

The Future of Charity in the UK

Monday, 8th – Tuesday, 9th April 2024

Participants' Biographies



Ms Antonia Bance

Antonia has been head of campaigns, communications and digital at the Trades Union Congress since 2015.

In her role, she has overseen a massive expansion in the TUC's profile, and been part of winning campaigns against new trade union restrictions in 2015-16, and for the furlough scheme during the pandemic. She ran major innovation programmes to get under-30s into unions and help unions overcome strike ballot thresholds. She is currently leading campaigns on the cost of living crisis, the New Deal for Working People, and against government attacks on the right to strike, and supporting the TUC's participation in the Covid public inquiry.

Antonia is an expert in campaigns strategy and corporate communications. She was previously policy and communications director for a domestic abuse charity and head of campaigns for the housing charity Shelter. She has also worked for Oxfam and in the women's and criminal justice sectors. She is a board member for Generation Rent and for HOPE not hate, a former trustee of the Nationwide Foundation and Fawcett, and a former Labour councillor, cabinet member and parliamentary candidate.

Antonia lives with her girlfriend and their daughter in south-east London.



Ms Benaifer Bhandari

Benaifer is the Chief Executive of Hopscotch Women's Centre. She has over 25 years' experience in the sector and has seen many cycles of expansion and contraction which can inch charities towards sustained growth, or decline – dependant on the commitment, agility and passion of the board and SLT.



Ms Margaret Bolton

Margaret is Director of Policy and Communications at Local Trust. She has worked in a number of high profile policy, campaigning and communications roles including at NCVO and Arts Council England. She ran the campaign to get an equal share of lottery proceeds for charities and has led influential programmes of work on charity taxation – which significantly extended reliefs – and the reform of charity law. The last of these led to a Prime Minister's Strategy Unit project to which she was seconded as Voluntary Sector Advisor. Before joining Local Trust she was a consultant for a number of years working primarily on social investment, social innovation and charity effectiveness undertaking research and writing numerous reports including the report for the Calouste Gulbenkian Inquiry into the Civic Role of Arts Organisations.



Professor Beth Breeze OBE

Beth worked as a fundraiser and charity manager for a decade before co-founding the Centre for Philanthropy at the University of Kent in 2008 where she now leads a team conducting research and teaching courses on philanthropy and fundraising, including an innovative MA Philanthropic Studies taught by distance learning. Beth researched and wrote the annual Coutts Million Pound Donor Report from 2008-2017, co-authored *Richer Lives: why rich people give* (2013), *The Logic of Charity: Great Expectations in Hard Times* (2015) and co-edited *The Philanthropy Reader* (2016). Two of her books *The New Fundraisers* (2017) and *In Defence of Philanthropy* (2021) have won the AFP Skystone Research Partners book prize. In 2023 she published two further books: *Advising Philanthropists: Principles and Practice* (co-authored with Emma Beeston), and *The Fundraising Reader* (co-edited with Donna Day Lafferty and Pamala Wiekping). Beth is currently working on the 3rd decennial update of the *Why Rich People Give* study, and has begun a new project to understand the nature, challenges of opportunities of Moonshot Philanthropy.



Mr Patrick Butler

Patrick is the Guardian's social policy editor. He's worked as an editor and reporter at the Guardian for over two decades, and formerly edited its weekly *Society Guardian* supplement. He writes regularly about poverty, inequality, public services and the voluntary sector.



Mr Dan Corry

Dan is Chief Executive of NPC, a charity think tank and consultancy focused on increasing the impact of the social sector. This followed a variety of posts in public policy and economics. He was Head of the Number 10 Policy Unit and Senior Adviser to the Prime Minister on the Economy from 2007 to 2010.

Dan has been Chair of the Council of Economic Advisers in the Treasury and has worked as a special adviser to the Secretary of State in the Education Department as well as at DTI and DCLG. He was a Director in the Economics segment of FTI Consulting. He ran the New Local Government Network (now [New Local](#)) think tank between 2002 and 2005, which was voted Think Tank of the Year in 2004, and was Senior Economist at the IPPR in the 1990s.

Dan is a trustee of homelessness charity [St Mungo's](#), 19 Princelet Street and of the [What Works Centre for Wellbeing](#), and is a former member of the Research Committee of the ESRC and of the Greater Manchester Economic Advisory Panel. He is currently a member of the Policy Advisory Group of the [Future Governance Forum](#).

You can find Dan on [X](#) and [LinkedIn](#).



