

RURAL URBAN SYNTHESIS SOCIETY

Operations Director Candidate Pack

February 2017



Message from the RUSS Board

Thank you for your interest in joining the Rural Urban Synthesis Society (RUSS). This is a pivotal point in RUSS's history, as we gear up to start on the site of our first community-led housing development at Church Grove, in the London Borough of Lewisham.

Church Grove is an £8.6m pioneering 33-home affordable housing development. One to four bedroom homes will be available on a mixture of tenures including shared ownership, affordable rent and social rent. The development is led by the community, with the design underpinned by sustainability, community and affordability principles. Residents have co-designed the neighbourhood and will help to build the homes. RUSS was selected (via a competitive process) by Lewisham Council to undertake the project and signed a development agreement in 2016. A planning application was submitted in October 2017, with building work due to commence in summer 2018.

We're looking for an Operations Director to join our team of Trustees, 700+ members, consultants and advisors to help steer the Church Grove project to completion; at the same time keeping an eye on the future and day-to-day operations of the wider organisation.

Community-led housing is increasingly being seen as a solution to the housing situation in the UK, and RUSS is at the forefront of this movement. This is therefore an exciting time to join the organisation. Over the past year we have strengthened our board, governance and project management processes as we prepare to embark on the construction of Church Grove. You would join the organisation as it continues to transition, playing a vital role in its future development.

Managing a range of stakeholders and ensuring community ownership of a complex and innovative housing development project will require someone with ambition, strategic thinking skills, flexibility, the right experience, and a good sense of humour! The role will reward and challenge with equal measure – it's therefore key that you have a passion for community-led, sustainable housing solutions, the ability to form strong working relationships, and the drive to find pioneering solutions and enable others to make things happen.

We look forward to hearing from you.

