



WILLOW TREE
HOUSING PARTNERSHIP

Board Member Recruitment pack

January 2025

Contents

Your application

Welcome

About Willow Tree Housing

Role profile - Board member

Person specification - Board member

Leadership structure

Key terms and conditions

Key dates and the selection process

Your Application

Thank you very much for your interest in the role of a Board member at Willow Tree Housing Partnership Limited.

On the following pages, you will find details of the role, the organisation, and the selection process, to assist you in completing and tailoring your application.

You will no doubt do your own due diligence but do read this pack carefully as it will provide you with a good overview of the organisation and this role.

To apply, we will need the following from you:

- A CV. Make sure this confirms your current/most recent roles (you can sum up earlier roles, say before the last 15 years), tell us about your achievements so we get a picture of your skills and experience. Maximum 3 pages
- A personal statement. We want to hear about your motivation, why this role/organisation, and you will also want to evidence how relevant your offer is to the role specification. Maximum 3 pages. (please note only applications accompanied with a covering letter will be considered)
- Equality and Diversity monitoring form – please complete this

Please submit your CV, personal statement and Equality and Diversity form to sue.sparks@willowtreehousing.org.uk

The role closes at 12 noon, 30 January 2025

Please ensure we receive your application in good time.

We are happy to have further discussion, so drop me an email at the address below and I can arrange a time to speak.

Kind regards

Sue Sparks

Head of Corporate Services

Sue.sparks@willowtreehousing.org.uk

Mobile : 07561 396345

Welcome

I am very pleased that you are looking at the opportunity to join our Board. As a smaller community-based housing provider, at Willow Tree Housing we feel that we have a crucial role to play across the social housing landscape. Our relationship with our tenants is that much more intimate, we can operate with agility, and the impact we make is clearly seen and felt. We find these are hugely motivating factors and hope they and our values will align to your ethos.

We are excited about welcoming a new colleague to our Board. You will find that we are a friendly, supportive, and skilled team, with a highly effective relationship with our Chief Executive and her senior team. We welcome diversity of thought and different perspectives; appreciate thoughtful and robust debate; and value consensus-based decision-making. We hope that chimes with your preferred ways of working.

We are looking for a Consumer expert (preferably with background in housing service delivery) who understands the value of providing affordable, safe, and sustainable housing and the importance of the tenant voice. We want our neighbourhoods and communities to thrive, and for people to fulfil their potential and realise their aspirations. With a cost-of-living crisis, that has never mattered more. When we came together as two locally focused housing providers to create Willow Tree Housing, it was our intention that we could do more together to make that all important difference to our tenants.

To support that intention, for this role we seek:

- A Board member who understands all the elements of the RSH’s Consumer Standard and their application to our business, You should be passionate about creating exceptional customer/complaint services and promoting tenant engagement and voice.
- A team-player, who can make a rounded contribution to our debates and decision-making; bringing creativity and innovation along with best practice to reshape our customer experience and understands the role of data in measuring outcomes in this area.

The South-West has a spectrum of comfortable lives for many and pockets of high deprivation, compounded by rural poverty for others. If you have a connection to this region, housing development experience, believe in opportunity for all and want to be a part of a team where you can see and feel the impact you make, then I would hope that you will want to read on and find out more about this opportunity.

Warm regards

Sue Lane

Sue Lane

Chair of the Remuneration & Nominations Committee & Chair of the selection panel



About Willow Tree Housing

Willow Tree Housing was created through merger on 31st March 2023. As two local organisations, South Western Housing and Tamar Housing, we started working together in partnership from 2020, to harness collective expertise, knowledge, and passion for social housing. We wanted to increase our joint capacity to provide more new homes and invest in existing homes; to directly benefit existing and future tenants.

Our **vision** is to: deliver and grow.

Our **mission** is to: build and manage safe and comfortable homes, that are truly affordable for people who are not in a position to access the housing market.

