



# Chair - Recruitment Pack

# Welcome Letter



Dear Applicant,

Thank you for your interest in joining Wirral Methodist Housing Association and leading the Board as Chair.

You will lead the Board in developing and shaping strategy, monitoring performance, assessing and ensuring the services we provide meet the quality and standards we set and are informed by residents. All members take an active role, adding value and expertise and supporting and challenging the leadership team to achieve our mission and strategy. This means identifying with our community purpose, having diversity of thinking and supporting our values. Having a keen eye on gaining assurance, understanding risks and contributing to get the best decisions are key ingredients for effective governance.

The last 5 years for the Association have seen quite some change in people alongside the modernisation of our structures and approaches. The next 5 years present some great opportunities alongside the environmental challenges facing the sector as we seek to upgrade homes, develop new homes and be better in all aspects of delivering to and involving our residents. To support our ambitious plans and as part of our planned Board succession programme, we now have this special opportunity to join the Board and become Chair. Over the last 5 years we have come together as a committed and experienced team who work well together and who have been tremendously supportive to me as Chair. We have great team momentum and see the early recruitment of the Chair for the next six years as a key factor for the Association's success.

If you have professional expertise or business acumen and can bring awareness and understanding of what it takes to grow and manage a successful business, or you have a sound understanding of the local and regional markets we operate in, we would love to hear from you.

Yours faithfully,

**Bryan McPaul, Chair**

**Paul Carhart, Chief Executive:**

*"Wirral Methodist Housing Association is facing the same challenges as much of the sector; an increase in regulatory scrutiny, wider financial pressures, and increased expectations from tenants and stakeholders. However, we believe we are in a good position to face these challenges and continue to deliver tenant focused services in a community setting. We have grown over many years and continue to be able to deliver new homes each year. We work with a range of partners to deliver a bigger impact in Wirral and we are proud of what we have achieved. We have a small and dedicated team of colleagues and an exciting plan of what we want to achieve next. We look forward to the guidance and support of a new chair as our board continues to shape our strategic direction."*



# About Us

Wirral Methodist Housing Association has been providing quality housing in Wirral and Ellesmere Port since 1964.

We provide family houses, flats, supported accommodation including sheltered housing and shared ownership schemes.

We strive to be a caring organisation and are committed to providing quality homes and a responsive service.

Wirral Methodist Housing Association was founded in 1964 by a group of local Methodists who were moved to address the housing problems in their home community of Wirral.

The organisation grew organically and slowly throughout the next 15 years until increasing funding of social housing by Government enabled it to expand to its current size of over 850 properties in management.

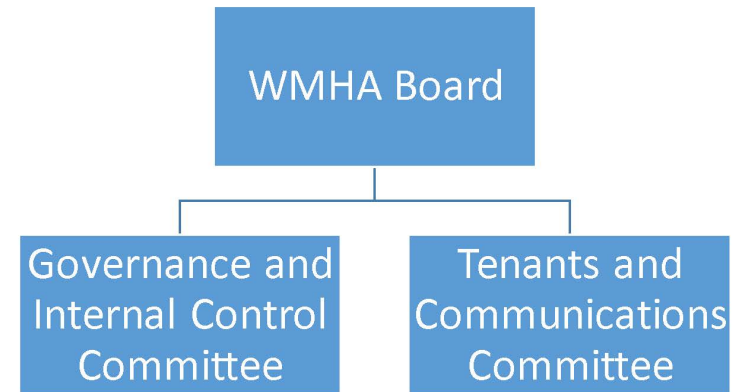
We are a charity which does not distribute the profits we make to shareholders, but instead invest them in the work we do to help people in need. We have a remunerated Board who give their time to ensure we maintain our ethos, our vision and our values.

We believe in treating everyone who we come into contact with as a valued individual with whom we seek to develop a mutually beneficial relationship.



