



**Scottish Youth Parliament
Annual General Meeting**

Candidate Information Pack 2026

Contents

What is the AGM?	2
Key dates	2
What is the SYP Board?	3
Personal characteristics	3
Legal Requirements and General duties of charity trustees	4
Role description: Chair	5
Role description: Vice Chair	6
Role description: Trustee	6
How is the Board selected?	7

What is the AGM?

As a youth-led organisation, SYP is led by a group of Trustees elected by MSYPs to represent them on the SYP Board.

SYP's Annual General Meeting (AGM) gives the SYP membership the opportunity to elect a new Chair, Vice Chair and Board of Trustees.

The Scottish Youth Parliament is a charity and a company, and is bound by charity and company law to run the AGM in a very professional and tight fashion. Therefore, the details of how the elections work, and the times at which they happen, are extremely important.

This pack will help you to find out more about SYP's 2026 Annual General Meeting (AGM), the positions available, and how to stand for a role.

If you have any questions about the AGM, please contact elections@syp.org.uk

Key dates

- Applications open - Friday 21st August 2026
- AGM info sessions - Between Monday 24th and Saturday 29th August 2026
- Applications close - Midday (12pm) on Tuesday 8th September 2026
- Assessment panel meeting - Tuesday 15th and Wednesday 16th September 2026
- All Candidates will be informed of the assessment panel outcome within one week after the panel meeting.
- Candidate Briefing - week beginning 21st September 2026
- Successful Candidate Announcement - Wednesday 23rd September 2026
- Trustee, Chair, and Vice Chair Candidate Hustings - 1st or 5th October 2026 - TBC
- Voting opens - Thursday 8th October 2026
- Voting closes - 3pm on Friday 16th October 2026
- Results announced at AGM - Saturday 17th October 2026 at the End of Membership Event
- Board training - within one month after the AGM

Due to the rules around the Board selection process, we strongly advise all candidates **NOT** to publicise their intention to stand in the AGM until the Assessment Panel decision has been announced to the SYP membership.

What is the SYP Board?

The SYP Board is a group of eight MSYPs who are legally responsible for the governance of SYP. They are required to stand up for the best interests of SYP as a charity, no matter what.

‘Governance’ means the overall **leadership, oversight, and decision-making** that ensures the Scottish Youth Parliament is well run, financially responsible, and working towards its charitable purpose.

Of the eight MSYPs on the Board, one is Chair, one is Vice Chair, and six are Trustees. They are supported by External Advisors, who attend Board meetings and support the Board to make decisions. External Advisors do not have voting rights.

SYP is a Scottish charity, which means the Board of Trustees’ primary responsibility is to look after the interests of the charity and make sure SYP acts in the interests of its charitable purposes at all times.

The SYP Board of Trustees has different responsibilities. These are legal responsibilities of all charity Trustees, and if the SYP Trustees do not meet those responsibilities they could, ultimately, be taken to court or even be charged with a criminal offence.

In addition to their legal responsibilities, the SYP Board acts as leaders of the organisation, liaises with the staff team and represents SYP at various events. More details on the Board’s many responsibilities are available in the relevant role descriptions, which are shown on the next few pages.

Personal characteristics

The Chair, Vice Chair and Trustees must be able to demonstrate the following skills and aptitudes:

- Passion for delivering SYP’s charitable purposes.
- Commitment to their role as a local/NVO MSYP (as appropriate).
- Commitment to SYP on a national basis (e.g. participation in SYP campaigns, projects, and events, and other SYP working groups).
- Mental resilience.
- Conflict resolution.
- Empathy and understanding of the views and perspectives of others.
- Ability to work in a team.
- Strategic thinker and understanding of difference between strategic and operational matters.

In addition to the requirements outlined in the role descriptions in this document, MSYPs elected to the SYP Board are expected to continue to prioritise their work as a local MSYP, and must, on their election, agree with their Support Worker how they can work together to achieve this.

