



22nd AGM Election information for Members

Trustees up for re-election – Statements

Gerry Toplis - joined October 2018

'I have been an SRS Trustee since January 2018 and chair of the Board of Trustees from July 2020. I retain my firm belief that refugees and asylum seekers coming to the UK should have access to extensive support to achieve the life they wish for in this country. SRS plays a vital role in providing this support for the individuals, families and children coming to Suffolk, and I have been proud to be a Trustee and to support this work. We will face new challenges in the coming years, for instance new refugees from Afghanistan. I would like to continue serving SRS as a Trustee in meeting those challenges and I would be grateful for your vote to remain a member of the SRS Board.'

Greg Dodds - joined October 2019

'I have been a trustee at SRS for 3 years and am seeking re-election for another term having also had experience of volunteering at SRS. I am also a member of the HR subcommittee. In my professional role I am a Director of Development for a local Housing Association and sit an Executive level contributing to strategic direction of the business. I have over 25 years' experience working with local authorities, charities and the private sector in developing further affordable housing and working in the housing sector.

I am experienced in working at a strategic level on business development and strategy formation and implementation and would very much like to contribute to the future of SRS, progressing the organisations strategic objectives and being involved in the great work SRS does in supporting refugees across Suffolk.'

Trustees co-opted and up for election – Pen profiles

Christina Sweet-Escott - joined April 2021

'For over 22 years SRS has been a lifeline of support and advice for refugees and asylum seekers coming to the UK. Its services, such as immigration and housing advice, moral as well as practical support, are vital to those who arrive here having fled wars, human rights violations and torture.

The daughter of an internally displaced parent I grew up aware of the acute trauma of fleeing a war zone and the subsequent struggle and hardship of rebuilding a life. A foreigner to Britain I know from my own experience how bewildering it is to arrive in a new country even under the best of circumstances, so I am especially grateful for the chance to support SRS in providing its services to the refugees and asylum seekers in Suffolk.'

Felicity Szesnat - joined April 2021

'I am seeking confirmation as an SRS Trustee (having acted as a co-opted Trustee since April 2021), as I feel I have a great deal to offer in the areas of law, policy, and strategy. Having been an activist in apartheid South Africa, I have a first-hand understanding of why people flee their countries. I am a trained lawyer, with a PhD in international law (human rights law, and the law of war). I have represented detained asylum seekers in the UK in their claims for refugee status and, as such, have an excellent understanding of how the system works, as well as the difficulties faced by asylum seekers, refugees, and those who work with them. I would greatly appreciate the opportunity to continue as a Trustee, especially as SRS grapples with the impact of COVID-19, Brexit, armed conflict, and climate change on its clientele and work.'

Amelia Whitworth - joined September 2021

'I have admired the work of SRS for some time and when I saw the opportunity to apply to be a trustee, I felt that I hopefully have the skills and experience to be useful to the organisation and the people it works for.

I have 15 years' experience working for humanitarian charities; working in policy, lobbying & research. For the last 10 years this has focused on gender equality & child rights, particularly those who have been forcibly displaced by conflict or natural disasters.

I am experienced in strategy development, preparing funding applications & managing budgets. I am particularly passionate about ensuring that an organisations work is meaningfully informed by those with lived experience.'

Mary Engleheart - joined September 2021

'I am a communications professional with twelve years' experience working for international humanitarian organisations. I lead on global digital communications strategies at the International Rescue Committee in order to raise the profile of the organisation to increase funds, supporters, and to influence policy change. In my career at the IRC, I have also overseen the organisation's websites, social media profiles, digital content, brand and ethical storytelling in Europe. Previous to the IRC, I volunteered in refugee camps in Greece, France and Italy, and worked with grassroots refugee organisations in the UK. I grew up on a farm in south Suffolk and escape London to visit family there as often as possible. I share SRS's values and mission, as well as a love of Suffolk, and would like to further contribute to the organisation as a trustee.'

Will Atkins - joined September 2021

'Thanks for the opportunity to be considered as an SRS trustee. I'm a writer based in Westleton. I've been interested in issues around migration, refuge, exile and displacement for many years. I have volunteered with Walthamstow Migrant Information Centre in London, and with aid organisations assisting migrants on the US-Mexico border – a subject I've also [written about](#). Since moving to Suffolk two years ago, I've become keen to find a way of helping to support refugees in my own wider community.'