

Become our next Chair. Help write the next chapter.

CHAIR OF THE BOARD RECRUITMENT



A message from our Chair

Thank you for your interest in the work of United St Saviour's Charity.

For almost 500 years, United St Saviour's Charity has been committed to supporting the people and communities of Southwark. Over the last decade, we have transformed our organisation and strengthened our impact, making a meaningful difference through our almshouses, charitable programmes, and investment in local communities.

I have had the privilege of serving as a trustee of this charity for almost nine years, the last several as Chair. Being a trustee here means being genuinely close to the difference you're making — you meet the residents whose lives have been changed by a safe, dignified home; you see the community organisations we fund growing in confidence and reach; and you get to shape decisions that will matter to the people of Southwark not just this year, but for generations to come.

I am proud of what we have achieved together during my time on the Board. We have transformed from a traditional grant-maker into a place-based community investor working across the whole of Southwark, and now spend far more than we did a decade ago on grants to local organisations. We have nearly doubled our housing provision and, with the opening of Appleby Blue, delivered a genuinely radical new model of social housing for older people — one that went on to win the RIBA Stirling Prize, the UK's most prestigious architecture award, and is now shaping national policy conversations about housing and ageing. We have doubled our endowment and tripled our income and staff team, while working hard to remain agile enough to respond to crises, from the pandemic to the cost of living crisis. And our voice and influence now reach well beyond Southwark, informing practice and policy across London and the UK.

As my tenure comes to an end, we are now looking for an exceptional new Chair to help us build on these achievements and ensure our charity continues to deliver on its mission for generations to come. We have ambitious plans for the next ten years — more homes for older people, a deeper and more relational approach to community investment, and a bigger voice in shaping how this country houses and supports its ageing population.

Whoever takes on this role will inherit a charity in a position of real strength, with the opportunity to leave as significant a mark on its future as those who came before.

I hope you will consider joining us.

We look forward to receiving your application.



Ben Johnson
Chair of the Board



A message from our Chief Executive

You would be joining at a pivotal moment. We are scaling up our housing development pipeline, working to secure the partnerships and funding that will let us build significantly more almshouses for older people across Southwark. We have just launched a new Community Investment Strategy for 2025–2030, shifting towards longer, more flexible funding and deeper relationships with the organisations we back, and we continue to grow our direct work with young people through One Southwark.

At Appleby Blue, our community centre in Bermondsey has become a real neighbourhood asset in its own right — its Garden Room and Community Kitchen bring residents, families and neighbours together through everything from intergenerational baby groups to cooking classes to art workshops, and we are determined that it stays open, welcoming and genuinely useful to the whole community, not just the people who live there. Following the success of Appleby Blue, we are also being asked more and more often to share what we've learned with other boroughs and housing providers, which means thinking seriously about how a relatively small, place-based charity builds influence at a national level.

Our success so far is down to the innovative trustees and Chairs who have led this Board before. Being a trustee here means acting as custodian of a 500-year-old organisation, while making the innovative, modern decisions that ensure we continue to evolve for the next 500. Delivering on what comes next will take a Board with that same breadth and ambition — people who understand housing and property development, organisational governance at scale, and community investment, working alongside a Chair who can knit those perspectives together into sound strategic decisions. I am looking for a thinking partner as much as a governance lead: someone who will bring their own networks, ask sharp questions of our strategy, and help me and the senior team navigate the choices ahead, particularly as we take on more development risk and grow our staff team to match our ambitions.

This is a role with real weight to it. The decisions the Board takes over the next few years will help shape how older people in Southwark live in their later years, how well our community programmes serve the neighbourhoods around us, and how far this charity's model and influence extend beyond our borough.

I very much look forward to working closely with the chosen candidate.

We look forward to receiving your application.



Martyn Craddock
Chief Executive



About Us

For almost 500 years, United St Saviour's Charity has supported the Southwark community, providing housing, grant-funding and community programmes that build resilience and foster connection. acting swiftly and flexibly to sudden crises in our communities.

The history of United St Saviour's is one of continual change and modernisation to meet the needs of the people of Southwark. We provide exceptional social housing for older people, creating strong, supportive communities in the city. We champion good design, great services and joyful inner-city living for the older population, so that people of all ages are recognised for their value to society and can lead independent lives for as long as possible.

Through our community investment and grant-making programmes, we help communities tackle social inequality — investing in people and organisations with both proven and innovative ways of solving problems, and connecting organisations and initiatives to create a thriving community ecosystem across the borough.

