

BGEN Training & Conference Trustee



ROLE	Training & Conference Trustee, Botanic Gardens Education Network
LOCATION	Home-based, with occasional face-to-face meetings if required
CONTACT	Pre-application enquiries to the BGEN Chair - lauren.daly@obg.ox.ac.uk Application to the BGEN Coordinator: info@bgen.org.uk
CLOSING DATE	11.59PM, Tuesday 24 th November 2026

Help Shape the Future of Plant and Environmental Education

BGEN is seeking a Training & Conference Trustee to join its Board and help deliver the organisation's Strategic Plan by shaping an engaging annual conference and year-round programme of training and networking opportunities. This voluntary role will work alongside the Training & Conference Workstream Lead, BGEN Coordinator and fellow Trustees to provide high-quality learning and knowledge-sharing opportunities that respond to member needs, support the exchange of best practice, and strengthen the impact of our work across the UK and Ireland.

About BGEN

Founded in 1989, BGEN (Botanic Gardens Education Network) is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation and the professional network for plant and nature educators across the UK and Ireland.

We connect educators and community engagement professionals, build professional capacity and provide opportunities to share knowledge, experience and best practice through our Annual Conference, training, networking and wider member activities.

BGEN also advocates for its members, helping strengthen the voice of plant and green-space education on matters that affect the sector.

Why Become a Trustee?

As a BGEN Trustee, you will help shape the future of the organisation and contribute to its 2026–2030 Strategic Plan, including strengthening and connecting the sector, increasing the visibility and collective impact of members, developing BGEN's role as a recognised sector voice, and building a financially sustainable and resilient organisation.

Trustees bring different skills, experiences and perspectives to the Board. You do not need previous Trustee experience or to work in a botanic garden. We welcome people with relevant professional or transferable skills who share BGEN's commitment to strengthening plant and nature education.

About the Training & Conference Workstream

The Training & Conference Workstream oversees BGEN's programme of professional learning, knowledge exchange and networking, including the Annual Conference, online training, Virtual Coffee Mornings and occasional face-to-face events.

The Annual Conference alternates between online and in-person formats. Across the programme, the workstream aims to respond to member and sector needs, facilitate collaboration and sharing of best practice, and use feedback and evaluation to continually improve BGEN's offer.

About the Role

The Training & Conference Trustee will support the development and delivery of the Annual Conference and year-round programme. The role combines strategic thinking with practical support: contributing ideas, identifying speakers and opportunities, supporting relationships and helping ensure events are relevant, inclusive and valuable to members.

The Trustee will not be expected to lead every aspect of every event. Day-to-day event administration, ticketing and routine communications sit with the Coordinator; the Trustee will complement this operational role through strategic input, connections and agreed practical support.

About You

We are looking for someone who is enthusiastic about professional learning, knowledge sharing and bringing people together. You may have experience in conferences, events, education, training, facilitation, learning and development, visitor or community engagement, programme development or a related field, and we also welcome relevant transferable skills.

You will enjoy developing ideas, understanding what BGEN members need and building positive relationships with speakers, colleagues and partners. You will be able to contribute strategically while working collaboratively as part of a Trustee Board and workstream.

You do not need experience across every aspect of conferences and training. Most importantly, you will share BGEN's commitment to strengthening plant and nature education and supporting the professionals who connect people with plants and the natural world.

Key Responsibilities of the Role

- Help shape and review BGEN's annual programme of conferences, training, networking and knowledge-sharing opportunities, ensuring it responds to member needs and strategic objectives.
- Contribute to the Annual Conference, including themes, programme development, speaker and contributor identification, and appropriate logistical support.
- Identify emerging topics, speakers, partnerships and opportunities that could strengthen BGEN's professional development and member engagement offer.
- Bring relevant professional knowledge, networks and connections, and support speaker or stakeholder relationships where appropriate.
- Use member and Trustee feedback and evaluation to assess and improve the programme, including exploring new approaches such as member forums and other knowledge-sharing formats.
- Work collaboratively with the Coordinator, providing agreed support with event preparation and delivery while recognising the Coordinator's operational responsibilities.
- Promote BGEN's programme through relevant professional networks where appropriate, and support accessible and inclusive event planning.
- Ensure appropriate consideration is given to GDPR and data protection and follow BGEN's policies and procedures and good governance requirements.