Legal Requirements and General duties of charity trustees

Please note, these duties below are LEGAL requirements of all Charity Trustees in Scotland, as set out in the Charity and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005. A Charity Trustee must:

1. **Act in the interest of the charity:** Trustees should put the interests of their charity before their own interests or those of any other person or organisation.
2. **Operate in a manner consistent with the charity's purposes:** Trustees should carry out their duties in accordance with their governing document.
3. **Act with due care and diligence:** Trustees should take such care of their charity's affairs as is reasonable to expect of someone who is managing the affairs of another person.
4. Ensure that the charity **complies with the provisions of the Charities (Regulation and Administration) (Scotland) Act 2023** and other relevant legislation.

Automatic disqualification from being a charity trustee includes:

- You have a conviction for an offence involving dishonesty.
- Are disqualified as a company director.
- Have an undischarged bankruptcy or protected trust deed.
- Have been removed as a trustee by the court.
- Conviction of offences under bribery legislation.
- Conviction under proceeds of crime legislation.
- Conviction for perverting the course of justice.
- A conviction of terrorism or association with proscribed terrorist group.
- Misconduct or negligence as a public official.
- Disobedience with an order of court.
- Sexual offences subject to notification.

The specific duties of each position available for election at the SYP AGM are shown in the role descriptions on the following pages. In addition to these specific duties, all members of the SYP Board must:

- Be aged 16 - 25 on the date of the Annual General Meeting (Saturday 17th October 2026).
- Act in accordance with the SYP Articles of Association, protect the integrity of the charity, and ensure the organisation operates within the law.
- Act as a role model for all other MSYPs, for example by abiding by the highest possible standards of personal behaviour.
- Agree the strategic plan and organisational policies with the Chief Executive.
- Understand the difference between strategic (Board) and operational matters (Staff) and not involve themselves in the day-to-day management of the organisation but support the work of the staff group.
- Ensure accountability, as required by law, to the beneficiaries (MSYPs and other young people), staff, donors, and other stakeholders, including the production of annual reports and accounts which meet all legal requirements.
- Agree the budget, monitor financial performance, and ensure the charity has adequate resources to carry out its work.
- Regularly review the performance of the charity.
- Take professional advice where appropriate.

- Establish and adhere to procedures for recruitment and support, when required.
- Establish subgroups and working groups, as and when required.
- Produce and keep an up-to-date list of Board Members' interests.
- Recognise the difference in their role as Trustee, and that of MSYPs and staff, and respect the role of elected MSYPs in the development of SYP agendas and activities.
- Not receive payment, but have reasonable expenses reimbursed.
- Respond to communications from other Trustees, members of staff and other relevant partners as promptly as possible.
- Abide by the charity's policies in relation to Discipline and member Code of Conduct, Child Protection, Data Protection, and Health and Safety.
- Take collective responsibility for all decisions made, acting as one group, setting aside personal or local interests.

All MSYPs elected to the Board of Trustees will be required to join the PVG (Protection of Vulnerable Groups) Scheme.

All Trustees must take part in Board training on Governance and Child Protection at the start of their term of office.

Role description: Chair

One position available

The Chair of the Scottish Youth Parliament is the figurehead of the organisation and chairs the Board of Trustees. They need to be able to chair meetings of the organisation, represent SYP at the highest level, and work with the Chief Executive and other senior SYP staff.

Approximate time commitment (not including local/NVO work): approximately 15 hours per week

In addition to the general duties of a trustee, the SYP Chair will:

- Adopt a leadership role on behalf of the Scottish Youth Parliament.
- Act as the media spokesperson and public face of the Scottish Youth Parliament.
- Chair SYP Board meetings, ensuring discussion and decision making are open and democratic, and be proactive in resolving conflict.
- Oversee the business of the Board, including managing agendas for meetings and managing Board business between Board meetings.
- With staff and the Board, assist in the development of the organisation's strategic plans.
- Work with the Chief Executive and senior staff members to maintain and develop relationships with outside agencies as well as high-level policy and decision makers.
- Assist in ensuring that the Board is aware of and enabled to fulfil its responsibilities as Trustees of SYP, seeking specialist advice where necessary.
- Act as a role model for all other MSYPs in line with SYP's values.
- Assist in ensuring the Board receives the information necessary to perform its duties.
- Ensure the smooth and efficient realisation of SYP's strategic aims and objectives, as agreed by the Board.
- Direct line manager of the Chief Executive, agree on the delegation of operational matters, and set and review the Chief Executive's objectives.

