



**thecockburnassociation@150**

## Job and Person Specification

July 2025

<b>Job Title:</b>	Director
<b>Reports to:</b>	Chair/Trustees
<b>Engages with:</b>	All levels of the Association and external interests and associates
<b>Contract:</b>	Three-year fixed term contract <sup>1</sup>
<b>Salary:</b>	£ 50,000 negotiable according to skills and experience
<b>Pension:</b>	Pension scheme in place
<b>Working hours</b>	35 hours Monday-Friday with options negotiable for flexible working and reduced or compressed hours <sup>2</sup>
<b>Annual leave:</b>	32 days leave plus 6 days public holidays <sup>3</sup>
<b>Location:</b>	Central Edinburgh; hybrid working options are negotiable but normally three days per week are required to be based in the office

### Strategic Purpose

The Director holds full executive responsibility for developing, implementing and monitoring the Cockburn Council's strategies, objectives, policies and decisions, enabling the Association to fulfil its charitable purposes. The job priorities are focused on ensuring financial sustainability, membership growth, and enhanced organisation profile, working closely with the Chair, Trustees, and President. While a keen interest in Edinburgh and the quality of its environment, and commitment to the principle of citizen participation are expected, specialist skills or experience in planning, architecture, conservation or design are not a requirement. At this stage of the Association's history, we are seeking a Director with

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<sup>1</sup> The post is time-limited to denote a specific set of tasks comprising Phase 1 of a longer-term change programme. (See above Strategic Purpose and Appendix B, Looking to the Future)

<sup>2</sup> The job necessitates working beyond normal office hours on a regular basis. (See Appendix A). We are happy to discuss any reasonable adjustments to the working pattern that would enable the successful candidate to perform the role while meeting the needs of the Association.

<sup>3</sup> Good Friday, Easter Monday, Christmas Day, Boxing Day, New Year's Day, 2 January.

management and business skills who will implement a change programme for our long-term sustainability.

## **JOB DESCRIPTION**

The job is focused on leading and managing the first phase of the Cockburn Council's longer term change programme, concentrating on the following priorities for which the postholder will be held accountable:

- Leading and developing plans aimed at securing the Association's financial sustainability in the short, medium and longer term, ensuring compliance with OSCR requirements
- Initiating and developing new income-generating and fund-raising activities including engagement with local businesses and organisations with a view to securing corporate support
- Building the profile and visibility of the Association to attract new members while meeting the expectations of existing members through imaginative communications, events and campaigning activity
- Managing and developing the Association's staff and volunteers with sensitivity to the effects on employee wellbeing arising from a period of transition.

Please note that the job includes a number of other ongoing operational duties which will be expected to form part of the Director's everyday workload. These are listed in Appendix A. The trustees undertake to offer strategic direction and appropriate support to enable the postholder to focus on the above priorities.

## **PERSON SPECIFICATION**

### **Qualifications**

It is essential that the successful candidate is qualified to degree level in a subject relevant to the job description as outlined above.

A Masters level qualification or other professional qualifications or certifications relevant to the job are desirable but not essential.

### **Skills, Experience and Knowledge**

The successful candidate must have demonstrable skills, experience and knowledge of the following key areas:

- **Leadership and management:** people, projects, financial resources, income-generation, business planning, performance monitoring, risk, contracts, change programmes, delegation, information systems. A commitment to diversity and inclusion must be evidenced. Office management is highly desirable.
- **Communication:** written, verbal and presentational, with the ability to engage effectively with different audiences using tailored methods.

It is desirable that applicants will have experience of working within or in partnership with the charity sector and that they can offer skills in good governance practice. Experience of managing small teams and/or working within a collaborative or co-leadership environment will be very useful.

Other desirable skills may be offered in examples of work experience such as creative problem-solving; influencing and negotiation; debating and summarising arguments; fund-raising; grant applications; event management; and social media.

### **Personal qualities**

The successful candidate will be a highly motivated self-starter, enthusiastic about the Cockburn Association's activities and campaigns. They will be committed to change while understanding the need for sensitivity in their work of communicating and managing change. In the words of one of the Cockburn's early members, Patrick Geddes, the watchword is 'conservative surgery' for the Association, embodying a holistic, adaptive approach, rather than 'demolish and replace'.

They will be capable of working independently, managing the Association's interfaces diplomatically and professionally; committed to collaborative working, and remaining mindful of the need to uphold its long traditions of impartiality and independence.

They will possess personal qualities of integrity, reliability and humility, and will support and help foster the values underpinning the Council's conduct, to be respectful, inclusive and collegiate.

## TO APPLY

The Cockburn Association is committed to a culture which values diversity and inclusive work practices. We particularly welcome applications from individuals from underrepresented backgrounds.

To apply for the position, please submit:

- An up to date, job-relevant CV including your qualifications, professional affiliations, employment history, achievements and the contact details of two referees, one of which should be your current or most recent employer. Please indicate whether you are willing for us to contact referees prior to the interview process.
- A covering letter explaining your interest in the post and what you think you would bring to the role, giving selected examples of how your experience, skills and knowledge match the job and person requirements.

Applications should be emailed to [admin@cockburnassociation.org.uk](mailto:admin@cockburnassociation.org.uk) with the subject line:

### **CONFIDENTIAL: APPLICATION FOR ROLE OF COCKBURN ASSOCIATION DIRECTOR 2025**

We will send you an acknowledgement of your application. If you do not receive this, please contact Brigid Golden on 0131 557 8686 or by emailing the above address.

Provided below are the key dates:

Closing date: Friday 8 August 2025

Interviews: w/b 29 August 2025

All shortlisted applications will receive an invitation to attend an interview with a panel of three. The interviews will take place at the Cockburn Association's office in Trunk's Close, 55 High Street, Edinburgh EH1 1SR. If you need any adjustments or flexibility in the interview process, please do not hesitate to ask.

