



Gravesend Churches Housing Association Chair of the Board

Recruitment Pack - May 2023





020 7620 3048

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www.thehousingexecutive.com

Board Chair, Gravesend Churches Housing Association

Thank you for requesting information about this exciting role. As consultants to Gravesend Churches Housing Association (GCHA), The Housing Executive aim to provide you with comprehensive information to enable you to structure your application.

Recruitment Timetable & Process:

Closing Date: 10.00 am Tuesday 30th May 2023

First Interview: Thursday 8th June 2023

Panel Interview Friday 23rd June 2023 (Morning)

- Candidates who are successful following their first interview will undertake an online personality exercise and asked to provide references.
- Panel interviews with Gravesend Churches Housing Association will be held at their offices; 14 London Road, Northfleet, Kent, DA11 9JQ.
- The successful candidate from the Panel Interview will be invited to attend the next Board Meeting in July.

To Apply:

Please provide a **CV** (no more than 3 sides A4) together with a **Supporting Statement** and complete the confidential [Declarations & Monitoring Form](#).

The supporting statement should demonstrate your suitability for the role and address the key elements of the person specification enclosed in this pack. Please ensure you provide evidence, with recent examples, of your experience.

Send your application (CV/Statement/Declaration & Monitoring Form) by **10.00 am on Tuesday 30th May 2023:**

By email to: rec@thehousingexecutive.com

ALL applications will be acknowledged by email or telephone within 24 hours.

If you would like to discuss any aspect of this post or the process, in confidence, please call Tony Clark, Director at The Housing Executive, on **020 7620 3048**.

We look forward to receiving your application.

Letter from the Interim Chair

Chair of the Board, Gravesend Churches Housing Association

Dear Candidate,

Thank you for your interest in the role of Chair of GCHA Board. This pack gives you background information on GCHA, information on the role and on how to apply.

GCHA has an excellent reputation with the local authorities that we work with and providing a flexible, personal and friendly service for our residents. We are ambitious for our size and continue to develop new homes in partnership with Homes England. These are increasingly challenging times but our Board are clear that we should remain independent and are determined that we fulfil our vision to “Opening doors to safe, secure and affordable homes”.

The Board and Executive team have a clear focus on priorities over the next 3 years. We have recently launched new Resident Involvement and Asset Management Strategies to ensure that we can deliver the best possible service to our residents.

Our Chair will play an integral leadership role in delivering against our strategic plan. Working closely with other Board members and our executive team you’ll map out how we can support our residents and communities and measure our progress against this commitment.

Our approach to development is linked to our strategic and business plan. We have strong financial foundations which drives our commitment to build new homes in the local communities that we operate in.

This is a crucial appointment for GCHA as the Chair role is essential for good governance, to lead the Board and steer the organisation. We are looking for an experienced Chair or senior Board Member who has operated at executive level in housing or a closely related field.

The successful candidate will have the necessary leadership and collaborative skills, vision and commitment to deal with difficult issues and support Board Members and the executive team.

We expect all our Board Members to demonstrate a commitment to valuing and championing diversity. Thank you for your interest and I do hope you will consider applying.

Kind Regards

Eileen Jordan

Interim Chair of GCHA Board

About Us

Gravesend Churches Housing Association Limited (GCHA) is a registered provider, incorporated with the Financial Conduct Authority as a Community Benefit Society with Charitable Status (no. 16849R). It is also registered with the Regulator of Social Housing (no LH 0870).

In 2004 we signed a joint development programme with another association [since ended] delivering 42 new affordable housing units at DeWarren House, Glebe Road, Rochester Road, Fulwich Road and four street properties in Singlewell. In recent years, working with small developers, we have delivered 37 units for market rent to cross subsidise our affordable homes.

Our History

We were formed in September 1964 by the Gravesend and District Council of Churches which recognised the growing need for affordable rented housing in the area.

By 1966, spurred on by the drama 'Cathy Come Home' we had raised enough cash to purchase 14 London Road, Northfleet, creating our first nine flats for rent.

With the passing of the 1974 Housing Act and the introduction of capital grant, GCHA grew from strength to strength. By 1977 we had over 100 homes, rising to over 200 by 1980; including the purchase of Elizabeth Court in central Gravesend and expanding our homes and services to the borough of Dartford.

