



**PENTLAND**  
**HOUSING ASSOCIATION**

**Board Members**  
**Candidate Information Pack**



## **Appointment of Board Members**

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Further information to be provided by email from Pentland Housing Association

- Application form
- Annual Report

## **A letter to applicants from the Chair of Pentland Housing Association**

Thank you for expressing interest in the current recruitment of voluntary Board members to Pentland Housing Association.

I am pleased to enclose a recruitment pack which provides some background information about Pentland and which also describes the role and responsibilities of a voluntary Board member. Information about the specific skills and knowledge that Pentland is interested in acquiring through this recruitment exercise is also included. Please remember that no individual member is expected to have the full range of skills, knowledge and experience described and appropriate training will be offered to successful candidates.

The pack also contains an application form which you should complete and return if you wish to be considered. As Pentland is both a Scottish Charity and a Registered Social Landlord, it is important that you complete the declarations about your eligibility to become a Board member.

Please return your completed application form to the address below. I look forward to hearing from you and thank you for your interest in Pentland's work.

Yours sincerely

Jim Hair  
Chair

## **Pentland Housing Association**

### **Background Information**

This pack contains important information to consider before submitting an application to become a Board Member.

Pentland Housing Association (PHA) is a successful and highly valued local housing association operating exclusively within the county of Caithness. PHA was formed in 1993 by a steering group of tenants and other residents of the Pennyland and Mount Vernon estates in Thurso, which were built in the 1950s to provide housing for workers at the Dounreay nuclear power station, located nearby. The estate owners, the UK Atomic Energy Authority, decided to put the estates up for sale on the open market, and the newly formed housing association successfully bid for and took ownership of some 350 homes in 1994.

Since then some 190 homes have been developed for rent (allowing for some sales, rented homes in management now stand at around 500 homes), and 35 for shared equity. Further sites are in PHA's ownership which could produce around 120 new homes. Turnover is currently around £2M p.a.

PHA's housing stock is primarily located in Thurso and Wick. The Caithness economy has depended heavily on the nuclear power station at Dounreay, which is undergoing decommissioning, due to be completed around 2025. Given significant potential job loss there is a strong local emphasis on the need to create, support and sustain industries and new enterprise to retain current population and attract a new working population to the area. PHA sees it as part of its mission to contribute where it can to such regeneration and re-skilling initiatives and programmes, both directly and through its subsidiary, Pentland Community Enterprises (PCE), within prudent financial parameters.

Alongside its housing activities, PHA has developed a range of additional services, in some cases through subsidiary organisations to benefit its tenants and other local communities. It has established a long running Care & Repair service, and a Handyperson service to provide a small repair service to disabled and elderly residents. More recently an equipment store and adaptations service was added, which primarily benefits the NHS, by providing both minor works and equipment on loan to enable hospital patients to be able to return home and free up beds. These services achieve excellent results and enjoy very positive customer feedback.

In 2006 PHA became a registered charity, and set up PCE as its trading subsidiary, initially to manage its portfolio of 450 or so garages. However, it has a wider remit to develop, support and encourage sustainable business ventures that compliment the aims of PHA and contribute to the wider economy of the North Highlands. Today, it provides management services to a range of housing tenures, including mid-market renting; IT training and skills development, in partnership with other agencies.

In 2011 Pentland Energy Advice (PEA), formerly Caithness Energy Advice, became PHA's second subsidiary organisation. It provides essential energy saving information, material and advice to our tenants, other landlords and

homeowners and, is an accredited Green Deal assessor. In 3 years it has successfully transformed itself from a grant-funded organisation to one primarily self-funded from its range of fee earning services.

In 2015, PCE and PEA consolidated and PEA have become part of PCE, with one board supporting all activities.

PHA is highly regarded in the county for the quality of its homes, for the excellence of its customer service – its latest tenant survey confirms that tenants have very high levels of satisfaction with the quality and effectiveness of our services – and for what it has already achieved in terms of investment in local communities. It is valued as the only local housing organisation completely focused on the needs of the county.

Over the past couple of years, PHA has undergone a comprehensive review of its governance and financial management, and is nearing the end of a substantial improvement programme to address identified governance weaknesses. It has also recently completed a review of the staff structure. PHA and its subsidiaries have been through a period of considerable change and successful consolidation, which of necessity has been inwardly focused, and is ready to move forward. There is a strong sense of renewal about the organisation, of having strengthened the foundations, and being much readier for and focused on the future.

We look forward to receiving your application.

## Recruitment Process

Completed application forms, as provided in the information pack, should be sent to Pentland's offices. Please make sure that you give a full response to the questions about why you want to join the board, and how your experience would help us. Please can you also send a completed eligibility declaration form at the same time.

