



Recruitment of trustees

Candidate information pack

September 2023

# Candidate briefs for Property Trustee and Company Secretary

Would you consider bringing your skills, knowledge and experience to the Board of a charity that is passionate about providing older people with supported independent living for companionship and social interaction and diminishing the effects of loneliness and isolation?







## Welcome from our Joint Chairs

Thank you for your interest in the Property Trustee and Company Secretary roles at Abbeyfield Southern Oaks.

Effective governance involves a range of responsibilities not least ensuring that the leadership of an organisation has a good mix of skills and experience to meet the needs of an evolving society. We have been associated with Abbeyfield Southern Oaks for many years and having opened Nonsuch Abbeyfield, a wonderful community hub for local older people, and with potential growth in the coming years, we're now recruiting Trustees who will bring the skills and experience to support the delivery of our ambitious plans.

Trustees with skills in marketing, the public sector (many of our residents' accommodation is funded by Local Authorities) and project management have recently joined us, and we now need another trustee with strong property management skills to help us ensure that our growth in housing is managed effectively, as well as a Company Secretary with experience of working within the Charity sector and/or dealing with mergers. We have a clear vision for developing the charity, our existing and new Trustees are skilled people, and we all have a passion for and real commitment to what we are doing. We are supported by competent and professional staff who share our vision.

We recognised some years ago that we needed to change from being almost entirely volunteer-run to one with professionally employed staff. With the opening of our new community at Nonsuch Abbeyfield we have been implementing those new ways of Trustees and staff working together, and this is how we see the charity progressing to the next stage of its development.

We are seeking individuals who are enthusiastic about what we want to achieve, have senior experience in their fields and who can operate at both a strategic and executive capacity. However, this charity will not suit someone who only wants to attend quarterly Board meetings: we hope to find people who want to get thoroughly involved and are interested in contributing to other aspects of our work.

We both very much look forward to receiving your application.

Nigel Macdonald and Graham Walker

Joint Acting Chairs



## About us

Abbeyfield Southern Oaks is deeply interconnected with the local community on many levels in the spirit and practice of our vision and values. Residents, employees, trustees, volunteers and service professionals are all drawn from the local area.

Abbeyfield Southern Oaks is a not-for-profit organisation. We provide supported housing for people who are still able to care for themselves and wish to remain independent. Our residents generally don't want the responsibilities of maintaining a house or flat, or a garden, but they're not ready to go into a care home. We currently have four supported houses with between 7-10 residents in each at any one time.

People may also like extra support for things like meals, cleaning and most of all they want the possibility of the company of others if they wish. Our supported housing offers that extra help: someone around to offer a bit of security in case they fall or feel unwell although supported housing isn't for people who need more dedicated care.

We have recently developed Nonsuch Abbeyfield, a supportive, vibrant retirement village in Surrey, where active, independent living is at its heart. Thirty-six of the flats are leaseholds while the remaining are rented at an agreed affordable rent, frequently when residents have been referred by the council.

Although our growth over recent years has been funded in part by donations and bequests we aim to cover the full cost of providing housing and support by the charges we make to residents. We do, however, aim to raise funds in a structured way to support the growth of our housing capacity and the development of new services,

Abbeyfield Southern Oaks is affiliated to The Abbeyfield Society, but we are independent and run our own affairs. We pay an annual affiliation fee to The Abbeyfield Society and enjoy the benefits of a national brand and access to knowledge and networks of good practice.

## Background to the roles

With the opening of Nonsuch Abbeyfield, and our plans to develop and grow our offer, our newly appointed and excellent Property Trustee needs to collaborate and work alongside another skilled professional in order to cover all that's required. The candidate would ideally be an experienced senior-level local government or social housing professional with relevant knowledge and experience including housing management, planning, repairs and maintenance and relevant legislation.

In addition, our current Company Secretary wishes to step back after many years of dedicated service and we need to replenish this important range of skills and expertise on the Board. The role would suit a current part-time or recently retired Solicitor or senior Legal Executive fully versed in corporate governance.

In addition to our quarterly Board meetings, Trustees may be asked to sit on other committees and attend ad hoc meetings. The time commitment will be on average one to two days a month and can be delivered across the year in a flexible way.





