



Vacancies for board members of Community Rail Network – 8 places (5 vacancies and 3 potential re-elections)

Community Rail Network is currently inviting applications for board directors to play a role in shaping the future direction of the organisation and community rail more broadly.

Duties of the board and responsibilities of directors

The role of a board member is to oversee and support the organisation at a strategic level and to act collectively, with the rest of the board, in the best interests of Community Rail Network and its membership as a whole. The main responsibilities are to:

- Fulfil the duties of a board member of a limited company, in line with our Articles of Association and any Community Rail Network by-laws that may be agreed from time to time. This includes: acting within powers as set out in our memoranda and articles (M&A); promoting the success of the organisation for the benefit of its members as a whole; exercising independent judgement and reasonable care, skill and diligence; avoiding conflicts of interest; not accepting benefits from third parties; and declaring interests in proposed or existing transactions.
- Agree the mission, vision and values of the organisation, with support and input from the staff team, and ensure there is a suitable strategy, systems and procedures in place to deliver on this.
- Ensure there are organised and clear governance and management structures with well understood delegations and authorities.
- Take an overview of Community Rail Network's work at a strategic level, including monitoring and reviewing performance, effectiveness and financial performance, ensuring Community Rail Network's effective operation and sustainability in line with its governing documents and long-term strategy, and exploring opportunities for development.
- Adopt financial plans, with support and input from the staff team, that ensure solvency, sustainability and success, and ensure control and risk management systems are in place that promote efficiency and effectiveness.
- Be accountable for the business of Community Rail Network, taking final decisions on matters of fundamental concern to the organisation.
- Ensure the organisation meets and aims to exceed its legal and moral responsibilities, including for equality and diversity, health, safety and wellbeing, and sustainability.
- Review, advise on or undertake specific matters or tasks as needed, if discussed and agreed by the board (such as to review strategic documents and advise on decisions relating to particular areas of expertise).

As per our M&A, board members are generally appointed for three years, renewable on re-election. Board membership is voluntary, with remuneration only of agreed travel and subsistence expenses.

The board meets around every eight weeks, either online or in person. In person meetings, if not connected with an awayday, are usually in London. Online meetings typically start at 09:30 and finish by 12:00. Meetings in person typically start at 11:30 and finish at 14:30. Occasional additional conference call meetings are called as needed.

We will start the new Board year with a two-day meeting in the north of England, to be confirmed, but likely to be Leeds or Manchester on Tuesday 19 and Wednesday 20 November 2024. We also have an awayday every summer, usually in July. This is a two-day event and is combined with a Board meeting and a visit to a community rail initiative. This year's awayday was to the Bishopstone in Sussex to see the work to the station building.

Person specification

Applicants for the role must be a representative of a Community Rail Partnership (CRP), station adoption/friends group, community station member, or an individual or honorary member of Community Rail Network.

We believe in equality, diversity and inclusion in the workplace and encourage board applications from people with a range of backgrounds and experience. We would particularly welcome applications from women; ethnic minority; disabled and LGBTQ+ candidates, as they are currently under-represented on our board. We also welcome those with experience of corporate/third sector fundraising, third sector governance, and finance. To be effective, the Community Rail Network board aims to ensure that all members display the below general skills (recommended by the Non-Executive Director Network) and will ask those standing for election to make clear their possession of these:

- Integrity and high ethical standards
- Sound judgement and willingness to challenge
- Interpersonal skills, including listening, persuasiveness, ability to communicate ideas, sensitivity, openness and awareness of non-verbal communication, co-operation and team-working, facilitation skills
- Leadership and self-awareness, ability to gain respect and attention, confidence
- Critical thinking, creativity and strategic awareness, with the ability to take a wider, strategic view
- Business acumen, ability to identify new business opportunities, embrace change and innovation
- Ability to assimilate, assess and analyse information, especially financial information
- Political astuteness, diplomatic, able to deal with conflict
- Determination, with the tenacity and drive to succeed
- Keeness to gain new knowledge and skills to develop competences further

If individually or collectively board members identify that they have training or development needs related to their abilities to serve in their role as board members effectively this can be addressed, through internal coaching and support or external training.

How to apply

For an informal discussion about the role prior to application, please contact our chair Jeremy Whitaker at jeremy.whitaker@jeremywhitaker.com. Potential applicants are encouraged to read minutes of previous board meetings, the M&A and governance procedures, which can be obtained by contacting the chair. Potential applicants can also arrange, with the chair, to attend a board meeting (as an observer).

IMPORTANT NOTE: Community Rail Network will likely be pursuing charitable company status during 2024/25, and if successful, board members (i.e. company directors) will also become charity trustees. The regulation and responsibilities for charity trustees is not too dissimilar to the responsibilities of company directors, but we ask all prospective board members read the following Charity Commission guidance [The Essential Trustee: what you need to know, what you need to expect](#) (and check their eligibility¹) to ensure that they are happy with the prospect of also becoming a charity trustee before submitting their application.

To apply, please complete in full the nomination form, which can be [downloaded from the Community Rail Network website](#), providing a 250 word summary of yourself and why you are suited to fulfil the role along with your relevant skills. If you are not an individual honorary member of Community Rail Network, then you will also need to indicate on the form which CRP, station friend/adoption group or community station member you represent. You will also need to supply the name of a proposer and seconder both of whom must be representatives of a Community Rail Network member organisation or individual honorary member. If you are seeking election as the representative of a CRP, station friend/adoption group or community station member, that body must be your proposer. Completed forms must be submitted by email to patrick@communityrail.org.uk. **All applications must be received no later than 12pm on Monday 14 October 2024.**

Your 250-word summary and the names of your proposer and seconder will be available on our website and you will also have the opportunity to make a short statement during Community Rail Network's AGM that is being held online on Tuesday 5 November 2024 (14.00-15.30). If there are more candidates standing for board places than there are vacancies, the board will be elected via an online member ballot held during the AGM. If there are less, or the same number, of candidates as board vacancies then it will be agreed at the AGM without the need for a vote. More details on the AGM are available on our [website](#).

The electorate is made up of each CRP, station adoption/friend group and community station membership (one vote per organisation in Community Rail Network membership), and our individual honorary members. If a vote is required, and unless we have been notified otherwise, the link to the online voting will be emailed after nominations close directly to the individual/honorary member, the CRP's partnership officer or most senior staff member, or to the chair of a station adoption/friends/community station group.

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¹ See [section 3](#) of '[The Essential Trustee: What you need to know](#)'.