



Become a Trustee for the Friends of Rowntree Park

Help lead the charity supporting one of York's best-loved green spaces

Friends of Rowntree Park is looking for a new Chair of Trustees to help guide our charity through its next chapter.

Rowntree Park is a much-loved public green space at the heart of the York community. The Friends of Rowntree Park is the registered charity that works alongside the City of York Council and other partners to help care for, improve and champion the park, while creating opportunities for people to get involved through volunteering, nature, events and community projects.

We're looking for someone who shares our passion for community, nature and the power of volunteering, and who can provide positive, collaborative leadership to our board of trustees.

What does the Chair do?

The Chair helps the trustee board work effectively and keeps the charity focused on its purpose, priorities and long-term sustainability.

This isn't about running the charity day-to-day. We have a part-time freelance Charity Manager who oversees much of the charity's operational work, supported by volunteer leads and other freelance roles. The Chair works alongside the Charity Manager and fellow trustees to provide oversight, support and strategic direction.

The Chair's role includes:

- leading trustee meetings and helping ensure discussions are constructive and decisions are made;
- helping the board maintain a clear strategic direction;
- supporting good governance and ensuring trustees understand and fulfil their responsibilities;
- developing a positive, inclusive and collaborative board culture;
- acting as a sounding board and point of support for the Charity Manager;
- helping maintain appropriate boundaries between governance and operational management;
- supporting effective relationships with the City of York Council and other key partners where appropriate;
- helping the charity consider its long-term financial sustainability, development and priorities; and
- representing the Friends of Rowntree Park when appropriate.

The Chair doesn't need to have all the answers. An important part of the role is helping bring together the knowledge, skills and perspectives of the whole trustee board.

About Friends of Rowntree Park

The Friends became a registered charity in 2019, although volunteers have been supporting Rowntree Park for many years.

Today, our work covers a wide range of activities. Our volunteers help care for several garden areas, develop wildlife habitats, litter pick, run events and activities, fundraise and support projects throughout the park. We run nature and wellbeing activities for adults and families, support volunteering, work with schools and community groups and develop projects aimed at making the park welcoming to a wider range of people.

We are also an important community link with the City of York Council, which retains overall responsibility for managing Rowntree Park. We work closely with Council officers, sharing community feedback and discussing priorities, improvements and issues affecting the park.

Alongside our volunteers and trustees, we have a small number of freelance roles supporting the charity's work, including our Charity Manager and roles supporting volunteering and the Wildlife Area.

Further information about what we do can be found on the Friends of Rowntree Park website.

Who are we looking for?

You don't necessarily need to have chaired a charity before. We're interested in finding someone who can bring good judgement, an ability to listen and bring people together, and enthusiasm for helping a small community charity develop sustainably.

You might have experience of leadership, governance, charities, community organisations, business, the public sector or managing people, but equally, relevant skills may have been gained through volunteering or other lived experience.

It would be particularly useful if you:

- are comfortable facilitating discussions and helping a group reach decisions;
- can think strategically while understanding the realities of a small, volunteer-powered organisation;
- communicate clearly and diplomatically;
- value different perspectives and encourage others to contribute;
- understand the distinction between governance and day-to-day management;
- are willing to support and constructively challenge when appropriate; and
- care about community green spaces and the role they play in people's lives.

Above all, we're looking for someone who wants to help the charity thrive.

Diversity and inclusion

Friends of Rowntree Park is committed to improving the diversity of our trustee board. We believe representation matters and that the leadership of the charity should better reflect the diverse communities who use and care about the park.

We particularly encourage applications from people who are currently under-represented within charity governance, including people from ethnic minority backgrounds, LGBTQ+ people and disabled people. Applications are welcome from anyone aged 18 or over.

Time commitment and flexibility

We are a relatively small charity, so the contribution of our Chair and trustees is important. The trustee board formally meets around 4-6 times a year, usually outside normal working hours. The Chair will also need some time between meetings to liaise with the Charity Manager and other trustees, help shape agendas and respond when significant governance issues arise.

Trustees are also encouraged to attend our twice-yearly public meetings and, where possible, occasionally join Friends activities and events. This isn't compulsory, but it is a great way to understand the work of the charity and meet the volunteers who make it happen.

We recognise that people balance work, caring responsibilities, health needs and other commitments and aim to be flexible wherever possible.

Payment and accessibility

The Chair of Trustees is an unpaid voluntary role.

We recognise that giving time without pay can be a barrier and that traditional models of charity trusteeship aren't equally accessible to everyone. Reasonable expenses will therefore be covered in line with our expenses policy. This can include travel and, where appropriate, childcare, carer costs or other access-related expenses required to enable participation. We're also happy to discuss adjustments around meeting formats, timings and other access requirements. If you're interested in the role but unsure whether it could work alongside your other commitments, please get in touch for an informal conversation.

Support and board culture

You won't be doing this alone. The Chair works alongside an established board of trustees, our Charity Manager and a fantastic network of volunteer leads and volunteers.

We aim to have a board culture that is friendly, respectful and collaborative, while still taking our responsibilities as charity trustees seriously. Different perspectives are welcomed and constructive discussion is encouraged. An induction and appropriate support will be provided to the incoming Chair.

Why become Chair?

This is an opportunity to play a meaningful role in the future of a much-loved York green space and a growing community charity.

You could help strengthen the organisation behind everything from gardening and wildlife conservation to volunteering, community events, nature activities and projects designed to make the park more welcoming and inclusive.

For someone interested in community, nature, volunteering or charity leadership, it is a chance to use your experience in a role where you can see the difference the organisation makes around you.

Interested?

To apply, please email a letter of no more than two sides of A4 by Monday 14th September 2026.

Please tell us:

- why you're interested in becoming Chair of Friends of Rowntree Park;
- the skills, experience or perspectives you would bring to the role; and
- details of two character references.

You're also welcome to include a CV if you have one, but this isn't essential.

Please send applications to hello@rowntreepark.org.uk.

If you're interested but would like to understand more before applying, we'd really encourage you to have an informal conversation with us first. Email hello@rowntreepark.org.uk and we'll arrange a chat with one of our trustees.

Deadline: Monday 14th September 2026

Further information about the role and the Friends of Rowntree Park can be found on our website.