For general background information about the Cockburn Association, please contact Brigid Golden in the first instance on 0131 557 8686 ([admin@cockburnassociation.org.uk](mailto:admin@cockburnassociation.org.uk)) or for a confidential informal discussion about the role, please contact the Chair, Dr Lesley Martin on 07969 178483.

## **APPENDIX A**

### **Operations of the Cockburn Association**

The Cockburn Association is based at 5 Trunks Close, just off High Street in the heart of Edinburgh's Old Town. The Association enjoys the advocacy and support of an active President, Stephen Jardine, who took up the role in 2024. The Cockburn Council of Trustees (the Association's Board) has collective responsibility to determine the Association's strategic direction, to ensure prudential oversight, and to support and guide the Director. It meets every two months or more often if an issue requires urgent attention. The office-bearers comprise the Chair, Vice-Chair and Treasurer. Trustees contribute to events, promotion and outreach, working within their own networks and localities and playing to their professional backgrounds. There are currently committees for Management and Finance (meeting every two months), and Policy and Development (monthly); the latter considers the Association's response to current planning policies and proposals and new government legislation or guidance. This work is complemented by representation of the Cockburn Association on the Edinburgh Urban Design Panel. Meetings are generally held in-person in the late afternoon or early evening although a proportion of meetings are held online. The Committees and their operation are awaiting review to ensure their ongoing effectiveness.

Of the community engagement activities, the most important is the work of the Edinburgh Civic Forum, set up in 1998 and chaired and administered by the Association. It provides an opportunity to connect the City of Edinburgh Council with over 100 community and amenity groups, enabling quarterly updates on planning matters, and a means for them to act together in matters of common interest. The operation of the Forum is currently under review in discussion with the City of Edinburgh Council.

The Cockburn Association's work is supported by a small and very hard-working and experienced staff team who will assist the new Director and help maintain business continuity in providing the news, commentary, and events which our members expect and value. The paid staff consists of an Assistant Director (working 3-4 days per week) who supports the Director through committee and office management, representation at meetings, and monitoring of and commenting on planning proposals; and a full-time Engagement and Development Manager who supervises volunteer support, and develops and manages events and communications, for example, the production of the monthly newsletters to members. Budget planning is administered with the Treasurer and with monthly advice from an external Accountant, separate from the Independent Examiner of the Association's annual accounts. There is also IT support and informal arrangements for website development which are under review.

The priorities for the job are outlined in the job description. However there are ongoing operational responsibilities of the Director that include but are not necessarily limited to the following tasks. Appropriate delegation and job enrichment for staff is encouraged.

- Managing the efficient ongoing operational control of finances and investments in liaison with the Association's Treasurer and external Accountant
- Managing the administration of the Association, ensuring compliance with OSCR requirements
- Acting as a spokesperson for the Association and first point of contact for media enquiries, liaising with the Chair and Trustees as appropriate.
- Overseeing the work of the Association's Committees and working groups, including the preparation of agendas, minutes and papers, in liaison with the Chair and Vice-Chair
- Implementing and where appropriate updating internal policies including staff appraisal, office procedures, insurance, risk assessments, and the secure filing of records and archives
- Representing the Cockburn Association at appropriate external groups, events and inquiries, as resources and other priorities allow
- Initiating and facilitating staff and trustee skills development.

## APPENDIX B

### Background to the Cockburn Association

Founded in 1875, the Cockburn Association is Edinburgh's Civic Trust. It is a registered Scottish Charity with stated objectives as:

- a. The maintenance and improvement of the amenity of the City of Edinburgh and its neighbourhood;
- b. The protection and preservation of the city's landscape and historic & architectural heritage.

In practice, the Cockburn Association has evolved to take an interest in many other aspects of the city's development and management in accordance with sustainability principles:

- Supporting the protection of the landscape setting of the city and significant open spaces that contribute to the city's unique character
- Promoting the improvement of the aesthetic and functional quality of shared spaces such as public squares, parks, streets and footways
- Advocating for sustainable transport systems sensitive to different needs for accessibility and mobility
- Encouraging high quality contemporary design for buildings and the public realm.

Overarching these concerns is the advocacy for greater public interest and participation in the city's planning, conservation and design quality. The Cockburn Association aspires to develop its role as a city convener and civic champion, facilitating citizen involvement in sustainable city development, working within a cooperative ethos and the principles of equity and inclusion.

### Looking to the Future

The Cockburn Association has this year been celebrating a notable anniversary, the 150th year of its establishment in 1875. The Anniversary has been marked by the publication in June 2025 of *Campaigning for Edinburgh: The Cockburn Association 1875-1949* authored by Cliff Hague and Richard Rodgers, with DJ Johnston-Smith and Terry Levinthal.

The Trustees believe that with the significant and complex challenges facing society and the city: climate change, growing inequalities, development and tourism pressures, stretched budgets in government and evidence of citizen disquiet about the direction in which Edinburgh is travelling, the need for the Cockburn Association's work is becoming ever more important. Working towards a sustainable city generates differences of opinion and conflicts of interest and we believe that an important part of our role must be to help facilitate productive debate in safe and respectful settings.

We want to extend our reach and influence but in common with organisations across the city, we face rising costs, and as an amenity body, we have a predominantly older membership and diminishing financial resources. This has led the Cockburn Council to

decide that the time is right to pause some of our ongoing business and prioritise the interconnected action areas of resources, membership and profile. In three years' time, we intend to be ready to proceed to Phase 2 which will embed and strengthen new ways of operating and move forward with renewed confidence and purpose.