Core Trustee Responsibilities

- Contribute to BGEN's vision, mission and strategic priorities and act in the best interests of the charity and its members.
- Ensure BGEN complies with its governing document, charity law and relevant legal and regulatory requirements.
- Support sound financial management, financial sustainability and effective risk management.
- Contribute to effective, transparent and evidence-based Board decision-making and agreed actions.
- Work collaboratively with fellow Trustees and the BGEN Coordinator, supporting a positive and constructive Board culture.
- Maintain appropriate confidentiality and uphold the Nolan Principles of Public Life.

Candidate Skills, Experience and Knowledge

Essential

- Relevant experience in professional learning, training, conferences, events, programme development or a related area.
- Ability to understand audience or member needs and translate these into relevant activities or programmes.
- Experience developing ideas and working collaboratively to take them through to delivery.
- Strong communication and relationship-building skills, including confidence engaging speakers, facilitators, partners or stakeholders.
- Strategic thinking and sound judgement, with an ability to balance ideas and opportunities with capacity, resources and priorities.
- Ability to use feedback and evaluation to improve future activity.
- Commitment to BGEN's charitable aims and sufficient time and capacity to fulfil the Trustee role.

Desirable

- Experience developing a professional learning or events programme at organisational or sector level.
- Knowledge of, or experience working within, the devolved education systems and curricula of Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland, and/or Ireland.
- Experience within a membership organisation or professional network, particularly responding to member needs.
- Knowledge of current or emerging issues in plant, environmental, biodiversity or sustainability education, and relevant professional networks.

- Experience developing new approaches to professional engagement, knowledge exchange or peer learning.
- Experience of working at Board, committee or strategic level within a charity, professional body or not-for-profit organisation.

We recognise that no candidate is likely to meet every criterion and encourage applications from individuals who feel they can make a positive contribution to BGEN.

Availability and Commitment

- Board meetings: 4 online meetings each year, 90 -120 minutes each.
- Workstream meetings: approximately 4–6 online meetings each year, 90 – 120 minutes each.
- Annual General Meeting: usually held between January and February, within the BGEN Conference.
- BGEN Conference: 2 full days each year, usually held in January or early February.
- Administrative time: typically 3 days per quarter, including meetings, preparation, reading papers and agreed follow-up actions. Commitment may vary depending on Board priorities and the event calendar.
- Trustees are appointed for an initial three-year term, with the opportunity to serve one further term, in accordance with BGEN's governing document.

Support and Induction

New Trustees will receive an induction to BGEN's charitable objectives, governance arrangements, strategic priorities, financial position, current projects and workstreams. Ongoing support will be provided by the Chair, fellow Trustees and the BGEN Coordinator.

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

BGEN is committed to creating a diverse and inclusive Board. We welcome applications from people of all backgrounds, identities and lived experiences and believe diversity of thought, experience and perspective strengthens our governance and helps us better support our members. We will consider reasonable adjustments throughout the recruitment process.

How to Apply

If you would like to join the BGEN Board of Trustees as our Training & Conference Trustee, please send your CV and a covering letter (maximum two pages) outlining why you are interested in becoming a Trustee, your relevant skills and experience, and how you believe you could contribute to BGEN and this role.

Contact: Samantha Bowden, BGEN Coordinator

Email: info@bgen.org.uk

Opening Date: Tuesday 29th September, 2026

Closing Date: 11.59PM, Tuesday 24th November, 2026

Interviews: Early December

For an informal conversation about the role, the Board or the different workstreams, please contact Dr Lauren Daly, Chair of BGEN, at lauren.daly@obg.ox.ac.uk

Thank you for considering becoming a BGEN Trustee.