Application forms can either be posted to:

Pentland Housing Association Ltd  
37-39 Traill Street  
THURSO  
Caithness  
KW14 8EG

Or emailed to [rachel@pentlandhousing.co.uk](mailto:rachel@pentlandhousing.co.uk).

On receipt of a completed application, the acting Chief Officer will review it with a view to confirming eligibility in terms of Pentland Housing Association's (PHA's) Rules and the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR) requirements.

Eligible applicants will then be invited to attend a meeting with the Chair of PHA, Jim Hair and the Vice Chair, Colin Macdonald.

The purpose of the meeting, which is a forum of informal interview will be to:

- Establish that you understand the role of board members, and particularly the likely time commitment involved.
- Establish the potential contribution you might make to PHA, in light of the skills, knowledge and experience we are looking for.
- Explain the potential benefits of having an experienced board member provide support and mentioning to any successful applicant.
- Confirm your eligibility to act as a member of the board.
- Answer any questions you may have.

We will let you know the result of this "interview" as quickly as possible, normally within 24 hours.

If you are successful, you will be invited to attend a meeting of the Board as an observer, before your appointment is confirmed at the next board meeting (board meetings are 6 weekly, normally held on a Wednesday evening).

The normal term of office is three years, following formal nomination at the Association's AGM.

# Pentland Housing Association Ltd

## Role Description for Board Members

### 1. Introduction

“The Governing Body leads and directs the RSL to achieve good outcomes for its tenants and other service users” Regulatory Standards of Governance and Financial Management Standard 1

- 1.1 This role description has been prepared to set out the responsibilities that are associated with being a Board member of Pentland Housing Association (PHA). It should be read in conjunction with the PHA’s Rules and Standing Orders.
- 1.2 PHA is a Registered Social Landlord and a Scottish Charity. The role description reflects the principles of good governance and takes account of (and is compliant with) the expectations of the Regulatory Standards of Governance and Financial Management for Scottish RSLs and relevant guidance produced by the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR).
- 1.3 PHA encourages people who are interested in the Association’s work to consider seeking election as a Board member and is committed to ensuring broad representation from the communities that it serves. Board members do not require ‘qualifications’ but, from time to time, we will seek to recruit people with specific skills and experience to add to or expand the range of skills and experience available to ensure that the Board is able to fulfil its purpose. We carry out an annual review of the skills that we have and those that we need to inform our recruitment activities.
- 1.4 This role description applies to all members of the Board, whether elected or co-opted, new or experienced. It is subject to periodic review.

### 2. Primary Responsibilities

- 2.1 The Board Member’s primary responsibilities are, with the other members of the Board, to
  - Lead and direct PHA’s work
  - Promote and uphold PHA’s values
  - Set and monitor standards for service delivery and performance
  - Control PHA’s affairs and ensure compliance
  - Ensure PHA’s financial viability
- 2.2 Responsibility for the operational implementation of PHA’s strategies and policies is delegated to the Chief Executive.

### **3. Key Expectations**

- 3.1 PHA has agreed a Code of Conduct for Board Members which every member is required to sign on an annual basis.
- 3.2 Each member must accept and share collective responsibility for the decisions properly taken by the Board. Each Board member is expected to contribute actively and constructively to the work of PHA. All members are equally responsible in law for the decisions made.
- 3.3 Each member must always act only in the best interests of PHA and its customers, and not on behalf of any interest group, constituency or other organisation. Board members cannot act in a personal capacity to benefit themselves or someone they know.

### **4. Main Tasks**

- To contribute to formulating and regularly reviewing PHA's values, strategic aims and performance standards
- To monitor PHA's performance
- To ensure that PHA operates within and is compliant with the relevant legal and regulatory frameworks
- To ensure that risks are realistically assessed and appropriately monitored and managed
- To ensure that PHA is adequately resourced to achieve its objectives and meet its obligations
- To ensure that PHA is effectively governed

### **5. Duties**

- Act at all times in the best interests of PHA
- Accept collective responsibility for decisions, policies and strategies
- Attend and be well prepared for meetings of the Board and sub-committees
- Contribute effectively to discussions and decision making
- Take part in training and other learning opportunities
- Take part in an annual review of the effectiveness of PHA's governance and of the member's individual contribution to PHA's governance
- Maintain and develop personal knowledge of relevant issues and the wider housing sector
- Represent PHA positively and effectively in local communities and when attending meetings and other events
- Respect and maintain confidentiality of information
- Treat colleagues with respect and foster effective working relationships within the Board and between the Board and staff
- Attend and participate in reviews of the Board's performance, individual and collective
- Be aware of and comply with the restrictions on payments and benefits
- Register any relevant interests as soon as they arise and comply with PHA's policy on managing conflicts of interest



