

# Broken Spoke Bike Co-op Board recruitment pack

## August 2020

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## 1. About us

### Broken Spoke Bike Co-op

Broken Spoke\* is a community bike workshop in Central Oxford. Our staff and volunteers help people from across the city to fix the bikes they ride, and get as many people on bikes as possible through courses, training and events. Broken Spoke is for everyone and we are actively working with marginalised groups across the city to make cycling an option for

anybody. We're as much about community building and inclusivity as we are about bikes. As one of our founders puts it;

*"Broken Spoke creates a safe learning space that doesn't just allow people to defy the expectations they have of themselves or that others have of them, it smashes power structures that put them there in the first place"*

We're a community-owned organisation, accountable to our members, and working to benefit everyone in our community. Our legal structure is a co-operative Community Benefit Society, and we have exempt charitable status (AKA charitable status for tax purposes). Our governing document is [our primary rules](#). It's a lot of rules - and there's no need to read them before you apply. But we're a friendly bunch and will be happy to discuss any questions you have about our rules.

We've been running since 2012. You can find out a bit more about what we do, and our history, [on our website](#). As a co-operative, we also subscribe to this [Statement on the Cooperative Identity – the Values and Principles](#). We are members of [Locality](#).

If you're interested in what we've been up to recently, here's [a short video](#) about some of the things we've been up to during the Covid-19 pandemic. Plus we've been producing a series of blog posts on 'why community bike projects matter' such as [this blog post from our co-founder Ellie](#).

*\*Our full legal name is Broken Spoke Bicycles Limited, and our Registered Society number is 31918R*

## The role and composition of the board

The role of our board is similar to that of a board of trustees in a charity. We refer to the members of our board as 'board members' or 'directors'. The board have oversight of the organisation, make key decisions to help steer the strategic direction and are responsible for supporting staff on operational matters.

*According to our rules we can have two types of board members:*

1. Up to 6 Elected Directors elected by and from the Society's Members;
2. Up to 5 Co-opted Directors, who must be Members, appointed to the Board by co-option. Co-opted Directors are to be selected by the Board of Directors for their particular skills and/or experience.

Currently our board is made up of 4 *members elected from our membership (1 above), plus two staff members co-opted onto the board (2 above)*. It is the second type of board members (directors) we are recruiting now. This means new board members must become a member of Broken Spoke, giving them voting rights at our general meetings. It is a straightforward process to become a member - and we will discuss this with appointed board members.

## What are we looking for?

We are quite a 'new' board, and we are looking to bring in new people with skills and experience that complement those of our existing board members. You'll be joining a small team of friendly and hands-on folks.

### **Additionally to the role descriptions below, the key skills and experience we're looking for in new board members at this time are:**

- Business development and business planning (ideally in social enterprise/community business)
- Relevant skills and experience for improving the education and teaching side of what we do, such as creating diverse learning environments
- Running purpose-driven organisations
- Volunteer coordination and community organising
- Experience in retail
- Individuals that are well networked with strategic partners/funders/institutions locally and beyond; and/or with fundraising skills.

We recognise no one individual has all this experience, but we're keen to hear from anyone who has some of these things to offer and has energy for what we do.

## How does the board work together?

Current board members come from a range of backgrounds and provide expert guidance as well as accountability. Board members attend a 3 hour meeting every 6-weeks and some give additional time to help with specific activities in between meetings. We are open to applications from outside of Oxford and it is possible to attend board meetings digitally. However we do require all board members to be present in Oxford for a minimum of two meetings per year.

When making decisions we aim for consensus (agreement from all board members) on proposals, but may fall back on majority voting if we are unable to reach consensus.

## Benefits of being a board member

Being a board member is an unpaid, voluntary role. However, board members will benefit from occasional training sessions, and reasonable expenses will be paid. We hope that board members will gain valuable experience through their role with Broken Spoke, but the main benefit will be the satisfaction of contributing to an innovative organisation that is making a difference in Oxford.

## 2. How to Apply

**Applicants are asked to send a CV and a covering letter, of a total of no more than 3 pages please.** The covering should:

- a) explain why you are interested in becoming a board member / Co-chair.
- b) outline which bits of the ideal person specification you meet (**role descriptions below**).
- c) highlight if you have any of the [key skills and experience](#) we're looking for at the moment (see above).

Please indicate whether you are specifically applying for the role of Co-Chair and/or Treasurer.

