
ENGLISH RURAL

Chair Recruitment Pack

*An invitation to lead the Board of English Rural —
a specialist provider of affordable rural homes.*



Mark Pragnell

Chair, English Rural

Welcome

“ *Thank you for your interest in becoming the next Chair of English Rural.*

After a hugely rewarding period leading this Board, I will complete my term as Chair in April 2027, and we are now seeking an exceptional individual to succeed me. This pack sets out who we are, what the role involves, and how to apply.

You would be joining at an exciting time. We have recently completed a regulatory inspection that reaffirmed our strong governance and financial viability — a real endorsement of the work of our Board and executive team. This inspection also gave us a strong C2 grading, our first consumer grading under the new regulatory approach. The incoming Chair would also be joining as the Board refreshes agreed Business Strategy for the next phase of growth. This will enable the incoming Chair to help shape English Rural’s direction from the outset.

We are a small organisation that punches well above its weight, with high levels of engagement across our staff and Board. If you share our commitment to affordable rural housing, I hope you will feel inspired to lead us into our next chapter. I look forward to receiving your application.

With best wishes,

Mark



We're a small organisation that punches well above its weight — with an expert team and a Board deeply engaged in shaping our future.

— Martin Collett, Chief Executive

Specialist provider of affordable rural homes.

We build and manage homes in village locations, principally across the South of England. Our partnerships with local communities ensure homes are affordable — and stay that way — for local people, forever.

1,600

homes owned
and managed

200

villages across
the South of England

150

new homes in our
current strategy

HRH The Princess Royal is our Patron.

Quality homes, well managed, built with the community.

Three principles guide every scheme we deliver and every home we manage.



Quality & Sustainability

We design and maintain to a high standard. A 'fabric first' approach minimises environmental impact, while renewable technology keeps homes affordable to live in.



Resident Voice

We listen to our residents and act on what they tell us. Their feedback directly shapes the way we work, helping us to continually improve the services we deliver and ensure they truly meet the needs of the people we house.



Trusted Governance

Rated V1 for Viability, G1 for Governance and C2 for Consumer by the Regulator of Social Housing. We work in partnership with Homes England to invest in more affordable homes.

Chair of the Board

A non-executive leadership role, with a full induction and a planned handover from the outgoing Chair.



ACCOUNTABLE TO

The Board and the membership in general meeting



REMUNERATION

£7,000 per annum



TIME COMMITMENT

Around five Board meetings a year, plus committee attendance and regular contact with the Chief Executive — time commitment varies but typically 25 days per annum.



TERM

Up to two terms of three years (maximum six years), subject to annual reappointment.



LOCATION & FORMAT

A mix of in-person and remote video meetings; at least three Board meetings per year held in person, generally in London.



INDUCTION & APPRAISAL

A full induction and planned handover from the outgoing Chair, with coaching and Insights profiling. The Chair leads the annual Board appraisal.

What you'll do.

- 01** **Lead the Board** — ensuring the efficient and effective conduct of its business and of the Association's general meetings.
- 02** **Set the tone** — making sure every Board member can contribute, and upholding high standards of conduct and behaviour under the Board's code of conduct.
- 03** **Partner with the Chief Executive** — building a constructive, supportive relationship and ensuring the Board works in partnership with the executive team.
- 04** **Ensure effective delegation** — to committees, the Chief Executive and others, so business is carried on effectively between meetings.
- 05** **Uphold good governance** — ensuring English Rural follows its adopted Code of Governance and receives professional advice when it is needed.
- 06** **Represent English Rural** — acting as an ambassador for affordable rural housing and taking the decisions delegated to the Chair.
- 07** **Lead Board appraisal and succession** — overseeing appraisal of the Board, its members and the Chair, and implementing a robust succession plan.
- 08** **Oversee leadership continuity** — ensuring any Chief Executive appointment is timely and well-advised, and that Board remuneration follows a fair, conflict-free process.

What you'll bring.

We are looking for an experienced leader with proven experience of chairing a board — supported by the breadth of qualities below.

EXPERIENCE OF

ESSENTIAL

- Chairing a board, committee or organisation — a proven track record of chairing is essential.
- Setting strategy, providing direction and getting the best from a board.
- Building strong relationships with a chief executive and executive team.
- Sound judgement, good decision-making and constructive challenge.
- Communicating with authority and listening to other views.
- Championing good governance, ideally within a regulated sector.
- Strategic thinking.

DESIRABLE

- The not-for-profit or social housing sector — its culture and values.
- Rural housing — understanding the needs of rural communities and the challenges of providing affordable homes in small villages.
- Understanding the importance of customer-focused services.
- Acting as an ambassador and building external partnerships.

CURRENT KNOWLEDGE OR SKILLS

Board Leadership & Chairing

A proven ability to lead a board, shape agendas and build consensus.

Governance & Regulation

A strong grasp of governance and regulatory expectations.

Strategic & Financial Acumen

Confidence overseeing strategy, finances and risk at board level.



Helpful, but not essential.

Any of the following would strengthen an application:

✓ Social housing experience

Experience gained in or with the social housing sector.

