**Joining the Journey 2025**

**Ethos**

Torch has a clear purpose – we exist to enable blind and partially sighted people to encounter Jesus, grow in their Christian faith and thrive in Christian community.

Torch also has a distinctive culture that reflects its Christian beliefs and has been shaped by its history of seeking to be faithful to God’s guidance. Our values inform the choices made by Torch, what we do and the way we do it.

Our Values: to be Christ-centred; People-focussed; Open; Creative

**Statement 1. We are Christ-centred**

We seek to make Jesus Lord over every aspect of Torch Trust's work responding to the call he continues to give to us.  Jesus is the example that we try to follow so we seek to be centred on Christ in all that we do, working to principles we find in the Bible. Torch is God's and we seek to give reality to the prayer "Your kingdom come; your will be done" in our work for him.

This means that individually and corporately we seek to remain (or abide) in Christ, listening for his voice within and through our colleagues.  It means we seek to be Christ-like in our thinking, attitudes and activity, aiming to speak as he would speak and to do as he would do in every situation. We are committed to pray and stimulate prayer — faithfully and creatively.

**Statement 2. We are People-focused**

As Christians, we worship a Trinitarian God and see beautiful interdependent relationship perfectly displayed in the very nature of God.  At the heart our faith therefore is relationship – with God and with each other and so nurturing and prioritising relationships is core in all we do.

Being Christ-like therefore means we will always seek to be caring and compassionate, respecting each other, always seeking the good of the other and offering grace.  We seek therefore to prioritise the protection and enhancing of relationships and to find ways of expressing our interdependence. We will continuously strive to understand and appreciate the lives and needs of blind and partially sighted people and adapt our work to better serve their spiritual needs.

**Statement 3. We are Open**

As Christians, we follow a Trinitarian God who demonstrates in His own being what it means to be utterly open and surrendered.  In Jesus, we have a pattern for human life lived in complete openness and honesty to everyone he encountered.

As Christ’s followers, we seek always to operate with integrity in an open, honest and accessible way that creates understanding and trust.  We are open about our Christian faith as the motivation and inspiration for our work; we offer our services to people of all faiths and none; we are non-denominational, seeking to work in harmony with other Christians, embracing the diversity of Christian understanding, experience and tradition.

**Statement 4. We are Creative**

We worship and seek to follow a God who is both Creator and Sustainer of all things. Creativity is part of the very nature of God and as people made in his image, we believe that all people have the potential for creativity expressed in a myriad of ways.

Therefore, listening to our clients we respond with creative solutions, embracing innovation, technology, partnerships and the gifts of others.  We always seek to learn, develop and adapt to our current environment.

**Statement of Faith**

We ask anyone joining us to respect our basis of faith, a copy of which is provided at the end of this document.

**Torch – The Story**

In 1959 the conversion of one blind girl, Wendy, in the home of our founders, Ron and Stella Heath, led to a search for Christian literature in Braille for her.  This was to prove largely unsuccessful, however the Lord seemed to be saying to them “YOU give them something to eat” (Matt 14:16).

Under the gracious hand of our God, the work has grown and developed beyond the Heath’s wildest dreams.

The production of literature in audio, Braille, and giant print formats is now largely computer driven and a well-stocked lending library has been established with books available in a variety of accessible media for free loan. Torch magazines in accessible media go to readers all over the world. Torch is in touch with blind and partially sighted people in over 80 countries of the world and is producing scriptures in several languages. Torch also transcribes Bible reading notes in several media.

Many people have been helped and blessed through the ongoing programme of holidays, and Torch Fellowship Groups nationwide where blind and sighted people can support and minister to one another.

The work has extended internationally, with a partner in Malawi (Africa). Torch has other international partnerships and close links with many similar organisations in various parts of the world.

Today Torch is a vibrant organisation seeking to adapt to the needs and aspirations of blind and partially sighted people within an ever-changing context. The original vision is being fulfilled through producing and providing Christian literature in a form that blind and partially sighted people can read alongside the support we are able to encourage through Christian fellowship.

The present and future of Torch’s programme of activity is increasingly driven and shaped by a vision of Christian community as the setting in which people with sight loss find wholeness. This has led us to the development of our Sight Loss Friendly Church initiative which aims to inform and encourage all churches of the importance of being aware of sight loss among their congregations and the support that Torch can offer.

**Working and Volunteering with Torch**

Torch places a high value on everyone who is involved with Torch and seeks to ensure that they are safe and working in an environment that is purposeful, pleasant, and cooperative and where teamwork, fellowship and mutual support are an everyday part of working life. We encourage people to ‘join the journey’ as we travel with God on an adventure of faith, as we seek always to do His will and to work His way.