Role description: Vice Chair

One position available

The Vice Chair of the Board works with the Chair to promote and develop the organisation. The key responsibilities of the Vice Chair are to deputise for the Chair as required.

Approximate time commitment (not including local work): 10 hours per week

In addition to the general duties of a trustee, the SYP Vice Chair will:

- Deputise for the SYP Chair, as required - see role description for Chair.
- Act as a media spokesperson and public face of the Scottish Youth Parliament.
- Assist in the leadership of the Scottish Youth Parliament.
- Act as a role model for all other MSYPs, in line with SYPs values.
- In the absence of the SYP Chair, chair the SYP Board and full SYP meetings.
- Be a member of the SYP Complaints Committee and chair disciplinary panel meetings as required, in line with SYP's Complaints and Disciplinary Procedures.
- Chair the Subject Committee Conveners Group.

Role description: Trustee

Five positions available

Approximate time commitment (not including local/NVO work): At least 5 hours per week

SYP Trustees will:

- Recognise that Trustees are accountable to the membership of SYP.
- Attend each Board meeting and be prepared to play a full part in any Board Committees or working groups.
- Provide written or oral updates on their work (as required by the Chair) as Trustees for each Board meeting.
- Endeavour to respond positively to requests for assistance.
- Act as a role model for all other MSYPs.
- Act in line with the SYP Board Code of Conduct (alongside the MSYP Code of Conduct).
- Recognise a need for confidentiality and to abide by the processes, policies and protocols of the organisation.
- Support their colleagues on the Board, as required.

The sixth Trustee will be a Convener elected by the Conveners Group to represent them. This Trustee has the same responsibilities as above. A separate role description will be shared with the Conveners Group ahead of the Conveners Trustee election the additional duties of this role.

How is the Board selected?

As the Board has legal responsibilities, there is a strict process for recruiting MSYPs to these roles, and this section outlines each stage of that process.

This process is underpinned by SYP's Articles of Association - the document that lays out how SYP will operate as a charity.

Due to the rules around the Board selection process, we strongly advise all candidates NOT to publicise their intention to stand in the AGM until the Assessment Panel decision has been announced to the SYP membership.

1. Submit your application

All MSYPs who want to be considered for a position on the SYP Board must submit an online application form, which is **available [here](#)**.

If you are unable to access the online application form, please contact elections@syp.org.uk to request a Word version of the form.

The application form asks candidates for:

- Your name, contact details, and availability during the AGM period.
- The position you want to apply for.
- Written examples (around 100-200 words) on the key areas of responsibility, how you have shown leadership skills or developed and implemented a strategy, your skills, experience of building relationships and working with others, and your personal priorities.
- Information about any cautions, rehabilitation and criminal records.
- Demographics and questions about your skills and knowledge.

All information provided in the application form will be kept securely and will be strictly confidential. This information will only be shared with the Assessment Panel and key staff involved in the AGM process.

Before you submit an application, you must speak to your Support Worker to let them know you are planning to apply for a role on the SYP Board.

Applications open on **Friday 21st August 2026**.

Applications close at **midday (12pm) on Tuesday 8th September 2026**.

Late applications will not be accepted, so make sure you submit your form before this deadline.

