

Can you help us build community ownership in Bedminster?

We're looking for Directors for the [Bedminster Property Partnership](#), a new CIC which is being set up to get more local independent businesses, community groups and socially-trading organisations into long-term, secure and affordable premises. We're one of five pilot projects around the UK, supported by [Platform Places](#) and [funded by the National Lottery Communities Fund](#).

We know that magical things happen when organisations and individuals feel ownership of the places they inhabit. We want to give value-led organisations the security they need to plan for the future and invest in the people and places around them.

To do this, we need to bridge the chasm that exists between those who have space and those that need space. The Bedminster Property Partnership has one foot in the world of property and development, and the other in the communities of Bedminster, and we want to encourage and enable more collaboration for the benefit of all.

To do this we need a Board of Directors who have skills in property, facilities management, community development, fundraising and finance, communications and movement building, and social enterprise governance. We need people who love Bedminster, who live and breathe the streets of BS3, who believe in community wealth building and who want to have a go at finding the elusive-but-exciting grey area between no growth and uncontrolled gentrification.

We need folks who are ready to roll their sleeves up and get stuck in, who are ready to recruit and support a small staff team and consultants to deliver 3 buildings in 3 years, whilst also figuring out the broader strategy and roadmap for the organisation.

If we get it right, we'll make Bedminster's thriving network of community organisations, independent businesses, and civic and community spaces more secure in their future in the area. Instead of spending precious resource on worrying about rising rents or precarious leases, they can invest that time and money into the people and places of Bedminster.

We're inspired by projects like Makespace Oxford, Nudge Community Builders, Hastings Commons, The Onion Collective, We Can Make, and Civic Square, examples that prove ideas like this can work. If you'd like to help us figure out how to bring ideas like this to Bedminster then please read on for details on how to apply.

Background

The Bedminster Property Partnership is one of 5 pilot projects supported by Platform Places's 'Local Property Partnerships' workstream, funded by the National Lottery Communities Fund. Windmill Hill City Farm, as the fiscal host of the Bedminster Property Partnership is setting up a new community interest company to take the project forward.

The intention is that the new CIC will become a sustainable organisation that continues to work beyond the life of the initial Lottery-funded 3-year start-up programme.

The initial legal structure of the company will be a CIC so that individual profit cannot be extracted from it. Any profits will be re-invested into the projects it runs. In future it may convert to a CIO to gain benefit from charitable status.

The company will be independent with the following aims

- ◆ Encourage and support community organisations, social enterprises and local independent businesses to make Bedminster their home.
- ◆ Engage property owners and developers to create a good environment for community organisations in the neighbourhood.
- ◆ Develop premises into spaces that community organisations, local independent businesses, and socially trading organisations can use as long-term bases for activity.

It will be tasked with delivering the Local Property Partnership project under contract to Windmill Hill City Farm (the fiscal host of the project in Bedminster) until October 2027. This contract will provide the core funding for its initial operations. As its work develops it will generate its own revenue income and raise capital for new projects it wishes to pursue.

Directors

Independent directors are needed to steer the company. They will employ a manager to whom day-to-day activity will be delegated. The directors need to have, between them, a range of skills, networks and perspectives that enable them to run a company, develop a community-focused project, and reflect a diverse range of interests in shaping the neighbourhood. The company is aiming for between 4 and 8 directors – sufficient to share the load, not so many that agile decisions cannot be made.

Every director should

- ◆ Be interested in the work of the company and committed to its social mission
- ◆ Be willing and able to give their time, experience, skills and enthusiasm to the company (time commitments are outlined below).
- ◆ Have a balanced view of risk and be comfortable taking and managing risks.
- ◆ Contribute to the overall balance of the board, bringing their unique perspectives and experience.
- ◆ Help to steward the company through a period of set-up and development.
- ◆ Demonstrate entrepreneurialism, motivation and eagerness.

Collectively the board should

- ◆ Harness the creativity of its members and wider community.
- ◆ Be locally grounded and invested in Bedminster (eg live or work in the area).
- ◆ Have experience of running and growing an enterprise.
- ◆ Have experience of undertaking business development

- ◆ Have professional experience in real estate and strong property knowledge (management and development).
- ◆ Be well connected to and reflect our local communities with strong networks and partnerships with potential tenants.
- ◆ Have an understanding of grassroots activism in the context of space ownership.
- ◆ Have a knowledge of company and contract law.
- ◆ Have financial expertise.

The founding board members will identify gaps in their collective attributes through an audit of skills, networks and perspectives and will be able to build the board by appointing other directors.

