



Support for community & voluntary groups

CCVS

Case study

Tees Law and Cambridge & District Citizens Advice Bureau working to provide people with essential advice and information

BACKGROUND



Founded in 1913, Tees Law have six offices with over 300 staff across the East Anglian region offering clients a range of business, agricultural and personal legal and financial services. www.teeslaw.com



Cambridge & District Citizens Advice Bureau (Cambridge CAB) is a registered charity that provides information, advice and support on a wide range of issues, including benefits, debts, housing, relationships, employment and other questions. Last year, they helped 17,709 people with 36,482 issues. www.cambridgecab.org.uk

TEES LAW APPROACH TO COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The firm operates a national and local approach to its work with charities. All the offices participate in fundraising for a main charity of the year selected by the employees, but individual offices are also able to maintain their local charity connections. One such local link is with Cambridge CAB. Tees Law have provided a trustee for Cambridge CAB for the last five years, Isobel Foenander a solicitor in the medical negligence team, is the third incumbent in the role.

HOW THE RELATIONSHIP WITH CAMBRIDGE CAB EVOLVED

Initially, Tees Law offered to fundraise for Cambridge CAB as part of the firm's 100th birthday celebrations. As a follow-up to this, Cambridge CAB asked Tees if one of their team would be interested in being a trustee.

Isobel took on the trustee role about a year ago *'I wasn't sure what to expect. But it's been a good way to get involved in the local community and forge some links...Meetings are once a month and my work are happy for me to take the time out to attend.'*

As a trustee, Isobel has oversight of the how the CAB operates and participates in planning for the future. In addition to offering legal advice over issues such as GDPR Isobel has also been involved in a project to find ways to attract more young people, particularly students into volunteering with the CAB *'It is such a fantastic experience for them.'*

Isobel has enjoyed working with the diverse range of people on the CAB board and seeing how they contribute their different spheres of knowledge. *‘Everyone was very helpful and welcoming.’*

Getting to hear about the work of the CAB has been a real eye opener. *‘I was taken aback by how many people (CAB) actually work with and the difficulties of balancing the workflow with the need to give good advice...The disparity in Cambridge influences a lot of (CAB) work, for example debt, homelessness, immigration. I now know a lot more about the city.’*

From the perspective of Cambridge CAB Rachel Talbot, CEO of CambridgeCAB comments

‘One thing we do on a regular basis is examine the skills base of the trustee board. There are some basic areas that all charities could aim for, one of which is legal knowledge. Bearing in mind the work we do, our board identified that it would be beneficial to have someone as a trustee who could represent the legal community.’

Not only does Isobel fit the bill, but she has also happily helped to bring the average age of our trustee board down. Finding more younger trustees is still an ambition.’

KEY LEARNING POINTS



- The role of trustee carries legal liabilities and Isobel did reflect on this before concluding that, in a well-run charity, the benefits outweigh the risk.
- There is a regular commitment but *‘It isn’t onerous.’*
- As well as using her legal skills, there have been opportunities for Isobel to use and develop her wider skill set.
- The role has put Isobel in touch with a

diverse group of people and extended her business contacts in the city.

Cambridge CAB board of trustees

- Cambridge CAB built on an existing relationship with Tees Law to strengthen the skill set and diversity of its trustee board.
- For charities seeking guidance on recruiting trustees, visit [Cambridge CVS find a trustee](#)
- For people interested in becoming a charity trustee, visit [Cambridge CVS become a trustee](#)