



**Voluntary  
Board Member  
Recruitment**

**Information Pack**

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## **Vacancy Advertisement: Voluntary Board Member**

Railway Housing Association was established in 1919 and is a registered charity and registered provider of social housing with over 1,575 units of accommodation, primarily in the North East and Yorkshire & Humberside areas.

The Board face the challenges of regulation and ensuring good governance arrangements while continuing to improve our services and provide new homes during the current difficult economic times.

We are therefore looking to recruit a new board member with an interest in social housing and board membership. If you feel that you have something to offer to our board then we would like to hear from you.

In our centenary year this would be an exciting time to join Railway Housing Association!!!

Meetings are held in Darlington approximately 6 times per year, plus training sessions.

For further details and an information pack please call Karen West 01325 373035 or email [kwest@railwayha.co.uk](mailto:kwest@railwayha.co.uk)

The closing date for expressions of interest and CVs is **Friday 1st February 2019**, and interviews will be held in Darlington on **13th February 2019**, with a view to making an appointment in advance of the next board meeting on Wednesday 27th February 2019.

## How to Apply

Applications can be made by post or email and should include the following:

- An up-to-date curriculum vitae including qualifications, employment history, relevant experience and details of any other current or recent board memberships
- A covering letter/email setting out how you feel you meet the requirements of the role of board member and what you would contribute
- Completed board applicant questionnaire, at page 10
- Names and contact details of two referees, stating in what capacity each person knows you (referees will only be contacted for shortlisted applicants)
- Your postal address, day and evening contact telephone numbers and email details
- Declaration of any interest you have in, or close connections with, Railway Housing Association, its board or staff. Any interest should not be considered a barrier to applying as this can often be managed.

Applications should be sent to:

Karen West  
PA to the Chief Executive  
Railway Housing Association  
Bank Top House  
Garbutt Square  
Neasham Road  
Darlington  
DL1 4DR

Or via email to: [kwest@railwayha.co.uk](mailto:kwest@railwayha.co.uk)

If you have any queries regarding the Association or the application process please contact Karen West on 01325 373035.

Closing date for applications is close of business on **Friday 1st February 2018**

A shortlist will be drawn up by the interview panel with interviews held in Darlington on **Wednesday 13th February 2018**.

## **About the Association**

Established in 1919, Railway Housing Association & Benefit Fund is a registered charity (reg. no. 216825) and Registered Social Landlord (reg. no A1855); regulated by the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) and the Charity Commission.

The Association owns over 1,575 homes for rent, lease and shared ownership, located in 24 local authority areas in the North East of England and in Hereford. This wide geographic spread means that the Association's biggest challenges are ensuring that we provide an equitable service to all, and establishing a presence within the local community.

The areas in which the Association has a significant presence are Doncaster, Hull, York, Darlington & Durham County.

We specialise in the provision of rented accommodation for older people. However, we also have general needs properties, mainly in Darlington and York.

The Association employs 35 members of staff. The majority work from our head office in Darlington. The remainder are based in our sheltered schemes providing local housing management services.

The Association's governing body is its Board of Trustees which comprises 9 volunteers.

The Association's Business Strategy & Financial Forecast 2019-2024, which outlines the Association's seven strategic goals and provides details of key achievements, commitments and actions to achieve these goals, is included with this pack

Further details on the Association, including policies, the Association's Annual Report to residents and newsletters, can be found on our website [www.railwayha.co.uk](http://www.railwayha.co.uk)

## **Mission**

Providing homes for today and tomorrow

## **Values**

To be:

- Honest
- Approachable
- Flexible
- Forward thinking
- Transparent
- Accountable
- Diverse

## **Governance Structure**

The board comprises nine members. Board members are initially appointed for a three year term, in line with the National Housing Federation Code of Governance, and are eligible to apply for further terms up to a maximum of three.

The Association aims to have a balanced board reflecting a wide range of skills, knowledge and experience.

There are currently two committees within the governance structure

- Audit Committee
- Remuneration & Governance Committee

## **Responsibilities of the Board**

The essential functions of the Board are listed below. The Board operates in accordance with Railway Housing Association's Rules.

- Define and ensure compliance with the values and objectives of the Association
- Establish policies and plans to achieve those objectives
- Approve each year's budget and accounts prior to publication
- Establish and oversee a framework of delegation and systems of control
- Agree policies and make decisions on all matters that might create significant financial or other risk to the Association, or which raise issues of principle
- Monitor the Association's performance in relation to these plans, budgets, controls and decisions
- Appoint (and, if necessary, dismiss) the Chief Executive and be represented in the appointment of Functional Managers.
- Satisfy itself that the Association's affairs are conducted lawfully and in accordance with generally accepted standards of performance and propriety
- Establish and oversee a risk management framework in order to safeguard the assets of the association
- Carry out an annual risk appraisal and review exercise
- To receive minutes from committees for consideration and approval of any decisions as necessary
- On an annual basis appraise the effectiveness with which it conducts its business
- Assess how the association follows the requirements of the NHF Code 'Excellence in Governance'
- Establish and monitor a mechanism for communicating and receiving feedback from the organisation's stakeholders and shareholders
- Establish a strong working relationship between the Board, Chief Executive and other senior staff
- Follow the organisation's constitution in appointing (and if necessary, removing) the chair of the board
- Establish a code of conduct and expected behaviour for the Board

## Commitment

An initial induction with the Chair, Chief Executive and members of the senior management team takes place over 2 or 3 days within six months of formal appointment to the board.