To find out more please visit: [www.wmhaltd.org.uk](http://www.wmhaltd.org.uk)

# Meet the WMHA Board Members



**Bryan McPaul**

Chair



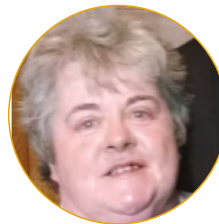
**Claire Fouracre**

Tenants & Communications  
Committee Chair



**Tom Sault**

Governance & Internal  
Controls Committee Chair



**Sandra Simmons (MBE)**

Honorary Secretary



**David Smith**



**Maggie Cornall**



**Kerry Scott**



**Craig Sparrow**



**John Morgan**

## **Bryan McPaul FCIPD (BOARD CHAIR)**

Bryan works in senior management recruitment, assessment and development, building leadership capability, employee engagement and organisational change. He has some 15 years NED/Trustee experience in housing and services to young people and is currently a Non Exec Director with Manchester based Procure Plus, who invest to create social and economic wellbeing for their neighbourhoods. With an earlier career in HR, Bryan progressed to board level roles in sales and marketing before moving into consultancy. A qualified leadership coach, Bryan is a Chartered Fellow of the CIPD and a Principal Practitioner with the Association of Business Psychologists.

## **Claire Fouracre (Chair of Tenants and Communications Committee)**

Claire discovered her passion for all things social housing after joining City West Housing Trust (CWHT), now known as For Housing who are part of the Forviva Group, as an Income Officer in 2013. Claire has worked hard to develop her housing career over a six year period, successfully moving into management after working in the sector for two years. She has worked at various different organisations during this time which has broadened her skills, knowledge and outlook. After leaving CWHT, Claire joined the Guinness Partnership (TGP) as a team manager, before rejoining Manchester City Council and now currently heads up income collection at Rochdale Boroughwide Homes.

## **Tom Sault CPFA ( Chair of Governance & Internal Controls Committee)**

Tom, a qualified accountant, enjoyed a career spanning 44 years in the public sector working at Wirral Council. This included over 15 years involvement with housing finance before taking up a senior finance position until he retired at the end of 2017. Born on the Wirral, Tom has always enjoyed the many things on offer in the area. He was recently appointed as a Trustee for the Tam O'Shanter Cottage Farm Trust. Rekindling his links with housing Tom joined the Association's Board in 2019.

## **Sandra Simmons MBE (Honorary Secretary)**

For the past twenty years, Sandra has worked as Chair of Governors at two local schools, leading and supporting the Governing Body, Headteachers and staff. In 2007 she was awarded an MBE for Services to Education. She has also worked with local charities to empower people and to help anyone struggling against unequal odds. In earlier years she worked within Adult Basic Education with Hamilton Square Adult Literacy Centre which gave her insight in to the life struggles that many people experience and worked to enable people to engage with modern life and gain the skills they needed to thrive.

## **David Smith**

David spent over 50 years working in the Insurance Industry with the majority of that time spent working as an underwriter with Royal and Sun Alliance (RSA). Before leaving RSA David was a Head Office underwriter dealing with a number of commercial classes of business including property and theft. After leaving RSA David worked as the Northern Director of a small firm of Insurance Brokers specialising in the niche market of Legal Indemnities and dealt with solicitors from around the UK, before retiring in June 2018. He is now active in Willaston Methodist Church as the Property Steward and one of a number of Worship Leaders.

## **Maggie Cornall**

Maggie has worked in social housing for many years and with several employers. She began her career at Preston Council moving onto North British Housing Association (now Places for People) and later taking roles at West Lancashire District Council and Anchor Trust. Since 2015 Maggie has been employed as Director of Operations for Blackpool Coastal Housing and has overall responsibility for the housing management, supported housing and repairs and maintenance services and asset management. She has previously been the chairman of the Blackpool Home Start service, which provides support for families with children under 5 years of age, many of whom were customers of BCH and was a non-executive director of Generation Rent.