Top tips for writing your personal statement

- **Make sure you understand what the role you are applying for is** - read the role description and general duties of a trustee (pages 4-6) before you start your application.
- **Don't leave it to the last minute** - the information you share in your personal statement is the first thing MSYPs will receive about why you want to be considered for this role, so you don't want to rush it.
- **Take time to plan what you want to say** - note down some ideas then walk away and come back to it a few days later when you've had time to process your thoughts.
- **Start with a clear statement about why you are standing for this role** - this should be a couple of sentences at most.
- **Do your research** - make sure you understand the role, and then think about what you would like to achieve on the SYP Board and how you would go about doing this.
- **Use bullet points** to clearly indicate your key points.
- **Be concise and try to avoid repetition** - you have a limited number of words so don't want to waste them by repeating yourself.
- **Keep it simple** - this will make it easier for everyone to understand what you want to do and why they should vote for you.
- **Be positive** - it's ok to disagree with people or with the way things are currently but criticising without giving solutions can reflect negatively on you. Try to focus on what you could do to make things even better.
- **Be realistic** with what you can achieve in the time you have available.
- **Summarise** why MSYPs should vote for you in your closing couple of sentences.

If you're struggling to get started, try answering these questions:

- Why are you standing for this role?
- What would you like to achieve in this role, and why? How will you do it?
- How will you work with other members of the Board, MSYPs, and SYP staff?
- What will you bring to the role?
- Why should MSYPs vote for you?

2. Testimonials from local authority or national voluntary organisation

SYP will ask the local authority or national voluntary organisation supporting each candidate to provide a testimonial for their suitability for these roles.

This testimonial is similar to the kind of references employers ask for at job interviews. All testimonials are considered by the Assessment Panel (see below) alongside candidates' application form and their interview.

3. Assessment panel - Between 15th and 16th September 2026

An Assessment Panel will consider all applications from MSYPs who put themselves forward to stand for a position on the SYP Board, and will invite MSYPs who have clearly demonstrated how they meet the requirements of the role they have applied for.

If a current Trustee wishes to be considered for a different role on the Board to the role they currently hold e.g. a current Trustee applying to be Vice Chair, the current Trustee will be required to meet with the assessment panel. If a current Trustee wishes to be considered for

the same role as they currently hold, they would not be required to meet the assessment panel unless there are concerns about their ability to perform their current role.

The Assessment Panel's role is to ensure that all candidates can meet the numerous requirements that being a charity Trustee entails (you can read about these requirements in the role descriptions on page 4-7 of this guide). These interviews normally last around 30 minutes. You will also be asked to prepare a task for the interview. More information on this will be provided if you are invited to meet the Assessment Panel.

It is vital that all candidates are interviewed by the Panel, but if an MSYP is not available on this date, please contact elections@syp.org.uk as soon as you can.

The Assessment Panel this year will be composed of the SYP Chief Executive, two external advisors, and a former SYP Trustee.

The Assessment Panel will decide which candidates should go forward for each of the roles based on their application form, their performance at the assessment panel interview, their prior experience within SYP and the testimonial (see above) from their National Voluntary Organisation or Local Authority. As well as accepting or rejecting any application, the Panel may also recommend a candidate applies for a different role than the one originally applied for (e.g. a candidate applying to stand for Chair may be advised to stand for Trustee instead).

Please note that this we will ask all candidates to reflect on their local or NVO work, ideally using [SYP and Me](#) as a guide.

As stated in SYP's Articles of Association, the decisions of the Panel are final, and candidates do not have a right of appeal on any decisions it makes.

4. Reopening of Nominations (RON)

If no suitable candidate(s) come forward for a position, the assessment panel will decide whether to reopen nominations for that position for a short period of time to give other MSYPs the opportunity to apply. Information about this process will be shared with all MSYPs if this situation arises.

5. Campaigning period

After the assessment panel has met and testimonials have been reviewed, all candidates will be informed if they have been successful or unsuccessful.

Successful candidates will be required to attend a briefing led by SYP's CEO prior to announcing their candidacy. This briefing will cover SYP's strategy, long term plans, and funding. This session aims to support candidates in their campaigning.

Successful candidates will be required to submit a personal statement and a short video statement which will be shared with the membership to help them find out more about each candidate.

The SYP staff team will email all MSYPs to let them know who the AGM candidates are and will include the personal statement you are asked to submit with your application. At this point, the campaigning period will begin.