The board has six regular meetings per year at the Association's head office in Darlington which are currently on Wednesdays, usually starting at 9.30am and finishing at 12.00pm, although we have recently introduced some mid afternoon meetings. The board meeting plan for 2019 on page 8 shows the standard agenda items considered by the board at each of its meetings.

In addition there is a full day board away day and a business strategy review day, with all staff, held each year away from head office.

Audit Committee meetings are held at our head office four times per year with Remuneration & Governance Committee meetings held twice per year.

Additional board or committees meetings and discussion/away days are arranged if necessary to consider specific topics or issues outside of the formal board meeting environment.

Training sessions are arranged as necessary and a training programme is in place.

Board members also have the opportunity to attend external training, conferences and networking sessions; and are encouraged to do so.

Board members are required to sign to confirm that they are not disqualified from acting as a Trustee under the Sec 72 of the Charities Act 1993, by virtue of:

- Having been convicted at any time of any offence involving deception or dishonesty (unless the conviction is legally regarded as spent)
- Being an un-discharged bankrupt
- Having made composition with creditors and not been discharged.
- Being at any time removed by the Commissioners or the court from being a trustee because of misconduct
- Being disqualified from being a company director.
- Being subject to an order under S429 (2)(b) of the Insolvency Act 1986.

## **What the Association Expects from Board Members**

- 1.** To uphold the values and objectives of the Association.
- 2.** To uphold the Association's core policies including those for equality and diversity.
- 3.** To prepare for and attend meetings of the Board of Trustees and Committees.
- 4.** To participate in meetings, contributing expertise where applicable.
- 5.** To contribute and share responsibility for the Board's decisions.
- 6.** To prepare for and attend training sessions or other events.
- 7.** To attend and prepare for reviews linked to individual performance and that of the Board.
- 8.** To represent the Association as appropriate.
- 9.** To ask for training where it is needed.
- 10.** To declare any relevant interest.
- 11.** To respect confidentiality of information, and
- 12.** To uphold the Code of Governance and Code of Conduct.

## **What Board Members Can Expect from the Association**

- 1.** Induction and other specialist training, as appropriate, to enhance the skills of all Members.
- 2.** Support of the Chair and Senior Management Team.
- 3.** Reimbursement of incidental expenses, including travel, associated with attending meetings and other events.
- 4.** Access to the Board Members Portal on the Association's website which contains the key documents of our business.
- 5.** Notification of the annual meeting schedule.
- 6.** Agendas and meeting papers circulated in advance of meetings.
- 7.** Access to publications and literature relating to the social housing sector and board membership.



## Board Meeting Plan 2019

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <p><b>Wednesday 27th February (9.30am)</b></p> <p>Policy</p> <p>Balanced Scorecard: Quarter 3<br/>Management Accounts: Quarter 3<br/>Treasury Management Quarterly Update<br/>Health &amp; Safety Report: Quarter 3</p> <p>BSC Performance Indicator Targets 2019/2020<br/>Risk Matrix &amp; Metrics</p> <p>Board Member Re-appointment<br/>SHPS Staff Consultation</p>         | <p><b>Wednesday 1st May (9.30am)</b></p> <p>Policy</p> <p>Audit Minutes: <b>6th March</b></p> <p>Statement on Internal Control<br/>Health &amp; Safety Report: Quarter 4</p> <p>Review of Mileage Allowances/Rates</p>  |
| <p><b>Wednesday 26th June (and networking meal) (3.00pm)</b></p> <p>Policy</p> <p>Audit Minutes: <b>24th April</b><br/>Remuneration &amp; Governance Committee Minutes: <b>1st May</b></p> <p>Balanced Scorecard: Quarter 4<br/>Management Accounts: Quarter 4<br/>Treasury Management Quarterly Update</p> <p>Risk Matrix &amp; Metrics</p> <p>Board Member Re-appointment</p> | <p><b>Wednesday 7th August &amp; AGM (9.30am)</b></p> <p>Policy</p> <p>Audit Minutes: <b>17th July</b></p> <p>Balanced Scorecard: Quarter 1<br/>Management Accounts: Quarter 1<br/>Treasury Management Quarterly Update<br/>Health &amp; Safety Report: Quarter 1</p> <p>Annual Report to Residents<br/>Annual Accounts 2018/2019<br/>Letter of Management Representations<br/>Write Offs</p>   |
| <p><b>Wednesday 2nd October (9.30am)</b></p> <p>Policy</p> <p>Annual Review of Financial Regulations<br/>Annual Review of General Standing Orders<br/>Treasury Management Strategy<br/>Health &amp; Safety Report: Quarter 2</p> <p>Meeting Plan 2020<br/>Value for Money Strategy<br/>Stress Testing</p> <p>Risk Matrix &amp; Metrics</p> <p>Board Member Re-appointments</p>  | <p><b>Wednesday 11th December (10.00am) (and Christmas lunch)</b></p> <p>Policy</p> <p>Remuneration &amp; Governance Committee Minutes: <b>2nd October</b><br/>Audit Minutes: <b>13th November</b></p> <p>Balanced Scorecard: Quarter 2<br/>Management Accounts: Quarter 2<br/>Treasury Management Quarterly Update &amp; Covenant Checklist</p> <p>Business Strategy 2020-2025<br/>Financial Forecast 2020-2025<br/>Budget Approval 2020/2021<br/>Rent Setting Policy 2020</p> |

