

# INDEPENDENT CHAIR OF THE CUSTOMER PANEL

*Candidate information & Job Description  
October 2019*

WONDERFUL ON TAP



# Independent chair

Our customers, and the communities we live and work in, are at the heart of everything we do. And that's why, from 2020, we're going to donate around £10million over the next five years to support local projects, charities and community groups, helping to make a real and tangible difference in the communities we serve.

The Fund will be overseen by a customer panel whose role will be to review applications and ultimately decide where our money will be spent.

We are searching for a chair person to lead this panel.

This document gives an overview of our community fund, the role of the panel itself, the role of the chair, the experience and capabilities we are seeking and information on how to apply.

# The community fund

Our customers have helped us to create and shape our new Community Fund. We've spoken to lots of people to better understand their community needs, and as a result, have chosen to design our fund around improving community wellbeing.

By community wellbeing we mean:

**People:** Projects that facilitate healthier lifestyles and skills development

**Places:** Projects that help to create better places to live in and use

**Environment:** Projects that facilitate a healthier natural environment, greater access to that environment or support the preservation of water

And of course, being a water company, we'd also love applications for projects that have a connection to the water cycle too! This might mean creating sustainable drainage, installing grey water recycling, creating water efficient green spaces or encouraging hydration for health.

We've recruited a new Community Fund team whose role will be to promote the scheme, provide support to grant applicants and to assess the grant applications against our eligibility criteria.

The Community Fund team will then make recommendations to the panel. The Community Panel will meet face to face on a quarterly basis to review these recommendations and ultimately decide where they want our money to go.

The panel itself will be approximately 9 people and include a mix of Severn Trent customers and our own employees; all with a range of interests and backgrounds.

Grant applications will open in **January 2020** via our website. In March, we'll be holding our first Customer Panel and from **April 2020** we'll be administering our first grants.

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# The chairperson role

## Role objective

Responsible for facilitating discussion and encouraging consensus among panel members to ensure the review of applications are conducted fairly and decisions are valid, evidence-based and in line with the fund's eligibility criteria and guidelines.

## Key accountabilities

- Ensure that the review of applications is conducted fairly and that decisions are valid, evidence-based and in line with the fund's eligibility criteria and guidelines.
- Facilitate discussion, encouraging panel members to share their views and challenge where necessary.
- Ensure a consensus is reached and decisions are made in a thorough and timely manner.
- Ensure that all panel members act in good faith and do not unjustly influence any decisions.
- Participate and engage with the process fully including reading preparation documents prior to the meetings to facilitate informed discussions.
- Conduct a review of smaller-sized grants by exception on a monthly basis.
- Attend quarterly panel meetings held in March, June, September and December (duration c. 4 hrs per meeting).
- Follow and adhere to Community Fund guidelines, eligibility processes etc.
- Occasional support with Community Fund review reporting and strategy development, and make recommendations for improvement.

# The chairperson role

## Experience

- Leadership experience with ability to demonstrate strong independence of judgement to challenge effectively outside of areas of your own expertise
- Previous board membership experience with ability to question intelligently and debate constructively. A willingness to be challenged on your own views and subsequently re-examine them to reach new conclusions
- Professional experience or genuine & demonstrable personal interest in one or more of the following (or similar):
  - **Environmental protection**
  - **Sustainability**
  - **Working with young people**
  - **Diversity, equality & Inclusion – including Mental Health, Social Mobility & Disabilities.**
  - **Work supporting the local community**
- Previous Chair/Deputy Chair experience for an advisory board or similar (desirable)

## Capabilities

- Ability to develop a professional rapport with other board members and Severn Trent.
- Ability to time manage and facilitate the meeting, conclude conversations and make decisions .
- Ability to keep calm in difficult situations and be willing to take action if necessary.
- Ability to summarise the discussions and present back to the panel .
- Ability to encourage all panel members to participate, facilitate conversations and challenge where necessary.
- Capable of taking a holistic view to ensure all issues are explored fairly and thoroughly.

**We want our Community Panel & Chair to fully represent the communities we serve, therefore we are seeking to appoint someone who is a Severn Trent customer.**

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# Additional information

## Time commitment & fees

There will be 4 panel meetings held quarterly across the year in March, June, September and December which will be held at various locations across our region (duration c.4 hrs per meeting). We'll ask you come prepared having read all relevant documents prior to the meetings to facilitate informed discussions (c.1hr per month).

You will also be required to conduct a review of smaller-sized grants by exception on a monthly basis (c. 1hr per month) which can be done from home.

The chair appointment will be for a 2 year period. The role will be unpaid & voluntary, with all reasonable expenses will be covered. You will also be supplied with an iPad where all the documents can be accessed.

## To apply

To apply, please submit a CV and cover letter outlining your interest in supporting community projects to [Life@severntrent.co.uk](mailto:Life@severntrent.co.uk) by 1<sup>st</sup> November 2019.