Information for Prospective Trustees, 2026

Applications for appointment to the Scotland Malawi Partnership's Board of Trustees will be open till Sunday, 2 November 2026. The 2026 Annual Gathering and AGM will be held on Saturday, 21 November 2026 at Stirling University. All prospective Trustees must have read this document and completed and returned an application form, no later than 17.00 on Sunday, 2 November 2025.

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The Scotland Malawi Partnership SCIO is a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SC050781)

Part 1: Introduction and Our Work

Introduction

This information pack is designed to give you an introduction to the role of a Trustee as it relates to the Scotland Malawi Partnership and how it works. It also gives guidelines to act as a checklist of responsibilities and defines other duties expected of Trustees. The information in this booklet should be read in conjunction with the various policies of the Scotland Malawi Partnership, the Memorandum of Association, the Standing Orders and the Strategic Plan.

If you require further information or clarification on any point in this handbook, or in any of the Scotland Malawi Partnership policies and procedures, please email info@scotland-malawipartnership.org.

History

The friendship between Scots and Malawians began in 1859, with the warm welcome extended to David Livingstone and his companions when he entered what is now Malawi for the first time. Over the last 160 years countless individuals, families and institutions have struck up friendships, which have often found expression in the creation of development projects.

When necessary, the Scotland-Malawi relationship has taken a directly political form. For example, in the late 1880s a massive, popular campaign in Scotland persuaded the British Government to rethink its initial unwillingness to become involved in the area, leading to Britain, rather than Portugal becoming the colonizing power. In the 1950s, when the racist Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland were imposed on Malawi, Scots stood shoulder to shoulder with Malawians in resisting it, until finally the Federation was dismantled and Malawi became an independent country in 1964. More recently, in the 1990s, Scots offered significant solidarity as Malawi threw off the shackles of its one-party system and became a multi-party democracy.

The challenge posed by the United Nations Millennium Development Goals was taken up in Scotland in the late 1990s by David Livingstone's alma mater Strathclyde University when, in partnership with Bell College (local to Livingstone's birthplace at Blantyre), they launched their Malawi Millennium Project. This project was the catalyst for a new round of networking among individuals and organisations in Scotland with strong ties to Malawi. Many sensed that significant value could be added by coming together under a single umbrella. The Scotland Malawi Partnership was officially launched in April 2004 with the support of the Lord Provosts of Edinburgh and Glasgow. The following year, 2005, the G8 met at Gleneagles, with the Make Poverty History campaign drawing public attention to the issue of international development. At the same time the Scottish government published Scotland's first international development strategy, with a particular focus on the relationship between Scotland and Malawi.

On 3rd November 2005, the historic Co-operation Agreement between the governments of Scotland and Malawi was signed, and immediately afterwards the **Scotland Malawi Partnership** hosted a "Malawi After Gleneagles" conference at the Scottish Parliament. Our patrons, HRH the Princess Royal and His Excellency President Bingu wa Mutharika, and the First Minister, Rt Hon Jack McConnell MSP, looked forward to a new chapter in our strengthened friendship.

The Partnership registered as a Scottish Charity. Three-year funding (2005-08) was awarded by the Scottish Executive in 2005 which allowed the Partnership to employ a full-time Coordinator and to rent office space within the Edinburgh City Chambers. Enthusiastic members, a dynamic Board of Trustees and the effective leadership of staff [Leo Williams (2006-08) and David Hope-Jones (2008-2023] have enabled the Partnership to build up an extensive programme of activity: growing its membership, producing regular bulletins of information, creating a comprehensive website, organising sector-specific workshops, stakeholder meetings and training events, responding to enquiries from members of the public and the media, running the Cross-Party Group on Malawi in the Scottish Parliament, organising a programme of academic exchange, relating to Malawian counterparts and hosting their visits to Scotland, and arranging high-profile events when required, both in Scotland and in Malawi.

The Partnership has grown significantly and currently has over 1,000 members. It has been core funded by successive Scottish Governments on a triennial (more recently bi-annual or annual) basis, while remaining studiously non-governmental and politically neutral. We are extremely grateful for this far-sighted investment by successive governments.

Our Work

The Scotland Malawi Partnership (SMP) is the national civil society network coordinating, representing and supporting the many people-to-people links between our two nations.