Ms Susan Daniels OBE

Susan has been Chief Executive of the National Deaf Children's Society since 1992, and has seen the charity grow from an income of £1 million in 1992 to over £33 million in 2023/24. Before joining the National Deaf Children's Society, Susan was Head of Education, Employment and Training and then Head of Policy and Research at the Royal National Institute for Deaf People, (now Action on Hearing Loss). In 2006, she was awarded an OBE for services to deaf children and their families.

Susan was a Commissioner of the Disability Rights Commission from 2003 until its merger with the Commission for Equality and Human Rights at the end of September 2007. Until November 2010 she was Chair of the UK Council on Deafness, the umbrella body for all organisations working in the field of deafness, which provides information, advice and support to member organisations and represents the views of the sector to government and policy makers.

Susan is currently Chair of the NHS Newborn Hearing Screening Programme Quality Assurance Advisory Group, which monitors the delivery of the programme across hospitals in England.

Susan is Chair of Groundbreakers, an informal networking group for women leaders in the voluntary sector, which includes Chief Executives from organisations which range in profile from large national and international to smaller local and community based.

Susan is also a member of the BBC Appeals Advisory Committee which is responsible for all policy matters relating to all BBC related charity appeals, the overview of specific fund-raising projects such as Children in Need, Comic Relief's Red Nose Day etc. and the allocation of broadcasting time for individual charity appeals on BBC channels.



Mr Matt Downie MBE

Matt has been Chief Executive of Crisis since January 2022. He is one of the country's leading experts and advocates on ending homelessness, serving on advisory bodies for the UK, Welsh and Scottish Governments, as well as international committees. He was awarded an MBE in the 2019 Queen's birthday honours, for 'Services to tackling homelessness'.

Matt was Crisis' Director of Policy and External Affairs from July 2014, leading a number of significant initiatives in policy, research, best practice and service development in homelessness. This includes leading the campaign to achieve the Homelessness Reduction Act which came into force in 2018.

Prior to his work at Crisis Matt led award winning teams and successful campaigns at Action for Children and the National Autistic Society, and he began his career at Shelter.

Matt is also the Chair of London Youth Theatre, and the UK Board representative for FEANTSA, the European-wide body on homelessness.

Mr Mike Durham

Mike joined Cumberland Lodge as Chief Operating Officer in June 2022 and oversees the day-to-day running of their commercial operations as a social enterprise. Prior to joining Cumberland Lodge, he was the Deputy CFO of Oxfam GB.

He has extensive commercial experience, including with De Vere Hotels, as well as a degree in Economics from UCL, and a Masters degree in Voluntary Sector Management. He is also a voluntary crisis counsellor for the mental health support service Shout, established by the Royal Foundation of the Prince and Princess of Wales, and a trustee of educational charity First Give, which offers secondary school children opportunities to identify and alleviate social issues in their local communities.

Outside of work and volunteering, his main passions are cycling and his camper van.



Mr Seth Farsides

Seth joined SMK in November 2021, having previously enjoyed roles working in human rights and as part of the policy team of his local Brighton MP. Seth traces his campaigning roots back to 2003, when he was nestled on his dad's shoulders for the duration of the 'Stop the War' protest in London.

More recently, Seth achieved a First Class Degree from the University of Essex in Elections, Public Opinion and Political Parties, which he invariably shortens to 'Politics'.

While passionate in his convictions, Seth loves nothing more than talking with – and attempting to understand – those who view the world differently.

For this reason, he often ponders the Abraham Lincoln quote included in SMK's Social Power report: 'I don't like that man, I must get to know him better.'

In 2023 Seth was made a Democratic Wellbeing Champion by Carnegie UK.



Mr Nathan Gamester

Nathan is the Managing Director of the CSJ Foundation, an organisation that seeks to magnify the impact and influence of grassroots charities. Prior to joining the CSJ Foundation he was the Chief Operating Officer at the Legatum Institute, an international think-tank that promotes human development and national prosperity. Prior to that he was the Chief Operating Officer at the CSJ. Nathan also runs the Atlantic Partnership, an organisation established over 20 years ago that seeks to develop and maintain a strong relationship between the transatlantic group of nations.



Ms Katie Ghose

Katie is a non-profit chief executive and experienced board member with nearly three decades experience of leadership and management in the UK voluntary sector. Currently Chief Executive of Kids, a charity supporting disabled children, young people and their families in England, Katie has also been Chief Executive of Women's Aid Federation of England, the Electoral Reform Society and the British Institute of Human Rights.

Prior to this Katie held public affairs and communications roles in Parliament and in the charity sector at Age Concern England (now Age UK) and Citizens' Advice. As a barrister in her twenties, she represented migrants and asylum-seekers and went onto fulfil Board roles with several human rights charities, including Asylum Aid, Bail for Immigration Detainees and Stonewall.

