

eoa

Recruitment Pack

Chair of the eoa

May 2026



Welcome from the CEO, James de le Vingne



Thank you for your interest in becoming Chair of the eoa.

Employee ownership in the UK is at a critical moment. The sector has more than doubled since 2020. Awareness is rising. Evidence is compelling. Businesses, communities, and policymakers are increasingly recognising that a people-powered approach can unlock fairness, resilience, and productivity.

We believe the UK can reach 10,000 employee owned businesses within the decade, transforming succession, broadening ownership, and reshaping the economic landscape. But achieving this relies on bold, strategic, values-led leadership across our community.

The eoa exists to build and connect that community: a network of more than 850 member businesses, thousands of employee owners, specialist advisors, policymakers, and partners committed to powering fairer livelihoods and stronger businesses through employee ownership.

As Chair, you will play a defining role in this next stage of the UK's EO journey. You will guide the Board, support and challenge the CEO, and help steer the sector toward a UK EO Growth Strategy with national significance. You will bring clarity, connection, and conviction, leading through influence, partnership, and insight.

This role calls for an established leader: someone with strategic depth, strong governance capability, and the ability to convene and inspire. Someone who believes in the potential of people-powered business and understands the importance of community, collaboration, and shared purpose.

If you are energised by the opportunity to help shape a fairer, more resilient UK economy - and to support a community capable of real impact - we would be delighted to hear from you.

A handwritten signature in white ink, appearing to read 'James de le Vingne'. The signature is stylized and fluid.

James de le Vingne
Chief Executive, eoa

Employee Ownership

A Growing Opportunity

Employee ownership gives employees meaningful stake and meaningful voice, unlocking higher commitment, stronger performance, and a clear sense of shared purpose.

The evidence is consistently strong:

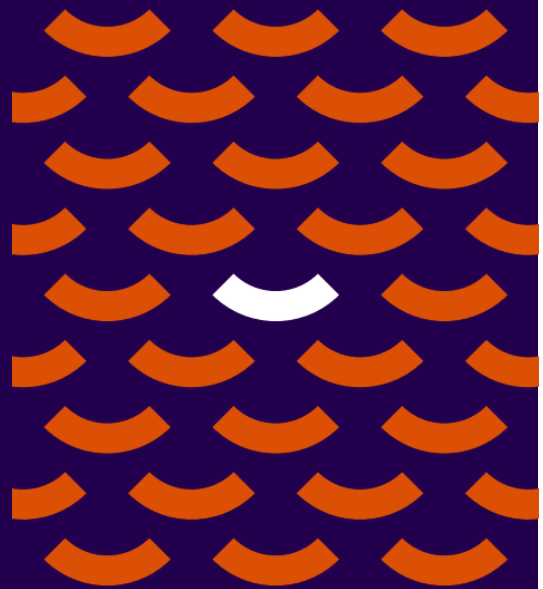
- 8–12% higher productivity
- Stronger resilience and long-term investment
- Improved innovation, retention, and culture
- Successful succession for founders and families
- Significant contributions to local, regional, and national economies

The UK now has over 2,800 employee-owned businesses, contributing more than £30bn to GDP and spanning every sector - from manufacturing and engineering to care, digital, retail, architecture, and professional services.

Looking ahead, research shows enormous potential. More than 120,000 UK SMEs will need succession plans over the next decade. With the right conditions, employee ownership can become a mainstream choice, expanding to 10,000 EO businesses and creating a more inclusive, long-term-focused UK economy.

Your leadership as Chair will be instrumental in shaping these conditions.

Read more: [UK EO Growth Strategy](#)





The eoa Who We Are

The eoa is the national voice for employee ownership. We are a not-for-profit, politically independent membership organisation established in 1979.

We work to:



Expand the EO sector: Grow awareness, accessibility, and advocacy to make EO a mainstream business model choice, anchored in the **UK Employee Ownership Growth Strategy** as the core framework underpinning and aligning this work.



Set the standard for Great EO: Provide tools, learning, evidence, peer support, and practical insight that help employee-owned businesses thrive.



Strengthen and connect the EO community: Bring together businesses, employee owners, advisors, policymakers, and partners through events, networks, research, and collaboration.



Invest in our organisational strength: Build robust governance, a high-performing team, digital capability, and a sustainable operating model.



The eoa

Our People & Culture

We are a modest-sized association with significant reach and influence. Our cultural framework guides how we work with each other and our community.