# Being a Board Member – what's involved

Every not-for-profit organisation has a Board – a group of volunteer Trustees who ensure that the organisation is effective in carrying out the purpose for which it was set up. Trustees have responsibility for overseeing the work of Abbeyfield Southern Oaks, ensuring it is financially stable, well-run, and fulfilling its 'objects', as set out in our Articles of Association.

Boards govern effectively by:

- Focusing on their governance responsibilities
- Being clear about the role of the Board vs. the role of the Executives - and fostering good relationships between both
- Ensuring the board itself operates effectively

As an Abbeyfield Southern Oaks Trustee you'll be an ambassador for the organisation and its work. You'll share our vision to help older people in our local communities.

## What we can offer you

Becoming a Trustee is a fascinating way to engage in the not-for-profit sector. It's a role that will give back just as much as you put in and often much, much more. Our Trustees have already proved themselves and recognise that they have developed a wealth of personal and professional skills that they can continue to apply outside the salaried work environment, for the benefit of others, as well as continuing to apply those skills in their personal lives. So, becoming a Trustee will empower you with a new sense of contribution in the pursuit of a wider purpose.

## Contributing to a great cause – sustainability

There is no doubt that being a Board member in a not-for-profit organisation is one of the most powerful ways in which you can contribute to a cause you really care about. As an Abbeyfield Southern Oaks Board member, you will have an opportunity to have a real impact on our work addressing the needs of older people, especially loneliness, across the wider



communities in which we are located. Our work helps them to live the life they want and do the things they choose.

## Strategic experience

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Strategic experience can be hard to come by. It can often take decades to find yourself in a role which requires strategic oversight. A not-for-profit Board role is a fantastic way of getting a head start on this, at once giving you the opportunity to develop and hone your critical thinking, problem-solving and analytical skills as well as developing vital strategic sensibilities and team working skills. The strategic experience which can be gained through a Board role can have an immediate and powerful impact on your career, opening doors to new responsibilities and more senior job prospects.

Equally for those who have already had some strategic responsibilities, a not-for-profit Board role provides an opportunity to use those skills in a significantly different context.

## Continued personal development

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Joining a Board can be a very interesting experience, not least because it allows you to adapt and apply everything you have learnt to date into an entirely new context. Through a not-for-profit Board role, you can gain a clearer idea of your own professional strengths and weaknesses whilst simultaneously learning altogether new skills. Understanding how to adapt your professional knowledge to useful and impactful ends is a good reminder of your own versatility, giving you confidence in your existing abilities whilst challenging you to push the boundaries of your expertise. Most of us are idealists at heart, even if life has shown us that things are not as simple as we once thought. As a Trustee of Abbeyfield Southern Oaks you will be able to combine your own sense of purpose with your expertise and skills to bring a great deal of benefit to others.

## Teamworking

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As a Board member at Abbeyfield Southern Oaks you will be part of a team and will have the opportunity to apply your unique skills and experience, while also learning from others. Working closely with a passionate team of people who have different perspectives is often one of the most enjoyable aspects of the role.



The ability to collaborate effectively with others and to challenge constructively the ideas of fellow Board members, as well as those of the Senior Management Team, is essential to ensuring the Board's strategic decisions are fully informed, reasonable and effective. Negotiating, empathising, listening and clearly communicating ideas and concerns are key factors in this process and often help to set the tone and culture of Board meetings.







# Property Trustee and Company Secretary job descriptions

<b>Location</b>	Ewell, Surrey
<b>Time Commitment</b>	<p>Quarterly Board meetings (2-3 hours).</p> <p>Monthly Services Committee meetings (2-3 hours) – The Services team is the group of Trustees who, along with the Director of Business Operations (DBO), provide the operational oversight and guidance to the professional staff, and report to the full Board quarterly.</p> <p>There are a number of sub-committees and it would be useful, at least initially, to attend meetings to learn about the charity’s activities</p> <p>Periodic phone calls, discussion of issues as they emerge, liaison with professional staff between meetings (an average of 1-2 hours per week).</p> <p>Trustees with the capacity to do so also have the opportunity to support occasional projects working with the DBO and the wider leadership team.</p>
<b>Duration</b>	Trustees serve an initial term of five years with the option of a second term
<b>Remuneration</b>	Unpaid; expenses covered in line with policy

## Trustee duties

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Abbeyfield Southern Oaks is a registered charity and a company limited by guarantee. The Board are the Trustees and directors of the Charity. The Trustees are responsible for the



overall governance and strategic direction of the Charity, in accordance with the terms of its constitution and with legal and regulatory requirements and best practice.