Role and responsibilities

Directors have individual and collective responsibilities as part of the Board and carry the accountability in law associated with being a company director. The board is charged with ensuring good governance of the organisation, overseeing its management, and setting strategic direction.

The Board needs to bring together a range of skills, networks and perspectives to provide the best possible support to the company. Directors are expected to contribute through Board discussion and may also be asked to provide advice or undertake specific tasks, for example looking at a lease, providing HR support or scrutinising accounts.

Directors are specifically responsible for:

- ◆ Participating in board meetings
- ◆ Participating in an annual strategy day
- ◆ Committing to an initial term of one year
- ◆ Reviewing and commenting on financial reports
- ◆ Considering and signing off the annual business plan and accounts
- ◆ Acting as a spokesperson or ambassador for the organisation where needed

Time commitment

It is difficult to define what time will be needed to fulfil the director role in a new organisation. Directors are likely to have individual roles (eg managing the employed staff) as well as their collective one (eg attending board meetings).

In its early stages, success will depend on the time and energy input by the directors. It is anticipated that there will be additional commitments in the first months of the new company as it is established (eg recruiting a manager). As it becomes more settled directors are likely to specialise into particular interests within the project confines.

WHCF as 'fiscal host' will help to support the secretarial function of the company set up. Ongoing the new company needs to stand alone in managing its own compliance, governance and company infrastructure.

Appointment of Directors

This document outlines the role and person specification expected for directors. Windmill Hill City Farm will appoint the initial (three or four) directors from those people already involved in the Bedminster Property Partnership, if necessary, casting wider among the associated networks of the project.

As part of the set-up of the company, a self-assessed audit of the directors' attributes will identify gaps in the overall composition of the board. The initial directors will use this as a guide to recruiting further directors to strengthen the board. This will be through an open recruitment process, which invites applications and undertakes a selection process.

Remuneration

For the board to be strong it needs to draw on a diverse range of people as its directors. To encourage those who may not be able to sacrifice other paid work to take part in it we can offer up to £100 per calendar month in remuneration for the role of Director. Appointed directors are free to waive some or all of this remuneration. Other direct expenses incurred in the duties of the board will also be covered.

Key relationships

The directors of the company need to be involved and connected to the neighbourhood. They also need to steer the company as an independent entity. Inevitably there will be both conflicts and confluences of interest. Robust governance will be required to ensure that directors are comfortable managing their interests to the best advantage of the company (not the other way around).

Windmill Hill City Farm

Windmill Hill City Farm is the 'fiscal host' of the Bedminster Property Partnership. In this role, WHCF have been responsible for receiving the initial funding from the National Lottery Communities Fund, for working to establish a governance structure and for appointing the first set of Directors. This relationship will be defined through a contract for the new company to deliver the Local Property Partnership project. The new company will be independent of the farm (ie no staff of the farm will be directors of the company), however, it may be appropriate for trustees of WHCF to join the new company board.

Platform Places

The accountability pathway for delivering the project is through WHCF. However, the new company may be involved in national meetings and have direct communications with Platform Places and its staff about the project.

Key Stakeholder Group

The relationships with parties interested in the development of the neighbourhood will be many and varied. The project has evolved with a key stakeholder group of those who have been active in developing ideas for community ownership on and around East Street. At the heart of the project is an aim to bring greater community ownership to the neighbourhood, so a high level of engagement with a group that is broadly representative of the area needs to continue. Its form is not prescribed.

Bristol City Council

Among the key stakeholders, Bristol City Council has a particular interest in development in the neighbourhood. This comes through elected members and officers in more than one department (eg Regeneration and Economic Development).

Action Great Bedminster

The remit and membership of Action Greater Bedminster is undergoing change at the time of set-up of the new company. There is a clear will to ensure that AGB remains closely connected to its

community and plays an active role in influencing local developments. The role of the new company must draw on AGBs strengths as a key connector to local people.

How to apply

To apply, please complete [this form](#). We will shortlist directors based on how well you meet the criteria laid out in this Terms of Reference, how your skills and experience fit with that of existing Directors, and the answers you give to the two questions:

- ◆ Why are you interested in being a Director of the Bedminster Property Partnership? (500 words max)
- ◆ What would you bring to the role? (500 words max)

If you have any questions or would like to discuss the role, or require the application information in a different format, please contact Anna Ralph (annastasier@gmail.com) and Lucy Warin (warinlucy@gmail.com).

The deadline for applications is 5pm on Thursday 3rd April.