Torch is a Christian mission that seeks at all times to express the example of Jesus Christ in all its work and actions. Torch therefore seeks to set the highest standards in personal and business conduct and in relationships. Torch is prepared to listen and empathise with individual’s personal circumstances but does not seek to provide professional counselling or to replace pastoral care undertaken by an individual’s Church.

People may journey with Torch as employees or volunteers.

*Joining the Journey* is intended to give a basic overall picture of what joining Torch will be like. Specific details will be discussed as part of the recruitment process.

**Christian Commitment**

There are opportunities for those who do not have a Christian faith to work with Torch; however, it is important to recognise that Torch is a Christian mission and that the Christian ethos is part of the everyday life of Torch.  Daily prayer and worship are an integral part of the way we work together and the majority of our staff and volunteers see their work as an expression of their Christian faith.

All staff and volunteers who have regular contact with the users of our services are required to be committed Christians. For these roles the role description will define this as an Occupational Requirement. Those applying for such roles will be required to confirm that they are able to respect the Torch Basis of Faith and live to generally accepted standards of Christian life and witness.

Where the work involved is not defined as having an Occupational Requirement, applications are considered from those who do not have an active Christian faith.

**Christianity within the life of Torch**

Prayer is woven into the fabric of Torch. We engage the wider network of beneficiaries, supporters, volunteers and staff in daily prayer through a Daily Prayer Guide and Prayer Diary.

Many conversations with our clients will involve prayer or requests for prayer. Staff and volunteers are encouraged to take time with the challenges and concerns that often become apparent during conversations.

Consistent with this value is a governance and leadership that seeks always to discern and apply God’s leading. We test our choices against the teaching of the Bible, by prayer and by seeking unanimity after prayer.

**Employment**

**Recruitment Process**

The seeking of the Lord’s will is essential in the selection and appointment of staff.

Torch Trust seeks to ensure that throughout this process ample time is given and good opportunities for dialogue provided, so that the Lord’s will can be discerned in a way that is open, equal and fair. Our experience is that this process can take time. During this time we will be pleased to welcome you to Torch House and our Chief Executive and Leaders will be pleased to talk to you. We trust in this way you will be able to learn something of the special nature of Torch Trust and to share in the excitement of working in a Christian mission environment.

**Employment Opportunities**

The following are the main areas of activity within Torch:

* Torch House at Market Harborough – Client Services; Editorial and Transcription; Production and Distribution; Technical, Administration, Financial; Regional Support; International Outreach, Fundraising and Communications.
* Home locations across the UK – Regional Workers and Representatives.

A team of Leaders support those involved in these activities whether they are technical staff, support staff or volunteers. Details of specific vacancies are made known through Torch publications, on our website and where appropriate by circulating to Churches local to our bases and in the press. However, our experience has shown that the Lord brings to us those called to the work and whose talents can be best used at a particular time rather than those that necessarily fit into a predefined job specification.

**Salary**

As a faith-based mission we are extremely reliant upon the generosity of our supporters and Torch appreciates this and engages in appropriate ways for developing ongoing sustainability.

Torch’s staffing costs are our biggest single expenditure and as an expression of one of our values ‘Christ-centred’ we seek to always be faithful stewards of all that God provides. This will ensure we remain above legal minimum levels of wage, with salaries which whilst modest will reflect the level of responsibility; seniority of the position; and level of technical skill.

The salary for any particular role will be discussed as part of the recruitment process.

**Taking Employment seriously**

Torch is assisted in its HR management by Peninsula Services to ensure we offer best practise and maintain up to date and compliant employment practices. The Employee Handbook offers a comprehensive guide to working with Torch and is issued when being offered employment.

**Volunteering**

**Why Volunteer?**

Volunteers are an essential part of the work.  As a volunteer at Torch you can expect:

* An opportunity to join an enthusiastic and committed team, working together to serve blind and partially sighted people.
* Support in your work as a volunteer. We will help you to develop your skills and talents within Torch, devote appropriate supervisory time to these tasks and do so in a professional, supportive and courteous work environment.
* Information and training to enable you to work more effectively.
* Specific training to help you work with visually impaired people.
* A ‘Role Profile’ to clarify the work you do at Torch.
* A Partnership Agreement which will affirm the importance we place on your willingness to serve.
* An invitation to certain Torch events, including training and the annual Torch Thanksgiving.
* Regular reviews with you to exchange ideas; explore ways in which you can develop your role and to provide feedback on your work for Torch.