From 2006-08, Katie was an independent Commissioner on the Independent Asylum Commission, which was instrumental in persuading the government to pledge an end to child detention in the UK.

Following a St George's House consultation on democracy in 2014, Katie helped to convene and pioneer the UK's first citizens' assemblies, which convened randomly selected citizens in two regions to consider English devolution and present their recommendations to fellow citizens and policy-makers. St George's House hosted the participants in a successful follow-up gathering, which stimulated a citizens' assembly on Brexit and helped to embed the assembly model as a means of encouraging reflective and informed deliberation on a wide range of topics. Katie was appointed to Sussex University's governing Council as an independent lay-member in 2015 and also serves on the Advisory Board of the university's Business School. Katie was born and brought up on the South Coast, studied law at Oxford University and received a Masters in Political Science from the University of California, Riverside. She lives in London with her partner, daughter, nephew and their two cats. Her favourite sport is table tennis.



Ms Arvinda Gohil OBE

Arvinda is an experienced executive and non-executive, having started her career in housing. She brings significant experience of working in the housing, homelessness, charity and social enterprise sectors. Her long history includes the Chief Executive of Central YMCA, the founder YMCA; Community Links a place-based charity in Newham London; Emmaus UK; umbrella body for homeless charity and social enterprise; Director for Membership, Governance, and Regions for the National Housing Federation; Assistant Director for London at the Housing Corporation; setting up a capacity-building agency in South Africa for emerging housing organisations; and Chief Executive of two black led housing associations. She was instrumental in setting up Unity Housing Association in Leeds, where she was its first Chief Executive.

Arvinda also has significant experience in the voluntary sector, working for a women's refuge, running a positive action programme to enable access to employment, and running a regeneration partnership. In addition to the executive roles, Arvinda has held several non-executive and trustee roles including in housing associations, refugee organisations, a university, and a social investment charity.

She is currently Chair of Swan Housing Association, a subsidiary within Sanctuary Housing Group, Chair of the Future Economy Alliance, a non-executive director at University Hospitals North Midlands and Co-Convenor of the Better Way Network.

Arvinda is passionate about supporting young leaders particularly women of colour and provides mentoring and coaching support in their leadership journey.



Ms Chloe Hardy

Chloe has twenty years' experience of campaigning, public affairs, and policy influencing in both the not-for-profit and charity sectors.

Before joining the Sheila McKechnie Foundation, Chloe worked for various charities and trade bodies including Action for Children and the National Housing Federation. She has campaigned on green energy, social housing, waste reduction, fuel poverty, child neglect, and early-years development. Most recently, her focus has been on shrinking democratic space in the UK and the space to campaign.



Mr Paul Kissack

Paul is the Group Chief Executive of Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF) and Joseph Rowntree Housing Trust (JRHT). Paul started with the organisation on the 1 September 2020, and was previously a Director General in the UK Government working on the national response to the Covid-19 crisis. He has held Director General roles at the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and the Department for Education. He was Deputy Chief Executive for Policy and Organisational Strategy at the Ministry for Children in New Zealand. Paul has also held senior roles at HM Treasury, the Cabinet Office, and a local authority. He has worked throughout his career on economic and social policy issues and public service reform.



Ms Polly MacKenzie

Polly took up the post of Chief Social Purpose Officer at the University of the Arts, London in July 2022, having previously served as Chief Executive of Demos, the UK's leading cross-party think tank, which brings citizen voice and lived experience into public policy discussions. Previous civil society roles include founding CEO of the Money & Mental Health Policy Institute and establishing the operations of the Women's Equality Party. From 2010-2015 she was Director of Policy to the Deputy Prime Minister, based in 10 Downing Street and the Cabinet Office, having worked as a policy advisor to the Liberal Democrats since 2004.

Polly's recent publications include *The Gravitational State*, *The Humble Policy Maker*, *Living in the Exponential Age*, and *The Social State: From Transactional to Relational Public Services*. She is a member of the Social Value Taskforce, a trustee at Shift Foundation, and a non-executive director of Registry Trust, a not-for-profit provider of credit data.



Dr Rob Macmillan

Rob is a Principal Research Fellow at the Centre for Regional Economic and Social Research at Sheffield Hallam University. He has been actively researching the voluntary and community sector (VCS) and community development for over 25 years. His main research interests are around the long-term qualitative dynamics of organisational change in voluntary and community action, the relationships between markets and the VCS, and capacity building and VCS infrastructure. His current research is looking at the relationship between the VCS and the Labour Party as a government in waiting, and the role and impact of local civil society infrastructure.



