

*Chris Cowton, Dean of the Business School at the University of Huddersfield*

“Hello I am Chris Cowton. I am the Dean of the Business School at the University of Huddersfield, and I have just given a speech to the CFG Annual Conference on promoting public trust: governing charities in troubling times. One of the things that interests me is what role the trustees have to play or the governance structure of the charity has to play in maintaining trust. I think you can do it in three key ways. The first way I’d point to is a bit like in any public limited company where the trustees should be keeping an eye on the management to make sure that they are paid appropriately, that they are acting in the right way, and they are not feathering their own nests; and they can reassure the public then that the managers are being paid properly to do a proper job. I think the second way again is like any company where the role of the governing body should be to help strategy. The governing body should be there to challenge strategy, to tease out the implications, to help the implementation of strategy but they are not there to run the charity. They must keep their fingers out of the charity and not meddle. So if management is about running a charity properly then I think the governance is about seeing it is run properly. I think the third way in which trustees can help is actually not something that requires any effort on their part. It is simply that if a charity knows why it has the trustees or the governance it has, it should be able to tell the outside world who they are, why they are there and what they do, and I think that can provide the public with a degree of reassurance that there is appropriate oversight of the charity and hopefully that itself will help maintain the trust.”