

Trustee

We are looking for two Trustees to join our Board, who bring energy, enthusiasm and commitment to help us realise our vision of a future where every young person can realise their potential.

We are particularly looking for Trustees with experience in Higher Education and Finance.



Recruitment Pack
February 2026

An introduction from our Chair of Trustees

Thank you for taking the time to learn more about becoming a Trustee of Villiers Park Educational Trust. We are a national social mobility charity with a vision of a future where background does not define opportunity and every young person can realise their potential.

Villiers Park has a rich history and a long track record of delivering impactful programmes that improve and advance education for young people. We work in some of the most deprived areas of the UK, where progression into higher education and employment is among the lowest. We overcome entrenched disadvantage gaps by equipping young people with the skills they need to thrive in the future and empowering them to feel informed and confident about the pathways to realising their goals.

Our targeted programmes are delivered by local hub teams based within the communities we serve, working in partnership with schools, colleges, universities and funders whose support is essential to our mission.

I became Chair just over a year ago and am proud to build on the charity's legacy, opening opportunities to more young people and helping to transform lives. My own connection to this charity began many years ago, and I have seen first-hand the difference our work makes. I remain deeply grateful for the opportunities Villiers Park gave me, and I know my experience is shared by many others. I am delighted to be joined by fellow alumni on our Board of Trustees, among our programme staff, and within our growing team of volunteers.

Our Board is made up of people who care deeply about our mission and who bring a wide range of skills and lived experiences. Together, we provide strategic leadership, support our executive team and ensure that the charity remains accountable to the communities we serve.

We are now seeking two new Trustees who can help us strengthen our governance and broaden our expertise. We are particularly interested in candidates with expertise in Finance and Higher Education, the latter to help continue this important perspective as Sir Les Ebdon steps down after eight dedicated years of service on the Board. If you are passionate about social mobility and committed to supporting young people to realise their potential, we would be delighted to hear from you.



Dr Desmond Birmingham
Chair of Trustees at Villiers Park

About Villiers Park

What we do

- We are experts in working with young people aged 11-19 from under-represented backgrounds. We believe that every young person should have an equal opportunity to excel at school, at university and into their careers.
- Our unique and highly-tailored programmes inspire ambitious young people, increase motivation and develop academic, employability and personal skills to raise attainment.

Who we are

- Founded over 100 years ago, Villiers Park is committed to advancing and promoting education.
- Our vision is a future where every young person has the opportunity to realise their full potential. Yet for too many, this is limited by economic, social and personal barriers not of their making. As a national social mobility charity, we exist to change that.

Our Hub Locations



Beyond Barriers

Last year, Villiers Park's Trustees approved Beyond Barriers, an ambitious five-year strategy that builds on our strong foundations and sets a bold direction for the future. It focuses on deepening our impact, expanding our reach, and driving change both locally and nationally. We aim to more than double our reach to support 5,000 young people every year by 2030 and fuel this growth by launching a major fundraising campaign.

The strategy is built upon three core goals:

Goal 1: Deepen Impact:



Villiers Park will build on partnerships within our existing geographical hubs—Hastings and Bexhill, Swindon, Tyneside, Norwich and Cambridgeshire—to meet high demand. The focus remains on the Future Leaders programme, a longitudinal initiative using the "possible selves" theory that empowers participants to visualise and achieve their future pathways.

Goal 2: Enhance Reach:



We aim to extend programmes into new communities with high unmet needs. We will offer specialist support for students applying to Oxford or Cambridge and to highly competitive courses such as medicine, dentistry and veterinary medicine, as well as targeted support for young people pursuing apprenticeships and vocational pathways.



Goal 3: Local and National Change:

Using evidence of what works and the lived experiences of young people, we aim to create a "ripple effect" in the communities we work, influencing local and national policy and practice.

Our strategy will be achieved through three critical enablers:

- We will be driven by evidence, investing in our evaluation to evidence impact and longitudinal outcomes.
- We will grow our partnerships, collaborating with schools, colleges, universities and employers to deliver targeted interventions that bring expertise together and build social capital.
- And thirdly, sustainability of resources will include the launch of a bold fundraising campaign, the development of our People and Culture strategy and a commitment to environmental sustainability, helping us make responsible choices for both people and planet.



Working with Villiers park has given me a wave of confidence I just didn't have before.

Monique, Norwich Future Leader

Our Values



We are ambitious

We are strategic in our ambition, and ambitious in our strategy. We are bold in our vision for long-term change, while remaining focused and driven in our day-to-day delivery. We support young people to be ambitious for themselves. And we are ambitious for the communities we work in, striving for meaningful, lasting change.



We are curious

We are driven by curiosity — asking questions, challenging assumptions, and exploring new possibilities for change. Our programmes are informed by data and evidence, and we continuously seek to learn and improve. We nurture curiosity in our staff and volunteers through learning and development, and we inspire young people to explore their futures with confidence and an open mind.



We are considerate

We approach our relationships with beneficiaries, partners, colleagues and supporters with empathy, respect and care. We are active listeners and intentional in our communications, fostering trust and collaboration. We use resources thoughtfully, make sustainable choices, prioritise wellbeing, and make decisions with a clear view of their long-term impact.