**What does Torch require from its Volunteers?**

* Ensure that all duties are undertaken with respect for people and equipment and display good manners at all times.
* Make clear to Torch when you are available and maintain the agreed level of commitment.
* Advise your supervisor promptly if you are unable to undertake your duties, including sickness, holidays etc.
* Attend training and support sessions as required.
* Respect confidentiality of information you come across during your volunteering, which is increasingly a legal requirement within our environment.
* Respect the need for the security of our premises and always abide by our protocol of signing in and out.
* Respect and comply with the Torch Christian Ethos and the Equality, Health & Safety and Safeguarding policies.
* Inform Torch about any health or disability concerns that might affect your volunteering with Torch.
* Not to undermine the name of Torch either within Torch or to outside sources.
* To sign and adhere to your Torch Volunteer Partnership Agreement as required and to inform your supervisor immediately you believe you are unable to comply with its commitment.

**Volunteer Recruitment Process**

It is important that we take time to ensure that both volunteer and Torch fit well together, that the volunteer role is well suited to the volunteer and that they gain a real sense of fulfilment in undertaking these duties.

New volunteer applicants will therefore be invited to speak with a supervisor and, as appropriate, to visit Torch House to learn something about the work we do. During this visit we will explore the various opportunities available and discuss the possibilities that we believe you may be suitable for. For some roles we may visit you in your home to discuss the opportunity of volunteering.

**Volunteering Opportunities**

Within two categories there are the following areas of volunteer activity within Torch:

* **Torch House** - at Market Harborough – Hospitality; Production and Distribution.
* **National** - Home based - Audio Transcription; Telephone support and services; Sight Loss Friendly Church; Retreat and Event assistance; and Regional support for Torch Fellowship Groups throughout the UK.

All volunteers are expected to complete some initial induction and appropriate training sessions.

Different roles will require different types of equipment and support. If you undertake tasks that require you to have I.T. access and a Torch email this will be provided for use on Torch business only. We reserve the right to monitor all email/internet activity by you for the purposes of ensuring compliance with Torch Trust policies and procedures and of ensuring compliance with the relevant regulatory requirements and you hereby consent to such monitoring.

Whatever tasks you will be volunteering for you will work under the management of a nominated Supervisor who will be a Torch staff member.

**Hours of Work**

Our volunteers work a very flexible working pattern: -

At Torch House volunteers often work a day or half day a week or on an as needed basis between Monday to Thursday.

Working from home is very flexible but normally would involve a minimum of three to four hours per week. Or if at a holiday or event dependent upon the particular situation.

**Safeguarding Checks**

References, a Self-Disclosure certificate and, where required, a Disclosure and Barring Services (DBS) or equivalent check must be satisfactorily completed before an individual can start work with Torch.

**Health and Safety**

Copies of the Health and Safety handbook will be provided for people working at Torch House. Whether at home, away or on Torch property you are to work safely, taking care of yourself and others.  Any concerns about health and safety are to be reported to the Head of Finance and Operations as Health and Safety Officer.

- Joining the Journey - Michael Heaney, Head of Central Services, January 2022

- updated by Linda Prickett, Head of Finance & Operations May 2025

**Basis of Faith taken from the Evangelical Alliance, May 2024**

We believe in ...

The one true God who lives eternally in three persons – the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

The love, grace and sovereignty of God in creating, sustaining, ruling, redeeming and judging the world.

The divine inspiration and supreme authority of the Old and New Testament Scriptures, which are the written Word of God – fully trustworthy for faith and conduct.

The dignity of all people, made male and female in God’s image to love, be holy and care for creation, yet corrupted by sin, which incurs divine wrath and judgement.

The incarnation of God’s eternal Son, the Lord Jesus Christ – born of the virgin Mary; truly divine and truly human, yet without sin.

The atoning sacrifice of Christ on the cross: dying in our place, paying the price of sin and defeating evil, so reconciling us with God.

The bodily resurrection of Christ, the first fruits of our resurrection; his ascension to the Father, and his reign and mediation as the only Saviour of the world.

The justification of sinners solely by the grace of God through faith in Christ.

The ministry of God the Holy Spirit, who leads us to repentance, unites us with Christ through new birth, empowers our discipleship and enables our witness.

The church, the body of Christ both local and universal, the priesthood of all believers — given life by the Spirit and endowed with the Spirit’s gifts to worship God and proclaim the gospel, promoting justice and love.

The personal and visible return of Jesus Christ to fulfil the purposes of God, who will raise all people to judgement, bring eternal life to the redeemed and eternal condemnation to the lost, and establish a new heaven and new earth.