



Chair  
Seckford Foundation  
Candidate Brief



## *A Message from Roger Finbow, Chair of the Seckford Foundation*

It has been a privilege to act as Chairman of the Seckford Foundation for the last ten years.

It has been an eventful decade. The change of government in 2010 brought about challenges to both our care and education activities, but also opportunities. The squeeze on expenditure on social care had profound effects on our provision of care for the elderly while the period of recession made paying fees for independent education increasingly challenging for parents. Both of these pressures continue today. However, the policy of the coalition government to promote free schools and accelerate the academy programme gave us the opportunity to support groups of parents in their desire to establish alternatives to existing secondary schools by the establishment of the Foundation's Free School Trust (now the Seckford Education Trust); and reduced help for disadvantaged young people prompted us to establish Seckford Springboard, which supports marginalised young people through apprenticeships, mentoring and grants for individuals and supportive organisations in rural Suffolk.

The second half of the decade has been one of consolidation.

Seckford Care has established itself as one of the best providers of care for the elderly in the region, with both its very sheltered and residential provision being ranked Outstanding by the Care Quality Commission and makes a modest surplus.

The activities of Springboard have been enhanced through the Foundation's leadership of Flourish, a Suffolk-wide initiative aimed at addressing issues of rural isolation, and the subsequent establishment of a post funded in part by the Salvation Army and the Prince's Countryside Fund to support the Foundation's work on developing the aspirations, skills and job opportunities for young people.

After a difficult first few years the Education Trust is now seen as one of the more successful multi academy trusts in the country, with aims to grow through the addition of further schools which should enable the Trust to become fully self-sustaining.

The biggest challenge now is to ensure that Woodbridge School is able to generate a surplus each year for reinvestment in the school, notwithstanding a strong competitive environment and external financial pressures such as significantly increased contributions to the Teachers Pension Scheme and the threat of VAT being imposed on fees.

I hope that you will consider applying for this role. If you are appointed, I am confident that you will find it as stimulating and rewarding as I have done.

## About the Seckford Foundation

The Seckford Foundation is one of Suffolk's oldest charities and exists to promote and support the care of the young and elderly in and around Woodbridge and the County of Suffolk. The Foundation has circa 650 employees, over 2,200 beneficiaries and an annual turnover of £23 million.

Its core objectives are:

- 1. Enabling elderly people to lead safe, secure, independent and fulfilling lives and caring for them when in need.**

Based at the Seckford Almshouses we offer sheltered, very sheltered, residential accommodation and day care services, including dementia care. This enables older people to maintain their independence in a safe, caring and secure environment. Seckford Care looks after around 80 elderly people.

- 2. Helping younger people to achieve their potential and to lead financially independent and productive lives.**

Woodbridge School has been in existence for more than 350 years. Today we educate some 750 pupils aged from 4 – 18.

Seckford Education Trust provides education, opportunity and choice for 11-16 year olds at publicly funded schools serving the areas in and around Ixworth, Beccles and Saxmundham; and from July 2019, junior and infant schools in Felixstowe, in total some 1,400 pupils.

- 3. Strengthening the communities in which those we support live, ensuring no-one suffers through rural isolation**

Seckford Springboard supports and helps young people under 25 in the local communities in which we operate through our Springboard initiative, providing and procuring apprenticeships, helping young people to become employment ready and providing mentoring.

In addition, we support through grants individuals and organisations to assist in addressing the extra challenges that arise through living in rural communities.

More information can be found at: [www.seckford-foundation.org.uk](http://www.seckford-foundation.org.uk)

## The Role

The Chair will provide leadership to the Board of Trustees holding them and Principal Officers to account for the Foundation's mission and vision, ensuring that they fulfil their duties and responsibilities to effectively set and deliver the strategy. Other key requirements are to:

- Be an ambassador and the public face of the Foundation in partnership with the Director.
- Keep abreast of Charity Law and regulations to ensure best practice in governance of the organisation.
- Provide positive, sensitive and supporting Strategic Leadership of the charity.
- Lead the Board in overseeing and reviewing strategic plans and goals and ensure that the Foundation's work reflects the vision, mission, values and strategy delivering maximum impact for its beneficiaries, and enabling the Board to review major risks and associated opportunities.
- Develop strong positive relationships at senior levels with key stakeholders, both internally and externally.
- Ensure that the work of each of the Foundation's Committees is reported to and considered at Board meetings.
- Ensure the Board fulfils its duties to maintain the sound financial health and future sustainability of the organisation, satisfying itself that systems are in place to take advantage of opportunities and manage and mitigate risks.

