

HERITAGE RAILWAY ASSOCIATION



Chair Recruitment 2025

Hello ...

This document provides the full role profile/job description. It includes an introductory 'welcome' from the Chief Exec, background information and context, person spec, key job requirements, details on how to apply and brief statutory information.



Heritage railways are loved and enjoyed by millions of people ... and they're important.

Iconic locomotives such as 'Flying Scotsman' hold a place in the nation's affections and stand shoulder-to-shoulder alongside famous structures and buildings such as Stonehenge and Big Ben.

Ranging from lengthy railways operating historic steam locomotives, to short electric tramways and even water-powered cliff railways, heritage railways are an important part of the nations' cultural heritage and visitor economy.

Together they attract more than 13 million visitors each year and play a vital role in tourism, regeneration, conservation, training and social wellbeing across the length and breadth of the British Isles.

The Heritage Railway Association is the UK trade association and professional support

body for the heritage rail sector ... and, as we seek to secure charitable status, we're recruiting a new Chair for our Board of Directors.

The role encompasses being an important public face of the Heritage Railway Association while leading the board in its tasks of governance and shaping the organisations' strategy.

This pack sets out a little more about the HRA, the role of Chair of the Board and how to apply.

This is a role that will challenge and stimulate. If this piques your interest, please consider what you might be able to bring to our Board and to the heritage rail sector ... and we'd love to hear from you

**Steve Oates Chief Executive
Heritage Railway Association**

The Context

About the HRA

The Heritage Railway Association is the UK trade association and professional support body for the heritage rail sector.

Ambitious and progressive – for the sector and for each of the heritage railways, tramways, cliff railways, museums and related organisations within our membership - the HRA is here to make sure that an ever-greater number of people properly understand the role that heritage rail plays in the UK's cultural life and economic success.

We are the voice of the sector. We represent our 300 members to the sector's regulators, central and regional government, the media, tourism bodies and others.

The HRA plays a leading role in developing best practice, providing guidance, business support and opportunities to collaborate and learn. We protect and promote the interests of our members, while acting to enhance relationships within the industry and with external stakeholders.

We are committed to supporting our membership to succeed.

Our Emerging Strategy

Development of a new strategy to lead the sector across the next five years is in progress. It is being drafted as 'A plan for stability, resilience and growth' with the vision:

Heritage rail ... World famous heritage - World-class experiences

By 2030, Heritage rail's tourism and cultural offer will be a headline act in the UK's visitor

story, complementing its thriving visitor economy and attracting more higher-spending international and domestic tourists.

The core objectives of the plan are:

- To benefit members
- To show leadership
- To encourage members and their personnel to embrace change

Our Governance Structure

The HRA is a not-for-profit company limited by guarantee.

We are currently working towards securing full charitable status.

The Board set the overall vision and strategic direction for the HRA's work supported by the Chief Executive and the team.

Members of the Board are elected by the HRA membership at general meetings with the positions of Chair and Deputy Chair elected from within and by the Board. The board have the power to co-opt a director (who will then need to stand formally for election at the following AGM) and it is likely that our new chair will be appointed under this process.

We have a small team of dedicated professional staff led by our Chief Executive and the team is enhanced by experts from the sector who serve on a number of advisory committees and working groups, giving up their time on a voluntary basis to benefit members.

Summary profiles of our directors and executive team can be found [here](#).

Who We are Looking For?

We are looking for a strategic leader with passion and vision to chair our Board and to act as a powerful advocate for the HRA and for the heritage rail sector.

Our Chair is an important public face of The Heritage Railway Association, representing our members in a range of forums and to key decision-makers and influencers in Government, regulators, funders, tourism bodies, and a variety of external stakeholders. As HRA's Chair your expertise and knowledge to advocate for the heritage rail sector and help to develop the HRA's networks and influence, will be invaluable.

At the same time, we are looking for someone who will work with and support the Chief Executive (Stephen Oates) to ensure the smooth running of the organisation, prioritising the running of a successful trade association, and supporting the work of the team delivering business support, guidance, fundraising and sector resilience activities.