In 1987 we took over the management of 22 units on behalf of Maidstone Churches Housing Association, amalgamating them into our stock in 1992.

In 2017, we came full circle and returned to our original home, with new offices at 14 London Road, as part of the redevelopment of the site.

Location of GCHA's market rent properties

	Year of Construction	Number of Properties
Location		
Swanscombe	2012	1
Gravesend	2014	3
Gravesend	2013	12
Northfleet	2016	1
Gravesend	2016	12
Maidstone	2019	8
Total		37

We are continuing to build new affordable homes for local people. In 2021, we completed the purchase of a site to build nine units in Meopham and acquired land for 14 new homes in Gravesend.

We also continue to work closely with local councils, as well as Kent Housing Group, the g320 group of small housing associations, and the South East Consortium (a procurement organisation).

Our Vision

Opening doors to safe, secure and affordable homes.

Our Culture

Our culture is defined by our values which underpin everything we do and inform our behaviours, decisions and delivery of our strategic priorities.

Our Values

In 2022, we identified a set of values required to achieve our strategic objectives:

1. Adaptable



We adapt quickly to challenges and provide a flexible, personal and friendly service for our residents and communities.

2. Responsive



We are quick to respond and believe in going the extra mile and taking personal responsibility for the services we deliver.

3. Inclusive



We provide equal access to our services and resources. We believe that everyone has the right to be treated fairly and with respect.

4. Trustworthy



We keep our promises and can be depended on by our residents to provide and maintain good quality affordable homes and a consistent service that meets their needs.

5. Accountable



We take ownership for everything we do and are held accountable by our residents, board members and the social housing regulator.

These values apply across the organisation and will act as our guiding principles in everything we do in the present and in the future.

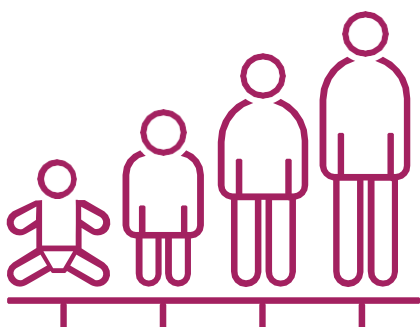


Our Residents

We are proud of our local roots and reputation as a small, community focused, independent housing provider in the heart of Gravesham.

We have provided some data about our residents to show their demographics compared to local authorities in our operating areas.

Age and Gender



- 51% of our residents are below the age of 55. This is slightly lower than Gravesham (66%), Dartford (69%) and Maidstone (64%) according to 2011 Kent County Council census information.
- We have a slightly higher percentage of female residents than male (53% female, 47% male). Gravesham, Dartford and Maidstone boroughs broadly show a 49% male/51% female split between adults over the age of 20 (source: 2011 Kent County Council census).

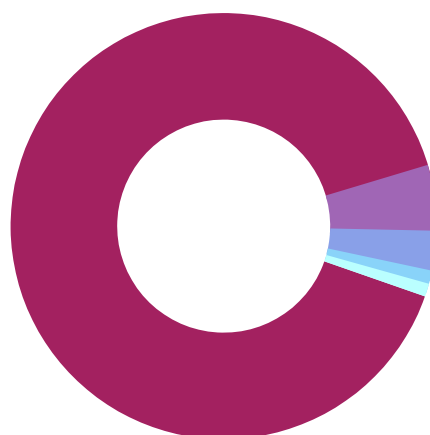
Ethnicity and Employment Status

90% of our residents are white which is broadly consistent with the boroughs that we operate in. The adjacent chart shows a full breakdown of the ethnicity of our residents.

67%

of residents were in full time or part time work

47 out of the 70 lettings from April 2020 to January 2022 were to residents in full time or part time work.



90%

White

5%

Black/ African/ Caribbean/Black British

3%

Asian/ Asian British

1%

Mixed/ multiple ethnic groups

1%

Other ethnic group

Board Members



Eileen Jordan, Interim Board Chair

Eileen has always worked in a public sector environment moving into the housing sector over 25 years ago. She has undertaken several roles ultimately leading to her most recent role of Director of Housing Services at Optivo (a registered provider with 44,000 homes across the South East and Midlands).

