



WILLOW TREE
HOUSING PARTNERSHIP

Chair of Board Recruitment pack

February 2026

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Your Application

Thank you very much for your interest in the role of the Chair 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 roles.

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 submit your CV and personal statement to governance@willowtreehousing.org.uk

The role closes at 12 noon, 23 February 2026

Please ensure we receive your application in good time.

Kind regards

Sue Sparks

Head of Corporate Services

Welcome

Chair of the Board – Willow Tree Housing Partnership

Thank you for your interest in the role of Chair of the Board at Willow Tree Housing Partnership. This is an exciting opportunity to lead a committed, values-driven organisation that plays a vital role in providing safe, secure and affordable homes for our communities.

At Willow Tree Housing Partnership, our purpose is clear: to make a positive and lasting difference to people's lives through great homes, trusted services, and strong, sustainable neighbourhoods. We are a forward-looking organisation with a strong social mission and a commitment to good governance, innovation, and continuous improvement.

As Chair, you will lead a capable and dedicated Board at a time when the housing sector continues to evolve, with increasing regulatory expectations, a sharper national focus on building safety, and growing demand for affordable homes. Your leadership will be critical in ensuring that Willow Tree Housing Partnership maintains high standards of governance, delivers excellent services, and remains resilient, accountable, and responsive to the needs of our residents.

We are seeking an inclusive and strategic leader who can bring clarity, confidence and integrity to Board discussions; who can support and challenge our executive team; and who can act as a trusted ambassador for the organisation. Experience in social housing is essential. We are interested in your ability to demonstrate sound judgement, strong governance experience, and a genuine commitment to our social purpose. The organisation has a strong culture of openness and inclusivity; our new Chair will emulate this and will display authenticity in their leadership.

In this pack, you will find more information about the organisation, our strategic priorities, and the key responsibilities of the Chair. We hope it gives you a strong sense of who we are, what we stand for, and the meaningful impact you could have by joining us.

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, 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 role.

If you share our passion for great homes, strong communities and responsible leadership, we would be delighted to hear from you.



About Willow Tree Housing

Willow Tree Housing is a smaller provider, operating with a turnover of c. £10million and a widespread geographic footprint that spreads across the southwest of England. Our organisational operating model is simple, made up of general needs housing and some shared ownership. The Board and the staff team are forward thinking and brave and committed to a singular vision that ultimately seeks to deliver effective and efficient services to those who have limited choice.

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:

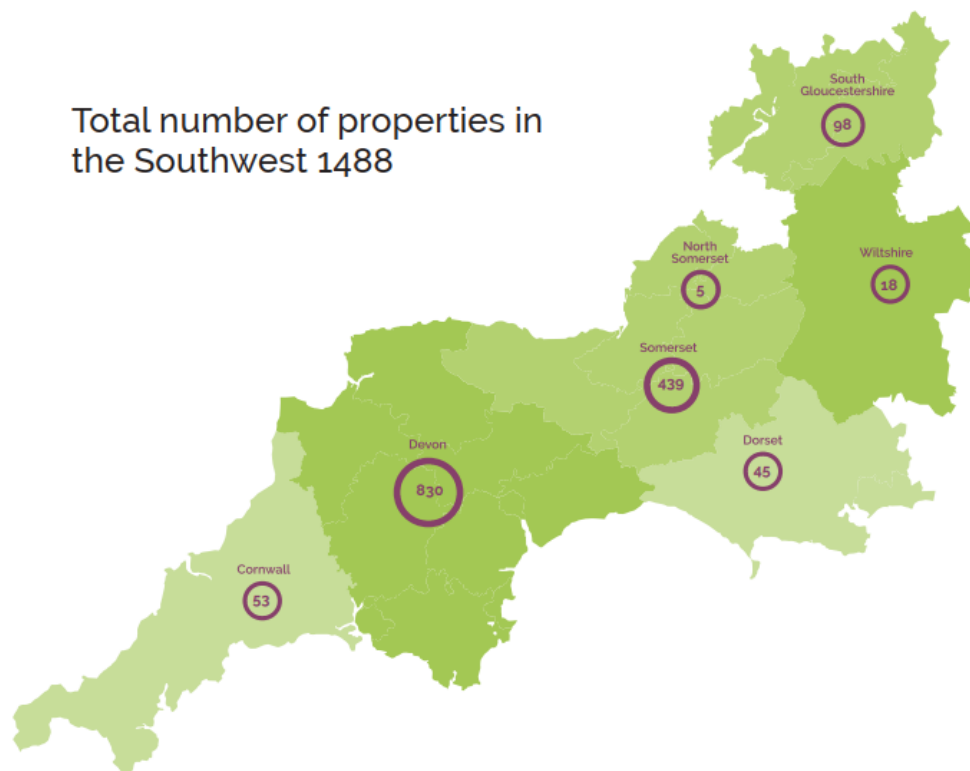
- **S**upporting collaboration, enabling staff and tenants to work together to achieve shared goals;
- **T**rust and honesty, being willing to listen and learn and be open when we need to improve;
- **R**espect and understanding, all colleagues and residents can expect mutual courtesy and empathy when 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.

