

Albyn Housing Society Board Recruitment Process

1. Introduction

This document sets out the process for recruiting Governing Body Members (GBMs) to Albyn Housing Society (AHS). It is based upon guidance provided by the SFHA.

It covers the process to be followed when shareholding members are nominated to the Board, or non-shareholding applicants express an interest in joining.

2. Advertising positions

AHS will also advertise vacancies and anticipated Board vacancies through the use of:

- Information to shareholding members of AHS.
- Adverts in the local press, journals, the AHS website/social media pages and online publications.
- Information to partner organisations and professional/trade bodies.
- Information to tenant organisations and community groups.
- Information to other voluntary organisations and social enterprises.
- Information to recruitment agencies.

Adverts will highlight the recruitment priorities, particular skills and knowledge we seek to strengthen the Board and its Committees.

3. Applications & Nominations

All applicants / candidates should be provided with a Recruitment Pack. This pack consists of:

- GBM job description
- GBM skills and knowledge specification
- Application form
- Board eligibility statement

All should complete an application form and eligibility statement and return these to the registered office (if there is a closing date as part of a recruitment drive or for nominations to the AGM, this must be specified clearly on the form).

If a shareholding member is seeking election at the AGM, a nomination form must also be completed and signed by another shareholding member and be submitted with the application form. Nomination forms are sent out as part of AGM communications with shareholding members.

4. Meetings / Interviews

Shareholding members

Shareholding members who are nominated for election should be invited to attend an informal meeting to discuss the role. This should involve at least one member of the Board (normally the Chair or another office-bearer) and a senior officer who supports the Board. The Board should agree the composition of the group which meets with candidates.

The purpose of the meeting will be to:

- Confirm the candidate's eligibility to act as a member of the Board
- Establish the candidate understands the role of Board members, including the likely time commitment involved.
- Establish the potential contribution likely to be made by the candidate, in the light of the skills, knowledge and experience described in the Board profile
- Answer any questions from the candidate
- Explain the induction process and support available

It is important to be clear that shareholding members of Albyn can be nominated, stand for election and be elected without being 'approved', as long as they meet the eligibility criteria in the rules.

The recruitment process described here recognises this important principle but also seeks to introduce an early opportunity to discuss the role of a GBM with potential candidates. This can help to avoid misunderstandings about what the responsibilities are and to explain the focus of the business discussed at meetings of the Board.

It is also an opportunity to describe the requirements of the Code of Conduct, which must be signed before anyone can become a member of the Board.

It is appropriate to explore why a member is seeking to stand for election at this introductory, informal meeting and, if it seems that their expectations do not reflect the role, to be clear about the discrepancy. For example, if a shareholding member seeks to join the Board because there is a specific issue that they want to resolve (perhaps relating to their tenancy or to a service they receive), it is important that it is made clear that membership of the Board specifically prevents individual, personal matters being pursued other than through the procedures that are available to all tenants and service users.

Non-shareholding applicants

Applicants who respond to an advert or who volunteer should be invited to an interview. This should be conducted in a similar way to the informal meeting described above. It should involve at least one member of the Board (normally the Chair or another office-bearer) and a senior officer who has governance responsibilities. The Board should agree the composition of the interview panel which should have delegated responsibility to make recommendations to the Board about appointments.

The interview should:

- Confirm the applicant's eligibility to become a member of the Board

- Establish the applicant understands the role of Board members, including the likely time commitment involved
- Establish the potential contribution likely to be made by the applicant, in the light of the skills, knowledge and experience described in the Board profile
- Confirm whether the applicant is interested in becoming a shareholding member (and their eligibility)
- Explain the process by which the applicant could join the Board (e.g. co-option; filling a casual vacancy; standing for election at the AGM)
- Answer any questions from the applicant
- Explain the induction process and support arrangements
- Confirm the timescales for appointment

Applicants should be advised of the outcome of an interview within a reasonable timescale. Decisions should be made by the interview panel based on the agreed recruitment priorities, and recommendations to the Board should be linked to the profile.

5. Eligibility

Only shareholding members can stand for election to the Board. It may be that candidates who respond to a recruitment campaign apply to become a shareholding member. All applications for membership must be approved by the Board which must be satisfied that applicants meet the terms of the membership policy.

Applicants seeking to be co-opted to the Board do not need to be shareholding members but do need to support the aims and objectives of AHS.

The recruitment pack for prospective GBMs should include information about the circumstances that could prompt a governing body to refuse an application to join the GB as set out in the rules.

The SFHA's Model Rules (2020) make provision for a GB to refuse a candidate's nomination in very specific circumstances, where concerns have been identified and evidenced about the candidate's suitability. Any such decision has to be approved by at least three quarters of the GB members. This provision should be used in exceptional circumstances only.

Where an individual has responded to a recruitment initiative (that would potentially result in them being co-opted onto the Board), the interview process is a means of gaining assurance that they have relevant skills, knowledge or experience and that their motivation is appropriate. If the panel is not satisfied that the Board will benefit from the contribution that the applicant is offering to make, their application can be politely declined.

Where a candidate for co-option has decided not to go ahead or an applicant withdraws or is refused, steps should be taken to suggest alternative means for them to contribute (e.g. by encouraging a candidate to get involved in scrutiny activities or by suggesting other voluntary organisations that might be a better 'fit').

6. Successful Candidates / Applicants

Successful applicants may be invited to attend a meeting of the Board as observers before their appointment is confirmed /they stand for election.

It is good practice to offer any new GBMs the opportunity to be allocated a mentor or buddy to help them settle in, and the Induction Policy should include details of provision for this where it is being offered.

7. Unsuccessful Candidates / Applicants

Where there is a competitive election for a GBM and a suitable candidate is unsuccessful, it is important to take steps to ensure that they remain interested and engaged e.g. by being co-opted to a sub-committee or working group. This will mean that they are far more likely to stand for election again and become a member of the Board in the future.

8. Review

This process will be reviewed inline with guidance from the SFHA.

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