## General Trustee Duties

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- To lead collectively and ensure that the vision and purpose of the Charity is developed, shared and achieved
- To ensure that the Charity complies with legal and regulatory requirements and acts in accordance with the terms of its constitution
- To act in the best interests of the Charity at all times and to the benefit of present and future beneficiaries of the Charity
- To develop, protect and preserve the ethos of the Charity
- To ensure the solvent and efficient running of the Charity through the monitoring and control of its finance and administrative systems and investment policy
- To manage the strategic direction of the Charity
- To protect the property, reputation and resources of the Charity through ongoing identification, monitoring and management of risks to the Charity and its assets
- To appoint and give support to the Charity's professional staff

## General responsibilities of the Property Trustee role

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- Provide advice and guidance to the Chair and trustees over all property matters
- Provide thought leadership on, and analysis of, opportunities for development and expansion both for building and acquiring new properties
- Provide advice and guidance to the Chair and trustees over legal and contracting matters pertaining to a property portfolio
- Monitoring performance and KPIs through participation in the Services Committee
- Strategic oversight and direction through participation in Board meetings and the strategy committee
- Provide advice regarding all aspects of social housing property letting and management. In particular direction and guidance and hands-on work relating to:
  - Reactive and planned maintenance and refurbishment, and asset management.
  - Fire safety, health and safety, and housing management.



- Assistance with contractor selection and monitoring.
- Resident and Tenant satisfaction measures.
- Budget preparation and monitoring.
- Advise on all issues regarding property standards and legal requirements for residential properties, particularly Fire Safety, Health and Safety, HHSRS, listed building, and planning issues
- Advising and ensuring adherence to planning conditions
- Preparation of repair works schedules and inspecting works and developing and documenting operational procedures
- Providing oversight and direction to the sports pavilion development, and works to the property portfolio including commissioning, liaison and meetings with professional advisors, contractors, partners, consultants, engineers, architects, surveyors, and solicitors, etc
- Regular liaison meetings. correspondence, advice and assistance to Epsom Sports Club, our partner
- Oversight of client role rectifying £1m general and latent defects in a new-build premises
- Liaison and decision-making involving complex legal matters with surveyors, receivers, contractors and legal representatives

## General responsibilities of the Company Secretary role

- To ensure ASO complies with our Articles of Association, becoming familiar with ASO's constitution, the legal responsibilities of charities under the Charities Act 2009 and the charity's internal governance rules
- To ensure ASO pursues our objectives as defined in our Articles of Association, acting as ASO's 'conscience' and making sure that we do not spend money on activities which are not included in our objectives, no matter how 'charitable' and 'worthwhile' those activities are.
- To ensure the effective and efficient administration of ASO, including:
  - Keeping the information held on the Registrar of Social Housing, Companies House and the Charity Commission websites up to date and completing their annual Statutory Declarations following the AGM





- Organising AGMs and EGMs, ensuring that invitations are sent out in a timely manner, responses recorded including proxy votes, and appropriate meeting rooms or virtual Team meetings are booked as required, nominations for Directors are received in time and in the correct format, voting procedures are followed correctly and that any required business is dealt with, such as the appointment of auditors
- Drafting the Annual Report to members and organising the publication of these in local periodicals
- Organising quarterly Board meetings, including the co-development of the Board Agenda with the Chair, the distribution of Board papers, the booking of meeting rooms and virtual Teams meetings, the taking of accurate Board Minutes and the follow-up of Board Actions Arising
- Maintaining accurate and up-to-date Trustee records, maintaining the Register of Interests, Trustee Availability
- Maintaining accurate and up-to-date membership records, including contact details
- To support the learning and development of existing and new Trustees, including:
  - Awareness of our Articles of Association
  - Awareness of the requirements to comply with relevant codes such as the Code of Conduct for Charity Trustees and the Charities Governance Code
  - Awareness of the development and history of ASO
  - Awareness of commonly used Glossary of Terms
  - Ensuring that an induction programme is in place and followed through for new Trustees
- To ensure that due diligence is carried out, including:
  - Supporting the recruitment process for new Trustees, including the completion of all relevant due diligence documentation
  - Ensuring that DBO checks are in place for existing Trustees.
- In addition with other trustees to hold the charity “in trust” for current and future beneficiaries by:
  - Ensuring that the charity has a clear vision, mission and strategic direction and is focused on achieving these.



