

RURAL URBAN SYNTHESIS SOCIETY

Resident sales contact

Job Description & recruitment briefing

May 2023



Overview

The Rural Urban Synthesis Society (RUSS) is seeking to expand and strengthen its team in 2023. Paid/contracted staff support our vision to build sustainable, genuinely affordable neighbourhoods across London, working with our staff, residents and volunteers.

We are seeking a **resident sales contact** person, acting as a point of contact and managing queries, supporting our future residents and the sale/lease of our newly completed homes.

This briefing document provides information about who we are, who we are looking for and how to apply.

You can get in touch with us with any questions or for an informal chat about the roles at info@theruss.org

About RUSS

RUSS is a Community Land Trust that builds sustainable, permanently affordable and community-led housing in London. Established in 2009, it has grown from a small group of friends meeting around a dinner table to an organisation with over 1000 members, widely regarded as a pioneer in the community-led housing sector.

We empower residents to shape all stages of development, from design to construction. By learning and working together, residents form a collaborative community who take on the ongoing stewardship of completed developments.

In October 2021, we started construction of our first development at Church Grove in Lewisham, due to be completed summer 2023. Church Grove is a pioneering scheme of 36 new, all-affordable homes, with an 'affordability in perpetuity' model in place that means they remain genuinely affordable for future generations. The homes will be available on a mixture of tenures, including shared ownership, affordable rent and social rent. The development includes a communal garden, a publicly accessible playground and shared facilities including laundry, office and a guest flat. A group of future residents have co-designed the scheme and are currently fitting out a number of the flats.

Role description: Resident sales contact

The **resident sales contact** will be in regular communication with our future residents and our conveyancing lawyers, to ensure all queries relating to the sale/lease of each home are properly and promptly responded to by our team.

A legal, conveyancing or housing background is not necessary, although may be helpful.

Of the 36 flats under construction at Church Grove, 28 flats are for sale to individual households, either on a shared ownership or fixed equity basis. These 28 flats have already been allocated to their future residents. RUSS has appointed a firm of conveyancing lawyers to manage the sales. We aim to complete the sales as promptly as possible after practical completion in late summer 2023.

The successful candidate will be the point of contact for queries from residents and their solicitors by phone or email (a RUSS email address will be provided). They will respond to any general (non-legal) queries about RUSS 'affordability in perpetuity' policies, with reference to RUSS policy documents, the leases, and an FAQ document.

They will also track progress with our conveyancing lawyers and refer any queries that arise to the relevant member of the RUSS team.

A friendly manner, good communication skills and responsiveness are essential to support the timely conclusion of the sales process.

Specifically, the successful candidate:

- Will be a good administrator and communicator, with close attention to detail.
- Be able to manage, track, communicate and collate queries and responses in a clear, prompt and efficient way, developing a Q&A database based on previous enquiries.
- Be supported by, and engage with, our Client Representative, interim Managing Director, other RUSS volunteers and Trustees,
- Be able to attend our site and administrative base in Ladywell, Lewisham, London SE13 from time to time, in order to familiarise themselves with the future homes and future residents. They will also attend specific meetings including Board Meetings every 4-6 weeks and to be able to discuss progress in person, as well as provide visible presence for this role. Hybrid/online options are available for those that can't make each meeting in person.

Skills and behaviour

In addition to being able to deliver on the above tasks, the ideal candidate will:

- Have strong commitment to equality and diversity.
- Be values-led, with a strong commitment to RUSS's mission and values.
- Act with integrity, openness and accountability.
- Be well-organised and able to manage competing priorities.
- Be able to work collaboratively with a diverse range of people, as well as being able to take the initiative and lead tasks.

Time commitment

- Be available typically 1-2 hours/day, equivalent of 1 day per week.
- Be available to respond to emails and phone calls from June to September 2023, with enquiries likely to increase toward the latter end of that period.
- Be available for a 1-day induction (or equivalent hours) in June.

Remuneration

- Contract duration: June – September 2023
- Rate: £20 per hour/£150 per day (contractor/freelance basis)

How to apply

Diversity

RUSS seeks to reflect the community it operates in, and would welcome applications from people from ethnic minority groups, women, LGBTQ+ people and people with disabilities. You can see our [Equality and Diversity policy](#) on our website.

