



Chief executive

Employer:	Community Rail Network
Salary:	£62,500-£77,250 pa, full time
Days:	Full time (37 hours per week) – flexible working patterns available
Benefits:	25 days annual leave plus bank holidays (rising up to 30 days, plus Bank Holidays, in line with long service); pension with employer contribution of 7%; flexi-time working (core hours 10am-3pm); access to Employee Assistance Programme
Contract type:	Permanent
Location:	Home based / remote

We are seeking an exceptional leader to be our next chief executive, leading a respected and influential membership organisation at the heart of a thriving grassroots movement.

You'll be working to build on the success we've seen and strong position and voice we have established for ourselves and our members, as a leading force for inclusive and sustainable transport and communities.

You'll bring an impressive track record in values-based leadership, a proven ability to engage and inspire grassroots change-makers, strategic partners and policy-makers, and a deep belief in the importance of community-led change towards a sustainable, equitable future.

About us

Community Rail Network is a national not-for-profit organisation, which is in the process of applying for charitable status, supporting a growing 'community rail' movement, which helps communities get the most from their railways, promotes sustainable and inclusive travel, coordinates volunteering and place-making, and brings people together.

Community rail is made up of 77 community-based organisations, and around 1,300 station volunteer groups and other community-led initiatives around Britain. Their activities range from creative projects for young people, to advising train operators on service improvements, to building travel confidence among marginalised groups, to biodiversity projects at stations, to promoting greener tourism by rail.

Our enthusiastic team of 24 works from home in dispersed locations, but we come together regularly in person and online. We work collaboratively to support members, provide training, events and resources, run campaigns, and champion community rail and its insights. We believe in helping everyone reach their potential while having a good work-life balance.

About this role, and your main responsibilities

Our current CEO is moving on after nine years in role, leaving the organisation, team and wider movement in a strong and empowered position to deliver on the next phase of our development.

Your opportunity is to lead the organisation, and to deliver on our new five-year strategy setting an ambitious course for the future during a period of major transformation for our railways and the wider transport system. You will ensure that we are:

- clear in our identity and our independence, and seen as thought leaders in our field;
- are supporting our members and stakeholders to meet their changing and diverse needs; and
- ensuring the financial and operational resilience of the organisation in an environment that is undergoing a period of rapid change.

As CEO, you will lead a passionate and experienced senior leadership team with three direct reports, while working closely with and reporting into our Board, key partners and funders, and ensuring an engaging, empowering, tenacious approach across all we do.

Advocacy of community rail and its benefits will be high on your agenda, and you will be working closely across multiple stakeholders including UK and devolved national governments, regional and local authorities as well as forging collaborative partnerships with like-minded organisations.

Maintaining our community-centric ethos, you will need to ensure we're effective in enabling members to unlock greater value from the railways at a grassroots level, while drawing on their insights to affect wider change. With hundreds of member groups and organisations across Britain delivering life-changing, place-enhancing work, you will have a solid foundation to build on, to take community rail forward and expand our impact in the years ahead.

Last, but not least, you will be responsible for ensuring the strong and effective governance of the organisation, modelling our governing principles, values and behaviours, and ensuring that we have robust financial and resource management in place.

Skills, competencies and qualities

1. Exceptional leadership skills, including a proven ability to lead, develop and grow third sector organisations or multi-faceted teams delivering complex activities, projects and campaigns;
2. Excellent communication and external leadership skills: articulate, assertive, with the ability to work diplomatically and persuasively with stakeholders at all levels;
3. Experienced in acting as the public face of an organisation, such as through the media, public speaking and high-level meetings, and using evidence and storytelling to articulate and champion a cause;
4. Politically astute, with knowledge of and commitment to social inclusion, social justice and sustainability, and a sound grasp of the importance of public transport, sustainable travel, and community-led action;
5. A proven ability to influence policy and decision-makers, and to identify influencing opportunities, ideally in relation to community development, sustainability and/or transport, including sharing community insights;
6. A strong track record in income generation and development, building strong funder relationships and delivery partnerships, managing programme or organisational budgets and controlling expenditure;
7. Experience of working with and/or reporting to a board, ideally in a not-for-profit and/or membership context;
8. An empowering, engaging approach to leadership, management and change-making;
9. Resilient, pragmatic and determined, with the ability to work under pressure, seize emergent opportunities, manage risk, and support others dealing with competing priorities.

Other information

The role will involve extensive travel within Britain as part of building your profile and that of the organisation with central and devolved government in Scotland and Wales, and increasingly with the devolved regions of England.

There is flexibility on location given the requirement to travel and that your office will be home-based. You will need to travel to in-person quarterly team meetings (usually in London or West Yorkshire) and to Board meetings which alternate between online and London.

It is expected that travel will be by public transport and easy access to the rail network is therefore required to ensure journeys can be made sustainably.

This is a full-time position, 37 hours per week. We use a flexi-time system with core hours 10am-3pm, and are committed to being a flexible, supportive and understanding employer. This is a permanent position with a probationary period of six months.

Successful applicants will need to provide proof that they have the right to work in the UK and provide two references.

Community Rail Network is an equal opportunities employer. We welcome applications from disabled people and Black, Asian and other minoritised groups, who meet with the skills and competencies for this role. We will provide reasonable adjustments for interviews as required.

To apply

Applications via [Charity Job](#) by **Tuesday 12 May 2026 (23:30)** with two attachments: your CV and a covering letter of up to two sides of A4 summarising why you are the ideal person for this job and relevant experience and competencies. Please include a daytime phone number and an email address and identify your notice period in your cover letter.

First interviews take place **21-22 May 2026** online. Second interviews will be in person, **Monday 1 June 2026**, in London. Candidates invited for interview will be contacted by phone about a week before. Due to limited resources, we are unable to provide feedback to other candidates.

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