During the campaigning period, all candidates are free to make their case to the membership for why they feel they would make a good Trustee. However, there are rules that all candidates and the SYP staff team are obliged to follow. These have been designed to ensure that no candidate (especially those who currently hold national office, such as a Trustee or Committee Convener) are able to benefit unfairly from the work they are doing for SYP. More detailed guidance about the campaigning period will be shared with you when the candidate lists are announced.

Top tips for campaigning:

- You should not spend any money on campaign resources or materials.
- Be polite and respectful at all times - do not criticise any other individual or candidate. This won't reflect well on you and might go against SYP's values.
- Get creative - you could make images or short video clips showing your campaign pledges and why you would be a good Trustee, which you can share on social media.
- Be accessible - make sure the young people who will be voting can understand what makes you a good Trustee candidate and why they should vote for you. You will also want to make sure any materials you create are easy to read and meet SYP's accessibility guidelines, which you can find in the MSYP Handbook ([here](#)).
- Practice speaking to people - as a candidate for a Board position, you will have lots of opportunities to speak to MSYPs about why you want them to vote for you. Public speaking can be scary, especially if you haven't done much of it, so practicing is really important to help you overcome your nerves. You could start by speaking to yourself in a mirror, or by speaking to a group of friends or family members.

The SYP Code of Conduct still applies throughout this process please be mindful and respectful of others.

Election pledges:

Board candidates may want to create pledges on what they want to achieve if they are elected. This is an entirely valid part of the election process, and there are some tips below about how to prepare pledges:

- SYP already has agreed work plans and funding agreements, and any change might take time. You could read through the SYP 2025-30 strategy (available [here](#)) to understand the organisational priorities for the next four years.
- Make sure your pledges are realistic and achievable. If candidates make unrealistic pledges, they may be accused by their peers of not fulfilling pledges made during this period, which could cause problems with the wider membership.
- Discuss any pledges you want to make with your Support Worker before they are made public - your Support Worker can help you make sure your pledges are achievable and within the remit of the role you are standing for.
- Remember you are seeking election to the Board of Trustees of a charity, not to a political Cabinet! The Board's primary responsibility is to make sure the organisation meets its charitable purposes, and that, when they leave, they have left it in at least as stable a position as it was when they joined it. Everything else you may want to achieve must be a secondary objective to this.
- Any new initiatives the Board wishes to introduce need to be accounted for within the extremely tight restrictions of SYP's existing capacity and funding. This information will be provided to all at the Board training sessions.

6. Hustings

The AGM Hustings are designed to give MSYPs the opportunity to ask all candidates about their candidacy. The Hustings will be chaired by an independent Returning Officer. Before the Hustings, candidates will receive a briefing to help them prepare. The date for the hustings is to be confirmed and will be shared shortly.

7. Voting period - Thursday 8th October to Friday 16th October

Voting will be open from 10am on 8th October 2026 and close at 3pm on 16th October 2026.

All MSYPs will vote by submitting a proxy ballot paper during the week before the AGM.

Proxy forms will be emailed to all current MSYP email addresses, along with more information about how to submit your ballot.

The elections for the Board use the Scottish Single Transferrable Vote (Scottish STV) system - a system of preferential voting. MSYPs list their preferences for candidates rather than just choosing one. This means the result is based more on consensus or agreement.

You can find out more about the STV voting system at the following websites:

<https://bit.ly/2wnoblD> - youtube video explaining the Single Transferrable Vote

<https://bit.ly/2JZyogb> - another youtube video explaining the Single Transferrable Vote

<http://bbc.in/2q3jppw> - BBC article about the Single Transferrable Vote

After voting closes, votes will be counted by members of SYP staff in the SYP Office, and will be monitored by an Independent Observer with no connection to SYP or any candidates.

8. The Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting will take place online at the End of Membership Event on Saturday 17th October 2026.

At the AGM, an Independent Returning Officer will chair proceedings, and will announce the results for the Chair, Vice Chair, and Board of Trustees.

After the results have been announced, there will be a short meeting for all of the successful candidates where SYP staff will let you know more about the training and next steps.