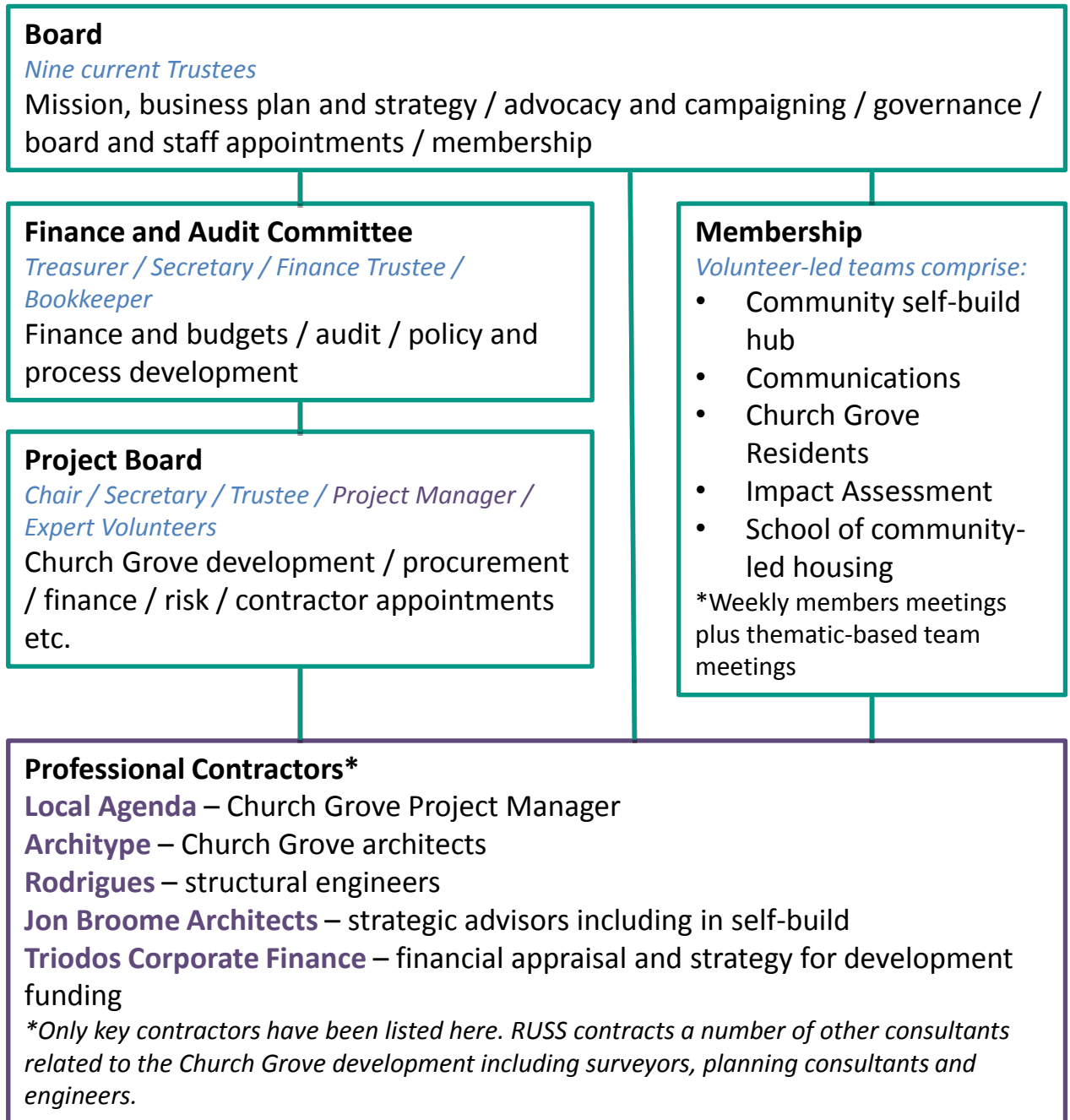
About RUSS

RUSS was set up by the direct descendants of a community-led housing initiative that delivered two highly acclaimed housing projects in London in the 1980s. These projects enabled ordinary people to build their homes using a technique developed by architect Walter Segal. The residents designed the lay-out of their homes, according to the needs of their lifestyle, and undertook most of the construction work themselves.

RUSS is now building on this legacy by replicating and updating the model for the 21st century. Established in 2009, it has grown from a small group of friends meeting around a dinner table to an organisation with over 700 members. It is formally constituted as a Community Land Trust, registered as a Community Benefit Society with charitable status through HMRC. The organisation has a skilled and diverse board of Trustees and retains a team of expert consultants to help it manage its activities. Volunteers are central to the work of the organisation and lead on many aspects of our work.

Over the next few months we will move through the planning determination period, construct a community hub on-site, appoint a main contractor, commence the groundworks and train up residents to be part of the build process. We'll also recruit a new Chair (as our Founding Chair reaches the end of his term), and continue to deliver training and workshops in community-housing.

Organisational Diagram



Colour coding

Volunteers Professional contractors

Operations Director Job Description

Role Credentials

Salary

£45,000 - £50,000 dependent on experience

Hours

37 per week

Contract

Fixed term for two years

Location

Initially home-based, moving to forthcoming community hub at Church Grove from August 2018

Reporting to

RUSS Chair

Pension

Contributory pension scheme

Annual leave

25 days per year

Purpose of the role

The purpose of the role is to work with RUSS's Board, consultants and members to implement the business plan and steer the Church Grove development to completion through efficient financial and operational planning and management.

Key areas of responsibility are:

- Operations and project leadership
- Financial management and reporting
- Appointments and contract management
- Governance, compliance and risk
- Stakeholder engagement and reporting

Please note that key areas of responsibility are likely to evolve as the Church Grove project moves through the development stages.