**Applications should be sent to [info@bsbcoop.org](mailto:info@bsbcoop.org) by midnight 13 September 2020.**

### Board Member recruitment schedule

1. Vacancies for 3 board members (including a Co-chair and Treasurer) will be advertised from mid-August 2020. **The closing date for applications is midnight 13 September 2020.**
2. Candidates have the opportunity to contact current board member Henry Owen on [h.a.owen@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:h.a.owen@hotmail.co.uk) if they have queries before they submit their applications.
3. Applicants apply as outlined above.
4. An appointments panel including board member(s) and staff will review the applications and shortlist, having informal discussions with applicants if needed. Informal interviews will be carried out via videoconference, and are **expected to take place on the evenings (6.30-9.30pm) of the week commencing 21 September.**
5. The board will decide, based on the information and recommendations from the appointments panel, who they would like to co-opt as board members. **We aim to make the decisions by the end of September 2020.**

### 3. General Broken Spoke board member role description

#### Role summary

The board of directors have oversight of the organisation, make key decisions to help steer the strategic direction and are responsible for supporting staff on operational matters. The board is where all authority resides until some is given away (delegated) to others.

#### Main responsibilities:

- With the rest of the board, to have oversight of the strategy, including its development and implementation.
- Financial oversight and, where needed, being a bank account signatory.
- Oversight of key organisational policies and procedures (including health and safety, HR, and others)
- Supporting the recruitment of key staff as appropriate.
- Monitoring legal and contractual compliance.
- Monitor key risks to the organisation and ensure appropriate risk mitigation where possible.
- Supporting the personal development and well-being of the staff team.
- Support with fundraising/partnership efforts, and building/maintaining relationships with current or potential funders/partners.
- Actively seek feedback from our members and our wider community, and to look for ways to make the organisation appropriately and effectively accountable and transparent.
- Represent Broken Spoke as a spokesperson at appropriate events, meetings and functions.

#### Ideal person specification (Knowledge, experience, skills, values)

*These are ideal standards, and **we recognise not everyone will meet all or even most of them.***

- Committed to the mission of Broken Spoke.
- Specific skills and experience in organisational management and strategic development such as: financial management, administration, HR, health & safety, meeting facilitation, monitoring and evaluation, writing funding bids etc.
- Committed to maintaining high levels of trust and openness between board members, the staff team, our volunteers and wider community.
- Able to think strategically and realistically.
- Ability to communicate clearly and use digital communication methods such as email, online collaboration tools and platforms (such as google drive and Slack).
- Willing to speak their mind in a board setting, to listen to others' views and be flexible, constructive and open to challenge.

- Understanding and accepting of the legal duties, responsibilities and liabilities of being a member of the board.
- Good interpersonal skills and the ability to be reflective and adapt your practice, actions and work accordingly
- Experience of building and developing grassroots organisation/s for social change.
- Experience of creating partnerships with diverse organisations and understanding of issues around inclusion and power including race, class, gender, faith, global north/south.
- Realistic capacity to give Broken Spoke your time and attention on a regular basis.

*Additionally: Board members must be over 18 years of age.*

### Commitment:

- **A term of 2 years**, with a review after the first 12 months.
- Attendance at board meetings (typically 3 hrs every 6 weeks) in person or online, plus an annual strategy workshop with staff and board.
- Attending the Annual General Meeting (AGM) - normally an evening in September.
- Being in communication with the staff team and other board members about any urgent matters arising between board meetings.
- If appropriate, to take responsibility for particular issues or areas of work.

Repeated non-attendance at meetings and/or strategy workshops may result in the board member being asked to resign.

NB. This is an unpaid, voluntary role. However, board members may claim reasonable expenses for board meetings. Expenses for other work may be payable with prior agreement.

### Relevant resources:

Co-ops UK's '[essential society director](#)' (focus on legal aspects).

## 4. Co-chair role description

This role description for Chair of the board (one of two co-chairs), will be shared between the two co-chairs in a manner mutually agreed by the co-chairs. Note board members who hold the roles of co-chair will need to be able to give more time to the role than a general board member. **This description is in addition to the general board member role description.**

### Role Summary

- Provides leadership and direction to the board in fulfilling their responsibilities for the overall governance and strategic direction of Broken Spoke.
- Ensures that the society pursues its objects as defined in the society's primary rules and other relevant regulations.
- Works in partnership with the staff team to support effective communication and a strong working relationship between the board and the staff.
- Facilitates the board in carefully considered strategic decision-making.