We are therefore seeking a Chair who will lead and work with us to shape how both our organisation and the heritage rail sector develops in the coming years.

What's in it for You?

Working at the heart of the heritage rail sector, you'll be integral to over-seeing significant changes at a time that they are really needed - a real opportunity to make a difference,

You'll be leading a board and team of enthusiastic professionals with the opportunity to:

- Help shape the future development of the HRA and the whole heritage rail sector

- Play a leading role in representing the sector as it marks 200 years of railways and beyond

- Lead the transition of the HRA to charitable status

- Help steer the delivery of the objectives being set out in the HRA's strategy

- Play a central role in an important and vibrant part of the UK's cultural heritage and visitor economy.



The Role Profile



1. About You

We are seeking a Chair who:

- Possesses strong leadership skills, and can demonstrate passion and commitment to the HRA, its work, vision, and strategic objectives

- Has an excellent understanding of, and commitment to, good governance

- Has personal gravitas to lead a significant national heritage organisation

- Demonstrates tact and diplomacy, and is comfortable in an ambassadorial role with strong networking capabilities that can be utilised for the benefit of the HRA

- Is a confident public speaker with an ability to articulate a compelling vision

- Is collaborative, tactful and able to work closely with – and motivate – fellow directors, the Chief Executive, staff and volunteers of the HRA in a strategic and supportive way

- Has personal integrity, business acumen and the ability to bring people together

- Is well equipped to support fundraising and membership promotion

- Can commit time to conduct the role well,

- including travel and attending events out of office hours

- Is committed to the principles of diversity and inclusion

To be effective in this role the Chair will need:

- Knowledge of the heritage rail and/or wider heritage sector

- Previous experience of being a non-executive Board member or charity Trustee

- Effective chairing skills

- Good understanding of charity governance issues

- Integrity and the respect of decision and policy makers in the public and private sectors, and with the Government

- Existing experience of a leadership role in an organisation of at least comparable scale and profile

- The ability to listen and engage effectively.

2. The Role

The Chair will lead the Board of Directors providing inclusive leadership to the Board, ensuring that each director fulfils their

duties and responsibilities for the effective governance of the Association. The Chair will also support the Chief Executive and ensure that the Board functions as a unit and works closely with the Executive team to achieve agreed objectives. The Chair will act as an ambassador and public face of the charity in partnership with the Chief Executive.

The Chair will have demonstrable and proven ability to deliver the following principal responsibilities:

Strategic leadership

- Provide leadership to the board, helping to maximise the service the Association provides to its members and delivers its overall objectives and purposes

- Ensure that directors fulfil their duties and responsibilities for the effective governance of the organisation, and contribute fully in meetings

- Ensure that the Board is able to regularly review major risks and fulfils its duties to ensure sound financial health and accountability of the organisation

- Work with the Directors, supported by the Chief Executive, to set the strategic direction of the organisation, horizon scanning, assessing risk, and harnessing opportunities for the future

Public Affairs

- Be a visible ambassador for the HRA and for the heritage rail sector

- Maintain good relationships within Government, key political stakeholders, industry regulators and other key influencers and stakeholders, while helping to build other contacts, looking beyond heritage sectors where relevant, for possible new sources of support

- Represent the HRA at external events, where necessary as a speaker and vocal advocate for the Association's priority areas.

- Be a spokesperson for the heritage rail sector and maintain good relations with key media contacts

- Help to promote membership growth and fundraising for the organisation

Effective Governance

- Oversee sound governance arrangements for the Association

- Chair meetings of the Board and, when required, general meetings of the membership, bringing impartiality, objectivity and collective ownership to the decision-making process

- Oversee the recruitment and participation of a diverse and experienced Board, ensuring it incorporates the right balance of skills, knowledge and experience needed to effectively govern and lead both the Association and the heritage rail sector

- Ensure that Directors are fully engaged and that decisions are taken in the best, long-term interests of the Association and that the Board takes collective ownership

- Foster and endeavour to ensure that constructive relationships exist with and between the directors