We believe the hundreds of partnerships which unite Scotland and Malawi represent an innovative new approach to international development. This is an approach based not on 'donors' and 'recipients' but on long-standing, mutually beneficial community-to-community, family-to-family and people-to-people links, each on its own quite modest in scale but, together, a formidable force for progressive change.

We exist to inspire the people and organisations of Scotland to be involved with Malawi in an informed, co-ordinated and effective way for the benefit of both nations. We do this by providing a forum where ideas, activities and information can be shared on our website and publications and through regular forums, training events and stakeholder meetings. In this way, we harness experience, expertise and enthusiasm from across Scotland and help inspire each new generation of Scots and Malawians to become involved together, in a variety of innovative new ways.

We are a membership organisation representing more than 1,200 Scottish organisations and key individuals, including half Scotland's local authorities, every Scottish university and most of its colleges, around 200 primary and secondary schools, dozens of different churches and faith-based groups, hospitals and health boards, businesses, charities and NGOs, and a wide range of grass-root community-based organisations. Our work permeates almost all aspects of Scottish civil society. Any Scottish organisation or individual with a link to, or interest in, Malawi is welcome to join the Scotland Malawi Partnership. By creating a single space for all organisations and individuals in Scotland currently engaged with Malawi to come together, we help reduce duplication of effort, add value to Scotland's historic civil society relationship with Malawi, and contribute towards poverty alleviation in Malawi.

A 2018 University of Edinburgh study estimated that the SMP membership contributes over £49 million in time, resources and money to their links with Malawi each year. This activity directly benefits 2.9 million Malawians and 260,000 Scots annually, making the SMP one of the UK's largest cross-community networks engaged in international development. A separate paper by a University of Glasgow researcher, working from a randomly selected sample of 449 Scots, found that roughly 45% of Scots could name a friend or family member with a connection to Malawi, and more than 75% of Scots were supportive of these links, with less than 1.5% opposed. There is arguably no comparable north-south, people-to-people bilateral relationship with this degree of public engagement and support.

We are an energetic coalition of civil society actors who believe in sustainable development through *dignified* partnership. We asked around 200 Scottish and 200 Malawian organisations to identify the principles which underpin such a partnership and were excited to find a great convergence of opinion. This has been enshrined in our eleven Partnership Principles. We and our members, hold ourselves accountable to these published principles. It is about partnership, joint-working and friendship. In keeping with this model, we work closely with our sister network in Malawi, the 'Malawi Scotland Partnership' which is uniquely also funded by the Scottish Government but is responsible for all coordination in Malawi and is totally Malawi owned and led.

The SMP is itself non-governmental and politically neutral. We are, however, active in representing our members' work in Holyrood (where we provide the secretariat for the Malawi Cross Party Group) and in Westminster (where we provide the secretariat for the Malawi All Party Parliamentary Group). All 59 Scottish MPs have SMP members in their constituency and all 129 MSPs have SMP members in their region or constituency. There is unshakeable all-party political support for Scotland's historic friendship with Malawi amongst Scotland's elected leaders.

Our work is delivered by a small but highly effective staff team, and governed by a large, experienced and committed Board of Trustees, elected from and by our Membership. We aim to be as transparent and engaging about everything we do as possible. Every three months we report to our funders and publish an Activity and Impact Report detailing exactly what work the Partnership has been engaged in and what has been achieved. Every month, we deliver an ambitious series of diverse, high impact events and activities, attended by members, partners, civic leaders, policy makers and other key stakeholders. We share information and updates with our members and partners through the regularly updated news pages of our website, through a dedicated weekly electronic bulletin, and through social media.

Part 2: Vision and Mission and Partnership Principles

Our vision

To inspire and support Scottish society to work in solidarity with the people of Malawi in an informed, co-ordinated and equitable way – ever mindful of the legacy of colonial rule - for the benefit of both nations.

