



Suffolk FA



Suffolk FA Recruitment Pack

Independent Board Chair

February 2026

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Welcome

Thank you for your interest in becoming an Independent Board Chair and Trustee for Suffolk County Football Association Ltd (“Suffolk FA”)



This is an exciting opportunity to join a forward-thinking charitable organisation that will innovate and lead to grow the game of football in a way that supports local communities. We want to enable and help provide opportunities to spread the reach of the game to those that don't normally get the opportunities to play. Our strategy focusses on the principle of 'Driving the Local Game' and the word local is at the heart of everything we do.

With over 306,000 people playing football regularly in Suffolk, the game's ability to reach many corners of the county brings a unique opportunity to make a true difference to local communities. Generating £267.8m of social value each year to Suffolk, we have an aspiration to make a true difference to people's lives and help transform the county through increased physical activity rates, improving health and wellbeing opportunities and building fantastic partnerships.

This position is particularly significant, as the Independent Board Chair is central to steering the strategic direction and governance of Suffolk FA. The role requires a steady hand to guide the Board, foster collaboration, and ensure effective oversight of our activities and impact. We value integrity, independent judgment, and visionary leadership, and are seeking a dynamic individual who will inspire our trustees and stakeholders, uphold our mission, and champion continuous improvement across all aspects of our work.

We want someone that wants to join us as we look forward to our next chapter as an organisation and are looking for someone that has a passion and desire to make a difference to the people of Suffolk and to keep them safe. If that's you, we look forward to receiving your application and hopefully welcoming you as Independent Board Chair.

About Us

Suffolk FA is the governing body for football in Suffolk and is part of the affiliated County network for the Football Association. Suffolk FA is also a registered charity with a role and remit to promote, develop and support participation, promote the game and support the health and wellbeing of the people of Suffolk.

Formed in 1885 it has led the governance, operations and development of football for 140 years. The organisation, however, is modern and thriving and became a registered charity in 2021. The organisation is responsible for supporting the 300+ clubs in the county, leading the development and growth of football across the grassroots game, growing participation and developing referees and coaches. It is responsible for supporting volunteers to be some of the best in England at providing opportunities for everyone wanting to engage in the game.

It is also a key stakeholder in Suffolk, responsible for leading key infrastructure work, being a key partner with health, local authorities and the business community. We use these relationships to help leverage significant funding into football and the county. Examples of this are development of Football Facilities Plans, ensuring local places have great sports facilities, coordinating funding applications to the Football Foundation and other funding partners and leading safeguarding training and DBS checks for the thousands of volunteers that deliver football in Suffolk.

Our vision is 'A Thriving Local Game' and we work across our whole football community and other partners to make this happen. Equality, diversity and inclusion is at the heart of what we do and this is underpinned by strong safeguarding.

Football is at the heart of what we do and we use this to help transform communities and lives.



Please [click here](#) to find out more.



The Role

Independent Board Chair

We are seeking to appoint an Independent Board Chair to join our Board of Trustees and play a central role in leading the Board and ensuring governance is at the core of everything we do.

The Role

As Chair, you will contribute to the effective governance and strategic direction of Suffolk FA. You will guide the Board's vision, uphold governance, and ensure effective leadership. You will preside over meetings and empower Trustees to fulfil their roles with integrity and collaboration.

You will:

- Lead the Board in upholding robust governance, ensuring compliance with all statutory and regulatory requirements
- Foster an environment where ethical decision-making and transparency are at the forefront of Board activities
- Guide Suffolk FA in fulfilling its mission and strategic objectives, maintaining alignment with organisational values
- Oversee Board performance, offering constructive feedback and support to Trustees to enable effective collaboration

What we're looking for:

We are seeking someone with;

- A strategic and inclusive leadership approach, fostering collaboration and accountability
- Experience in chairing meetings and guiding Board discussions to drive effective decision-making
- A thorough understanding of governance frameworks, with the ability to uphold robust standards
- Excellent communication, facilitation, and consensus-building skills
- Dedication to promoting equality, diversity, and inclusion throughout Board and organisational culture
- Previous board or committee experience is essential. An understanding of grassroots sport or voluntary organisations would be beneficial.



Our Values

At Suffolk FA, our values guide everything we do. We are **Inclusive, Team-focused, Respectful, Open, Empowering, and Innovative**. We expect all Trustees to model these behaviours and to act with integrity, fairness, and accountability in their role.

Safeguarding Commitment

Suffolk FA is committed to safeguarding children and adults at risk. Due to the nature of this role, the successful candidate will be required to undertake a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check through The FA DBS process. The possession of a criminal record will not necessarily prevent an applicant from obtaining this post, as all cases are judged individually according to the nature of the role and information provided.



Equality & Diversity Statement

Suffolk County FA is committed to promoting equity within the organisation and encourages applicants from all backgrounds, culture, beliefs and experiences to apply for this role, regardless of age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief and marriage and civil partnership.



Disability Confident

Suffolk County FA prides itself on being an employer that is committed to supporting candidates with disabilities throughout its recruitment process and supports any employee with a disability. If you require any reasonable adjustments to support your application, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Role Purpose

Collectively, The Board of Suffolk County Football Association Ltd are required to direct the business affairs of the Association and to determine the vision and strategy, plans, policies, and financial investment required to achieve the Association's aims. As such, individually and collectively, the Trustees are accountable to the Membership.