## **Kerry Scott**

Kerry has over 25 years of residential property experience with a social purpose. As Director and Founder of K&Co Homes, she provides professional consultancy services to the housing industry, assisting contractors and developers to drive forward their ambitious housing growth plans. Over recent years she has become experienced member of senior leadership teams ensuring that the strategic vision, values and culture is embedded into all organisations.

## **Craig Sparrow BA Hons**

Craig currently works as the Executive Director of Development for a North Wales based housing association, ClwydAlyn, and has spent the last 30 years securing land and delivering affordable homes across the region. He is the Chair of the Strategic Delivery Group for Future Homes in Wales and has worked closely with Government to help deliver the housing programme.

## **John Morgan**

John joined the Board of Wirral Methodist Housing Association in June 2022. After 20 years of working in senior finance roles John is growing his own accounting business serving small to medium sized business across the UK. John is an Associate member of CIMA (Chartered Institute of Management Accountants) and Certified Member in Practice.



# Meet the WMHA Executive Team

## **Paul Carhart – Chief Executive**

Paul has worked in housing for over 30 years and joined Wirral Methodist in summer 2018. Paul has worked for a range of Housing Associations across the North West and has extensive Non Executive experience with large and smaller specialist providers. Paul has experience in delivering excellent customer focussed services and enhancing the neighbourhoods where he works, and he is committed to developing high performing teams.

## **Mark Lowe – Director of Finance and Resources**

Wirral Methodist Housing Association is pleased to announce that Mark Lowe has been appointed as Director of Finance and Resources. Wirral born Mark is a Chartered Certified Accountant (FCCA), with extensive experience across all areas of finance, and is a member of the Audit and Assurance Committee with a large diverse North-West Registered Social Landlord. With over 20 years' experience working in a variety of interim and permanent senior finance and project management roles with several housing associations across England, Mark will be a key member of the Associations' Executive Team. Mark said, "I am looking forward to starting this exciting new role in May 2024 and to coming home to Wirral where I was born. I am delighted to be joining a small and dedicated team and contributing to the range of projects underway, as well as working with the Board."

## **Chris Page – Director of Operations (Interim)**

Chris has 35 years of experience in Housing from establishing a housing co-operative to being part of the leadership group of a medium sized housing association. This experience has taken in most aspects of housing and management including housing for the elderly, students, and leaseholders on behalf of Housing Associations, Co-operatives, Universities as well as the private sector. Achievements have included establishing 3 completely new organisations (Sensible Housing Co-operative, Manchester Students Homes and Netlet Holdings Limited) as well as driving improvement and growth in established organisations. Until last year he was also leading the drive for Community Led Housing across Greater Manchester as the Chief Executive of Greater Manchester Community Led Homes.





# CHAIR

£6k p.a. ● Birkenhead

Wirral Methodist Housing Association has been providing high quality housing to the communities of Wirral and Ellesmere Port for the last 60 years. Since purchasing our first four homes, our work has evolved and diversified through the years and we now own and manage more than 850 homes in the local area. But even though we are a much larger organisation, we have always retained our community focus and our commitment to being a caring organisation that has a positive impact on quality of life for our customers.

We are now looking for a new Chair who can play a central leadership role in the ongoing development of the organisation and ensure that our residents' voice continues to inform our priorities. An ambitious regeneration agenda is set to bring major change to the local area – with plans in place for mixed-use, high-density and sustainable new development, that will create new opportunities and stimulate economic growth, and Wirral Methodist Housing Association has an important part to play. This sits alongside the ongoing challenges of upgrading existing homes to meet new standards of building and environmental compliance. It's an exciting time, and a shared sense of momentum and purpose is building.

We're looking for someone who can bring good all-round business management experience and commercial acumen and who shares our sense of community purpose. You'll work alongside other Board Members and the leadership team in setting our strategic direction and measuring progress against it. You'll be someone who enjoys working with others and who values diversity of thought and perspective to inform better decision-making. You should also have a good understanding of how good risk management and assurance supports effective governance.