Key areas of responsibility

Operations and project leadership

- Drive forward the Church Grove development project to successful delivery on time and to budget, ensuring the project objectives are met.
- Work with the Project Manager to maintain and implement the Project Delivery Plan, drawing on internal and external expertise as required.
- Chair the Project Board, leading and enabling its specialist volunteer members and external Project Manager to effectively deliver the Church Grove development.
- Work closely with the Project Manager and investment advisors to implement the investment plan, securing appropriate finance for the scheme.
- Work with the Board to update and implement the Business and Operations Plans.
- Develop, review and update organisational policies and procedures.
- Ensure fit-for-purpose IT and other operational infrastructure.
- Recruit and manage of future employees as required by RUSS.
- Ensure good internal communications.
- Support to deliver the fundraising strategy working with the board's fundraising champion.

Financial management and reporting

- Liaise with the RUSS Board, the Finance and Audit Committee, investment advisors and accountants to provide strategic and operational oversight of RUSS's finances, specifically to:
 - Manage the annual organisational budget and development project budget, forecasting cash-flow across the project stages.
 - Maintain robust financial controls across all activities, including for payments processing and reconciliation.
 - Oversee financial reporting to the RUSS Board and Project Board, providing commentary on variance analysis.
 - Oversee regular VAT returns and recovery submissions.
- Work with the Finance and Audit Committee to continuously improve policies and procedures.
- Oversee the annual audit.
- Manage financial reporting to funders and investors, enabling successful and timely drawdown of loans and grant payments.
- Ensure administration and repayment of investor interest and capital obligations.

Appointments and contract management

- Lead the procurement process and make recommendations about new appointments.
- Undertake contract and compliance management with all external contractors.

Key areas of responsibility (cont).

Governance, compliance and risk

- Ensure the organisation operates within legal and statutory frameworks with responsibility for annual reporting, responding to new legislation and compliance with development agreements, funding and loan agreements.
- Oversee organisational risk management, health and safety (including of external contractors) and ensure adequate insurance is in place.
- Attend and report to RUSS Board and Finance and Audit Committee meetings.

Stakeholder engagement and reporting

- Maintain strong relationships and regular communication with Lewisham Council, the GLA and other key funders and stakeholders.
- Complete impact reporting requirements for funders and investors.
- Direct work of volunteer teams.
- Liaise with future residents of Church Grove alongside the Resident Representatives.

Other duties

- Carry out all such additional duties as are reasonably commensurate with the role.
- This post will require some working during evenings and at weekends (when all board meetings take place), and occasional travel.
- This job description is not necessarily an exhaustive list but is intended to reflect a range of duties the post-holder will perform.

Person specification

Essential experience

- Experience of operational or project management in housing, property development or related fields.
- Management of complex organisational or project budgets.
- Experience of procurement and contract management.
- Working effectively with a diverse team of consultants, partners and volunteers across a wide range of activities.
- Experience working in or with third sector/charitable organisations.
- Building positive relationships with a range of stakeholders including funders, investors, local authorities and community groups.

Skills and attributes

- Excellent communication skills across a range of formats and audiences.
- Strong financial acumen and attention to detail.
- Strategic thinking and pragmatic problem-solving skills.
- Flexibility and approachability.
- Drive and ambition and the ability to work on own initiative.
- Strong project management skills.
- Passion for community-led housing and RUSS's mission.

Knowledge and education

- Knowledge of health and safety practices with specific reference to the building and construction sector.
- Risk management theory and application.
- Knowledge of relevant legislative and governance frameworks.
- Educated to degree level or equivalent experience.

Application process

To apply for the role, please send a copy of your CV and a supporting statement (max 2 sides of A4) to carol@theruss.org by 5pm on Friday 23 March 2018. Please specify in the letter if you would be unable to attend interview on the scheduled day.

Recruitment timeline

Deadline for applications: 5pm on Friday 23 March 2018

Notification of shortlist: on or before Thursday 29 March 2018

Interviews: Thursday 5 April 2018

RURAL URBAN SYNTHESIS SOCIETY



The Rural Urban Synthesis Society Limited is registered with the FCA as an Industrial and Provident Society for the Benefit of the Community (30624R), with charitable status from HMRC (XT18342), VAT Registration Number 263831400. www.theruss.org