Chris Starke, Chair of A&R Committee

Chris has worked at an executive level in the social housing sector for over 20 years and also brings previous experience as a non-executive director on the Board of Town and Country Housing Group. He started his career with the accountancy firm KPMG, where he trained and qualified as a chartered accountant. At KPMG he developed his interest in the social housing sector and specialised in the audit of housing associations.



Jim McLaughlin, Board member

Jim has worked with a range of businesses assisting them in strategy, planning and growth. He has worked with a number of housing departments at local councils as well as assisting in running strategy awaydays for a number of housing associations.

Abay Aromoire, Board member

Abay is a technology leader with experience in leading and managing strategic technology and digital transformations across the private, public and charity sectors.

For more than 20 years, he has developed creativity and innovation in organisations, to find new and better ways of deploying digital, IT assets and technology to create real, timely value for organisations.



Brian Horton, Board member

Brian is a public sector housing professional with more than 30 years of experience working in the local authority and housing association sectors. He has worked as an advisor to a wide range of public and private organisations including Kent County Council, South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP) and Future Homes (Kent). He is passionate about the positive impact of good leadership and joins us to help us drive forward our strategic vision as we head towards our 60th anniversary in 2024.



Manpreet Bhupal, Board member

Manpreet brings 20 years of professional housing experience, including a vast amount of strategic knowledge and a sound understanding of local government social housing and private housing. He holds professional qualifications in leadership and management.

Monika Ziola, Board member and Audit and Risk Committee member

A qualified CIMA accountant and chartered company secretary, Monika has been employed in senior finance posts in the private sector since 2006. Monika also has a broad range of non-executive roles in organisations outside of her working environment.



Nicola Bowen, Board member and Audit and Risk Committee member

Nicola is a housing graduate and chartered member of the Chartered Institute of Housing with over 30 years' experience in social housing.

Nicola has worked across all disciplines and in her current role is Head of Tenant Services for mcch and Choice Support who are national charities providing housing and support for clients with learning disabilities, Autism and mental health needs.

Paul Sylva, Board member and Audit and Risk Committee member

Paul is a Chartered Accountant and a member of the Chartered Governance Institute with extensive work experience as a Finance Director in the charity sector. He has served as a board member for an NHS Trust and two housing associations, for one of which he was the Vice Chair. With a strong background in audit, he has also chaired the audit committee of a housing association and has been a member of audit committees of several charities.



Andrew Pert, Independent Audit and Risk Committee member

Andrew has more than 20 years of experience of internal audit across a wide range of disciplines and sectors. His current role is with a registered charity in housing and he has previously been within local authorities working for Kent County Council, Maidstone Borough Council and the London Boroughs of Lambeth and Bromley.

Bukky McGlynn, Chief Executive

Bukky joined GCHA in August 2021.

She has over 20 years of leadership experience in the private, public and charity sectors. Bukky has a BA Hons in Philosophy, an MBA and a postgraduate degree in Shared Services.

Bukky has spent her career managing, leading and improving services for residents and staff. She has held leadership roles at the Natural History Museum, Amicus Horizon, Surrey County Council, London Borough of Hounslow and Sapphire Independent Housing. She also initiated and led on the successful Customer Service Excellence (CSE) programmes at Surrey County Council, and Sapphire Independent Housing.