Our mission is to:

- Embrace a just approach to global development, promoting mutually beneficial civil society partnerships to help address the primary challenges facing Malawi
- Develop the SMP as an inclusive national network, in which all feel welcome to contribute, including diaspora communities and under-represented groups
- Encourage and support young people to play a full role in the partnership between our two nations so that they can deepen and expand it for the future.
- Develop practical and sustainable solutions that will have a positive impact on Malawi society, through our own activity and by influencing the policies and actions of governments and institutions.
- Support our members and Scottish civil society to gain a deeper understanding of Malawi's development priorities and policies and how they can work in support of these
- Act as a forum for encouraging best practice through sharing information and learning and the provision of relevant training
- Better understand and constructively challenge the power imbalance which exists between our two nations, and advance our cultural, political and economic understanding
- Work with our sister network in Malawi, the Malawi Scotland Partnership (MaSP) to optimise our collective impact
- Demonstrate the relevance of Scotland's civil society contribution to the attainment of the Government of Malawi's 'Vision 2063' and the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

Our work is underpinned by our **Partnership Principles,** which were designed after consultation in Scotland and Malawi and guided by our core values of **mutual respect and solidarity.**

Planning and implementing together:	*Whose idea is this?*
Appropriateness:	*How does it fit within local and governmental priorities?*
Respect, trust and mutual understanding:	*How would you feel if you were at the other side?*
Transparency and Accountability:	*How are challenges, issues and concerns listened to?*
No one left behind:	*Who is excluded from your partnership?*
Effectiveness:	*How do you know if your partnership is working?*
Reciprocity:	*What does each side contribute in the partnership?*
Sustainability:	*How long is your partnership for and what happens when it ends?*
Do no **H**arm:	*Could anyone be worse off as a result of your Partnership?*
Interconnectivity:	*How do you connect with what others are doing?*
Parity (equality):	*Who 'owns' the partnership? Who has the power?*

Part 3: <u>Governance</u>

Governance is the key to the Organisational Structure. Governance has been defined as "…the overall guidance, direction and supervision of an organisation." *(NCVO 1992).* Governance is not management, which is the role of the staff and Trustees should not be involved in day-to-day

matters that are the responsibility of staff. Rather, Trustees should provide leadership and attend to the charity's needs in terms of policy, strategic planning and financial management.

The Board of Trustees governs the Scotland Malawi Partnership and ensures that the Scotland Malawi Partnership meets its stated objects: takes responsibility for giving direction to the charity; ensures there is a framework for accountability; reviews systems and methods of control, financial and otherwise; monitor people, resources and performance and ensures that the Scotland Malawi Partnership complies with all aspects of the law, relevant regulations and good practice. For the Scotland Malawi Partnership to be effectively governed it requires a Board of Trustees with a diverse range of skills, knowledge, qualities and experience to help it fulfil its roles.

Competencies and Skills required amongst SMP Trustees
The Board must recognise the skills and experience held by current Trustees and identify gaps that need to be filled each year.

The range of competencies required for a competent Board includes:

- Knowledge & experience of Malawi
- Organisational / sector awareness
- Handling change
- Inter-personal effectiveness
- Judgment and decision-making
- Leadership
- Managing relationships
- Personal motivation
- Planning and organising
- Self-confidence and resilience
- Strategic thinking and vision
- Team working
- Technical/professional knowledge
- Financial expertise

Of course, most individuals have a range of skills, many of which could be useful to SMP and which go way beyond what is listed here.

In 2026, the Board identified several critical skill shortages

- **HR**: Someone with direct professional experience of HR matters (not just experience having managed a team)
- **Funding**: Someone with experience, contacts and time to help the SMP diversify its income, working within the very limited staff capacity
- **The Malawian Diaspora**
- In addition, applicants with knowledge, insight or experience in **Government/Parliament, Private Sector, the law as it applies to charities, and Membership Organisations** would be welcome.
- To ensure the Board is broadly representative of the wider membership, the Board is keen to encourage applications from:
  - Young people
  - Schools and Higher Education Institutions
  - Local Authorities

It should be remembered that being a Trustee also carries responsibilities and often, talents and skills can be used to support SMP in other ways than on the Board.