**Board Away Day:**

Wednesday 7th June 2019

**Business Strategy Review Day:**

Wednesday 6th November 2019

## **Current Board Members**

### **Berni Whitaker: Chair**

#### **Appointed to the Board: July 2016**

Berni is currently Enterprise Manager with Sunderland City Council and has had previous management roles with Derwentside Council, Easington Council, South Tyneside Council and Sunderland College. Berni was appointed chair from July 2016 following an external recruitment exercise.

### **Stuart Blackett: Vice Chair**

#### **Appointed to the Board: December 2016**

Stuart is an associate of the ICAEW and is currently Director of Finance & Strategy at RPMI Darlington and has held various finance roles at RPMI since 2001.

Stuart is a member of the Remuneration & Governance Committee.

### **Alistair Brown**

#### **Appointed to the Board: December 2011**

Alistair qualified as an accountant (ACMA) in 1997 and has worked for the Department of Work and Pensions since 1983, currently employed as Head of Financial Assurance and Control.

Alistair is Chair of the Audit Committee.

### **David Goodman**

#### **Appointed to the Board: November 2013**

David is a retired accountant / auditor who worked for the Audit Commission for over thirty years, progressing to regional director, focussing on legal and governance matters.

David is a member of the Audit Committee.

### **Fiona Coleman**

#### **Appointed to the Board: August 2014**

Fiona is currently Development Manager at Broadacres Housing Association and has been involved in social housing development for 25 years, also working for Bradford & Northern Housing Association, Cadarn Housing Association and Yorkshire Rural Community Council.

Fiona is a member of the Remuneration & Governance Committee.

## **Current Board Members continued**

### **June Grimes**

#### **Appointed to the Board: July 2016**

June retired from her role as Director of Crisis Skylight Newcastle in 2015 having also worked in various housing roles with Home Housing, Three Rivers Housing and Northumberland County Council and tutor/lecturer roles with New College Durham and South Tyneside College.

June is a member of the Audit Committee.

### **Paul Stephens**

#### **Appointed to the Board: 1st June 2018**

Paul has had a long and extensive career in the social housing sector and is currently FM Services Manager with Thirteen Group, having previously worked with Cestria Community Housing Association, Home Group and Sedgefield Borough Council. Paul is a Corporate Member of the Chartered Institute of Housing, with a BA (HONS) Degree Housing Studies.

Paul is a member of the Remuneration & Governance Committee

### **Carl Makin**

#### **Appointed to the Board: 1st July 2018**

Carl is currently working as an Intellectual Property & Legal Administrator at The University of Manchester Intellectual Property (UMIP) and also previously worked for Railway Housing Association on an undergraduate placement assisting with the setup of the associations asset & liability register.

Carl attained his first class LLB (Hons) Law degree at Durham University June 2016, during which time he also undertook various support and advice roles for organisations including Shelter and Citizens Advice Bureau, and will embark on a PhD in housing law and regulation at York University in September 2018.

Carl is a member of the Audit Committee.

## **Senior Management Team**

|                                       |               |
|---------------------------------------|---------------|
| <b>Chief Executive:</b>               | Anne Rowlands |
| <b>Director of Finance:</b>           | Joanne Watson |
| <b>Director of Policy:</b>            | Sheila Hastie |
| <b>Director of Customer Services:</b> | Andrea Abbott |

## BOARD APPLICANT QUESTIONNAIRE

Please complete this questionnaire to enable the Association to monitor the effectiveness of its policies and procedures. The information you provide will not be used as part of the short-listing or interview process and is for monitoring purposes only.

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Age:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Sex:**            Male            Female

**I would describe my ethnic and national origin as:** (please circle)

**a) White**

British            Irish            Other

**b) Mixed**

White and Black Caribbean    White & Black Asian    White & Asian    Other

**c) Asian or Asian British**

Indian            Pakistani            Bangladeshi            Other

**d) Black or Black British**

Caribbean    African            Other

**e) Chinese other Ethnic Group**

Chinese            Other

**Disability**

Do you consider yourself to have a disability as defined under the Equality Act 2010 'a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on your ability to carry out normal day to day activities'

**YES / NO** (if yes please give brief details)

Do you have any specific requirements relating to your disability to enable you to attend an interview?

**YES / NO** (if yes please give details below and advise Karen West prior to your interview)

**Please indicate below where you saw the vacancy advertised or how you heard about the vacancy:** .....