Mr Stephen Meek

Stephen has been the Director of the University of Nottingham's Institute for Policy and Engagement since it was established in 2018. The Institute connects research with policymakers and public to improve decision making and public understanding, and to strengthen research. Prior to that he was a senior civil servant for 25 years, holding board-level posts in two government departments as well as senior roles in HM Treasury and in local government. He was chair of the Universities Policy Engagement Network (UPEN) from 2019-2021. He regularly speaks and writes on issues around academic policy engagement, and has advised and run training in Government departments, devolved administrations and the UK Parliament, as well as in several UK universities.



Lord Gus O'Donnell

Gus is Chairman of Frontier Economics, Strategic Advisor to TD Bank, Executive Director and Strategic Advisor to Brookfield Asset Management, Chair of PwC's Public Interest Body (PIB), President of the Council of the Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS), Chair of the Board of Trustees for Pro Bono Economics, Visiting Professor at LSE and UCL, a member of the Economist Trust, and Chair of the Behavioural Insights Team Advisory Board at the Cabinet Office. Gus was Cabinet Secretary and Head of the British Civil Service from 2005-2011. In 2010, he oversaw the introduction of the first coalition government since the Second World War. Previously, he was Permanent Secretary of the Treasury from 2002-2005 and served on the IMF and World Bank Boards. Gus studied Economics at Warwick University and Nuffield College, Oxford, then lectured at Glasgow University. Knighted in 2005, Gus was appointed to the House of Lords in 2012, sitting as a crossbencher (i.e. not affiliated to any political party). Gus is an Honorary Fellow of the British Academy and Fellow of the Academy of Social Sciences.



Dr Tessy Ojo CBE

Tessy is a passionate Civil Society Leader who has spent over two decades driving change for children and young people in the areas of social justice, youth leadership and social equity.

She is also the Founder of Tessy's Brunches (www.tessysbrunches.com); a mentoring forum for female self-improvement.

In 2020, Tessy was recognised in the Queen's Birthday Honours with a CBE – Commander of The British Empire for her services to children and young people.

She is the Chief Executive of The Diana Award – the only charity that bears the name of Diana, Princess of Wales and through it has developed internationally recognised programmes that give young people skills to thrive and create positive change in their communities globally.

With over twenty-two years in third sector leadership and expertise in redefining outcomes for young people, Tessy played a founding role in the building and sustainability of the charity, bringing strategic clarity and innovative approaches leading to a 360-degree turnaround of the charity's growth and global industry recognition.

Her dedication to fostering social change extends beyond her professional commitments. She is actively involved in campaigns and philanthropic endeavours, demonstrating her passion for creating a positive impact. In 2017, she set up the first All Party Parliamentary Group on Mentoring to advocate for careers mentoring to be part of the Government's plans for youth engagement and youth social action.

Tessy has promoted change in the access to, and quality of, mental health support for young people from all racialised communities, advocating for a redesigned mental health support service that is fit for purpose and culturally competent. She has also led the call for mandatory anti-racist bullying training in England, as it is now mandatory in Wales, to ensure parity across the UK.

She is married and has two children.



Mr Andrew Purkis OBE

Andrew is a Trustee of the Directory of Social Change and of St Mary's Church, Balham. He is Vice Chair and Governor of Trinity St Mary's Primary School, Balham. He is a contributor to Civil Society News and blogs at www.andrewpurkis.wordpress.com. Find him on Twitter at @AndrewPurkis.

He has previously been Chair or Vice Chair of seven other varied UK charities (most recently Safe Passage International), a Board Member of the Charity Commission (2006-10) and of the Parole Board.

A former fast stream civil servant, he has held senior leadership positions in NCVO, CPRE, the Diana, Princess of Wales Memorial Fund and The Tropical Health and Education Trust and been a special adviser to the Archbishop of Canterbury.



Mr Chris Sherwood

Chris joined the RSPCA, the world's oldest and largest animal welfare organisation in 2018 as Chief Executive. Chris was previously CEO at Relate.

Chris joined Relate from Scope where he was the Director of Innovation and Development. Prior to joining the voluntary sector he worked in Westminster and local government.

Chris led the RSPCA through the modernisation of its governance, the biggest changes the organisation had seen since 1974, and is currently moving the Society forward with a new brand to support its strategy and transformational change programme.

As RSPCA chief executive, Chris continues to shape the debate about animals in society and how we can develop and maintain services that meet the needs of animals and the people who care for them.

Chris serves as a trustee for the NCVO, the Centre for Ageing Better and Eurogroup for Animals.