The Independent Board Chair is responsible for providing leadership to the Board of Trustees and ensuring the effective governance of the Suffolk County Football Association ('the Association'). The Chair holds the Board accountable for the Association's strategic performance, providing inclusive leadership and ensuring compliance with governance best practices. The Chair also serves as an ambassador for the Association, fostering strong relationships with stakeholders, including The FA, local football communities, and external partners. The CEO reports to the Board through the Chair, who is responsible for overseeing the CEO's performance and professional development.

Role Title: Independent Board Chair

Reports to: Suffolk FA Membership

Location: Suffolk FA, Bill Steward House, The Buntings, Stowmarket, Suffolk IP14 5GZ

Estimated time commitment to fulfil the role:

Expected minimum time commitment of 2-3 days per month which will include attendance at Board Meetings (typically 2 hours), Council & Sub Committee Mtgs, FA meetings and attending local football matches. All meetings are generally held both person and virtually.

In addition to attending formal meetings, the Chair is expected to devote time to reviewing papers, liaising with stakeholders, and providing guidance to fellow Trustees between meetings to ensure the smooth running of the Association's affairs.

Remuneration or Expenses:

County FA expenses reimbursed per the current Expense Policy



Key Responsibilities

Governance & Leadership

- Provide strategic leadership to the Board, ensuring clarity of purpose and direction.
- Ensure the Board maintains a clear division between governance responsibilities and operational management.
- Lead the Board in setting, reviewing, and approving the Association's strategic plan, financial plan, and annual budget.
- Monitor and evaluate the Association's performance against strategic objectives.
- Oversee risk management, ensuring effective processes for financial, operational, and reputational risks.
- Uphold high standards of governance, ensuring compliance with The FA's regulatory framework and the Companies Act (2006).
- Foster a culture of accountability, transparency, and inclusivity within the Board.
- Ensure the Association adheres to safeguarding requirements and promotes best practices in safeguarding.

CEO Performance & Support

- Manage the CEO's performance, conducting regular reviews and providing professional support through the Board.
- Act as a mentor and coach to the CEO, facilitating leadership growth and operational excellence.
- Address any concerns raised by the CEO and ensure a healthy working relationship between the Board and executive leadership.

Stakeholder Engagement & Representation

- Act as the primary representative of the Association at FA meetings, local football events, and external engagements.
- Build and maintain effective relationships with The FA, sponsors, grassroots football clubs, and other key stakeholders.
- Champion the Association's role in the local football ecosystem, promoting positive engagement with the community.

Board Management & Development

- Set the agenda for Board meetings in collaboration with the SID and CEO.
- Chair Board meetings effectively, ensuring all Trustees contribute meaningfully to discussions.
- Evaluate the performance of the Board and its individual Trustees, supporting their development.
- Ensure succession planning and Board development to maintain an effective leadership team.
- Promote continuous learning and professional development opportunities for Board members.

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI)

- Lead the Board in setting and maintaining EDI objectives aligned with The FA's governance framework.
- Ensure diverse and inclusive representation within Board decision-making and strategy development.
- Foster a culture where equality, diversity, and inclusion are embedded in the Association's policies and practices.



Person Specification

Key skills and experience required.

Essential Experience

- Leadership experience at Board level as Chair, Vice Chair or Senior Independent preferably within sports governance or non-profit sectors.
- Demonstrated success in strategic planning, risk management, and financial oversight.
- Strong understanding of corporate governance, compliance, and regulatory responsibilities.
- Experience in chairing meetings, ensuring balanced and productive discussions.

Essential Skills & Knowledge

- Strong strategic leadership and decision-making skills.
- Ability to challenge, debate, and guide discussions constructively.
- Excellent interpersonal and relationship-building skills.
- Knowledge of the Charities Act (2011) and Companies Act (2006) and corporate governance best practices.
- Understanding of safeguarding requirements and FA governance frameworks.

Desirable Experience

- Understanding of grassroots football structures and governance.
- Background in business development, stakeholder engagement, or public relations.
- Experience in recruiting, mentoring, and developing Board members.

Desirable Skills & Knowledge

- Familiarity with employment law, GDPR, and risk management in a governance context.
- Knowledge of customer engagement strategies and community outreach.
- Experience in financial planning, fundraising, and investment strategies.



How to Apply

Eastside People is supporting Suffolk FA in the recruitment of this role



Please [click here](#) to apply by submitting your CV and a cover letter both in Word doc. format.

Please use the cover letter (max 2 pages) as an opportunity to add to the information you have shared in your CV and ensure that you cover the following:

- Why are you interested in the Independent Board Chair role at Suffolk FA?
- Having read the information pack, what other relevant experience and skills do you feel you would bring to this role?

Please note that we will focus on your demonstrable experience and potential in the areas listed under the Person Specification and do not expect candidates to have experience in all responsibilities outlined in the Job Description. We would discourage you from deselecting yourself if you are in doubt about meeting all the criteria. Instead, if you have specific questions about the role, please email John Sanger at johns@eastsidepeople.org. Having a call of this kind will not influence the success or otherwise of your application.

The closing date for applications is Tue 7th April – 9am with online shortlisting interviews with Eastside People taking place throughout the recruitment process up to **9th April**. **Face-to-face interviews will take place on April 21st with the Suffolk FA recruitment panel.**

Suffolk FA is an equal opportunities organisation. We actively welcome applications from individuals of all backgrounds, cultures, beliefs, and lived experiences. We strive to reflect the diversity of the communities we serve and are committed to equity and inclusion at every level of our governance.

We are proud to be a Disability Confident organisation. If you have a disability or require reasonable adjustments during the application or interview process, please contact us so we can support you appropriately.





Suffolk FA

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@SuffolkFA #AThrivingLocalGame

suffolkfa.com