Our **values** reflect who we are, so anybody who works with us, pays rent to us, seeks services from us or collaborates in achieving shared goals, can expect these (STRIVE) values to be at the core of all of our business practices:

- **S**upporting collaboration, enabling staff and tenants to work together to achieve shared goals;
- **T**rust and honesty, being willing to listen and learn and be open when we need to improve;
- **R**espect and understanding, all colleagues and residents can expect mutual courtesy and empathy when times are challenging;
- **I**ntegrity and professionalism, ensuring at all times that we conduct ourselves in a way that reflects the importance of the service we provide;
- **V**ersatile and innovative, by embracing opportunities and new ways of thinking that will enhance how we deliver; and
- **E**qual and inclusive, by celebrating difference and ensuring that we do not operate in a way that excludes anyone.

Our current 2024/27 corporate strategy spans the period from one year after both organisations merged into one entity. Our **priorities** for the next three years will be centred around four key areas detailed below.

- **People**, this includes our current and future tenants, our colleagues and all of the partners we work with in collaboration as a smaller enterprise across the South West.
- **Property**, we will work to ensure we maintain and invest in the homes we own and manage, keeping them safe, and also working to improve their fabric to deliver more sustainable homes for the future.
- **Place**, we want people to enjoy where they live and for the new homes we build to be where people can access services and benefit from green spaces as much as possible.
- **Planet**, we aim to be an organisation that puts sustainability at the heart of what we do,

whether that is in the building of new homes, retrofitting existing ones, or limiting our impact on the biodiversity that is so important in supporting the efforts being made to manage climate change.

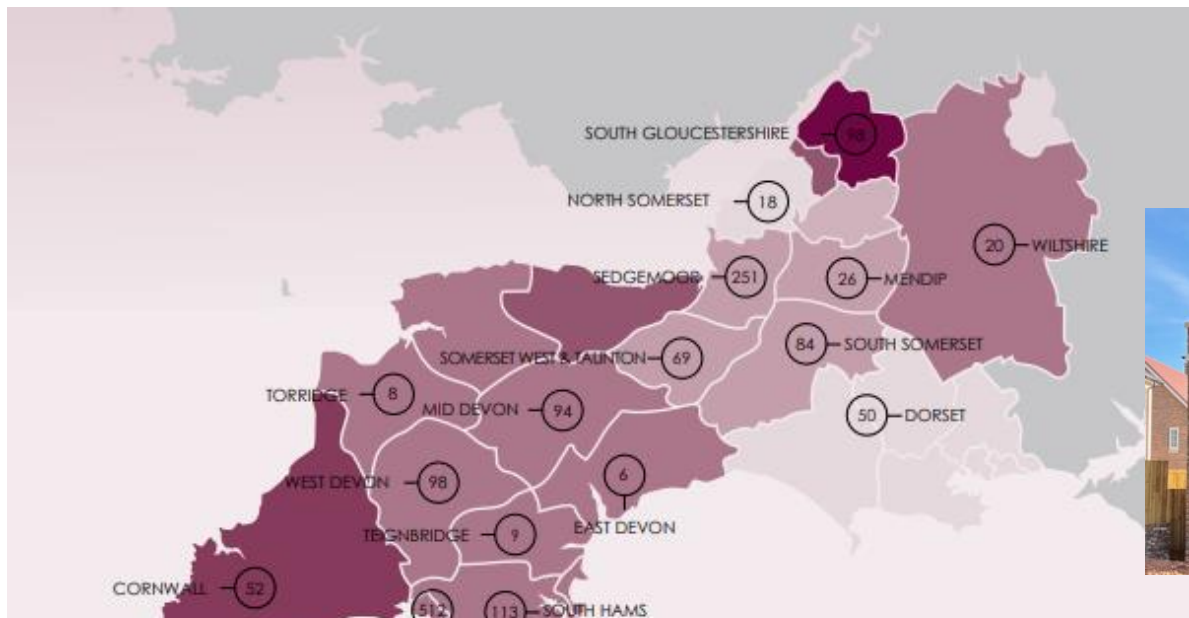
We are a housing provider, and own and manage c.1,500 homes. We are registered with the Regulator of Social Housing, and we have just had our first Regulatory Inspection since the merger.