What does the Board of the Scotland Malawi Partnership look like?
[Adapted from SMP Board Terms of Reference]

- The Board consists of no fewer than 3 and no more than 16 Trustees with appropriate skills and expertise, appointed by the membership. Trustees are appointed for a 3 year term.
- The Board appoints the Chair and Vice-Chairs as required and is responsible for structuring sub-committees/working groups to anticipate the future needs of the organisation.
- Roughly one third of the Trustees should retire by rotation every year. Trustees may stand for re-election if they wish. Up to three consecutive terms are permitted after which a Trustee must stand down.
- Trustees are expected to attend all Board meetings and the Annual General Meeting. Non-attendance at three, or more, consecutive Board meetings may result in a Trustee being asked to step down.
- Meetings will be held every 2-3 months. Some are held in person with an online option and others are fully online. Board meetings generally last 2 hrs on Thursdays from 6-8pm.
- To be quorate, at least three Trustees must be present. The Chief Executive Officer will attend meetings but shall not be a Trustee, and a member of staff will provide the secretariat.
- For voting purposes each Trustee has one vote. In the case of an equal number of votes cast for/against a motion, the Chair of the Board will have a casting vote.
- The Board reports regularly and at least every 12 months to its supporters and donors, partner organisations, staff and volunteers.

The overall role of all Trustees is to

- Be enthusiastic and committed to the ethos of the Scotland Malawi Partnership
- Give direction and leadership to the organisation - shape vision; agree long-term objectives and strategic plans; establish broad policies for the organization.
- Determine the values and ethical position of the organization
- Scrutinise and validate information produced or received by the organization
- Help in the collective evaluation of new proposals and ideas before they are taken forward by the organisation
- Ensure appropriate oversight of finance and risk - establish effective financial management control systems; ensure financial security of the charity.
- Approve annual accounts and report to the membership.
- Ensure appropriate oversight of people and resources, such that the organisation operates safely for members, staff and beneficiaries through delivery of services, health & safety and proportionate vetting.
- Ensure legal compliance and observance of statutory provisions – ensure relevant law is observed (e.g. Charity law, organisation law, employment law, health and safety, equal opportunities, data protection, human rights, public liability etc.) and statutory returns are filed.
- Manage the Board – hold regular meetings; ensure sufficient information is available to make good, informed decisions.

- Be accountable – to stakeholders; establish performance measures and monitor against these measures.
- Co-opt additional Trustees if necessary and retain advisers with specialist knowledge and skills as required.
- Promote and maintain the good name of the Scotland Malawi Partnership.
- Encourage a culture within the Scotland Malawi Partnership whereby each individual feels he or she has a part to play in promoting the Scotland Malawi Partnership and guarding its probity.
- Uphold the values and reputation of SMP

Expected commitment of a Trustee of the Scotland Malawi Partnership

- Attendance at all Board meetings, with apologies given for any essential absence. There are 4 or 5 Board meetings per year, each of 2 hours and generally held in the City Chambers, Edinburgh on Thursdays between 6-8pm. Attendance online is also possible Non-attendance at three, or more, consecutive Board meetings may result in a Trustee being asked to step down.
- Trustees are required to sign a declaration before their first Board meeting that they are not disqualified, in law, from acting as a Trustee.
- Trustees are expected to contribute at meetings
- A Trustee Induction session will be held before the second Board meeting and all new Trustees are expected to attend. This is generally around 1 hour, timed to suit. Trustees will be expected to have read the Trustee Induction Manual and sign that they have read and understood it.
- You may be asked to join a sub-committee. The Board has two important sub-committees:
    - Audit and Finance Committee (AFC) which meets two weeks before Board meetings and is usually online for 1.5hrs on a Wednesday
    - Human Resources and Safeguarding Committee, which meets when needed and deals with appointment of staff and any other HR issue which arises.
    - Both are chaired by a Trustee and have a further 3-4 Trustees, plus relevant staff members in attendance.
- As the SMP is a membership organization, Trustees come from the membership. As a consequence, potential Trustees are not vetted before taking up the role.
- Trustees will not be remunerated for services given to the Scotland Malawi Partnership, but they will be entitled to claim scale expenses for attending to Scotland Malawi Partnership business
- You can find out more about being an SMP Trustee from the website Our governance | Scotland Malawi Partnership or by contacting the chair, Professor Jeremy Bagg jeremy.bagg@glasgow.ac.uk

Part 4: A Job Description for Potential SMP Trustee

Title: Trustee

Purpose: To be responsible for:

- determining strategic direction and policies for the good governance of the Scotland Malawi Partnership
- ensuring the organisation operates within the law and observes its statutory and regulatory obligations;
- monitoring the performance of senior staff
- communicating the aims and objectives of the organisation to potentially useful people and organisations;
- ensuring appropriate remuneration packages are in place for Trustees and staff;
- appointing new Trustees

Term: Trustees are elected for a three-year term after which point they must stand-down but are welcome to stand for re-election if they wish.

