

RIBA



Royal Institute
of British Architects

Honorary Secretary Candidates Pack

About the RIBA

The Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) is a global professional membership body driving excellence in architecture. We serve our members and society in order to deliver better buildings and places, stronger communities and a sustainable environment. Being inclusive, ethical, environmentally aware and collaborative underpins all that we do.

The RIBA aims to:

- lead and support the highest professional and ethical standards;
- attract and retain the best and most diverse talent;
- provide access to education, knowledge and skills;
- help its members and Chartered Practices engage with the challenges and opportunities of a changing world;
- build a body of knowledge and facilitate collaboration, research and innovation in practice;
- broaden its international reach.

RIBA's Governance

In March 2020, we launched a new governance framework, establishing a Board of up to twelve Trustees responsible for the business's management, delegating day-to-day management to the chief executive.

The Board is appointed by Council, which comprises members elected by RIBA members, including the President who is the Chair of Council. The member holding either the President-Elect or Immediate Past President role, depending on where we are in the cycle of elections, is also a member of Council but not a Trustee.

The role of Council under the new framework focuses on membership representation and the provision of strategic advice and guidance to the Board. It also holds the Board to account through receipt of regular reports and Q&A sessions at quarterly Council meetings.

The Council is supported by a comprehensive regional structure made up of Branches and Chapters through the Nations and Regions Council Committee (N&RCC).

RIBA is currently undertaking a governance review; we expect changes to our governance framework, including our Charter and byelaws, to come into effect during your term of office.

RIBA's Strategic Direction

As an organisation, we are on our own business improvement journey, improving our governance and pursuing far-reaching business change to maximise our relevance and value to current and future members globally. We have an opportunity to become a data-driven professional membership association, and the continued digitalisation of both the organisation and the profession we serve will enable and open up global opportunities, resulting in a more diverse and inclusive profession. We are also keen to play an important advocacy role, lobbying governments and other key stakeholders to champion positive change.

What we are looking for

The Honorary Secretary is expected to work closely with the President and the Chair of the Board of Trustees, as well as with the CEO, the Director of Governance and Legal Affairs, the Board & Council Secretary, members of the Governance & Legal team and occasionally specialist legal

consultants. As the Returning Officer, the Honorary Secretary must also work closely with the Elections team.

The Honorary Secretary is:

- Ex-officio Trustee of RIBA and a member of the Board of Trustees;
- Ex-officio member of the RIBA Council (if not already a member of Council);
- Under Regulation 9.2.1, is responsible for overseeing compliance with the RIBA constitution, the Council Code of Conduct, good governance and any relevant policies and acts as the main point of contact for the Charity Commission and Privy Council;
- The Returning Officer for Presidential and Council elections;
- Responsible for providing guidance to the Board of Trustees, Council, and the President on constitutional and governance issues and procedural issues at meetings.
- May be required to chair meetings on behalf of the President or Chair of Trustees on occasion.

Candidates must be RIBA Chartered Members and fit to act as a charity Trustee at the time of submitting their nomination and continue to be so for their term of office

We are looking now for candidates who will be ready to become our Honorary Secretary, a member of the Board and Council (if they are not already a member) and a Trustee. For this reason, candidates will ideally have experience (or be able to demonstrate a clear understanding of the requirements) in a non-executive role and should be willing to commit to a bespoke training and development programme to develop in the role and as a Trustee.

Through the Nomination Statement, candidates must demonstrate the following, using no more than 1,250 words and no more than two pages of supporting information, such as a CV.

- a genuine interest in the profession of architecture and the built environment
- experience of influencing high-profile stakeholders and decision-makers in support of architects or a cause relating to architecture or the built environment
- experience (or an understanding of the requirements) of a non-executive role
- integrity and resilience in difficult situations and the ability to handle sensitive issues respectfully and confidentially
- a commitment to diversity and inclusion
- respect for the RIBA and what it is trying to achieve
- that their election promises align with the RIBA's charitable objectives.

Candidates must also provide a declaration to confirm:

- that they are a RIBA Chartered Member (quoting their membership number)
- that they understand the requirements of a charity Trustee and are fit to act as one
- all relevant interests, such as other directorships, employment or voluntary positions held
- if applicable, that they have the support of their employer to release them for the time required to carry out the role
- that they will comply with the Election Rules throughout the process
- that they will comply with the Code of Conduct for Council Members and the Code of Conduct for Trustees during the entire term of office
- that all information provided in their Nomination Statement is true to the best of their knowledge and belief and demonstrates mutual respect for others, including other RIBA members, volunteers or employees or those who are otherwise supporting the RIBA or the profession of architecture

Person Specification:

- Has evidenced experience and skills relating to good leadership, including: establishing a positive culture, instilling motivation, providing clarity of communication, effective team building, inclusion and collaboration.
- Has evidence of effectively chairing meetings, setting agendas, and approving minutes.
- Has evidence of meeting goals and progressing business through committees, governance structures and a membership network.
- Evidenced ability to work well within governance frameworks, policies and/or internal regulations.
- Willingness to learn about, and apply, the governance of charities and of membership associations.
- Willingness to work and meet digitally and travel both within the UK and internationally (when possible)

In addition to providing details of their proposer, seconder (both who must be RIBA Chartered Members at the time of the nomination), candidates must be willing to provide personal information necessary for RIBA to undertake background checks relevant to the role.