Please visit [www.emaconsultancy.org.uk](http://www.emaconsultancy.org.uk) to find out more and apply.

Or please call our retained consultants at ema for a confidential discussion:  
**Ian Robertson on 07947 126329.**

Closing date: noon, 14 June 2024





# Role Description

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## Job Title

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Chair



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## Role Overview

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Provides leadership to the Board, Committees and Chief Executive, creating the conditions for overall Board and individual Director effectiveness, enabling effective decision-making, debate and challenge, working in a collaborative and constructive style.

Working with directors and management shape and monitor the Association's strategic direction, policies, compliance control and risk management frameworks and resident involvement arrangements to ensure the Association achieves its aims and objectives.

Ensure directors act in the interests of the Association, that all stakeholders views are heard, build a collaborative and robust approach to scrutiny and decision making and embed collective responsibility.

Shares the same personal accountabilities and responsibilities of other Board members in addition to the specific Chair duties.

# Key Duties & Responsibilities

The Chair has a prime but not exclusive responsibility for ensuring that the Board conducts its business effectively. This will mean;

## ***Chairing meetings;***

- Ensure that the Board's work plan is appropriate and agendas are forward looking, business and strategy focused and that sufficient time is allowed for the constructive discussion of complex or contentious issues
- To ensure the efficient and effective conduct of the Board's business, that the Board receives accurate, timely and clear information that enables it to take sound decisions and oversee the effectiveness of the Association. Ensure that appropriate internal/external professional advice is sought and available for key or complex decisions to ensure appropriate levels of compliance
- Ensure that decisions are correctly recorded and that matters arising and other follow-up actions are monitored and conduct Board meeting reviews to seek out areas for improvement

## ***Board Member contribution and development;***

- Identify the Association's skills requirements for effective and inclusive governance
- Encourage and develop member's active engagement across all aspect of the Board's business so it makes best use of the skills, competencies and experience available and that sub committees are properly resourced
- Lead Board succession planning to balance continuity with diversity, fresh skills, experience and perspectives and, ensure effective and open recruitment processes
- Ensure all members are able to raise their views and concerns, that they are addressed appropriately and that all are able to make their contribution before any important decision is taken
- Ensure that appropriate standards of behaviour are maintained in accordance with the Association's code of conduct and probity policies

## ***Board effectiveness;***

- Establish proper and appropriate arrangements for the Board's collective and individual appraisal, including the Chair's own appraisal
- Ensure that there is a properly constructed induction programme for every new Board member, which is comprehensive, formal and tailored.
- Ensure that there is a programme of ongoing training and development for the collective Board and individual members
- Ensure there are effective arrangements to periodically review Board structures, committee membership, framework of delegation and compliance with the Board Terms of Reference/Code of Conduct for Board Members



## Key Duties & Responsibilities (cont'd)

### ***Chief Executive and management team;***

- Establish and develop a constructive and supportive relationship with the Chief Executive and ensure the Board acts in partnership with the management team
- Ensure that the Board makes proper arrangements to appraise the performance of and determine the remuneration of the Chief Executive.
- Ensure where necessary, that the Chief Executive is replaced in a timely and orderly manner.

### ***Delegation;***

- Ensure that the Board properly delegates authority to its committees, task and finish groups the Chief Executive and others to ensure effective business management, scrutiny and governance between meetings
- Ensure that any exceptional decisions are taken in line with the Association's rules and are recorded, monitored and reviewed

### ***Governance;***

- Ensure that the Association's affairs are conducted in accordance with all relevant legal, regulatory and best practice standards.
- Ensure that the Board's business and decisions are transparent and as open as practicable to all members, residents and stakeholders.
- Ensure that the Board, its members and management engage with and understand the needs and views of residents and stakeholders
- Promote and demonstrate effective two-way communications between Board, Committees, and management
- Promote and lead by example to maintain the Board's visibility and communications