✓ Regulated-sector experience

Experience of operating within a regulated sector.

✓ Non-executive & trustee experience

A track record in non-executive or trustee roles alongside chair experience.

✓ Governance & regulation

Familiarity with governance codes and operating in a regulated environment.

✓ Rural community insight

An understanding of the challenges currently facing rural communities.

✓ Smaller-organisation perspective

An understanding of the needs and limitations of a smaller organisation.

Why English Rural exists.

OUR VISION

Putting rural communities front and centre.

“For rural communities to thrive, we believe local people deserve to live in high-quality, well-managed homes that are comfortable, safe and affordable.”

OUR MISSION

Building, managing — and advocating.

“To build and manage affordable housing for local people in rural communities in England, and to be an advocate for affordable rural housing.”

Our culture, behaviours and values.

Our Board, staff and partners share six Core Values. They define the culture and behaviours we expect around our Board table — and the qualities we look for in our Chair.



COLLABORATIVE

We collaborate effectively as a team, recognising individual strengths and contributions. By forming powerful external partnerships, we achieve our purpose and ambitions.



APPROACHABLE

We take pride in our transparent and accountable culture. We are open to new perspectives and respond positively to change.



RESPECTED

We value our trusted position in the sector as experts and leading rural housing specialists. We always act professionally and with the utmost integrity.



RESOURCEFUL

We are innovative and creative, and we persist when problems arise. We run an efficient and effective business, applying our resources to achieve our purpose and ambitions.



DISTINCTIVE

We value the unique perspective that comes from being a leading rural housing specialist. We encourage new ideas and offer unique solutions to achieve our purpose.



INCLUSIVE

We strive to make everyone feel valued, welcomed, respected, included, represented, and heard. We ensure that they fully belong, can be authentic, contribute to the collective, and have a voice.

How we sustain our purpose.

Our purpose is as relevant today as when English Rural was founded, in 1991. Five fundamentals enable our expert team to deliver it.



Good governance

Governance that keeps pace with internal and external requirements.



Sound finances

Strong finances, controls and a clear focus on value for money.



Trusted relationships

The satisfaction of residents and the partners on whom we depend.



Access to capital

Access to capital finance to invest in new and existing homes.



Effective risk management

Robust risk management and stress-testing of the Financial Business Plan.



Key dates.

An indicative timetable for the appointment of English Rural's next Chair, overseen by the Board Effectiveness & Succession Panel.

APPLICATIONS

Closing Date
12-noon - 14th September



*Open process combining internal nominations
with external advertisement.*

INTERVIEWS

1st: w/c - 28th September
2nd: w/c - 5th October



*Screening and interviews led by the current Chair and
Chief Executive.*

CHAIR DESIGNATE

19th November 2026



*Confirmed at the November Board meeting,
with a planned handover ahead of the
outgoing Chair stepping down in April 2027.*

Want an informal chat first?

For a confidential conversation about the role, please contact **Martin Collett, Chief Executive** — [020 7820 7930](tel:02078207930) · martin.collett@englishrural.org.uk.

An informal chat with our **Chair, Mark Pragnell**, can also be arranged — we will be happy to facilitate this.

Process queries: **Karen Eagles, Governance & Executive Support Manager** — [020 7820 7933](tel:02078207933) · karen.eagles@englishrural.org.uk

Building a board that reflects our communities.

English Rural is committed to equality, diversity and inclusion. We welcome applications from candidates of all backgrounds.

OUR COMMITMENT

- We are an equal opportunities employer. All applications are judged solely on merit.
- We value diversity and are committed to creating an inclusive environment where everyone can contribute their best.
- We make reasonable adjustments for disabled candidates throughout our recruitment process and welcome enquiries about access requirements.
- We are committed to fair recruitment and to building a culture in which all Board members can thrive.

WHO WE'D ESPECIALLY WELCOME

We particularly encourage applications from people currently under-represented on our Board, including:

- People from Black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds
- Disabled people
- Women
- Younger people
- People who identify as LGBTQ+

We recognise that diversity of thought, background and experience makes for a stronger Board and better outcomes for the rural communities we serve.

Submitting your application.

Please email the items below to karen.eagles@englishrural.org.uk by **12:00 noon on 14th September 2026**.

01

Detailed CV

Including positions held and relevant dates.

02

Personal statement

Up to two sides of A4 explaining why you would like to chair English Rural, and what you would bring to the role.

03

Two referees

Full contact details (name, role, organisation, phone, email).
References will only be taken with your prior permission.

04

Equality, diversity & inclusion form

Please also complete our online equality & diversity monitoring form (link supplied with acknowledgement).

English Rural recognises the positive value of diversity, promotes equality, and welcomes applications from people of all backgrounds. Your application will be acknowledged and treated in the strictest confidence.



THANK YOU

Build something that lasts.

Chairing our Board is a chance to lead an organisation helping local people live in high-quality, well-managed homes — in the villages they love.

Apply by 12:00 noon, 14th September 2026

karen.eagles@englishrural.org.uk

englishrural.org.uk