We welcome the publication of the first regulatory judgement since our merger placed us into the larger landlord space. We have valued the forensic evaluation by the Regulator of Social Housing and benefitted from their expertise in evaluating our progress since the merger twelve months previously. We are reassured that the inspection did not highlight areas for improvement of which we are unaware and that the RSH noted the work already undertaken and action plans in progress. We are glad to note compliance with the governance and financial viability standards, albeit being mindful that the Board needs to maintain clear oversight of the organisation. Whilst we are pleased that our health and safety management meets all requirements, we are extremely disappointed that we are not meeting the service outcomes our tenants should expect overall. We are committed to delivering our improvement action plan at pace this and will be acting on all recommendations as a matter of priority to evidence of improvement for our tenants. Please use this link to read the full judgement from the Regulator.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/willow-tree-housing-partnership-limited/willow-tree-housing-partnership-limited-l2424-regulatory-judgement-30-october-2024>

We employ around 33 colleagues, and our financial turnover is c.£9m. You can find further details of our business profile in our 2022/23 Annual Report, and read about our Board and Executive team on our website www.willowtreehousing.org.uk

We operate right across the South West. Most of our homes are in Devon and Somerset, with a service base in each county. We manage general needs accommodation across a diverse property and resident portfolio, which includes flats, houses, rented, part owned and rent plus (a product that offers working people the chance to rent and save to purchase at the same time). We work in urban and rural areas and our staff team has expertise that is wide ranging with the ability to adapt swiftly and responsively to the needs of our residents and partners.



Role Profile Board Member

Responsibilities of an individual Board member:

- Take collective responsibility with the rest of the Board to provide strategic leadership, in alignment to agreed vision and values.
- Contribute to the Board to ensure compliance with all legal and regulatory obligations, including monitoring the performance and impact of the business.
- Support the Chair in effective governance of the organisation, ensuring that decisions taken by the Board are in the best interests of the organisation and its tenants.
- Maintain an effective relationship with the CE/wider senior Executive team.
- Each Board member will also be a Committee/Residents Scrutiny Panel member and/or Committee Chair, commensurate with your skills/experience.

Key responsibilities:

Strategic leadership:

1. Provides focused strategic leadership and direction to the work of the organisation, helping to set the vision, mission, values and standards for the organisation.
2. Promote good governance and ensure that the organisation's affairs are conducted in accordance with all legal and regulatory requirements and a high standard of probity.
3. Provides leadership on equality and diversity matters ensuring this is reflected in all that the organisation does.

Conduct of Board business:

4. Ensures that decisions taken by the Board are in the best interests of the organisation and its tenants.
5. Works in accordance with the organisation's chosen Code of Conduct and Code of Governance.
6. Participates in reviews of Board performance, attending training when required, and keeping up to date with sector matters.
7. Diligently prepares for and attends Board and Committee meetings, making an active contribution to discussions and decision making.
8. In the event of unavoidable absence from a meeting, provide comments and questions in advance on the relevant papers to the meeting Chair.

Risk and performance:

9. Approves an appropriate business planning, risk and control framework and reviews its effectiveness at least once a year.

10. Helps determine the organisation's approach to assurance and risk management.
11. Contributes to the consideration, setting and monitoring of the budget and business plan.
12. Monitors the organisation's performance across key indicators to ensure that the organisation is well run and viable.
13. Agrees policies and make decisions on all matters that might create significant financial or other risk to the organisation.

Working with the Executive:

14. Board members are accountable to the Chair of the Board. They are expected to maintain good relationships with other members of the Board, the Executive and other key members of staff and with external stakeholders, particularly residents, regulators, and any other related statutory agencies.

Promoting the organisation:

15. Be an ambassador for the organisation to help build its reputation in conjunction with the Chair & CEO.
16. Represent the organisation as required from time to time, promoting its values, purpose and impacts.

