsibilities include:

- Safeguarding ELCAN's charitable purposes, values and long-term sustainability.
- Setting and reviewing ELCAN's strategic direction.
- Overseeing organisational performance and ensuring that resources are used effectively.
- Providing financial oversight, including reviewing budgets, accounts, financial controls and organisational risks.
- Ensuring that ELCAN complies with its constitution, relevant legislation, regulatory requirements and funder obligations.
- Appointing, supporting and holding the CEO accountable for the management and delivery of ELCAN's work.
- Maintaining appropriate oversight of staffing, safeguarding, equality, risk, data protection, health and safety, and other key organisational responsibilities.
- Ensuring that ELCAN remains accountable and responsive to its members and to communities across East Lothian.
- Supporting the development of partnerships, relationships, influence and income that advance ELCAN's charitable purposes.
- Contributing constructively to collective decision-making, including raising questions, identifying risks and offering informed challenges.

Board members do not normally manage staff or direct day-to-day work. Operational responsibility is delegated to the CEO and staff team within ELCAN's agreed governance and delegated-authority arrangements.

The Mission Circle & [Our Way of Working](#)

Board members also sit within ELCAN's Mission Circle. The Mission Circle safeguards ELCAN's mission, values, charitable purposes and long-term direction. It considers whether ELCAN's activities and developing organisational structures remain aligned with the change that ELCAN exists to support.

The Mission Circle may include participants who are not charity trustees. However, decisions which are legally or constitutionally reserved to the charity trustees remain the responsibility of the Board.

ELCAN is developing a participative governance model based on sociocratic circles. Circles are groups with a defined Aim and Domain. Each circle has authority to make decisions within its agreed Domain, while remaining connected and accountable to the wider organisation. Trustees are expected to engage constructively with this approach while recognising that the Board retains those responsibilities which cannot legally or constitutionally be delegated.

The General Circle and thematic circles

ELCAN is establishing a General Circle to coordinate and oversee work across the organisation within the authority delegated to it through Our Way of Working.

The General Circle will include two representatives from each of ELCAN's thematic and other constituent circles. It will provide a space for coordination, shared learning, prioritisation and decisions which span more than any one circle and their Aims and Domains

The Board will retain overall legal accountability, while the General Circle will exercise meaningful delegated control over areas defined in its Aim and Domain and in ELCAN's governance arrangements.

ELCAN is developing or strengthening thematic circles in areas including:

- biodiversity;
- Renewable / Community-Owned Energy and Heat;
- Sustainable food growing including local food systems;
- Sustainable Transport including Active Travel;
- Community Resilience and Climate Change Adaptation;
- other areas identified through ELCAN's strategy and community engagement.

Board members with relevant expertise may help ELCAN establish these circles, strengthen connections and understand opportunities and risks. They will not

automatically lead or control the circles. Each circle will operate within its own agreed Aim and Domain.

Role of every Board member

Every Board member will be expected to:

- attend and prepare for Board and Mission Circle meetings whenever possible;
- read papers and contribute thoughtfully to decisions;
- understand and fulfil the responsibilities of a charity trustee;
- support ELCAN's mission, values and charitable purposes;
- contribute to strategic planning and organisational learning;
- provide constructive support and challenge to the CEO and fellow trustees;
- consider the needs and perspectives of ELCAN's members and East Lothian's communities;
- declare and appropriately manage any conflicts of interest;
- maintain confidentiality where required;
- participate in induction, training and periodic Board development;
- contribute their knowledge, experience, relationships and perspectives;
- work collaboratively and respectfully through ELCAN's sociocratic approach; and
- act collectively once decisions have been made.

Board members may also represent ELCAN externally, support relevant partnerships or attend community events. These activities are encouraged but will be balanced against individual availability.

Specialist contributions

All trustees have equal standing and share the same collective responsibilities. Some Board members may also take on a specialist role or act as the Board's main source of advice in a particular area. Specialist trustees are not expected to carry out operational work themselves. They will normally:

- provide informed advice to the Board;
- help the Board ask appropriate questions and understand important risks;
- liaise with the CEO to ensure that necessary work, systems or advice are in place;
- review relevant reports, policies or proposals;
- identify where external professional support may be needed; and
- contribute to decisions while recognising that responsibility remains collective.

Treasurer

The Treasurer will act as the Board's main source of advice on financial governance and oversight. Working closely with the CEO, the Treasurer will help ensure that:

- appropriate budgets, management accounts and financial reports are produced;



- the Board receives clear and timely financial information;
- appropriate financial controls and procedures are maintained;
- reserves, cash flow, restricted funding and financial risks are monitored;
- annual accounts and regulatory submissions are completed;
- the organisation plans realistically for financial sustainability; and
- significant financial issues are brought to the Board's attention.

The Treasurer is not expected to undertake ELCAN's routine bookkeeping or personally complete all financial tasks.

Human Resources

The trustee contributing Human Resources expertise will act as the Board's main source of advice on staffing, employment practice and organisational culture.