Our governing objects mean we exist to serve people in Southwark, but that doesn't limit our ambition to influence beyond it. Following the impact of our flagship project, Appleby Blue, we are increasingly sharing our knowledge and showcasing our work to influence policy and practice at a much wider level — strengthening our credibility by measuring our impact, gathering evidence and insight, and reaching a broader audience beyond our Southwark focus.



Our Mission

To create a united Southwark with strong, inclusive and equal communities where everyone can thrive.

Our purpose is to work together, and alongside partners, in Southwark — to provide and build brilliant homes with excellent support services, invest in people and communities to enable them to thrive, and find better ways of doing things and share what we learn.



To build more housing for older people in Southwark, and potentially other age groups.



To sustain the value and impact we get from our community investments.



To build our influence and share our knowledge far beyond Southwark so that others can benefit.

You can read our full [Strategic Plan here](#).

Our Governance

Governance powers us to achieve our bold vision for Southwark's people.

We currently have 9 trustees who were recruited for their skills, knowledge, perspectives and backgrounds.

The charity has over £66m in assets, which includes an investment portfolio managed by Rathbones, commercial and residential investment properties in Southwark, and our almshouse properties. Our total income is expected to reach £4m in 2026.

We are staffed by a small team of 23 led by Martyn Craddock, our Chief Executive and we are an incorporated charity limited by guarantee (Charity Reg Number 1103731, Company Reg 5092710).

Our long-term goals

New Developments

Building on the success of Appleby Blue, our RIBA Stirling Prize-winning almshouse, our ambition is to significantly grow the number of homes we provide for older people in Southwark over the next ten years — and to explore extending our model to other age groups — with a number of projects already in the pipeline. Delivering at this scale depends on strong partnerships: with Southwark Council and the Greater London Authority on funding and strategic support for age-friendly, later-living housing, and with private developers, following the three-way public/private/voluntary model that delivered Appleby Blue through a Section 106 agreement.

Housing

United St Saviour's Charity has been providing almshouses for older people in Southwark since the 16th century, and today provides 84 homes across three sites — Appleby Blue, Hopton's Almshouses in Bankside, and Helen Peele Almshouses in Rotherhithe — for residents aged 65+ who have lived in Southwark for at least three years and can demonstrate financial need. Residents are members of the almshouse community rather than tenants, making an affordable weekly contribution towards their home, with emergency telecare and a person-centred, Outcomes Star-based support team helping them navigate health, social care and daily life. We're committed to building the evidence for this approach and sharing its value more widely.



Community Investment

Community organisations are the beating heart of Southwark, and United St Saviour's Charity is one of the largest independent funders of the borough's voluntary and community sector — directly funding up to 50 organisations at any time and supporting a further 50 through devolved grants and partnerships. Rather than one-off transactions, we favour long-term, trust-based relationships and flexible, empowering grants that let organisations take the lead. Our Community Investment Strategy 2025–2030 takes this further: deeper relationships, longer-term funding, and a shared commitment to equity, empowerment and prevention, so community groups across Southwark have the stability, resources and voice to build power and effect change.

Community Programmes

Our community programmes work alongside our grant-making to create connections across Southwark, from directly supporting young people through One Southwark, which builds career pathways, a mental health and wellbeing support model, and a housing support pilot, with plans to grow funding, services and our partner network, to turning Appleby Blue into a real neighbourhood asset. Its Community Centre and Kitchen, often using food grown in the rooftop garden, bring people of all ages together through the weekly Songs & Smiles baby group, Man with a Pan cooking classes, art workshops and digital skills sessions, while affordable venue hire for community initiatives and private events keeps Appleby Blue open to the wider neighbourhood, with residents always at its centre.

Who are we looking for?

Most of our Trustees have some type of connection with Southwark. They might live here, work in the borough, or know it well through their training, education or research. Being able to understand what life is like for people in Southwark, including both the strengths of communities and the inequities they face, is important. As a place-based organisation, it is important that this is at the heart of our decision-making process. Given our growing role in shaping housing and ageing policy beyond our borough, we also welcome trustees who bring national — or international — expertise in our areas of work, and who can help us translate what we learn in Southwark into influence further afield.