We are committed to equity

We are committed to ensuring fair access to resources and opportunities for every young person, regardless of their background or circumstances. We champion inclusion, collaborate across communities and make space for every voice to be heard. We will actively promote equity and inclusivity in all that we do, working towards a more just and balanced society.



Trustee Recruitment

We are looking for two Trustees to join the Board in 2026, who bring energy, enthusiasm and commitment to the role. We are particularly seeking Trustees with experience in the following areas:

- Higher education
- Finance

You do not need previous governance experience. We welcome first-time Trustees and will provide a full induction as well as ongoing training and support.

Experience in any of Villiers Park's hub regions - Swindon, Hastings and Bexhill, Norwich, Cambridgeshire and Tyneside – would also be of particular interest but is not essential.

The role of a trustee

Becoming a Trustee at Villiers Park is an exciting opportunity to help a successful, medium-sized charity scale its impact and directly support young people from under-represented backgrounds.

Our Trustees play a vital role in ensuring Villiers Park fulfils its duty to the young people we serve. Trustees provide strategic oversight, strong governance and clear direction, making sure that our work aligns with our mission and long-term vision. Trustees support and challenge the executive team so that Villiers Park can grow, thrive and deliver meaningful impact now and in the future.

Trustees gain the chance to develop new skills, build networks and make a tangible difference to a charity that empowers young people to realise their potential. We encourage Trustees to draw on their expertise and experience to help shape Villiers Park's future and support the Board in making confident, informed decisions.

Our Board currently comprises 10 Trustees, led by Chair Dr Desmond Bermingham, including three alumni Trustees who previously took part in our Future Leaders or residential programmes. Candidates may wish to read testimonials shared by current Trustee [Benita Udegbe](#) and Chair of Trustees [Dr Desmond Bermingham](#) to learn more about the experience and benefit of being a Villiers Park Trustee.

Trustee responsibilities

- Ensure that the organisation complies with its governing document, charity law and other relevant legislation and regulations.
- Provide strategic direction for the organisation through the trustee board, reviewing strategy and vision, defining goals and evaluating performance.
- Champion Villiers Park, representing the charity and contributing to the promotion of our aims and reputation by applying your skills, expertise, knowledge and contacts.
- Ensure that key risks are being identified, monitored and controlled effectively.
- Oversee Villiers Park's financial plans and budgets, and monitor and evaluate progress.
- Review and approve Villiers Park's financial statements.
- Provide support and challenge to Villiers Park's Chief Executive Officer in the exercise of their delegated authority and affairs.
- Keep abreast of changes in Villiers Park's operating environment.
- Contribute to regular reviews of the Charity's governance. Attend Board meetings and be adequately prepared to contribute to discussions.

There will be times when the trustees will be asked to be actively involved beyond Board meetings. This may involve scrutinising board papers, leading discussions, focusing on key issues, providing advice and guidance on new initiatives, presenting externally, or other issues in which the trustee has expertise.

A Trustee's commitment

Terms of office

- Trustees are appointed for a four-year term of office, with renewal for one further term to a maximum of eight years.
- This is a voluntary position, but reasonable expenses are reimbursed.

Time commitment

- Attending four Board meetings annually. Currently we meet in-person once or twice a year, with other meetings taking place remotely.
- Attending four shorter Committee meetings each year, which take place online.
- Attending training and strategy sessions, which are arranged on a more ad-hoc basis. We will give as much notice as possible. Recent examples include a Trustee and staff strategy day in person, and an online fundraising workshop led by an expert consultant in philanthropy and partnerships.

The ideal candidate

You will join a committed and driven Board of Trustees, who take pride in their support of Villiers Park. We are looking for Trustees who bring:

- A passion for social mobility and commitment to the charity's vision of a future in which every young person can realise their potential.
- Willingness and ability to understand and accept responsibilities as trustees and to act in the best interests of the organisation.
- Ability to think creatively and strategically, exercise good, independent judgement and work effectively as a board member.
- Effective communication skills and willingness to participate actively in discussion.
- A strong personal commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion.
- Willingness to lead according to our values.
- Commitment to Nolan's seven principles of public life: selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership.



The application process

Desmond Bermingham, Chair of Trustees, and Gaby Sumner, Chief Executive, would be delighted to have informal conversations with interested candidates about the role of Trustee at Villiers Park.

To arrange a conversation, and find out more about our work, please contact Gaby Sumner, Chief Executive, at gaby.sumner@villierspark.org.uk.

You will also find useful information on Villiers Park's website including recent impact reports, news and updates: www.villierspark.org.uk.

To apply, please send your CV and a covering letter of up to two pages to HR@villierspark.org.uk expressing your interest, skills and experience.

Deadline

Midday, Wednesday 11 March 2026

Interviews

Online interviews will take place during w/c 16 March and w/c 23 March 2026. You will have the opportunity to meet two or three of our current Trustees and the Chief Executive during the process.

If successful, you will be formally invited to join the Board of Trustees at our July 2026 meeting.

We will always keep you updated with the progress of your application and endeavour to give you useful feedback at each stage.