Person Specification

PERSON SPECIFICATION: Board Member

Experience and knowledge:

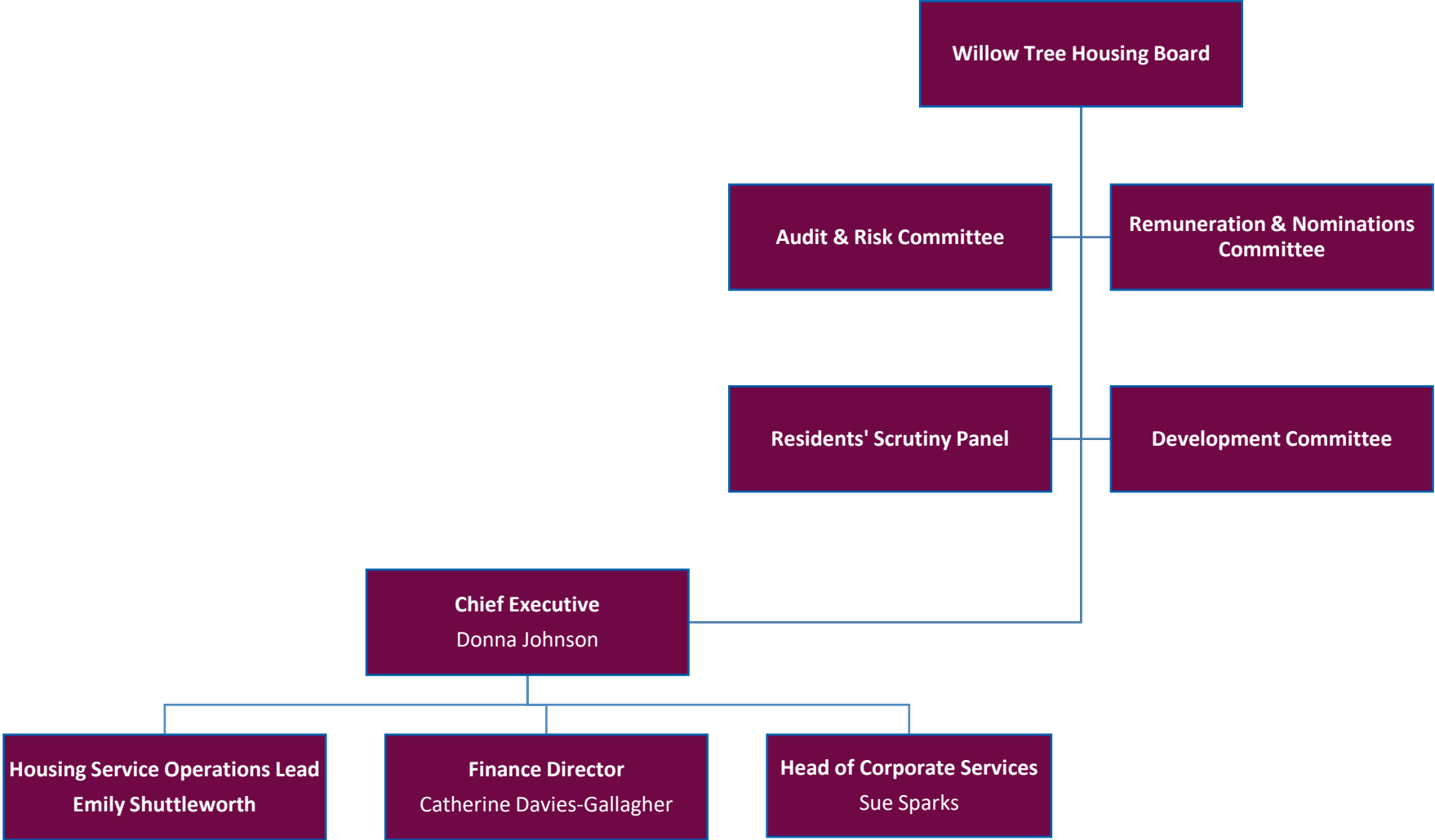
- a. Customer experience at a senior level, ideally in housing, with insight into the collection, analysis and use of data in this field to enhance customer service and tenant engagement.
- b. Additional experience in one or more of the following would be advantageous: Information and communication technologies/digital, communications, risk, financial strategy; people, and Human Resource/Organisational Development
- c. Understanding of how Boards operate.
- d. Experience in working with risk and assurance frameworks, appreciates the role of a Board and/or a Committee/Residents Scrutiny panel in monitoring compliance.
- e. Experience of operating effectively at high levels within an organisation, and a proven ability in influencing decision making.
- f. Appreciates the purpose and impact of social housing provision. Lived experience in social housing and knowledge of sector strategic considerations would be helpful.