The Chair plays a pivotal role in helping United St Saviour's Charity fulfil its mission, live its values and achieve its strategic ambitions. Through effective leadership of the Board of Trustees, the Chair ensures that the charity is well governed, financially sustainable and focused on delivering lasting impact for the people and communities of Southwark.

Whatever your background, we are looking for people with the following attributes:

- The time and commitment to be an active trustee, making your skills, experience and knowledge available, and being involved at and between meetings.
- An understanding of how systems, structures and circumstances shape opportunities and wellbeing in Southwark, and an impulse to see the opportunities that can make a difference.
- A natural understanding of what it means to look after a charity that is independent, transparent, honest and proud of its reputation.
- An ability to think big and think differently. To be strategic, not afraid to question, and work as a team to make the biggest impact.
- The willingness to talk positively about the work of the charity, advocating our vision and values, and act as our ambassadors
- The ability to open doors into communities and other people with influence who support our aims.

Your skills

Specific areas of interest and skill

In order for the charity to achieve its goals, we are looking for a Board that reflects the skill sets outline below. You may have one or more of these skills, however as Chair of the Board your ability to convene a board of trustees with these skills will be most valuable.



Housing, Land and Property Experience

We are looking for people with experience in either housing, property development, planning, property management and property investment.



Organisational Development and Governance

We are looking for people who have overseen organisational development, governance, HR, and strategic oversight, including the structures, capabilities and frameworks required for growth.



Community Development

We are looking for people who have walked alongside communities, with experience in community work and wealth, charitable organisations, social investment or grant-making.



Finance & Accounting

We are looking for people with experience in accounting, financial management or investment portfolios, and a strong understanding of how to manage financial risk and resources responsibly.



Purpose of the role

The Chair plays a pivotal role in helping United St Saviour's Charity fulfil its mission, live its values and achieve its strategic ambitions. Through effective leadership of the Board of Trustees, the Chair ensures that the charity is well governed, financially sustainable and focused on delivering lasting impact for the people and communities of Southwark.

Working in close partnership with the Chief Executive, the Chair provides support, guidance and constructive challenge, helping to create the conditions in which the organisation can thrive and deliver its strategic plan. Through the Chief Executive, the Chair also supports and champions the work of UStSC's staff.

The Chair leads the Board in holding the organisation to account, ensuring that Trustees fulfil their collective responsibility for the overall governance, strategic direction and long-term stewardship of the charity. They model a collaborative and inclusive culture, drawing on the skills, experience and perspectives of fellow Trustees to strengthen decision-making and maximise the Board's contribution to the organisation's success.

As an ambassador for United St Saviour's Charity, the Chair promotes its values, purpose and reputation and, where appropriate, acts on behalf of the Board, including in situations requiring urgent decision-making.



About the role

Time commitment: Trustees, including the Chair, are expected to attend all Board meetings, four per year, held in person, as well as the Strategy and Reflection Day, and to devote sufficient time to reading Board papers in advance. All Trustees are also expected to serve on at least one, and up to two, committees, each typically meeting four times a year. The Chair carries additional responsibilities: attending meetings with the Chief Executive and other Trustees as needed, and undertaking the extra duties associated with leading the Board and representing the charity. Trustees may also be invited to other events and opportunities to get further involved.

While the time commitment will vary from month to month, the Chair role will typically require approximately 2-3 days per month.

Terms of office: Trustees, including the Chair, are appointed for an initial term of four years, with a review after the first year. Trustees may be reappointed for a second four-year term, and by exception a further year, to a maximum of nine years in total. All Trustees are required to sign United St Saviour's Charity's Trustee Agreement/Code of Conduct on appointment, which sets out the standards of conduct expected, including conflicts of interest and confidentiality. Appointment as Chair is also subject to confirmation that the candidate meets the statutory eligibility criteria to act as a charity trustee.

Location: United St Saviour's Charity is located in the Borough of Southwark. Board and committee meetings usually take place at the charity's offices and almshouses.

Main Responsibilities

The main responsibilities of the Chair are to lead and enable Stewardship, Governance, Board Effectiveness, Culture and Relationships.

1. Strategic Leadership and Stewardship

The Chair provides leadership to the Board in shaping the organisation's long-term direction, ensuring its mission, charitable activities, housing provision and endowed assets are stewarded sustainably for maximum social impact.

Responsibilities:

- Guide the Board in setting and reviewing the organisation's strategic direction and priorities.
- Ensure the charity's activities remain aligned to its charitable purpose, values and long-term objectives.
- Ensure appropriate oversight of the organisation's housing, grant-making and community programmes.
- Ensure the Board balances current impact with the long-term interests and sustainability of the organisation.