Working primarily through the CEO, they will help ensure that:

- suitable HR policies and procedures are maintained;
- ELCAN follows fair, consistent and lawful employment practices;
- appropriate arrangements exist for staff wellbeing, supervision, development and performance;
- significant staffing risks or issues are brought to the Board appropriately;
- the CEO receives suitable support, objectives and appraisal;
- the Board understands its responsibilities as an employer; and
- specialist external HR or legal advice is obtained where necessary.

Youth Representation

ELCAN wants younger people to participate directly in its highest level of decision-making, and reserves at least one seat on the Board for youth representation. The Board particularly welcomes applications from people aged approximately 30 or under because younger adults are currently under-represented, but all eligible candidates will be assessed fairly.

They will help ELCAN:

- consider how climate change and organisational decisions affect younger and future generations;
- better understand the perspectives and priorities of young adults;
- identify barriers to youth participation;
- advise the CEO on how staff may develop meaningful ways for children, young people and young adults to influence ELCAN's work;
- help build wider and more diverse youth participation across ELCAN.

Previous Board or trustee experience is not required. ELCAN will provide induction, support and opportunities for development.

Thematic expertise

We particularly welcome applicants with knowledge or practical experience in one or more of the following areas:

Community Energy and Heat (Heat Networks and Retrofit)

This could include community energy, renewable energy, energy efficiency, heat networks, retrofit, fuel poverty, heat decarbonisation, community ownership, energy policy or the development of local energy projects.

Food growing and local food systems

This could include community growing, farming, land use, food partnerships, food insecurity, sustainable food systems, horticulture, allotments or community food projects.

Sustainable Transport, including Active Travel

This could include walking, wheeling, cycling, other active travel modes, community transport, accessibility, transport planning, carbon emission reductions, behaviour change or place-based planning.

Community resilience and climate adaptation

This could include community resilience planning, climate risk, flooding, coastal change, extreme weather, emergency planning, community development, public health, nature-based solutions or adaptation policy.

Trustees bringing thematic expertise may advise the Board and CEO and help ELCAN establish and connect with the relevant thematic circle. They will not lead that circle or take responsibility for delivering its work.

Person specification

We are not looking for one person who meets every criterion. We want to build a Board containing a balanced range of skills, experience, backgrounds and perspectives.

Essential for all Board members

Applicants should demonstrate:

- commitment to ELCAN's charitable purposes, Mission Statement and values;
- interest in community-led climate action and a just transition;
- willingness to take on the responsibilities of a charity trustee;
- ability to contribute constructively to collective decisions;
- good listening, communication and relationship-building skills;
- willingness to ask questions and offer respectful challenge;
- ability to understand strategic information and consider different perspectives;
- commitment to equality, inclusion and respectful working;



- ability to make the required time commitment; and
- willingness to learn and participate in induction and trustee development.

Useful experience or perspectives

One or more of the following would be helpful:

- previous trustee, governance or leadership experience;
- financial management, accountancy or charity finance;
- Human Resources, employment practice or organisational development;
- experience of youth participation or the lived experience of being a younger community leader;
- expertise in one of ELCAN's developing thematic areas;
- fundraising, income generation or organisational sustainability;
- experience of sociocracy, distributed leadership or participative governance;
- knowledge of East Lothian's communities; perspectives which are currently underrepresented in environmental and charitable decision-making.

Formal qualifications and previous trustee experience are not required for every role.

Eligibility

Board members must be eligible to serve as charity trustees and must comply with any requirements contained in ELCAN's constitution and relevant charity law.

Applicants do not need to be climate experts. They should, however, share ELCAN's commitment to community-led action addressing the climate and nature emergencies. Knowledge of East Lothian is important. Residence in East Lothian is welcome but may not be essential for every specialist appointment, subject to the requirements of ELCAN's constitution.

Support and development

New trustees will receive:

- an induction to ELCAN, the Climate Hub and the Board;
- information about trustee responsibilities;
- access to relevant governance documents, policies and financial information;
- an introduction to ELCAN's sociocratic approach and Our Way of Working;
- opportunities for training and development;
- support from the Co-Chairs, other trustees and CEO; and
- reasonable adjustments to support accessible participation.

We recognise that people from different backgrounds may have had unequal access to formal Board experience. We therefore encourage applications from people who bring relevant values, knowledge, lived experience, or community connections, even where they have not previously served as a trustee.



Application and appointment process

Applicants should submit:

- a brief CV; and
- a cover letter explaining their interest in ELCAN, what they would bring to the Board, and any specialist role or area of expertise in which they are interested.

Applications should be sent to:

elcanchair@eastlothianclimatehub.org

Suitable applicants will have their applications reviewed by the full ELCAN Board to raise any questions, then invited to an informal conversation with one or both of ELCAN's Co-Chairs. This will provide an opportunity to discuss the role, mutual expectations, the applicant's experience and interests, and any questions they may have.

Following a successful conversation, the Co-Chair(s) will return to the ELCAN Board with relevant answers and a recommendation for Board for review. The appointment will then be considered and potentially agreed by the Board in accordance with ELCAN's constitution and governance arrangements.

Applicants will be informed of the outcome as soon as reasonably practical.

Further information about ELCAN and the East Lothian Climate Hub is available at:

www.eastlothianclimatehub.org