

# *Offa house*



*October 2010*

*Trustee Prospectus*

## Becoming a trustee of Offa House

Thank you very much for your interest in becoming a trustee of Offa House. I hope that you will find all the information that you need both from this pack and from our website to give you an understanding of the activities of Offa House and the opportunities and challenges that we have as a board of trustees.

All trustees will be appointed as directors of Offa House Limited (the Company) and applicants will be required to confirm that they are not disqualified from acting as directors nor ineligible to act as charity trustees. Helpful guidance on duties of trustees can be found at [http://www.charity-commission.gov.uk/Library/guidance/cc3\(a\)text.pdf](http://www.charity-commission.gov.uk/Library/guidance/cc3(a)text.pdf)

Should you wish to pursue your application, please send a summary CV with a covering letter stating why you wish to apply, either by post to the address below for the attention of 'The Chair of Trustees' or by email to [peterpurdom@aol.com](mailto:peterpurdom@aol.com) with 'Offa House Trustee' in the subject line.

The closing date for applications is Friday 7th January 2011

If you have any queries regarding the recruitment process or require further information, please contact me by email (as above) giving me your contact details and I will get back to you as soon as I can.



Peter Purdom  
Chair of Trustees

Offa House Limited  
Offchurch  
Leamington Spa  
Warwickshire CV33 9AS

Tel: 01926 423309  
Fax: 01926 330350

Website: [www.offahouseretreat.co.uk](http://www.offahouseretreat.co.uk)

Company registration - 6888677  
Charity registration - 1137946



## An overview of Offa House

Offa House is the Coventry Diocesan Retreat House and Conference Centre, integrated with the purpose statement of the diocese to worship God, make new Christians and disciples and to transform communities. The Bishop of Warwick acts as Guardian with specific responsibility for the development of the spiritual life of Offa House. The land and buildings are owned by the diocese, which also pays the Warden's stipend. Otherwise Offa House operates independently as far as finances are concerned. The building has been altered many times and currently there are 24 bedrooms, most single but 3 double and 3 twin. All except 8 have en-suite facilities. The Coach House, a separate building at the bottom of the grounds, sleeps 2 in a double bed and is used as overflow accommodation for the house or as a holiday let.

Offa House functions primarily as a conference centre for groups who run their own programme using our facilities. The bulk of guests are church groups, there are often training events from Church of England bodies, other denominations and voluntary groups such as prayer ministry interest groups. We have a few charities and a very small number of local authority or other training groups. Offa House also runs its own programme of retreats – details of which are on the website. Most years every weekend is booked well in advance (with the exception of mid-August and late December) and we have to turn bookings away. Guests are particularly appreciative of our fine home cooking, and we have a gold star for hygiene.

Offa House is regarded by many in the diocese as their spiritual home and is supported by an active group of 'Friends of Offa House'. We are used by the diocese for training events, but few of the Coventry parishes use the house (though parishes from further afield do). This may be partly due to the fact that our weekends are booked up by the time PCCs are considering their programme for the year. We also face increasing competition from parish centres within the diocese which offer self-catering conference rates which are lower than we can set.

Offa House faces a number of challenges for the future, some which are common to all retreat houses and some which are specific to Offa House.

Generally, most people booking onto our retreats are around retirement age, we attract very few under-40s. Retreats are relatively expensive and must compete with the annual holiday for people's time and money. Only a small proportion of churchgoers have experienced a retreat and so there is work to be done to communicate the benefits both for individuals and for church groups.



Specifically, our buildings will need substantial investment in the future.

There is a projected major rebuild to provide a chapel that can accommodate all residents, to add wheelchair-friendly bedrooms, and to replace the poorly insulated non-ensuite bedroom wing and prefabricated conference room erected in 1962. In addition, we are working to become fully compliant with fire safety regulations, though the bulk of the work has been done, and a major heating/hot water overhaul will be necessary in the medium term.

Offa house

## Board of Trustees

The board of Offa House is a group of trustees working together with the Warden and senior staff team to ensure the safe running of the organisation.

Offa House is looking to recruit up to four new trustees with skills and experience that match the criteria outlined in the Trustee Person Specification (page 5).