Our People



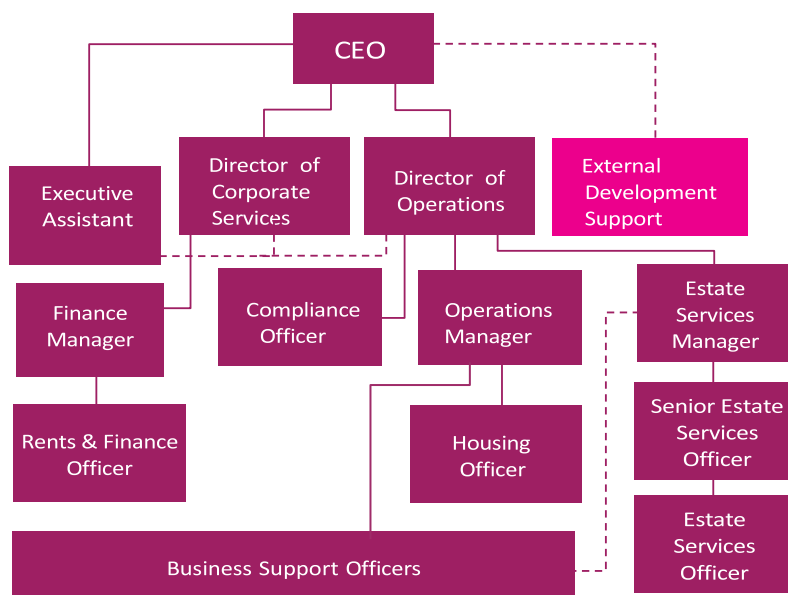
GCHA has a small, diverse staff team.

Our staff have strong links in the communities where they serve and offer a personal, friendly touch that is aligned to our values as a small local housing provider.

Our staff are motivated by our vision, and strategic priorities to provide affordable housing and services in the communities we serve.

We will continue to invest in our staff to ensure they are equipped to adapt to the ever-changing environment - whilst growing with the organisation - and in the process, enjoy a rewarding and interesting career.

Staff structure April 2023



Financial Strength

We continue to be a financially strong association, generating a healthy annual surplus to reinvest in both modernising existing homes as well as providing new ones.

GCHA annual surplus from 2012/13 – 2021/2



The graph above reflects our annual surplus position, after pension actuarial valuation costs. In 2021/22 our annual surplus position was £1,186k, which is an improvement on the 2020/21 annual surplus position of £307k, primarily due to an Actuarial surplus of £800k on our defined benefit pension plan for the year 2021/22.

Stripping out costs relating to actuarial costs, interest and investment revaluation, there has been a slight reduction in our operating surplus, largely due to increased maintenance costs.

Since 2018 there has been increased investment in our stock and staff, mainly to address health and safety compliance requirements.

We will continue to generate healthy surpluses for reinvestment in our existing properties.

Strategic Priorities

Our key objectives which are set out in our rules are:

1. The business of providing and managing housing including social housing and providing assistance to help house people and associated facilities, amenities and services for poor people or for the relief of the aged, disabled (whether physically or mentally) or chronically sick people.
2. Any other charitable object that can be carried out from time to time by a registered society registered as a provider of social housing with the regulator.

At a strategy away day in November 2021, our board members reflected on our achievements over the last three years and considered the culture and vision for the future, confirming that as long as we are still able to develop new homes we should continue to operate as an independent, community focused housing provider.

Our Priorities for 2022-2025



1. Deliver good quality homes and excellent services in safe neighbourhoods



2. Maintain high levels of resident and staff satisfaction and engagement



3. Develop new energy efficient affordable homes



4. Remain financially viable and strong

Risk

At the GCHA Board strategic away day in November 2022, the Board discussed its approach to risk and the current controls in place.

The Audit and Risk Committee was formed in April 2018 and the committee meets three to four times a year. The Committee reviews GCHA's risks, mitigations and reports back to the Board.

The top ten risks identified for GCHA as of 4th April 2023 are:

1. Increase in arrears due to cost of living crisis
2. Increasing costs and difficulty sourcing goods/parts from suppliers
3. Loss of staff/ability to compete for appropriately skilled staff
4. Failure to meet H&S/compliance requirements
5. Financial liability arising from SHPS pension scheme
6. Stock not maintained to decent homes standards.
7. Systems become inaccessible due to virus/cyber attack
8. Operating systems become out of date
9. Failure to manage regulatory compliance
10. Threat of another pandemic

The full risk register is available on request and monitored at the Audit and Risk Committee and at Board meetings quarterly.