### ***External role;***

- Ensure the Association is positively represented with residents, key current and potential stakeholders and partners
- Liaise where necessary *with the relevant legal and regulatory bodies on behalf of the Association*

# Person Specification

## Knowledge / Experience

Previous non-executive board level or Committee Chair experience in a customer focused organisation

Understanding of governance in regulated sectors (public or private), housing sector preferred

A track record of effective leadership and of working with diverse stakeholders groups

Evidence of strong business acumen; a background in property development, IT or services delivery an advantage

Experience of being an ambassador for an organisation and evidence of effective public speaking

Experience or understanding of the Wirral or Merseyside communities that the Association serves

## Competencies

Strategic thinking – the ability to think laterally, broadly and to consider many strategic aspects simultaneously

Leadership and the ability to run meetings effectively, to chair meetings impartially, encourage all participants to make a contribution and to reach consensus

Inclusive and customer focused in thinking

Able to command respect and commitment from Board members, colleagues and external bodies.

An excellent ambassador for the organisation and representing the organisation through networking.

Communication and influencing skills – the ability to negotiate and broker relationships



# Terms and Conditions

## **Fees:**

£6k p.a

## **Location:**

Birkenhead

## **Tenure / Time Commitment:**

An initial term of three years, and up to a maximum of six years

The Chair may join a sub-committee

6 Board meetings pa including a full strategy away day and AGM

Board meets: Tuesday's late pm – in person with opportunity for blended i.e. remote attendance if needed Time commitment 1 – 2 days per month

## **Training and Support:**

We will support you to make sure you have access to the relevant information to undertake this role

## **Other Benefits:**

Directors Insurance

Corporate CIH Membership



# HOW TO APPLY

Thank you for expressing an interest in joining Wirral Methodist HA. If you have read the candidate briefing information and you would like to apply, please follow the guidelines below.

## APPLICATION PROCESS

Please submit an up-to-date Curriculum Vitae (CV) and covering letter quoting the relevant reference number as follows **ema483**:

Please return your application by **noon, 14 June 2024** (electronic submissions) to our retained consultants at ema consultancy Ltd: email:

[responsehandling1@emaconsultancy.org.uk](mailto:responsehandling1@emaconsultancy.org.uk)

## HOW TO APPLY

It is important that your CV highlights supporting evidence of how your previous experience and skills relate to the criteria outlined in the Role Description and Person Specification. Within your CV, please supply the following:

1. Full name and postal address;
2. Work and home telephone number, mobile number and email address (NB most written communication with you will be electronic);
3. Relevant employment history;
4. Education qualifications;
5. Current Memberships of relevant professional associations/Institutes and dates.

Your covering letter (maximum of 3 pages) should be used to convey why you are attracted to the role describing how your relevant experience and skills will help Wirral Methodist HA map out and deliver their future purpose, direction and priorities. The covering letter is considered an important aspect of your application and will be used to assess your motivation for the role.

## TIMETABLE

The timetable for the selection process is included below. In your supporting letter, please advise us if you have any difficulty with the outlined dates and/or any other dates when you are unavailable for assessment. We try to offer flexibility, but it can be difficult to convene the selection panel outside the advertised selection dates due to diary commitments.

Process	Date
Closing Date	Noon, 14 June 2024
Screening Interviews (virtual)	w/c 24 June 2024
Final Interviews and Assessments	11 / 12 July 2024

## ASSESSMENT AND SELECTION PROCESS

All applications will be considered and assessed against the requirements of the Person Specification in order to select an initial long list of candidates. If you have been successful at this stage ema will contact you via telephone/email immediately following the initial longlisting meeting with Wirral Methodist HA.

## CONTACT DETAILS

If you have any queries about the position or the selection process; or if you would like an informal and confidential discussion with our consultants, please do not hesitate to contact, Ian Robertson on 07947 126329.

Thank you for your interest in this position.

**Ian Robertson**  
Executive Director