- Ensure the conduct of the Board is true to the Seven Principles of Public Life

Relationship with the Chief Executive

- Have a close, strong and effective working relationship with the Chief Executive (Steve Oates) ensuring he is supported and held to account for achieving agreed strategic objectives

- Ensure regular contact with the Chief Executive and develop and maintain an open and supportive relationship within which each can speak openly about concerns, worries and challenges

- Conduct an annual performance review of the Chief Executive in consultation with other Directors

- Ensure that the Chief Executive has the opportunity for professional development and has appropriate external professional support

- As well as the above, the Chair will be expected to perform all such additional duties as are reasonably commensurate with the role. The Deputy Chair (Paul Lewin) supports and acts for the Chair when they are not available.



3. Additional Information

Term:

The Chair (and board members) will serve a three-year term and then be eligible for re-appointment for additional three-yearly terms.

Remuneration:

The role of Chair is not remunerated. Reasonable expenses will be paid to enable you to attend any in-person meetings and events.

Location:

You can be based in any UK Mainland location. However, good transport links for cost effective travel from your home base are important for meetings with government, members and other stakeholders and to support the HRA's three major member events each year.

Time commitment:

Normally four board meetings per year. Additionally, the Chair is expected to have regular meetings with the Chief Executive and also to represent the HRA at various events and meetings with key stakeholders. The Chair also has the right to attend any of the HRA's advisory committees, which all meet between two to six times per year.

Reporting to:

Board of Directors

Induction:

The new Chair will receive a thorough introduction to the work of the Association and the role of the Board, and will be fully briefed on the prevailing challenges, issues and opportunities facing the heritage rail Sector.

Executive support:

The Personal Assistant to the Chief Executive provides some administrative support for the Association's Chair.

The Policy and Communications Manager provides some policy and PR support to the Chair.

As a sector support body committed to positive change and supporting our members to be fit for the future, we want our Board to be truly representative of the people it serves. We therefore welcome applications from a variety of backgrounds, especially those who are under-represented on our own board and across the heritage rail sector.

We recognise that each member of the Board brings their own expertise, experience and skill set to the work of the Association, so while an interest in, or commitment to the heritage rail sector is important, we are keen to consider a wider range of varied professional and lived experience, new perspectives and sound judgement.

How to Apply

To find out more ...

If you are interested in the role and would like to know more about the Heritage Railway Association, our Board and the wider heritage rail sector, we will be pleased to arrange an informal conversation with either our Deputy Chair Paul Lewin or our Chief Executive Steve Oates, by contacting Jasmine Wayland, PA to the Chief Exec at jasmine.wayland@hra.uk.com

To Apply ...

Please send applications via email to our Chief Executive at steve.oates@hra.uk.com. Please provide an up-to-date CV together with a covering letter outlining briefly:

- Why you want to join the Heritage Railway Association
- What you personally would bring to the HRA and the heritage rail sector
- Your relevant skills and experience
- How you would support the work of the Heritage Railway Association
- If you require any reasonable adjustments during the candidate process

Please confirm you have unrestricted rights to work in the UK. (In order to comply with relevant legislation, employers are required to see proof of a person's right to work in the UK. This will be requested if an offer of employment is made.)

Successful candidates will be asked to interview in person in late March/early April. For advice or support with your application, or to ask any prior questions, please email steve.oates@hra.uk.com

Statutory Information

In order to comply with the Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act 2006 it may be necessary to see proof of your right to live and work in the United Kingdom. If proof is required, we will request it once an offer of employment has been made but before you take up employment.

For ease, you may wish to confirm in your application that you have unrestricted rights to work in the UK.

The HRA is seeking to transition to full charitable status. The law places certain restrictions on becoming a charity trustee. For example, you cannot be under the age of 18; have previously been removed from trusteeship by a charity, by a Court or the Charity Commission; been disqualified under the Company Director's Disqualification Act 1986; or been convicted of an offence involving deception or dishonesty (unless the conviction is spent).

If you are in any doubt about your eligibility, visit the Charity Commission website at www.gov.uk/government/organisations/charity-commission.