Ms Moira Sinclair

Moira is Chief Executive of the Paul Hamlyn Foundation, an independent grant maker whose vision is for a just society in which everyone, especially young people, can realise their full potential and enjoy fulfilling and creative lives. In 2022/2023, PHF made £39m grants to organisations and individuals working in the arts, in cultural education, in migration and integration, and in giving young people voice.

Moira is Chair of Clore Leadership, Chair of the London Mayor's Cultural Strategy Board and from March 2024, Chair of Factory International in Manchester. She is also a member of the British Library Advisory Council and of the Investment Committee for the Arts & Culture Impact Fund. In late 2021, she became a Visiting Leadership Fellow at Exeter University Centre for Leadership.

Previously, as Executive Director London and South East for Arts Council England, she oversaw a portfolio of 322 funded cultural organisations and contributed to national policy development, with a particular focus on the resilience and sustainability of the cultural sector and workforce development. She played a key role supporting the cultural programme for the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games and continues to support its legacy at home and internationally.

Before joining Arts Council England, she was Director of Vital Arts, an arts and health charity. She has also worked in local government, and in theatre and production management. A graduate of Manchester University where she studied drama, Moira became a Clore Fellow in 2004/05.



Ms Caroline Slocock

Caroline is the Director of the think tank [Civil Exchange](#), which aims to improve the way government and civil society work together, and has written extensively about that relationship since 2011, most recently in the Sheila McKechnie Foundation and Civil Exchange publication, [Defending our Democratic Space](#). She is also the co-founder of [A Better Way](#), a cross sectoral network committed to improving services, strengthening community and building a fairer society, and now chairs its steering group. She is a former senior civil servant, including at No 10 and the Treasury, and knows the relationship from both sides.



Ms Sue Tibballs

Sue has been CEO of the Sheila McKechnie Foundation (SMK) since 2016. Her driving interest at SMK is to broaden understanding of social change and how it happens and use that insight to strengthen the efforts of campaigners and others trying to make change happen. SMK is also one of the UK's lead actors calling for a positive understanding of the role of civil society, while defending civic space and civil freedoms.

Prior to joining SMK, Sue was a professional campaigner working chiefly on issues that interest and affect women. She led a spectrum of campaigns aimed at unlocking the potential of women's sport as CEO of Women in Sport; led global campaigns at The Body Shop; and early in her career worked with the United Nations.

Sue is a regular writer and commentator. Her work on gender equality helped influence UK equalities legislation; she has consulted for the Labour Party on strategies to win women's votes; she is a former Chair of Fawcett and the campaigning platform 38 Degrees and is on the Advisory Board of the new AKO Storytelling Institute housed at University of the Arts London (UAL).

Sue was awarded an OBE for 'services to sport' in the 2014 New Year's Honour's list and has an Honorary Degree from Liverpool Edge Hill University for 'services to women's health'.

Twitter: @Sue_Tibballs

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/sue-tibballs-obe-775532b/>



Mrs Sarah Vibert

Sarah joined NCVO in January 2020 as director of membership and engagement before becoming chief executive. She's held a number of leadership roles in the voluntary sector, most recently as chief executive of the umbrella charity The Neurological Alliance.

Sarah also spent time in senior management roles at Epilepsy Society and In Kind Direct, as well as previously working for (then) HRH the Prince of Wales. She started her career in local government management, including working for the Mayor of London.

Sarah is a trustee at Trussell Trust. She also volunteers as a coach at her sons' rugby club and for the Parent Teacher Association at her son's school. Sarah has previously been a trustee of National Voices and The Brain and Spine Foundation.



Ms Clare Wightman

Clare is CEO of a national award winning charity, [Grapevine Coventry and Warwickshire](#) Relationships are at the heart of their work. Relationships solve problems and open up opportunities - for people, for organisations and for systems.

Clare works with the strengths of individuals and communities to help them bring about change that will improve their lives and futures. In doing that Grapevine has pioneered ways of helping communities to form that are ambitious for their members' health and happiness.

But Clare, and Grapevine, don't stop there. We want to get at root causes of problems that won't go away – not just treat the symptoms. We do that by working in open-hearted collaboration with systems and services like the NHS and local authorities and businesses to see how together we can understand and tackle the real problem – for good.

www.grapevinecovandwarks.org



Ms Grace Wyld

Grace is Head of Policy and Programme's at The Future Governance Forum, a new, non-partisan political think tank aiming to shape a new operating model for the delivery of progressive government in the UK. Grace's experience is predominantly in the charity sector, spanning policy research, strategy, and impact measurement, including at The Trussell Trust, NPC and the Sheila McKechnie Foundation. Grace has a particular interest in participatory methods for decision making and has a masters in Inequalities and Social Science from LSE.