

## Recruitment Pack for Chair and Board Members: Instant Neighbour

### Introduction

**Instant Neighbour** is a well-established charity based in Aberdeen City and Shire, marking its 40th anniversary in 2024. While our core mission focuses on alleviating poverty and improving the quality of life for individuals and families, we are also committed to sustainability. As an active member of Circular Communities Scotland and the Scotland-wide Reuse Consortium, we work to reduce waste by promoting the reuse of household goods and furniture. In the past year alone, we recycled 25 tonnes of textiles, books, and bric-a-brac, and reused 86.5 tonnes of furniture and household items, demonstrating our commitment to environmental sustainability alongside our social impact.

The charity provides a range of critical services, including:

- **Emergency food parcels** for those in immediate need.
- **Employability experiences** through volunteering in our shops, warehouse, in our vans and in our office.
- **Provision of household equipment and furniture** to help individuals establish or maintain their homes.
- **Furniture storage services** for people who have been evicted and are seeking temporary accommodation.
- **Affordable carpets and joinery services.**
- **The Annual Giving Tree**, which provides Christmas gifts for children who may otherwise go without.

As the needs of our community have increased, particularly in response to the ongoing cost-of-living crisis, so too has our scope of services. We are looking for a new **Chair of Trustees** and **Board Members** to help guide us through this critical time of growth and development.

### About Instant Neighbour

Based in Aberdeen City and Shire, we focus on providing practical support to those who need it most. Some key statistics from the past year highlight our impact:

- **7,807 food parcels distributed** to 1,954 different clients.
- Donations exceeded **32 tonnes of food**.
- Provided **skills development and employability opportunities** to beneficiaries, including 57 placements.
- **4500 children received Christmas gifts** through our Giving Tree initiative.
- Recycled **25 tonnes of textiles, books, and bric-a-brac**, and reused **86.5 tonnes of furniture** and household goods.
- Stored belongings for **309 individuals** who lost their homes.

We operate two physical shops and an online store selling nearly new furniture, household items, and clothing at affordable prices. These outlets not only generate vital income for our charity but also provide our clients with training and employment opportunities, helping them to gain confidence and develop new skills.

Our Chief Executive leads a team of around 22 supported by around, annually, 100 volunteers. We support around 10,000 people per year.

Our income is currently around £1.1million per year, however that includes physical donations which value around £240,000. Funding comes from a range of sources including contracts held with both Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Councils, grant funders, chargeable services, and donations.

Our Board is currently made up of 4 Trustees, led by the Chair, and a further 3 people who make up the Board of 7. They all bring different skills and views. The current Chair plans to stand down at the end of this financial year having been in the role since 2015.

## **Our Vision and Challenges**

At the heart of Instant Neighbour is the desire to see individuals empowered and supported to overcome hardship. However, the challenges facing our community are greater than ever. Aberdeen has seen a significant rise in unemployment, particularly in areas of multiple deprivation such as Tillydrone. Our clients face issues such as long-term unemployment, mental health struggles, addiction, and housing insecurity. Despite Aberdeen's reputation as a wealthy city, the gap between rich and poor continues to grow, and we are seeing increased demand for our services from former oil and gas workers impacted by the downturn in the industry.

## **Key Opportunities for the Board**

As a new Chair or Board Member, you will have the opportunity to:

- **Steer the charity's strategic direction**, ensuring we are well-positioned to meet increasing demand for services.
- **Enhance the charity's environmental credentials** by driving forward sustainable practices across our services and operations.
- **Lead our digital transformation** by supporting the expansion of our online presence and growing our e-commerce platform to reach a wider audience.
- **Champion sustainability**, building on our work with the Scotland-wide Reuse Consortium and Circular Communities Scotland.
- **Support the growth of our online shop**, which has created new paid roles and additional income streams.
- **Ensure the financial sustainability** of the charity, exploring new funding opportunities to keep pace with demand.
- **Enhance our engagement with local businesses and stakeholders**, expanding our network of partners and supporters.

## **Role of the Chair and Board Members**

The Chair of the Board will play a leading role in:

- **Providing leadership and direction** to the Board of Trustees, ensuring the organisation fulfils its charitable objectives.
- **Developing and overseeing strategy**, in partnership with the Chief Executive, to ensure that we are effective, financially sustainable, and growing.
- **Ensuring governance**, including compliance with legal requirements, best practices, and risk management.

Board Members will support the Chair in:

- **Shaping the strategic direction** of the charity.
- **Providing oversight and advice** to the charity's management team.
- **Using their expertise** to ensure the charity is responsive to community needs and in good financial health.
- **Acting as ambassadors**, promoting the charity's work and building relationships with funders, partners, and the community.

## **Person Specifications**

### **Chair of Trustees**

- Strong leadership experience, ideally with an understanding of charity or community sector governance.
- Strategic thinker with the ability to develop long-term plans in line with the charity's mission.
- A strong understanding of financial oversight, funding models, and risk management.
- Excellent communication skills and the ability to engage with a wide range of stakeholders.
- A passion for tackling poverty and supporting vulnerable individuals.

### **Board Members**

- A commitment to the mission of Instant Neighbour.
- Ability to work collaboratively with other Board members and the executive team.
- Willingness to contribute time and energy, including attending quarterly Board meetings.
- Knowledge or experience of poverty-related issues, community engagement, or social enterprise is beneficial but not essential.

We are particularly keen to recruit individuals with expertise in digital marketing, who can help us:

- **Enhance our digital presence** to drive increased awareness of our services and environmental initiatives.
- Develop and implement strategies to grow our online shop, helping us reach new audiences and create additional income streams to support our work.

We are seeking a Board Member with expertise in sustainability or environmental management, who can:

- **Elevate our environmental strategy**, ensuring we operate in an eco-conscious and socially responsible manner.
- Develop partnerships and programs that enhance our reuse, recycling, and sustainability efforts.
- Lead initiatives to reduce the charity's carbon footprint, ensuring that we continue to play a key role in the circular economy.

### **Time Commitment**

The Chair is expected to commit approximately 2-3 days per month, including attendance at quarterly Board meetings, strategic planning sessions, and additional meetings as required.

Board Members should expect to commit around 1 day per month, with quarterly Board meetings and ad-hoc participation in sub-committees.

### **What We Offer**

- The chance to make a real difference to those experiencing poverty and hardship in Aberdeen.
- The opportunity to work with a passionate and committed team of staff and volunteers.
- Full support from the existing Board and Chief Executive as you transition into the role.
- Networking opportunities within Aberdeen's charity, business, and public sectors.

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**How to Apply** If you are interested in applying for the role of Chair or Board Member, please submit your CV and a cover letter outlining your relevant experience and why you are passionate about joining Instant Neighbour.

We encourage applications from individuals from all backgrounds and are particularly keen to hear from those with lived experience of the issues we address.

For more information on the charity, please do visit our website, [www.instantneighbour.co.uk](http://www.instantneighbour.co.uk), and for further information on the role or to arrange an informal discussion, please contact Sophy Green at [sophy.green@instantneighbour.co.uk](mailto:sophy.green@instantneighbour.co.uk)

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**Instant Neighbour**

Supporting Local People, Alleviating Poverty, Building Futures  
Established in 1984