2. Governance, Accountability and Risk

The Chair ensures that the Board fulfils its collective responsibilities for governance, compliance, financial stewardship and risk management.

Responsibilities:

- Ensure the organisation operates in accordance with charity law, governing documents and relevant regulatory requirements.
- Ensure robust governance arrangements are maintained and periodically reviewed.
- Lead the Board in exercising proper oversight of organisational performance and accountability:
- Oversee the effective management of organisational risk.
- Ensure appropriate scrutiny of financial performance, reserves, investments and major assets.



3. Board Leadership and Effectiveness

The Chair creates the conditions for an engaged, diverse and high-performing Board that makes well-informed decisions and works effectively as a collective body.

Responsibilities:

- Create the conditions for a cohesive and effective Board, enabling high-quality discussion, sound judgement and collective decision-making.
- Foster a culture of openness, constructive challenge, respect and shared responsibility among trustees.
- Ensure the Board benefits from a diverse mix of skills, experience, perspectives and lived experience, supported by effective succession, recruitment and development.
- Encourage trustee engagement, reflection and continuous improvement, making effective use of trustees' expertise, networks and insights to strengthen Board performance.

4. Executive Partnership, Culture and Values

The Chair builds a strong partnership with the Chief Executive, promotes organisational values and helps create a culture that enables people and communities to thrive.

Responsibilities:

- Build a trusted and constructive partnership with the Chief Executive, providing support, guidance, challenge and accountability in service of the organisation's mission.
- Create the conditions for open, effective relationships between the Board and executive leadership, supporting shared understanding and delivery of strategic priorities.
- Champion a culture rooted in the organisation's values, promoting inclusion, safeguarding, wellbeing, respect and the opportunity for people to flourish.
- Encourage listening, learning and reflection across the organisation, seeking assurance that it remains responsive, accountable and connected to the communities it exists to serve.



Person Specification

We are looking for a Chair who brings:

Experience and perspective

- Experience of Board leadership, including previous experience of Chairing a Board or significant committee and contributing effectively in other Board roles.
- Senior leadership experience within a medium-to-large charity or purpose-driven organisation, ideally involving organisational growth, increasing complexity and strategic change.
- A strong lived or learned understanding of Southwark and the communities we serve, with insight into both local strengths and the barriers that can affect opportunity and wellbeing.
- Significant experience in one or more of the following areas:
 - Organisational development and governance
 - Land, housing and property development
 - Community development and place-based leadership
 - Accounting and finance

Leadership and governance capability

The successful candidate will demonstrate the ability to:

- Create the conditions for effective governance, enabling constructive challenge, sound judgement and collective decision-making.
- Build strong, trusting relationships and work effectively with a wide range of stakeholders.
- Lead with influence rather than authority, knowing when to guide, support, challenge and facilitate.
- Think strategically, balancing long-term purpose with appropriate oversight of performance, risk and accountability.
- Foster a culture of learning, reflection and continuous improvement.
- Communicate clearly, listen well and draw out the perspectives and contributions of others.

Personal qualities

We are looking for someone who:

- Supports bringing together housing, community, civic and voluntary sector strengths to create thriving neighbourhoods
- Acts with integrity, declaring and managing conflicts of interest and loyalty appropriately, and is committed to the highest standards of governance and ethical leadership.
- Is curious, open-minded and willing to learn from others and from lived experience.
- Values diversity of thought, background and perspective, and is committed to creating inclusive environments where people can contribute fully.
- Is flexible and adaptable in their approach, bringing out the best in others and enabling collective success.
- Has the credibility, judgement and personal presence to inspire confidence and build trust.

How to apply to become our Chair

If you are interested in becoming our Chair, please send your CV and a covering letter to Alison Benzimra, Director of Strategy and Operations, abenzimra@ustsc.org.uk, before **14 October 2026**, setting out why you are interested and how your skills, experience and background fit with what we are looking for.

Shortlisted candidates will be invited to interview with a panel drawn from the Board during the **third week of November 2026**. We anticipate the new Chair's appointment will be confirmed at the December 2026 Board meeting, which will be their first meeting in the role.

If you would like to speak to Martyn Craddock (CEO) and/or one of the trustees before applying, please let Alison know, and she will be able to put you in touch.

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