

Interests, loyalties and conflicts statement

All Trustee Board members have financial and other interests. Sometimes those interests give rise to conflicts, potential conflicts, or the potential for the appearance of conflicts. For example, Trustee Board members may be employed by organisations in which there are other members of the Society who may be applying for grants, standing for election, or nominating colleagues for prizes or positions.

The law recognises that such conflicts of interest or conflicts of loyalty are unavoidable, and requires that they need to be dealt with in a transparent manner. Some of these matters are formally regulated by Section 16 of the Articles of Association but the Trustee Board seeks to ensure that where appropriate, it does more than merely follow the letter of these rules.

All Trustee Board members complete a register of interests before taking office, and this is a public document. As a standing item on the Trustee Board agenda, the President reminds all Trustee Board members at all meetings to check and if necessary update their entries on the Register.

Trustee Board members are expected to declare any interest which may give rise, in the opinion of a reasonable person, to a conflict or the appearance of a conflict, in relation to a matter under consideration by the Trustee Board.

The Articles of Association and the Charities Act define certain people (such as close relatives of Trustee Board members), whose interests are relevant in considering conflicts, but in view of the nature of the Society's business, the Trustee Board also attempts to manage conflicts in relation to colleagues of Trustee Board members. For example, where the Prizes Panel is considering nominations from a particular institution, it would expect a member of the Panel employed by that institution to declare an interest, and potentially to refrain from taking part in the relevant discussion, depending on the closeness of the association.

It is a matter for the Trustee Board to consider the appropriate and proportionate response to any declared interest, which might range from merely noting it and deciding that it is not a material consideration through to requiring a member of the Board to leave the room during consideration of the matter at hand.

In July 2017, trustees agreed that no trustee who is candidate for any Board appointed post should sit on the Appointments Panel, even in relation to other posts under consideration.

In March 2018, it was agreed that trustees would not be eligible to nominate for any Society prizes or Board appointed positions, so as to minimise the number of potential conflicts of interest that may arise.