Skills and abilities:

- g. Ability to contribute to the collective leadership of the organisation, to provide strategic direction.
- h. Respects the respective roles of a Board and Executive.
- i. Strong interpersonal skills, skilled at listening to others contributions, challenging in a constructive way and supporting consensus decision-making.
- j. Ability to make balanced and informed decisions.
- k. Able to read, understand and analyse both written and numerical reports presented to the Board for decision and information and contribute to their discussion.
- l. Assesses risk and promotes risk awareness without being risk averse.
- m. Ability to ensure the commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion runs through all that the Board do.
- n. Able to be an organisational ambassador.

Personal qualities:

- o. Shared vision and values of the organisation.
- p. Champions the rights of tenants to access high quality homes and services.
- q. Leads by example with an open, engaging and enthusing style.
- r. Has personal and professional credibility.
- s. Works well in a team, with a collaborative style.
- t. Committed to accountability, openness, transparency, and equality of opportunity.
- u. Has the necessary time commitment for the role.



Key Terms and Conditions

Remuneration:

Board member: £2730 pa

Board remuneration will be reviewed in Spring 2025

The appointment:

The term of office for each role is three years. Typically, renewable up to a maximum overall tenure of six years, with possible extension.

Time commitment:

There are typically:

4 x Half day board meetings, plus preparation time

2 x Full day Away Days with one to include an overnight, plus preparation time

2 x Full Day Training

3 x Half Day Committee meetings / Resident Scrutiny Panel, plus preparation time

In addition, time will be required for ambassadorial events, stock tours, resident and staff engagement and possible working group participation. This could amount to c3 additional days

Total Minimum Time Commitment 14 days per annum

Location:

Our registered office is at Eastbridge House, Pill Road, Rooksbridge, Somerset, BS26 2TN

Meetings take place both virtually and in-person. There are at least two in-person Board meetings, and these take place in Somerset and Plymouth. Some Board meetings and most Committee meetings tend to happen virtually, the Away days are face to face. It is anticipated that we will continue to operate with this hybrid model.

Equal Opportunity Statement:

WTHP will consider all applicants for this role without attention to race, colour, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, veteran or disability status. We will make all reasonable adjustments requested for those with a disability of any kind.

Key Dates and Selection Process

Closing date for applications: 12 noon, 30 January 2025.

Shortlisting: Candidates will be shortlisted by the Interview Panel; shortlisted candidates will be invited to attend a familiarisation meeting with the Executive Team via individual Teams meetings on 12 February 2025 (4 x 15-minute meetings).

Interviews: Will be held in person at our Head Offices at Eastbridge House, Pill Road, Rooksbridge BS26 2TN on the **20 February 2025**.

The interview panel will be led by Sue Lane, Chair of the Remuneration & Nominations Committee & Chair of the selection panel, with Board members: Steve Hayes and Brian Whittaker.

We will be in touch to let you know the outcome of the interview by the end of the following week.

The final shortlisted candidate(s) will meet the Chair, Sarah O'Neill, via individual Teams meetings on 3rd March 2025

Board Appointment: We are looking for the board member to join the Board at the Away Day scheduled for 27 March 2025.

If you are unable to participate on any of the identified dates for interviews or other sessions, please do speak to Sue Sparks before making an application.