### Main responsibilities

In relation to the Board:

- Ensure the formulation of strategic plans and the regular review of long-term strategic aims of the organisation.
- Ensure there is monitoring of the organisation's progress against our strategy and goals.
- Ensure the development of key organisational policies.
- Work with the staff team on meeting agendas, and monitor decisions taken at meetings and ensure they are implemented.
- Chair and facilitate board meetings, as well as general meetings of the society.
- Liaise regularly with the Treasurer to maintain a clear grasp of Broken Spoke's financial position and to ensure full and timely financial transparency and information disclosure to the board.
- Support other board members to fulfil their responsibilities and enable individual and collective access to training/coaching/information to enhance the overall contribution of the board.
- Regularly review the board structure, role, staff relationships and ensure implementation of agreed changes/developments are carried out.
- Support the development of individual board members and ensure the effectiveness of the board through annual review/end of tenure meetings.
- Ensure the effective operation of the board by dealing with performance/conduct issues relating to board members (see code of conduct) and addressing conflict within the board in a timely and appropriate way.
- Look for ways to make the organisation appropriately and effectively accountable and transparent.
- Lead the board in fostering relations with potential clients and potential funders/donors.

In relation to the conduct of the society:

- Act as final stage adjudicator for disciplinary and grievance procedures if required.

- Ensure adherence and compliance around key policies including equal opportunities, health and safety in all decisions and discussions of the board and its working groups.

In relation to their co-chair:

- Discuss shared responsibilities at the start of their term of office - agreeing areas where one or other might lead and what they might share responsibility for. Some areas need a single lead, others can be shared.
- Review division of responsibilities each year (or before if issues arise).

### Ideal person specification (Knowledge, experience, skills, values)

*These are ideal standards, and we recognise that an appropriate co-chair may not meet all or even most of them. **In addition to the ideal person specification for the general board member role (above):***

- Experience facilitating meetings, with a commitment to including different voices and perspectives.
- Experience on the board of a social enterprise, community business, or charity.
- Experience of or skill in supporting/coaching team members (volunteers or staff).
- Skills in organisational development and capacity building.
- Knowledge of relevant funding environments (e.g. Oxfordshire, transport, health, environment/climate change, community business and social enterprise).

### Commitment:

The commitments for the general board member role also apply.

- **A term of 2 years**, with a review after the first 12 months.
- Exact time commitments will depend on how responsibilities are divided between the co-chairs. As mentioned above, we expect the co-chair role will require an additional time commitment compared to the general board member role. At present, we expect co-chairing will require an additional time commitment of about one day per month.



## 5. Treasurer role description

### Role Summary

The purpose of the role is to ensure that financial affairs of the organisation are legal, constitutional and within accepted accounting practice.

### Main responsibilities

- Making fellow committee members aware of their financial obligations and taking a lead in interpreting financial data to them.
- Supporting the staff member responsible for finance in
  - maintaining an overview of the financial affairs of the organisation
  - taking necessary steps to comply with relevant legislation e.g. Companies and Charity legislation.
  - regularly presenting the organisation's financial performance and status to the board and staff
  - producing an annual budget and proposing its adoption at the last meeting of the previous financial year
  - assessing the financial viability/implications of plans, proposals and feasibility studies
  - producing necessary financial reports/returns and accounts that meet the conditions of contractual agreements with external agencies such as funders and statutory bodies
  - appointing and liaising with auditors/an independent examiner and coordinating the implementation of any subsequent recommendations.
- Providing advice on, and reviewing, funding applications.
- Providing advice on the financial implications of the organisation's strategic and operational plans.

### Ideal person specification (Knowledge, experience, skills, values)

*These are ideal standards, and we recognise that an appropriate co-chair may not meet all or even most of them. **In addition to the ideal person specification for the general board member role (above):***

- Knowledge of bookkeeping and financial management, including budgeting and good financial analysis skills.
- Experience of fundraising and pension schemes.
- Experience of finances in a similar organisation, ideally of similar size (e.g. community business, co-operative, not-for-profit social enterprise, small charity)

### Commitment:

The commitments for the general board member role also apply.

- **A term of 2 years**, with a review after the first 12 months.

- Exact time commitments will vary over time, and should be similar to the general board member role, but we expect this role will require an additional time commitment around and following the end of our financial year (31 March).

## 6. Finally

Thanks for reading to the end of this pack. We're glad you're interested in supporting Broken Spoke! Do get in touch with us if you have any questions that aren't answered here, or would find it useful to chat to one of our team.

[info@bsbcoop.org](mailto:info@bsbcoop.org)