Responsible: To the Chair of the Board

Personal Attributes

1. An enthusiasm for the work of the Scotland Malawi Partnership, and a commitment to carry out the duties of a Board member.
2. The ability to work as a member of a team and a willingness to state personal convictions, and equally, to accept a majority decision and be tolerant of the views of others.
3. The willingness to deal openly with staff and colleague Board members when pleased or displeased about an issue.
4. A respected member of the community.
5. A preparedness to offer personal and professional business skills and experience to support the work of the staff, if required.

Trustees "should bring an independent judgment to bear on issues of strategy, performance, resources including key appointments and standards of conduct." *Cadbury Report 1992*

Legal and Financial Duties

1. To ensure that the organisation operates in accordance with appropriate legislation, including the filing of statutory returns and keeping of organisation registers.
2. To ensure the prudent financial management of the organisation by:
    - Exercising diligent financial control
    - Scrutinising quarterly statements of the financial position
    - Discussing and deciding on annual budgets and revisions
3. To ensure the Scotland Malawi Partnership keeps proper accounts and that audited accounts are produced annually and submitted to the appropriate authorities.
4. To ensure that all Scotland Malawi Partnership assets and property are well-managed and maintained.
5. To appoint bankers and cheque signatories and to make clear decisions about staff spending powers.
6. To appoint auditors and ensure annual audits are conducted

7. To ensure the Scotland Malawi Partnership is adequately insured.

Employment and Personnel Duties

1. To define and review annually Scotland Malawi Partnership employment policies and procedures, including:
   - Equal opportunities, salaries, contracts and appraisal, dismissal, grievance and disciplinary procedures, sickness, holidays, maternity/paternity/compassionate leave, pensions, expenses payments, training
2. To make decisions relating to the employment of staff:
   - To approve the staffing structure
   - To take part in the recruitment procedure for senior staff
   - To form the final appeal panel in grievance and disciplinary cases
3. To agree job descriptions, person specifications and terms of employment of senior management and, in outline only, for other members of staff.

Policy and Planning Responsibilities

1. To determine all policies and strategies, review all areas of policy implementation, including this document, at least annually and make appropriate revisions
2. To review the annual business plan

Advocacy Responsibilities

1. To act as an ambassador for the Scotland Malawi Partnership.
2. To promote the Scotland Malawi Partnership, its activities and its needs to the private, public and voluntary sectors, as appropriate, so as to enhance its profile
3. Assist with the organisation's fund-raising.
4. To act as a listening post in order to provide any information regarding significant events which may be of assistance to the Scotland Malawi Partnership.

Management Responsibilities

1. To agree a cycle of meetings with appropriate papers to service the Board efficiently
2. To establish a system of communications and delegated decision-making so that urgent decisions can be made and acted upon between Board meetings
3. To co-opt additional Trustees or advisers with specialist knowledge and skills as required.
4. To establish fixed-term working parties on specific issues, if required.

In order to carry out these duties and responsibilities the Trustee must:

1. Know the history, and background, of the Scotland Malawi Partnership and be able to give a clear description of its work.
2. Give proper time and attention to his/her duties as a Trustee and be present at an annual minimum of two thirds of all appropriate meetings to keep abreast of developments
3. Act strictly according to the Memorandum and Articles of Association of the Scotland Malawi Partnership.
4. Act only to the advantage of the Scotland Malawi Partnership, without regard to his/her private interests, or those of others.
5. Not derive any personal benefit or gain, including payment for services as a Trustee, and not be an employee of the Scotland Malawi Partnership.

6. Read all papers prior to meetings and all material distributed by the Scotland Malawi Partnership.
7. Attend Scotland Malawi Partnership organised events, where appropriate

If a Board member is unable to devote the necessary time to carry out his/her duties and responsibilities it is incumbent on the member to resign in writing to the Chairman, so as to allow an active replacement to join.

Trustees do not receive any remuneration from the SMP but are entitled to claim expenses for work carried out on behalf of the SMP (including attendance at Board meetings). Such expenses should be agreed in advance with the Chief Executive and submitted on a Trustees' Expenses Form, along with appropriate receipts, to the Chief Executive.