

THE
Susanna
INITIATIVE

**Chair of the Board of Trustees
Candidate Information and Role Pack**

QUIET ACTS. LASTING CHANGE.

An invitation

We are seeking an experienced board leader to chair The Susanna Initiative through an important period of transition and growth. This is an opportunity to help shape the next chapter of a charity creating *lasting change* through housing, wellbeing support and grant-making, while combining excellent governance with the agility to respond thoughtfully to rapidly changing needs.

About The Susanna Initiative

The Susanna Initiative, formerly Methodist Ministers' Housing Society, was founded in 1948. Our areas of mission are expanding, but our first mission remains of primary importance to us. We provide good-quality housing on charitable terms for retired Methodist ministers of limited means, and for their spouses or partners, widows and widowers. We also provide wellbeing support. Our work has been inspired by the vision 'there was not a single person in need among them' (Acts 4:34).

Our changing context

This is a time of significant change and opportunity. Changing patterns of need prompted us to innovate. We focused on how we could best fulfil our charitable purpose and use our resources for wider benefit.

How our work is developing

We have created two divisions within The Susanna Initiative; Samuel Living and Kezia Giving. In the fullness of time, further divisions may be created.

SAMUEL LIVING

Through Samuel Living, we continue to provide quality housing and wellbeing support to retired Methodist ministers of limited means, and their spouses or partners, widows and widowers. Providing somewhere to call home is just the beginning. We are focused on enabling better living, helping our beneficiaries live well as they continue to make a difference for good in their communities.



Our developing wellbeing support includes:

- mobility and accessibility improvements to ministerial residents' homes; and
- respite and care-break grants for ministerial residents and those who provide care for them.

KEZIA GIVING

Through Kezia Giving, we provide grants to help organisations achieve better outcomes for themselves and their beneficiaries. Our developing grant-making work currently supports organisations that improve the lives and wellbeing of unpaid carers and those they care for. Carers' contribution often enables other people to continue living independently, yet carers themselves may receive limited support and experience a significant effect on their own wellbeing.



In partnership with the Charities Aid Foundation, we have begun making multi-year grants to organisations supporting unpaid carers. This work remains at an early stage, giving the Chair and Board a meaningful opportunity to help shape its direction and impact.

STEWARDING OUR RESOURCES

Alongside all of this, we are reshaping our investments, initially through the disposal of a market-rented property portfolio. We wish to build our own financial resilience and give ourselves greater capacity to make a sustained difference for generations to come. The Board therefore has an important responsibility to steward substantial property and investment resources well.

OUR NEW IDENTITY

Our new name honours Susanna Wesley, considered by many as the ‘*Mother of Methodism*’, whose remarkable life of faith and influence inspired us in our strategic thinking and planning. Our strapline, ‘Quiet Acts. Lasting Change.’ speaks of consistent, faithful activity that is not self-seeking but is bringing about transformative change; providing security, restoring confidence, ensuring dignity, and giving hope. We are intentional in our interventions. It’s our privilege to help people toward a better place.

The opportunity

Our next Chair will lead the Board through this important period of transition and growth. With our identity still developing and new areas of work in their early stages, there is real scope to help shape our direction and impact. The Board practices modern governance that is purpose-led, proportionate and unbureaucratic. We are clear about accountability, focused on the decisions that matter, and agile in our responses.

Role summary

The Chair provides leadership to the Board of Trustees, drawing out the diverse skills, knowledge and wisdom of trustees and enabling the Board to fulfil its responsibilities. Working in partnership with the CEO, the Chair will help the Board remain faithful to our charitable objects, maintain a clear distinction between governance and executive functions, and focus on the decisions that matter most. The role calls for leadership that is compassionate and principled, clear, grounded and professional.

The Chair will help shape effective Board agendas and discussions, oversee the CEO appraisal process on behalf of the Board, and support the CEO in representing The Susanna Initiative externally. The Chair will also lead short times of prayer and Christian reflection at the beginning of Board meetings.

Principal responsibilities

PURPOSE AND STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP

- Help the Board remain faithful to the charity’s vision, mission and values.
- Lead the Board in agreeing and reviewing strategic direction, ensuring that decisions advance the charity’s aims and intended impact.
- Ensure that the experience of our ministerial residents and those assisted through our grant-making programmes informs Board thinking.