### External relations

- Act as an ambassador for the organisation, representing it at key events and in meetings with stakeholders.
- Be well connected in Suffolk and within the Suffolk Community maintaining close relations with key members of both the public and private sectors.
- Act as a spokesperson for the organisation when appropriate, addressing any potential conflict with external stakeholders.
- Be proactive in seeking opportunities for cooperation and collaboration with other charities and public bodies.

### Organisational efficiency and effectiveness

- Chair meetings of the Board effectively and efficiently to stimulate positive and supportive well rounded discussion to enable considered decision making undertaken in the best, long term, interests of the Foundation and its beneficiaries.
- Ensure that Board meetings are timely and well planned with the agreed agenda and relevant information circulated ahead in good time with appropriate records to ensure compliance.
- Ensure decisions are implemented and Board members take ownership of and drive forward their actions outside of meetings.

### Governance

- Ensure that Trustees fulfil their duties and responsibilities for the effective governance of the organisation.
- Ensure that the Board operates within its charitable objectives and, with the support of the Director, meets all the reporting and other requirements of the Charity Commission.
- Lead on the appraisal of the performance of the Trustees and the Board on a regular basis, ensuring that Trustees understand their role.
- Ensure that the Foundation's governance documents are reviewed and updated regularly.

- Ensure, through the Nominations Committee, that the Board of Trustees is refreshed when needed and incorporates the right balance of skills, knowledge and experience needed to lead and govern the organisation effectively.

### **Relationship with the Director**

- Establish and build a strong, supportive and constructive working relationship with the Director and Senior Officers, ensuring they are held to account whilst supporting them to achieve agreed strategic objectives.
- Ensure regular contact with the Director and develop and maintain an open and supportive relationship within which each can speak openly about concerns and challenges.
- Conduct an annual appraisal and remuneration review for the Director in consultation with other Trustees.
- Ensure the Director has the opportunity for professional development as required and has appropriate internal and external professional support.

## **The Candidate**

The ideal candidate will bring the following skills, experience and attributes to the role:

### **Personal Qualities**

- Commitment to the Foundation's work and to its vision, mission and values.
- A positive, sensitive and creative approach.
- Strong interpersonal and relationship building skills, with confidence to engage in an ambassador role.
- Strong networking capabilities in and around Suffolk to benefit the charity.
- Ability to commit time to the role, including travel and attending events out of normal office hours.

### **Experience of**

- Operating at a senior strategic level within an organisation.
- External representation, delivering presentations, pitching ideas and managing stakeholders.
- Securing partnerships, influence at senior levels and other support to deliver against organisational strategy.
- Successfully chairing meetings.
- Charity and/or Corporate Governance and working with or as part of a Board of Trustees or Directors.

### **Knowledge and Skills**

- Strong leadership skills with an ability to motivate others to bring them together around a shared mission, vision and strategy.
- Sound understanding of governance issues.
- Understanding and acceptance of the legal duties, responsibilities and liabilities of Trusteeship.
- Broad understanding of the commercial sector.
- Confidence in dealing with financial issues.

## Terms of the Appointment

The appointment of Trustees, including the Foundation's Chair is for a four-year term and will be eligible for reappointments for up to two additional terms.

The role is unremunerated, although expenses for travel may be claimed.

Board meetings are normally held in Woodbridge, although the Chair could be located anywhere in Suffolk.

There are currently five board meetings a year and the Chair may also attend committee meetings.

The Chair is also expected to have regular meetings with the Director and represent the Charity at various events and meetings with key stakeholders. The overall time commitment is three-four days per month.

## Next Steps

The Seckford Foundation has retained Wild Search to advise on this appointment. To discuss your potential interest in the role, please contact Edward Wild [ew@wildsearch.org](mailto:ew@wildsearch.org)

There will be an opportunity to discuss the role with Roger Finbow or with the Director Graham Watson prior to making an application. Wild Search will advise on and arrange these calls.

Candidates wishing to be considered should submit a CV, accompanied by a summary of interest in the role and relevant experience of no more than two A4 pages to [seckford@wildsearch.org](mailto:seckford@wildsearch.org)

Deadline for applications: **midday, 6<sup>th</sup> September 2019**

The appointments panel will be chaired by Vice Chair Jude Chin. Candidates shortlisted for an interview will have the opportunity to meet with Graham Watson and arrange visits of the Seckford estate prior to interviews, which will take place during late September.

*Prepared by Wild Search*

*July 2019*

[www.wildsearch.org](http://www.wildsearch.org)