

Meet the trustees

An open meeting was held at New Lands on 4 November 2018 providing an opportunity to find out more about how the White Eagle Lodge functions; to ask questions and to discuss specific points of interest.

There are currently five trustees, all volunteers; the Lodge Mother has an ex officio place on the board. We physically meet three times a year. Following an over view of the role and responsibilities of a trustee the following questions were asked.

Q. How did each one of the trustees find the White Eagle Lodge and what drew you to make the deeper commitment to become a trustee?

A. My name is Jason Wilson, I became a trustee in 2011 and was selected as Chair of Trustees in April 2017. I was introduced to the Lodge in the mid-90s by my wife. I had had a copy of the *Quiet Mind* since I was a teenager and when I began to read other White Eagle books they resonated with my heart and confirmed spiritual truths that I sub-consciously already knew to be true. I volunteered in a number of roles within the Lodge; for a number of years my wife & I were regional co-ordinators of the South West Centre. When the Lodge Mother asked me to consider being a trustee I felt this was another way I could give service and support the work of the Lodge.

I'm Paul Brenig-Jones and was drawn to the White Eagle Lodge in 1976, searching for healing for my father. I felt I had found my spiritual home and became a member in 1977, then a lone healer, absent healer and contact healer. I attended meditation classes with Ylana in the autumn of 1977, and went on to study the White Eagle School of Astrology's Beginners Correspondence Course & later the Advanced Course. My wife and I used to run the Warwick White Eagle Group and we acted as co-ordinators for the Heart of England Regional Centre from 2003 to 2016. I have been an astrology tutor since 2008 and the Lodge Mother asked me to consider becoming a trustee in 2005.

My name is Linda Cohen. I am from the U.S. and am Jewish. In the 1980s, while I worked in the U.S. Senate, I was given a book about the White Brotherhood (which mentioned White Eagle). As I read this book, I knew in my heart this was true and has always been truth. It was as if doors to my heart swung wide open and I fell in love with all of life. I began viewing everything with a more expansive lens. When I moved from Washington, D.C. to Washington, state (Seattle), an incredible individual who was a Baptist minister took me to a Theosophical bookshop and introduced me to the White Eagle books. It was years after reading the White Eagle books before I discovered there were physical places/centers. I was a group leader in Maine for 20 years and I also served as director on the White Eagle Americas' Board for several years.

I was asked to be a trustee in 2012. My training as a lawyer and view point from a different country bring a slightly different perspective. While I am not familiar with the law in the U.K., the legal training can be helpful in identifying various issues.

I am Chris Sangster. After moving to Liss in 2007 I first became involved with the Lodge through contact healing sessions for my late wife. I became more involved with both the

Family Activities and through facilitating several "Spirituality in the Workplace" retreat workshops jointly with Jeremy, as well as playing music for many meditative "sound baths" in the Temple over the intervening years. Prior to moving to Liss, I had been involved in both a village hall refurbishment in Wiltshire and the construction of a community centre in the Scottish Highlands, so was attracted to becoming a WEL trustee when the new temple build project became active. I appreciate the opportunity to bring this experience, plus many years as a management communication training consultant, to service for the Lodge, as a trustee.

I am Jill Wilday, the newest trustee. I became aware of White Eagle maybe 15 years ago when my partner was sent one of the books by her pen-friend. We attended a retreat led by Jeremy in the North West in 2006 and it immediately felt like coming home. We became regular attendees in the NW. More recently, my partner passed into the Light and I was much supported by visiting New Lands for retreats. I now work part-time and when I saw a trustee vacancy on the website it felt an exciting opportunity for service.

Q. Are trustees appointed for a certain time?

A. The charity's Articles of Association detail the rules relating to the appointment and powers of trustees. The term of appointment is 5 years and is renewable. We have a recruitment process starting with a skills audit to identify areas of expertise we may wish to strengthen. To widen the range of applicants we now advertise trustee vacancies. Following an interview process potential trustees are invited to attend 2 meetings as an observer before being confirmed as a trustee.

Q. Are you trustees for the Lodge in the UK or worldwide?

A. The Lodge is registered as a UK charity operating internationally and the trustees are only responsible for the UK charity. Different arrangements exist in overseas centres; generally they are registered as charities, or not-for-profit organizations, in their own countries and are self-governing.

Close links are maintained; particularly with regards to spiritual matters. The international leaders come together regularly to discuss both spiritual and practical aspects. In relation to contact healing we work closely with all overseas centres to ensure standards and safeguarding measures are consistent.

Q. Who takes precedence?

A. Under UK Charity and Company law the trustees have ultimate responsibility and accountability on most practical aspects of running a charity, especially those relating to finance, premises and staff. Any minister, manager or trustee can table ideas at a trustee meeting and we all come together to discuss any major decisions. We aim to come to a consensus which can be defined as a common movement of hearts. It is not about politically putting forward one's own will.

Q. What is the spiritual/practical strategy on the future of the family work; particularly given the reduced number of children attending services?

- A. The trustees, ministers and managers are currently working on a high level strategic plan. Two outcomes are the decision to appoint a Communications Coordinator and the project to make the Inner Teachings available on a searchable online database. When we come to review the different areas of our work (e.g. healing & children and families) we want to involve the relevant workers and volunteers. In our overarching discussions we are aware that low numbers occur in other areas too. We are asking:
- Is what we've offered in the past still relevant?
 - Are we communicating effectively?
 - What are the most effective ways to connect with people in this day and age

Q. We have put forward suggestions in the past that haven't always been supported. To mark St. Francis' day we wanted to hold an event focused on animals, including a dog walk, and to invite a Reiki & Crystal healer who works with animals, but the idea was vetoed. We would welcome the opportunity to talk openly about strategy and our ideas.

- A. It is essential that White Eagle Lodge activities are focused upon the Teachings and the Star. We must be careful not to confuse people with different messages.

We are really interested in your thoughts and ask that you gather ideas from as many people (from all age groups) in the children & families work as possible including those who attend the annual camp. What activities would you like to see? How can the Lodge better engage with you? How do you suggest we best communicate the White Eagle Teachings to a wider audience?

Next March (2019) the trustees, ministers along with representatives from the children & families group can meet together to discuss these ideas and how best to take them forwards. In other words create a children & families strategy together.

(Note: a number of ideas and suggestions had been provided prior to the meeting by attendees at the Starlight Family Camp who couldn't attend this meeting. We were excited to see these and for the enthusiasm for the Teachings shown).

Q. Can you publish key decisions from trustee meetings?

- A. We aim to provide key information in Stella Polaris, especially in Links of Light, and also on the website. However we are looking at other ways of achieving this.

Q. Does WEL have its own YouTube channel?

A. Not yet. It's one of the things we intend putting in place to host a range of content about the Lodge and its activities. Content created by, and on behalf of, the children & families group would be ideal for this. It would be great to explore a younger person recording at least some of the meditations or other content

Q. Going back to the comment that numbers attending children and families services is reflected in numbers attending other services. How can we keep people?

A. The Lodge has never been about attracting large numbers. But it is our job to make the Teachings available in different formats: written, electronic and through our activities. How do we make sure that what we offer is what people want? We don't have all the answers.

A discussion followed around ways of encouraging people to attend events and of engaging in different ways along with the importance of interconnectedness. We discussed finding ways to say yes and ensuring a lot of these wonderful ideas are incorporated while ensuring they are compatible with the White Eagle Teachings.