Trustees commit each year to be available to attend some 6 meetings of the board of trustees and are expected to contribute to the good running of Offa House by the use of the primary skills for which they have been appointed. Meetings are normally held at Offa House on a weekday evening starting at 6pm. Some time will be needed to look at relevant papers each month.

All new trustees will be given an induction and will be appointed for an initial 3 year period. The position of trustee is unpaid but agreed expenses will be reimbursed.

Trustees will be expected to take an active interest in the life and work of Offa House.

## Trustee Responsibilities

The statutory duties of trustees are defined by the Charity Commission and their website is a very useful resource for anyone considering acting or already acting as a charity trustee - <http://www.charitycommission.gov.uk>

### Statutory Responsibilities:

Trustees have and must accept ultimate responsibility for directing the affairs of a charity, and ensuring that it is solvent, well-run, and delivering the charitable outcomes for the benefit of the public for which it has been set up.

As Directors of the Company, the trustees have statutory duties of governance and reporting as defined by the Companies Act 2006 and also by Health & Safety legislation.

### Compliance – Trustees must:

- Ensure that the charity complies with charity law, and with the requirements of the Charity Commission as regulator; in particular ensure that the charity prepares reports on what it has achieved and Annual Returns and accounts as required by law.
- Ensure that the charity does not breach any of the requirements or rules set out in its governing document and that it remains true to the charitable purpose and objects set out there.
- Comply with the requirements of other legislation and other regulators (if any) which govern the activities of the charity.
- Act with integrity, and avoid any personal conflicts of interest or misuse of charity funds or assets.



### **Duty of prudence – Trustees must:**

- Ensure that the charity is and will remain solvent.
- Use charitable funds and assets reasonably, and only in furtherance of the charity's objects.
- Avoid undertaking activities that might place the charity's endowment, funds, assets or reputation at undue risk.
- Take special care when investing the funds of the charity, or borrowing funds for the charity to use.

### **Duty of care – Trustees must:**

- Use reasonable care and skill in their work as trustees, using their personal skills and experience as needed to ensure that the charity is well-run and efficient.
- Consider getting external professional advice on all matters where there may be material risk to the charity, or where the trustees may be in breach of their duties.

### **Responsibilities specific to Offa House:**

The specific responsibilities of Trustees of Offa House are set out in our governing document - Offa House Trustees shall meet at least four times a year and shall be responsible for:

- the financial affairs of the House. and for this purpose to maintain a bank account.
- the development of income through donations, Trusts, bequests and other sources.
- the fixing of house charges.
- the purchase and renewal of domestic and non-domestic equipment.
- the decor and furnishing of rooms.
- supporting the Warden in all matters affecting the day- to-day running of the House.
- preparing an annual report, together with audited accounts for presentation to the Diocesan Synod through the Bishop's Council and Standing Committee.
- preparing, as and when necessary, plans for the improvement of facilities of the House which require capital expenditure outside normal budgetary limits for submission to the Diocesan Synod.
- preparing a job specification for the duties of the Warden and all other paid members of the staff. If the Warden shall be the principal officiating minister of the Parish of Off-church then the resolution of any matters appertaining to the respective duties of Warden and the parochial duties of such a minister shall be determined by the Bishop.

- considering the programme provisions of the House without prejudice to the Warden's responsibility for the management of all bookings.

## **Trustee Person Specification**

### **Each Trustee must:**

- Be a Christian, willing to seek guidance from God
- Support the ethos of Offa House and be committed to the ongoing development of its vision and mission
- Have integrity
- Have an understanding of the legal duties, responsibilities and liabilities of a trustee
- Have clear, independent judgement
- Be willing to speak his/her mind
- Be able to think creatively
- Have strategic vision
- Be willing to devote the necessary time and effort to carry out their duties and responsibilities as a trustee
- Be able to work effectively as a team member and towards consensus decisions within board meetings

### **Offa House is seeking Trustees who have skills and experience in one or more of the following areas:**

- Financial management - with ability to guide on implementation of proper management accounting systems and procedures and with an understanding of the requirements of the Charity Commission and Companies House.
- Charity law and governance
- Property management and development
- Human Resources management
- Hotel and conference centre management
- Marketing and Public Relations
- Fundraising, in particular with major donors