RIBA encourages all eligible Chartered Members to consider putting themselves up for election, regardless of the type, size or geographical location of their practice, their gender, disability, marital or parental status, racial, ethnic or social origin, colour, religion, belief or sexual orientation, and RIBA will take steps to ensure equal opportunities during the process for candidates with disabilities or special needs where these are notified to the Returning Officer.

Role Commitments:

RIBA is looking for candidates willing to commit to a two-year term of office commencing on 1 October 2025:

The post-holder is expected to be available as necessary to carry out the role effectively. As an indication only, the time commitment for the role of Honorary Secretary is as follows:

- RIBA Council (4 x meetings per year, excluding prep/debrief & liaison)
- RIBA Board meetings (11 x meetings per year, excluding prep/debrief & liaison)
- Attends other meetings e.g. specially formed working groups (typically three hrs per month)
- On-call enquiries from the President, Chair and Members of both Board & Council, staff teams, and election candidates; other advisory work and email correspondence as needed (typically, three/four hours per week over the year).

Some meetings will take place on MS Teams, but the candidate should be prepared for some domestic and international travel.

RIBA will reimburse all expenses incurred directly in relation to the role being performed throughout the term of office, including travel and accommodation, in line with the Members and Volunteers expenses policy in place at the time.

Eligibility

Candidates for Honorary Secretary must be -

- a) current RIBA Chartered Members;
- b) nominated by a proposer and seconder, who must be current RIBA Chartered Members at the time of the nomination.

Codes of Conduct

During the elections process, including the nomination period, you will be expected to conduct yourself as if you were already a council member trustee and to confirm that you will do so via the Candidates Declaration Form.

We require that your communications, including your election statement, campaign website, hustings, and social media, adhere to the Council Member and Trustee Codes of Conduct, including the Communication Guidelines, and to any additional guidelines published by the Returning Officer from time to time to reflect those given to Council Member Trustees.

You must not:

- publish offensive, demeaning or defamatory comments about individuals;
- make unsubstantiated allegations which are damaging to the reputation and integrity of the RIBA;
- disclose confidential information that you are privy to during your communications with the RIBA.

You must:

- act in the best interests of the RIBA and not place your personal interests ahead of those of the organisation;
- be respectful of cultural differences;
- remember that you are legally and personally responsible for anything you publish, which can be quoted or published by the media.

If you need to make a complaint about a candidate or one of their supporters, this must be done in writing to the election team at elections@riba.org, who will then investigate and report back to the Returning Officer in line with the published complaints policy within the Election Rules.

Timetable (including Hustings)

Event	Timeline – week commencing
Notice of Election	7 July 2025
Nominations Open	7 July 2025
Nominations Close	1 August 2025
Election Hustings	18 September 2025 -12.45 to 14.15
Election day	25 September 2025

Ongoing Expectations

Throughout the term of office, the successful candidate will be expected to:

- Act with skill, care and diligence when discharging functions, using personal skills and experience to ensure that the RIBA is well-run and efficient
- Act in accordance with the RIBA's Codes of Conduct and other relevant policies
- Engage effectively and respectfully with RIBA colleagues (volunteers and staff) and key non-RIBA stakeholders in line with RIBA's values and behaviours
- Support and promote good corporate governance
- Maintain confidentiality on sensitive and confidential information
- Effectively identify, record and manage conflicts of interest
- Effectively prepare for meetings
- Analyse information and, where necessary, challenge constructively

- Make collective decisions and stand by them
- Undertake relevant training

Essential Reading (include links)

Annual Report & Accounts (2010-2023) - [RIBA Strategy \(architecture.com\)](#)

Constitutional documents - [RIBA history, Charter and Bylaws \(architecture.com\)](#)

Election Rules - <https://architecture.com/elections>

Code of Conduct for Council Members - <https://www.architecture.com/about/riba-council>

Code of Conduct for Trustees - [RIBA Board and committees \(architecture.com\)](#)

Charity Commission – The Essential Trustee - [The essential trustee: what you need to know, what you need to do \(CC3\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

Board and Council Protocol [RIBA Volunteer Code of Conduct](#)

Council Couriers - [RIBA Council Couriers \(architecture.com\)](#)

Board Couriers - [RIBA Board Courier \(architecture.com\)](#)

Other Governance and Strategic content on architecture.com

Guidance issued from time to time by the Returning Officer