We particularly welcome applications from people with a connection to Lewisham or South London.

To apply for the role, send the following to info@theruss.org:

- Your CV
- A supporting statement (up to 1 side of A4), setting out why you are applying and the skills and experience that you will bring to the role

Deadline: Friday 16 June, 12 noon.

RUSS encourages early expressions of interest and applications.

We will review applications as they are received and may close the recruitment process early if a suitable candidate is identified.

RUSS is committed to equal opportunities and is an inclusive organization. Please let us know about any adjustments that we can make or support we can give you with making your application by contacting info@theruss.org

Feel free to get in touch with any questions ahead of applying, including to arrange an informal chat about the role – contact Anurag Verma (Chair) on 07779 081172 or anurag@theruss.org

Background information about RUSS

We spread our model and support the community housing sector through the **RUSS School of Community-Led Housing** with a calendar of public events. The School delivers a rotating programme of modules, sharing the lessons from RUSS's many years of experience on how to set up and run a community-led housing project.

Our **Community Hub** in Lewisham, built by over 90 volunteers in 2019, serves as RUSS's administrative base. It is also available for hire to individuals, groups and organisations as an affordable, meeting, event or hot-desking space. The Hub has hosted events for London Open House for a number of years and teaching sessions for the Lewisham School of Muralism. RUSS volunteers have recently secured permanent Planning Consent for the Hub, so our community and future residents can benefit from the space for years to come.

More information on RUSS can be found on our website at <https://www.theruss.org>

In addition to our volunteers, who are the heart of our organisation and deliver on a wide range of projects and tasks, RUSS has recruited an interim Managing Director, Client Representative for our residential scheme, Core Support/Administrator, Volunteer Manager, Bookkeeper and Self-Build Manager.

In the coming year we will:

- Oversee the successful completion of our Church Grove housing development.
- Develop and implement the housing management strategy for the Church Grove homes, partnering with an existing Registered Provider that shares our values.
- Continue to implement the allocations process for the Church Grove homes, including managing waiting lists and completing financial assessments, sales and lettings.
- Seek out future sites for new RUSS community housing developments.
- Expand the education offer at the RUSS School of Community-Led Housing.
- Implement our 2023/4 Business Plan

Governance

RUSS is a registered Community Benefit Society with charitable status. As of 2023, RUSS has over 1,000 members, many of whom live and work in the Lewisham area. As an organisation, RUSS is governed by the RUSS rules, which are based on the model rules for Community Land Trusts.

RUSS is ultimately led by its members. Anyone can become a member by buying a community share for £1. Each member has one vote in key decisions, including the appointment of members of the Board of Trustees.

RUSS's Board of Trustees are collectively responsible for setting the overall strategic direction for the organisation, monitoring performance against its strategic objectives and ensuring that the organisation's resources and finances are being managed effectively. Some elements of

the Board's work are carried out through sub-committees and working groups, which can be made up of trustees, staff and volunteers.

Details of our current Board of Trustees can be found on our [website](#).

The key sub-committees and working groups currently in operation are as follows:

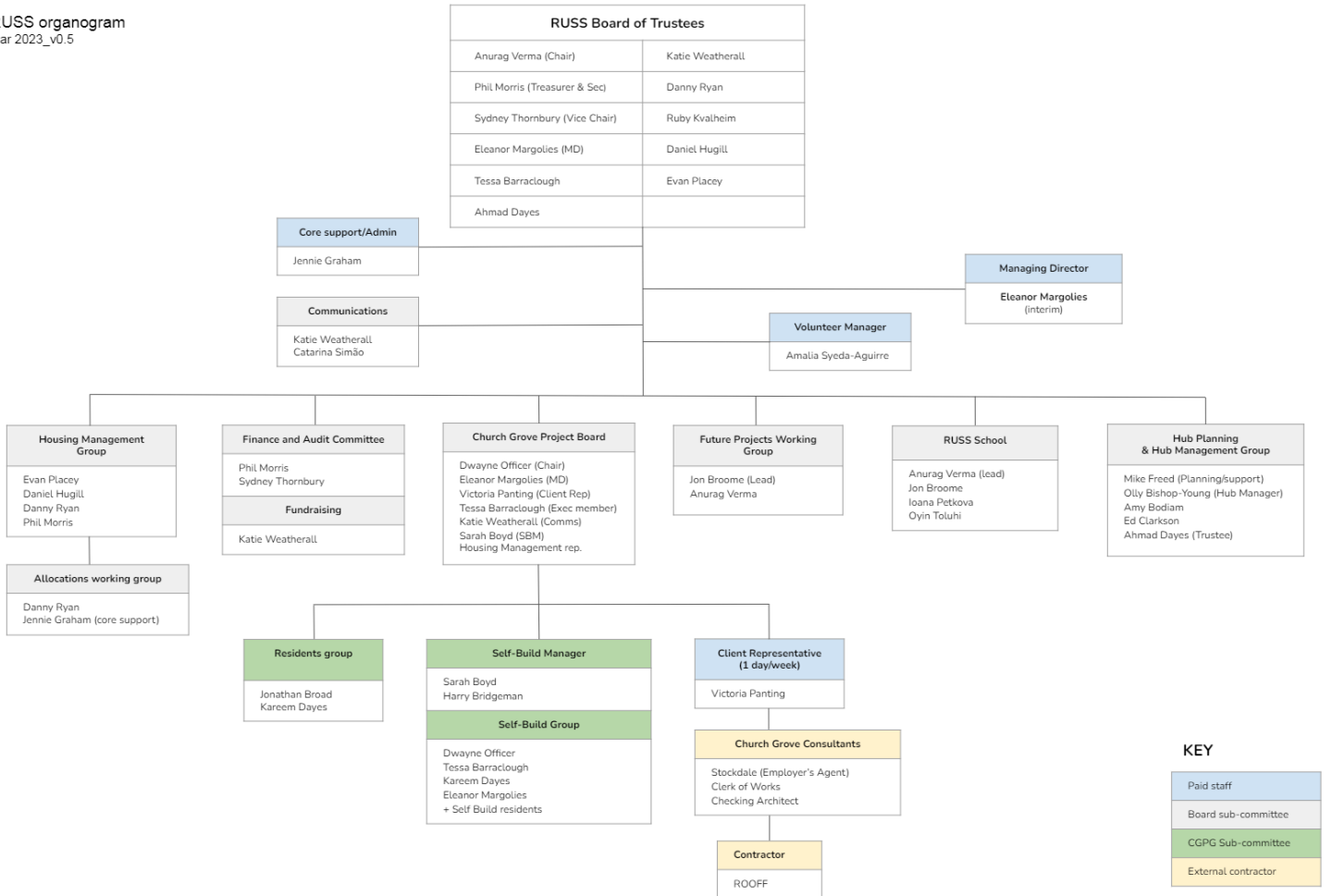
- **Finance and Audit Committee:** Produces financial statements, management accounts and other financial reports; oversees the annual statutory audit and advises the board about the safeguarding of RUSS's assets.
- **Church Grove Project Board:** Manages each stage of the Church Grove project within the budget set by the Board of Trustees; acts on the Board's behalf as the Client for external consultants and contractors working on the project; reviews risks, issues and exceptions and determines appropriate courses of action, based on recommendations from the Employer's Agent and Client Rep.
- **Future Projects Working Group:** Identifies opportunities for future housing projects within London, bringing proposals to the Board of Trustees; liaises with land-holding bodies on behalf of RUSS for the purpose of securing sites when authorised by the Board of Trustees.
- **RUSS School:** Produces and delivers content for educational courses and School events.
- **RUSS Hub:** Operating and maintaining the Hub for the benefit of future residents and the local community.

Our volunteers support, and are supported by, other volunteers, our Trustees, our small team of paid staff and contractors.

Our current and former volunteers are a group of talented, knowledgeable and inspired people who have helped turn RUSS's vision into a reality.

Current organisational structure:

RUSS organogram
Mar 2023_v0.5



KEY

Paid staff
Board sub-committee
CGPG Sub-committee
External contractor

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