We are about to embark on a refresh of our corporate strategy that will span the period 2026-30. Our **priorities** for the next four 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. Willow Tree is currently working through an improvement plan with the Regulator for Social Housing (RSH) and we are confident that good progress has been made. The new Chair of the Board will see this through to its conclusion, where we aim to move from a G2 compliant provider to a G1, and a C3 non-complaint provider through to C2 and then C1.

Properties across the Region



Willow Tree is a member of the trade body the National Housing Federation and has adopted its Code of Governance and Conduct, and the Model Rules. It is an exempt Charity as identified by the Cooperative and Community Benefit Society Act 2014. It is regulated by the Regulator for Social Housing (RSH), an independent body sponsored by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government.

Role Profile: Chair of the Board

Role Purpose

The Chair of the Board provides strategic leadership, governance oversight, and facilitation of effective Board operations. The Chair ensures that the Board fulfils its legal and regulatory obligations, operates to high standards of probity, and makes decisions in the best interests of the organisation and its tenants. The Chair works closely with the Chief Executive (CE) and Executive team, acting as an ambassador for the organisation and upholding its vision, mission, values, and commitment to equality, diversity, and inclusion.

Key responsibilities:

Strategic leadership

- Lead the Board in setting the organisation's strategic direction, ensuring clarity of vision, mission, values, and long-term priorities.
- Promote a culture of collective responsibility and high standards of governance across the Board.
- Ensure that equality, diversity, and inclusion principles are embedded in strategic decision-making and reflected across all aspects of the organisation's work.
- Champion purposeful and forward-looking debate that supports strong business planning, sustainability, and organisational impact.

Governance and Compliance

- Ensure the organisation complies with all legal, regulatory, statutory, and constitutional requirements.
- Lead the Board in upholding the organisation's chosen Code of Governance and Code of Conduct.
- Ensure that systems of internal control, assurance, and risk management are effective and regularly reviewed.
- Oversee Board evaluations, member development, succession planning, and ongoing training to ensure an effective and diverse Board.

Leadership of Board Business

- Chair Board meetings effectively, ensuring constructive discussion, informed decision-making, and clear outcomes.
- Ensure Board decisions are made in the best interests of the organisation and its tenants.
- Approve agendas, ensure high-quality papers, and support Board members to prepare effectively.
- Ensure appropriate delegation to committees and that committee reporting provides strong assurance.

- Uphold high standards of behavioural conduct and support all Board members to contribute fully and appropriately.

Risk, Performance and Finance

- Lead Board oversight of organisational performance, risk, and viability.
- Ensure the Board approves a robust business planning, risk and control framework, and reviews its effectiveness annually.
- Oversee the Board's scrutiny and challenge of financial performance, budget setting, and long-term business plan assumptions.
- Ensure decisions that have significant financial or operational implications are properly scrutinised and risk-assessed.

Relationship with the Chief Executive and Executive Team

- Act as the primary point of contact between the Board and the Chief Executive.
- Build a strong, constructive, and transparent working relationship with the CE, providing appropriate support, challenge, and guidance.
- Ensure effective communication between the Board and the Executive, supporting a collaborative and respectful culture.
- Lead the CE's performance appraisal, advise on development, and contribute to Executive succession planning.

Board and Committee Leadership

- Ensure the effective operation of all Board committees and panels, including the Residents' Scrutiny Panel.
- Support the appointment of Board members to committees and committee chair roles, ensuring alignment of skills and organisational needs.
- Ensure committee outputs and feedback are properly considered by the Board.

External Representation and Ambassadorship

- Act as an ambassador for the organisation, alongside the CE, promoting its values, purpose, and achievements.
- Represent the organisation to key stakeholders including residents, regulators, partner organisations, and statutory bodies.
- Build and maintain strong relationships with external stakeholders to enhance reputation, influence, and impact.

Culture and Conduct

- Model the organisation's values and expected behaviours, setting the tone for integrity, openness, accountability, and respect.
- Foster constructive relationships among Board members and between the Board and the Executive.
- Ensure the Board acts in the organisation's and tenants' best interests at all times.

