



Scottish Rural Action is seeking new Chair

SRA is seeking to recruit a new Chair to replace our out-going Chair. This is a high profile and important position in the rural sector in Scotland.

The new Chair will join the Board of Directors and will be appointed at our AGM on February 27, 2020. If you are interested in standing for Chair of SRA please read the following job description, discuss with us if necessary, and apply by email, with your CV and covering supporting letter, outlining why you are interested in becoming the Chair of SRA and how you would contribute to its work, according to the duties listed below.

Please send your application to: barbara@sra.scot

Your application should be received no later than 5pm on Monday January 27, 2020.

Interviews will be held in Edinburgh on February 17-19 in Edinburgh

Further information about the work of Scottish Rural Action is available on www.sra.scot and www.scottishruralparliament.org.uk

If you wish to discuss this opportunity please phone: 01381 600736

Introduction

SRA is an established Scottish Charity that represents and reflects the voices of Rural Scotland, bringing rural issues into the mainstream of policy making. SRA serves the interests of rural communities while providing a vital reference point for decision makers.

Scottish Rural Action (SRA) was established in 2013 with the dual objectives of establishing the Scottish Rural Parliament and developing a rural community movement. Since 2013, SRA has undertaken significant work to deliver its objectives. The biennial Scottish Rural Parliament is recognised as a strong voice to advocate for rural Scotland; priority issues have been identified and addressed, working in consultation with local and national interests; a strong relationship with the Scottish Government enables advocacy. SRA is also an active partner in the European Rural Parliament, a partnership of similar organisations in 38 countries. We are increasingly seeking to engage with the voice of rural youth and lesser heard voices.

SRA is now focusing its efforts on the further development of the rural movement, in partnership with Scottish Government and other organisations and rural communities across Scotland. This is an exciting challenge, which holds the potential to build an inclusive platform for rural people, interests and places. In this context, SRA itself is also embracing significant changes in the way it is structured and operates.

A Process of Change

As Rural Scotland changes so does SRA and recently a report commissioned from the James Hutton Institute gave us a clear indication of our strengths and areas where, with change, we can be more effective. Where it is acknowledged that SRA has shown strength in advocacy, we are particularly interested in developing the “pipeline” for thought leadership between the grassroots and policy makers and connecting more fully with partner organisations who have similar ambitions. We are seeking to do this by developing our regional network and extending this out to effect a rural movement. It is our intent to embed this change at Board level.

The Board

SRA’s constitution has provision for 15 Board Directors and Trustees. Building upon the excellent Directors currently in service we are developing our Board so that it has 13 Directors drawn from 2 different but overlapping pools of expertise.

- 8 Directors appointed for their strengths within the rural sector, especially with a regional focus, and their experience in organisational governance.
- 5 Directors specifically sought from partner organisations to ensure that we are aligned and can support one another while avoiding duplication of effort.
- 2 posts will be held open for co-option throughout the year.

Directors play an active role in the work of SRA, with both regional and thematic responsibilities. There will be a leadership group made up of Chair, Vice-Chair, Treasurer and Secretary.

SRA is a small organisation, by design rather than accident. This gives opportunity for Board members to take leadership roles that are reflected outside of SRA. They will be supported by staff, but Board members, because they reflect the Rural Community both through membership and employment, are the key voice of authenticity within SRA.

Staffing in the immediate future will comprise a National Co-ordinator and Administrator. Other aspects of the work are contracted out to different contractors.

The Chair

SRA is now seeking to appoint a new Chair. This will be a particularly important appointment, given the period of change we are now entering. The Chair will play a critical role in the development of SRA as an organisation and in shaping and positioning SRA in terms of the wider rural agenda, including the development of the Scottish rural movement, which is a key objective in the Scottish Government Programme for Government. The leadership given by the Chair will be important in enabling a well-functioning board and staff. It will also be critical in securing the internal management and funding for the organization, which is a priority during the coming 2 years.

Duties:

The Chair will be a Director and Trustee of SRA, as such the specific duties of all Directors and Trustees will apply – these are set out in the Appendix. More specifically, the duties of the Chair will be:

1. To provide leadership to the Board, Staff and Volunteers
2. To chair the Board of Directors and Leadership Group and ensure their smooth functioning
3. To ensure that the organisation complies with its memorandum & articles, Company Law, OSCR and any other relevant legislation or regulations.
4. To ensure the Board gives clear strategic direction to the organisation, setting overall policy, defining goals and setting targets, and evaluating performance against agreed targets.
5. To ensure the organisation is managed and funded effectively to enable its stability and sustainability.
6. To provide leadership in relation to existing and potential funders.
7. To provide support and supervision of staff, including line management of the National Co-ordinator.
8. To represent the organisation externally and be an ambassador and enthusiastic spokesperson for SRA and the Scottish Rural Parliament, to give the organisation an influential role in policy at national level.

Time commitment:

The Chair is appointed by the Board on an annual basis, and can be reappointed. It is anticipated that the new Chair will be prepared to serve for at least 2 years.

From experience, this is a demanding, but hugely rewarding role. The Chair is likely to have to offer between 2-4 days per month, depending on staffing.

Expenses are paid but this is not a salaried position. Much of our work is undertaken remotely through Skype, Zoom and other technological means. We usually meet 3-4 times a year plus our AGM, in central locations.

Appendix

Responsibilities of Directors

A Director is a Trustee of the Charity. As such their Duties have standard expectations. In outline, the duties of a Director are:

1. To ensure that the organisation complies with its memorandum & articles, company law and any other relevant legislation or regulations.
2. To ensure that the organisation pursues its objects as defined in its memorandum & articles.
3. To ensure that the organisation applies its resources exclusively in pursuance of its objects.
4. To contribute actively to the Board's role in giving clear strategic direction to the organisation, setting overall policy, defining goals and setting targets, and evaluating performance against agreed targets.
5. To safeguard the good name and values of the organisation.
6. To ensure the effective and efficient administration of the organisation.
7. To ensure the financial stability of the organisation.
8. To ensure effective management of the property of the organisation and to ensure the proper investment of its funds.
9. To appoint senior staff and monitor their performance.
10. To apply a duty of care to paid staff and volunteers.
11. To exercise collective responsibility for democratically taken decisions.
12. To protect the confidentiality of Board transactions, whether written or oral.
13. In addition to the above statutory duties, each director should use any specific skills, knowledge or experience they may have to help the Board reach sound decisions. This may involve scrutinising board papers, leading discussions, focusing on key issues, providing advice and guidance on new initiatives, or other issues in which the director has specific expertise.

Scottish Rural Action is a Private Limited Company with Charitable Status
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