

Trustee & Chair Biographies

Eastside Community Trust AGM 23rd October 2025

1. Megan Belcher – Trustee nominee

Hi I'm Megan, my background is working in Disability Equality and a lot of my work has been focused on creating the space and support for Disabled people in Bristol to speak for themselves, to each other, and to those in power. I am a Disabled person myself and I currently work as Director at BDEF (Bristol Disability Equality Forum).

Whilst a lot of my work has been focused across Bristol working alongside a specific community and its allies, earlier this year I moved to BS5 and really wanted to find some way of contributing to my local area. I have always been very impressed with Eastside Community Trust, not only for their approach to making their spaces accessible for Disabled people but also for their dedication to creating spaces which bring people and communities together.

The work that Eastside Community Trust does on this is so important, especially in the increasingly difficult times people are facing, that I look forward to being able to give any support or guidance that I might be able to.

2. Maca Gomez-Gutierrez – Trustee nominee

Maca lives in Redfield and is an active member and volunteer with Eastside Community Trust. She is passionate about contributing in a meaningful way to the organisation's work in strengthening community connections and ensuring that everyone feels a sense of belonging.

Originally from Colombia, Maca is a Latinx immigrant who has lived in the UK for 15 years, nine of them in Bristol. She believes her lived experience as both an immigrant and as someone from an ethnicity rarely acknowledged in the UK public sphere can bring a valuable and complementary perspective to Eastside's leadership.

Maca sees community spaces as more vital than ever in the current sociopolitical context, where many people are made to feel unwelcome in the country they call home. She recognises the role Eastside plays in providing inclusive spaces and opportunities for connection, and she is keen to support the organisation in improving its offer, sustaining its work, and building collective community power for the future.

By becoming a trustee, Maca hopes to deepen her contribution, learn from others, and help shape a strong, sustainable future for Eastside Community Trust.

3. Paul Hassan – Trustee & Chair nominee

I have been a resident of Easton for over 30 years and now live in Fishponds, Bristol. I have been committed to the community during that time specifically through my roles at Locality, Ujima Radio and before that Voscur where I have supported Eastside Community Trust (in its earlier iterations) both directly and indirectly.

I am a social entrepreneur with over 30 years experience of business, community and economic development largely in inner city Bristol. I'm currently Partnership Manager for ACH ensuring the successful integration of refugee and migrant communities.

<https://ach.org.uk/> I am also a member of the Bristol Homes and Communities board <https://www.bristolonecity.com/homes-and-communities/> working with others to ensure Bristol is a thriving cohesive city. I welcome the opportunity to utilise these skills and experiences to lead and support the trustees, staff and communities that Eastside Community Trust represents.

4. Lakhraj Minhas – Trustee nominee

Lakhraj Minhas is a lawyer and sustainability leader with cross-sector experience in corporate, start-up, nonprofit and public sectors. She has led organisations to change the way they work to embed responsible, inclusive and sustainable practices focusing on equality, diversity and inclusion, environmental sustainability and community investment, working with everyone from C-suite, politicians, charity leaders to grassroots community groups. Her work drives lasting change through strategic leadership and engagement, inclusive leadership, good governance, building partnerships and high-impact programme design and delivery.

As an Easton resident, she shares the charity's mission to create and support healthy, thriving, diverse communities in the place she now calls home. She is committed to using her skills and expertise to build on the support the charity provides to local people to drive greater impact on their health, wellbeing, sense of belonging and connection. Lakhraj also works with other charitable organisations and community groups dedicated to serving underrepresented groups in Bristol.

5. Kate Monkhouse – Trustee nominee

Kate has lived in Easton for 5 years and loves being part of her street, helping neighbours, enjoying local cultural activities... Both 'Up Our Street' and the community centre were a helpful navigation guide when she was making her home here. She feels very lucky to live close to such a brilliant space and has appreciated many of the services on offer such as dance classes, climate workshops, the repair café and menopause drop-in. Kate has been a member of Eastside Community Trust for a while and is ready to contribute to the great team who look after everything.

Kate is a facilitator who has spent most of her working life alongside people working for social change, especially with refugees, women and the LGBTQ+ community. She has 30 years' volunteering and job experience within the voluntary sector, ranging from policy consultation, social inclusion and peacebuilding. She values learning opportunities and has enjoyed delivering training with people from conflict affected countries. Kate knows that

working for positive social change can be challenging, so she has also hosted retreats for community activists.

Kate's current job is as an engagement manager for a social innovation charity which takes her around the South West of England and across Wales. She has a master's degree in Public Administration, and postgraduate qualifications in marketing and conflict resolution. She loves art galleries, swimming and Bristol's amazing street art.

6. Henri Owen – Trustee nominee

Henri lives locally in Eastville and currently works in the management team at Easton Community Children's Centre.

Henri is an experienced non-profit leader, whose career has been focused on climate justice, and working in different ways to build people power. They have previously worked a lot with community groups focusing on climate action and building democratic community ownership over the local economy. They have also led national climate and economic justice campaigns and political organising work. They have an MSc. in Environmental Change and Management.

Over the last few years they've focused on supporting non-profits to build strong and effective internal operations, governance, fundraising and finance systems. They enjoy getting into the nitty gritty of how organisations actually work, and think most things can be improved with a spreadsheet.

Their hobbies include surfing, cycling, board games and growing things in the garden.

7. Alan Russell – Trustee nominee

It is both a pleasure and a honour to be considered for the post of a trustee.

I have quite a multifaceted background, when it comes to employment. This includes labouring, security and therapist, to name but a few. I have experience of working with young people of all ages, from creche to adventure playground and college. I have also worked at a daycentre for people with disabilities. This journey helped me to grow a great deal as a person and realise my potential as a professional.

I went on to become a drugs worker delivering open access, needle exchange and counselling. As a drugs worker I was responsible for lone working (1-1 counselling) and also working as part of a team. Participating in team meetings and delivering services outside of my main role (external training, etc).

I believe that a neighbourhood becomes a community, when we all come together to share fun, support, experiences, skills, etc. I am very impressed by what I have seen and experienced from Eastside Community Trust. The variety of opportunities for people to access activities is phenomenal. It is, to me, a true community spirit, where everyone is taken into consideration. From toddlers to sessions for the older community, all are included.

I have seen the community centre used as a place of solace, somewhere to relax that is safe and comfortable. Somewhere to go for information, both local and city wide. There are also a wide range of activities that promote learning and fun. If I am successful in gaining the role of a trustee, I will give it my utmost to follow the example of those who came before me. I will seek the guidance and support of my peers and share my perspectives, when appropriate.