Person Specification: Chair of the Board

PERSON SPECIFICATION: Board Member

Experience and knowledge:

a. Strategic leadership experience

Extensive senior-level leadership experience, ideally within housing, social purpose organisations, or similarly regulated sectors. Strong insight into customer and tenant experience, including the effective use of data, intelligence, and feedback to improve services and engagement.

b. Additional governance-relevant expertise

Expertise in one or more of the following areas is highly advantageous for effective Board leadership:

- Digital, ICT and data
- Communications and stakeholder engagement
- Risk management and assurance
- Financial strategy and business planning
- People, culture, HR/Organisational Development

c. Deep understanding of governance

Strong understanding of Board operations, collective leadership, and the distinct roles of the Board, its committees, and the Executive. Experience of chairing at Board or committee level is highly desirable.

d. Risk and assurance leadership

Experience overseeing risk, assurance, and compliance frameworks, and an understanding of the Board's role in providing effective scrutiny and challenge.

e. Influencing at the highest level

A track record of influencing decision-making in complex organisations and operating effectively at senior levels, including with stakeholders, regulators, or partners.

f. Understanding of the social housing context

An appreciation of the purpose, social impact, and regulatory environment of social housing. Lived experience or professional understanding of tenant priorities and sector challenges is beneficial.

Skills and abilities:

g. Strategic direction-setting

Ability to lead the Board in shaping long-term strategy, ensuring clarity of purpose, ambition, and priorities.

h. Respect for governance boundaries

A clear understanding and respect for the respective roles of the Chair, Board, Committees, and Executive team.

i. Highly skilled facilitator and communicator

Strong interpersonal and chairing skills, able to:

- draw in diverse perspectives
- promote constructive challenge
- facilitate balanced debate

- support consensus decision-making
- ensure all voices are heard

j. Sound judgement

Ability to make well-informed, balanced, and timely decisions, based on evidence, insight, and organisational values.

k. Analytical capability

Ability to absorb, interpret, and interrogate complex written and numerical information, including financial reports, risk analyses, and performance data.

l. Risk leadership

Skilled in assessing and overseeing risk at a strategic level, promoting a balanced approach that supports innovation while protecting organisational viability.

m. Champion of equality, diversity, and inclusion

Committed to embedding EDI throughout governance, organisational culture, and strategic priorities.

n. Ambassadorial presence

Confident and credible in representing the organisation externally, strengthening reputation and stakeholder relationships.

Personal qualities:

o. Alignment with the organisation's vision and values

A strong personal commitment to the purpose, values, and social mission of the organisation.

p. Tenant-focused leadership

Champion of tenants' rights to safe, high-quality homes and excellent services, with an understanding of the lived experiences of residents.

q. Inclusive and inspiring leadership style

Leads by example with openness, integrity, emotional intelligence, and the ability to engage, motivate, and unite others.

r. Credibility and integrity

Respected, trusted, and capable of offering independent judgement with professionalism and authenticity.

s. Collaborative team player

Works effectively with fellow Board members, the CE, and the Executive team; promotes mutual respect and collective leadership.

t. Committed to highest governance standards

Dedicated to accountability, transparency, ethical practice, and equality of opportunity.

u. Time commitment

Able and willing to commit the necessary time and attention to fulfil the responsibilities of the Chair, including meetings, preparation, external engagement, and regulatory obligations.

Leadership Structure



Key Terms and Conditions

Remuneration:

Chair of Board: £7194 pa

Board remuneration will be reviewed in Spring 2028

The appointment:

The term of office for this 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 Board Away Days

2 x Full Day Training

In addition, time will be required for ambassadorial events, stock tours, resident and staff engagement and possible working group participation.

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, 23 February 2026.

Shortlisting: Candidates will be shortlisted by the Interview Panel.

Interviews: Will be held in person at our Head Offices at Eastbridge House, Pill Road, Rooksbridge BS26 2TN on the 9 March 2026

The interview panel will be led by Donna Johnson, CEO of Willow Tree, with Board members: Brian Whittaker and Stephen Burtchaell.

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

Board Appointment: We are looking for the board member to join the Board at the Away Day scheduled for **25 March 2026** to be held at the County Cricket Club in Taunton, Somerset, and to attend the Board meetings scheduled **28 May** and **30 July 2026** prior to being formally appointed at the Board meeting to be held on **10 September 2026**.

If you are unable to participate on any of the identified dates for interviews or other sessions, please contact Sue Sparks governance@willowtreehousing.org.uk before submitting your application.