## 6. Commitment

- 6.1 An estimate of the annual time commitment that is expected from Board members is

Activity	Time
Attendance at up to 8 regular meetings of the Board	16 hours plus travel
Reading and preparation for Board meetings	16 hours
Attendance at up to 8 sub-committee meetings	16 hours plus travel
Reading and preparation for subsidiary or sub-committee meetings	16 hours
Attendance at annual planning and review/appraisal events (including individual review meeting)	8 hours, plus travel
Attendance at openings and site visits, AGM, etc	4 hours, plus travel
Attendance at internal briefing and training events	12 hours plus travel
External Training and conference attendance (may include overnight stay or weekend)	14 hour (1-2 days), plus travel
<b>Total</b>	<b>102 hours plus travel</b>

## 7. What Pentland Offers Board Members

- 7.1 All members of the Board are volunteers and receive no payment for their contribution. PHA has policies which prevent Board members or their relatives benefiting personally from their involvement with PHA, although they also seek to ensure that Board members are not unfairly disadvantaged by their involvement with PHA. All out of pocket expenses associated with the role of a Board member are fully met and promptly reimbursed.
- 7.2 In return for the commitment offered by Board members, PHA offers:
- A welcome and introduction when a member first joins the Board;
  - A mentor from the Board for the first six months, with ongoing support
  - Clear guidance, information and advice on Board members' responsibilities and on PHA's work
  - Formal induction training to assist settling in
  - Papers which are clearly written and presented, and circulated in advance of meetings
  - The opportunity to put members' experience, skills and knowledge to constructive use
  - The opportunity to develop members' own knowledge, experience and personal skills
  - The chance to network with others with shared commitment and ideals

## **8. Review**

- 8.1 This role description was approved by the Board on Monday, 28 July 2014. It will form the basis of the annual review of Board performance. It will be reviewed by the Board not later than July 2018.

## Pentland Housing Association - Board Member Profile

Please tick the box that you feel best describes your current level of knowledge. Remember that not all Board members can know about everything – that is why PHA actively tries to recruit Board members from a variety of backgrounds and who have different areas of knowledge, skills and expertise. There is no expectation that you will have or want to gain knowledge in all the areas listed here: PHA would rather have Board members who, as individuals, bring their unique skills and knowledge in specific areas to help the organisation and contribute these skills and knowledge to the Board to ensure that, collectively, all the necessary experience is available. Please remember to add your name before handing the form in.

Name .....

<b>Knowledge and Experience</b>	<b>Professional Knowledge</b>	<b>Work or Life Experience</b>	<b>Some Knowledge</b>	<b>Would like to develop knowledge</b>
Scottish Housing and Housing Associations				
Scottish Charities				
Community Development				
Housing Management				
Scottish Housing Policy and Strategy				
Communities Scotland Policies and Procedures				
Tenant Participation and Related Issues				
Regeneration and/or Wider Role				
Community Planning				
Housing Design and/or Development				
Community Care and Supporting People				
Financial Management				
Relevant Law				
Customer Care				

<b>Knowledge and Experience</b>	<b>Professional Knowledge</b>	<b>Work or Life Experience</b>	<b>Some Knowledge</b>	<b>Would like to develop knowledge</b>
Marketing/Media/Promotions				
Health and Safety				
Care and Repair				
Human Resources				
Equal Opportunities/Human Rights				

## Pentland Housing Association

### Board Member Recruitment: 2018 - Eligibility Declaration

Please confirm your eligibility to be considered as a prospective member of Pentland's Board (please tick the yes box; if you are unable to confirm any of the statements, please provide details):

	Yes	Comments/Details
You are not an undischarged bankrupt		
You have not entered into an arrangement with your creditors		
You have not been convicted of a crime of dishonesty for which the statutory rehabilitation period has not expired		
You have not been convicted of an offence under the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005		
You are not party to any legal proceedings in any Court of Law by or against Pentland Housing Association		
You have not been removed from the governing body of another RSL within the last five years		
You have not been removed or suspended from a position of management or control of a charity under the provisions of the Law Reform (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Scotland) Act 1990 of the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005		
You have not been removed from the office of Charity Trustee or trustee for a charity by the Charity Commissioners in England or Wales or by the High Court of Justice		
You are not the subject of a Disqualification Order or have had a disqualification undertaking made against you		

**Signed:** ..... **Date:** .....