- Being responsible for the performance of the charity and for its “corporate” behaviour; ensuring that the charity complies with all legal and regulatory requirements.
- Acting as guardians of the charity’s assets, both tangible and intangible, taking all due care over their security, deployment and proper application.
- Ensuring that the charity’s governance is of the highest possible standard.
- As well as the various statutory duties, any trustee should make full use of any specific skills, knowledge or experience to help the board make good decisions.

## Person Specification

The person specification sets out the qualities, skills and experience needed to fill the Property Trustee and Company Secretary roles. All Trustees need certain qualities such as integrity and commitment. However, not every Trustee will have the full range of skills and experience ideally required by the Board.

### All Abbeyfield Southern Oak Trustees will have:

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- Experience of organisational management
- A commitment to being an effective and responsible advocate for the organisation
- An understanding of the importance of effective governance of voluntary sector organisations, including the respective roles and responsibilities of the Chair, the Board and the executive
- An understanding of the social and political environment within which Abbeyfield Southern Oaks operates
- The ability to think strategically and understand the importance of the organisation’s role
- An understanding of the demands, and operational challenges, inherent in Abbeyfield Southern Oaks’ role as a housing provider for older people in the community
- An understanding of the financial and funding environment in which charitable organisations operate
- The ability to work effectively as a team member and demonstrate a willingness to learn and develop



The Property Trustee will bring the following qualities, skills and experience:

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**Essential**

- Experience of developing, executing and reviewing property development and/or management at a senior level.
- Experience of both the strategic development and implementation of quality, compliance and reporting.
- Experience of successful contract negotiation and execution
- Understanding of the current property landscape including opportunities and risks for a voluntary sector organisation

**Desirable**

- Experience of working in or in close partnership with a charitable organisation
- Experience of older people's services in the statutory or voluntary sectors

The Company Secretary will bring the following qualities, skills & and experience:

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**Essential**

- To be organised and methodical
- Able to take good minutes and keep accurate records
- Have knowledge of company law relating to the Company Secretary's role
- Have/or develop a good knowledge of the organisation's own constitution
- Able to give clear advice on procedural matters
- Demonstrable leadership experience at an organisational level
- Ability to manage board discussions to enable decisions and agreement for action
- High level of interpersonal skills including tact and diplomacy
- Passion for the mission and values of ASO
- Experience in continually improving board governance and developing board performance
- Capability to deal effectively with issues that may emerge in governance, matters of safeguarding, risk of reputation and sustainability for the organisation
- Impartiality, fairness and ability to respect confidences





- Ability to quickly acquire sufficient knowledge and understanding of the organisation and be a 'critical friend' to the board and staff

**Desirable**

- Experience of over-seeing organisational growth and re-structure
- Leadership experience in the charity sector, particularly with organisations providing housing and older people's services
- Knowledge of the social demographics, economy and environment of the geographical area of ASO



## How to apply?

[Eastside People](#) is supporting ASO in the recruitment of these roles. [Please click here](#) to apply by submitting your CV and a cover letter, which should indicate why you are interested in applying for the particular role and how you meet the selection criteria. If you would like a call to discuss the role in more detail, please email Lucinda Shaw, [lucinda@eastsidepeople.org](mailto:lucinda@eastsidepeople.org) to arrange a convenient time. Having a call of this kind will not influence the success or otherwise of your application.

**The closing date for applications is Monday 23 October.** Shortlisting interviews will take place the week after and shortlisted candidates will have an interview with Abbeyfield Southern Oaks during the week beginning 30 October

We want you to have every opportunity to demonstrate your skills, ability and potential; please contact us if you require any assistance or adjustment so that we can help with making the application process work for you.

Abbeyfield Southern Oaks is fully committed to equality of opportunity and diversity to ensure that we reflect the full breadth of the people we aim to support. We work within an increasingly diverse area, and it is important that the Board is representative of the communities that we serve. We would particularly welcome applications from women and people from an ethnic minority background who are currently under-represented on the Board and warmly welcome applications from all suitably qualified candidates.



# Eastside People

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Eastside People is the trading name for Eastside Consulting Ltd. Company number: 4958922.