Our Performance - Key VFM measures

	GCHA			2021 Global Accounts	2021 SPBM benchmarks	Description
	2021-22	2020-21	2019-20	<2500 units (Median)	G320 group (Median)	
REINVESTMENT	6.4%	6.8%	2.1%	4.60%	2.20%	% of our stock that are either new or have had a component replaced
NEW SUPPLY DELIVERED	0.0%	0.4%	0.2%	0.8%	0.0%	% of new homes built compared to existing housing stock
GEARING	34.5%	31%	30%	33.7%	11.8%	% of the organisation's debt in relation to the size of its asset base
INTEREST COVER	84%	190%	180%	205%	356%	% of how GCHA is able to meet its interest payment obligation from surpluses generated in the year
HEADLINE SOCIAL HOUSING COST PER UNIT (£)	5,628	4,246	4,019	4,790	4,847	Amount spent on each social housing unit of GCHA
OPERATING MARGIN - SOCIAL HOUSING	8.6%	24.5%	28.1%	25.1%	20.6%	% of how much surplus is being generated from core business operations (Social housing only)
OPERATING MARGIN	30.3%	37.6%	33.1%	22.1%	20.0%	% of how much surplus is being generated from core business operations (All)
RETURN ON CAPITAL EMPLOYED (ROCE)	4.7%	4.0%	3.5%	2.9%	2.7%	% of operating profit generated compared to our net asset base

Strategic Plan 2022 - 25

This plan sets out our new values and shares our goals until the end of March 2025. [Click here to download.](#)



Role of Board Chair

Overall Purpose of the Role

The primary role of the Chair of the Board is to provide leadership and direction for the Board and ensure the Board's business is conducted efficiently and effectively.

The job description of the Board Members also applies to the Chair.

Key Responsibilities

1. To chair all Board Meetings.
2. To consult with the Chief Executive on Agendas for meetings of the Board and any other meetings at which the Chair is to preside.
3. To review and approve minutes of Board meetings and to ensure that matters arising from, and actions agreed at, such meetings are followed through as appropriate.
4. To ensure that the Board receives professional advice when needed.
5. To ensure that appropriate standards of behaviour are maintained in the board (including dealing with conflicts of interest, conflicts within the Board or with staff and 'whistle blowing').
6. To ensure the appointment of suitable Board members.
7. To ensure the effectiveness of the Board.
8. To ensure that the skills, knowledge and experience of individual Board members are applied appropriately and that all Board members have the opportunity to express views before any important decision is taken.
9. To appraise all Board members every year and to make arrangements for the appraisal of the Chair.
10. To ensure that there is an annual review of the effectiveness of the Board and its composition
11. To establish a constructive working relationship with and provide support and guidance to the Chief Executive maintaining contact, as appropriate, between meetings.
12. To act as ambassador for the organisation at a senior level attending and presiding at major company events and promoting its aims, values and policies.
13. To attend any necessary meetings with other partner bodies such as the Regulator of Social Housing, Local Government and other government bodies.
14. To ensure that appeals under the complaint process are dealt with effectively by the Board.
15. To represent the company to members, staff, government, media and other interested parties.
16. To ensure that the remuneration of Board Members are kept under regular review.
17. To ensure that the Board puts in place appropriate arrangements for the appraisal of the Chairman and a review of remuneration.
18. Implement the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy, ensuring that all policies and procedures are in accordance with good equal opportunities practice.

Person Specification

Skills and Knowledge

- Ability to think strategically (i.e. seeing the bigger picture and making links and connections in order to spot opportunities or avoid problems)
- A good team worker who can work co-operatively with others
- Strong leadership skills
- Commitment to diversity and equal opportunities
- An understanding of some of the key strategic issues facing housing associations now and, in the future
- Good communications skills

Experience -

The successful candidate will be a housing or related professional with significant governance experience, ideally as Chair. They will have experience of working with/for a registered social housing provider at a senior level. Experience of housing development would be advantageous.





Terms of Service

Salary of £6,000 pa

An initial 3 year term with an expectation of extension up to a maximum of 6 years.

To download full Board Member Terms of Reference [click here](#)

Board & Committee Meeting Dates 2023/24

2023:	
3 rd July	Audit & Risk Committee
19 th July	Board Meeting
September tbc	Audit & Risk Committee
20 th September	AGM
2 nd October	Audit & Risk Committee
18 th October	Board Meeting
22 nd November	Strategy away day

2024	
8 th January	Audit & Risk Committee
24 th January	Board Meeting
1 st April	Audit & Risk Committee
17 th April	Board Meeting