EXCELLENT AND PROPORTIONATE GOVERNANCE

- Chair effective, inclusive and well-focused Board meetings.
- Ensure that the Board understands and fulfils its legal, regulatory and fiduciary responsibilities.
- Keep the Board focused on governance, strategy, risk, stewardship and impact rather than operational detail.
- Support sound, well-evidenced decision-making and ensure that conflicts of interest are handled transparently and appropriately.

A COHESIVE AND EFFECTIVE BOARD

- Draw out the contribution, experience and wisdom of every trustee.
- Foster open, respectful and productive relationships among trustees.
- Support trustee recruitment, induction, development and succession planning.
- Review board effectiveness in line with an established 3-year cycle.

PARTNERSHIP WITH THE CEO

- Develop a good working relationship with the CEO.
- Act as a sounding board while respecting the CEO's role.
- Agree priorities and objectives with the CEO on behalf of the Board and oversee the annual appraisal process.
- Help maintain a healthy relationship between the Board and the Senior Leadership Team.

Person specification

EXPERIENCE

- Significant leadership experience at senior strategic or board level in an organisation of comparable scale or complexity.
- Experience of charity governance and of working with, or serving on, a board of trustees.
- Experience of chairing meetings and enabling constructive collective decision-making.
- Experience relevant to grant-making, technology digital change and information governance, investment management, property, housing, care or organisational change would be advantageous, but is not essential. Training may be required. Concurrent with the search for a Chair, we are also searching for two further trustees with in-depth experience in one or more of the following areas: grant-making, technology digital change and information governance, unpaid care, and investment management.

KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS

- Strong strategic leadership, with the ability to bring people together around a shared purpose.
- Sound judgement and the confidence to support, question and challenge constructively.
- Good financial acumen and an understanding of charity finance, risk and stewardship.
- A sound understanding of charity governance and the non-executive nature of the Chair role.
- Excellent listening, communication and relationship-building skills.
- The ability to lead well through change, uncertainty and opportunity.

PERSONAL QUALITIES

- An active Christian faith*, together with the ability to work generously with people from different Christian traditions and expressions of faith.
- A relational, inclusive and thoughtful leadership style.
- Integrity, humility, wisdom and discretion.
- A willingness and ability to devote the time needed to discharge the responsibilities of Chair and trustee properly.

*As the Chair will share responsibility for preserving the charity's Christian character and have a specific responsibility for prayers and short reflections, the appointee must be a practising Christian who is in sympathy with the values and aims of The Susanna Initiative.

Terms of appointment

- The Chair will be appointed initially for twelve months. Following a review by the Board towards the end of this period, and subject to mutual agreement, the appointment will be confirmed for a three-year term. Thereafter, the Chair (as Chair and as a trustee) may be eligible for reappointment in accordance with the charity's governing arrangements.
- The role is unpaid. Reasonable expenses are reimbursed.
- The anticipated time commitment is approximately 12 days each year, with some flexibility at periods of particular activity.

THE COMMITMENT IS EXPECTED TO INCLUDE:

- four or five in-person Board meetings each year, and one Board away day, together with preparation and review of papers;
- regular contact with the CEO;
- participation online in relevant committee meetings; and
- ad hoc involvement when significant or unforeseen matters arise.

How to apply

The Susanna Initiative is being supported in this appointment by Macaulay Search. Applications should be sent by email to Sam Stephens at sam.stephens@macaulaysearch.com.



The closing date for applications is 9 November.

Your application should include:

- a CV setting out your full employment history, responsibilities, relevant achievements and a mobile telephone number; and
- a covering letter explaining what attracts you to serve as Chair of The Susanna Initiative, how your faith has shaped your leadership, and the professional and personal experience that prepares you for the role.

Selection process

Selected candidates will be invited to a first interview by Microsoft Teams on 25 or 26 November. The appointment panel will comprise two trustees and the CEO. Second-round interviews are scheduled to take place in person at our offices at 109 Baker Street on 7 December. Macaulay Search expects to contact candidates invited to interview by 17 November.

A final word

The Susanna Initiative is changing, but the heart of our work remains constant: we steward our resources to meet need and unlock potential, thereby enabling flourishing. We are looking for a Chair who will help us hold that purpose with confidence and guide the Board through the opportunities ahead with excellent governance, responsible stewardship and thoughtful agility.

If that invitation speaks to your experience, faith and sense of service, we would be pleased to hear from you.