We are:

- **Bold:** Growth-minded, curious, confident, and unafraid to challenge conventional thinking.
- **Collaborative:** We nurture relationships, build networks, and work in partnership to achieve mutual goals.
- **Inspiring:** We evoke passion for Great EO and shine a light on the stories that show its power.
- **Caring:** We make business personal, support each other, and empower others to succeed.

As Chair, you will model these values consistently, helping create the conditions for our team, Board, and community to thrive.



Board Structure and Governance

Our Board has recently undertaken a full governance review to ensure that our structures, accountabilities and member voice remain fit for the future. Following the 2026 AGM, our Articles of Association were updated to strengthen transparency, modernise our governance, and reinforce the central role that our members play in stewarding the association. This means our new Chair will join the Board at an important moment, helping to embed these changes, support the ongoing evolution of our governance model, and ensure that our Board remains strategic, effective and aligned to our long-term ambition for the EO community.

A distinctive and defining feature of our governance is the Employee Membership Committee (EMC). The EMC is made up of representatives from across our member businesses and acts as the guardian of our member voice. Under our updated Articles, the EMC holds the final decision-making authority for the appointment of all Board members, including the Chair and the CEO, to ensure that leadership reflects the priorities, values and expectations of our community. Starting this year, the eoa Board will start to report formally to the EMC each year, strengthening accountability, transparency and alignment with member interests. As Chair, you will play a central role in cultivating this relationship, ensuring the EMC remains a powerful and constructive part of our governance and that our members continue to shape the future of the eoa.

Read more: [Articles of Association](#)

eoa

The Role of Chair

Purpose of the Role

The Chair provides strategic, values-led leadership to the eoA Board, ensuring effective governance, clarity of purpose, and alignment with our long-term ambition to scale the EO sector.

The Chair supports and challenges the CEO, represents the eoa publicly, strengthens key relationships, and ensures that the Board contributes insight, accountability and strategic depth.

This is a role for a leader who can see both the association and the wider system it serves, helping to create the conditions for the UK's EO community to flourish and expand.

What Success Looks Like

- A high-performing, values-aligned, future-focused Board
- A strengthened and influential EO community with national reach
- Clear progress in the UK EO Growth Strategy
- Growth in sector profile, visibility, and political relevance
- A trusting, effective partnership between Chair, CEO and SLT
- A diverse, skilled Board with strong succession planning
- A measurable contribution toward a UK with 10,000 employee-owned businesses



The Role of Chair

Key Responsibilities

Strategic leadership

- Provide strategic leadership to the Board, ensuring a clear focus on long-term sector growth and policy influence
- Bring strong insight, foresight, and judgement to sector opportunities and risks
- Champion employee ownership externally, positioning it as a mainstream and scalable model

Community, ecosystem and stakeholder leadership

- Champion employee ownership externally, positioning it as a mainstream and scalable model
- Facilitate effective engagement with the Membership Council and broader stakeholder base
- Partner closely with the CEO to expand access, and act as an ambassador, to government, policy and networks
- Build and strengthen relationships across:
 - Government, devolved nations and policymakers
 - Business leaders and representative bodies
 - The EO Community (members, advisors, employee owners, founders)
 - Investors, academics, trade bodies and partner
- Help strengthen a community capable of accelerating knowledge, adoption, and best practice

Governance & Stewardship

- Chair Board meetings with clarity, focus, inclusion, and balance
- Maintain oversight of performance, risk, financial resilience, and organisational learning
- Support the Board to remain future-focused, agile, diverse, and continually improving
- Ensure compliance, accountability, and strong organisational health in line with the Companies Act

CEO Partnership

- Act as a trusted source of counsel and challenge to the CEO
- Support the CEO in representing the sector, shaping strategy, and leading the association
- Lead the CEO performance review and support leadership development

Digital and innovation

- Champion the use of insight, research, digital platforms and data to support growth and member engagement
- Ensure the Board supports innovation and adapts to emerging trends

Board composition and succession

- Lead a high-performing, skills-based Board, maintaining effective governance and a strong values-led culture
- Lead Board succession planning using the eoa Future Skills Matrix and Project 2028 principles
- Ensure a diverse, skilled, future-ready Board
- Support strong working relationships between the Board, Membership Council, Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and wider community



The Role of Chair

Skills and Attributes

The Employee Ownership Association Chair will be a values-driven, commercially credible leader with strong government and policy networks. They will understand alternative business models, be comfortable across the small and medium-sized enterprise landscape, and bring the influence, judgement and strategic perspective to help employee ownership gain broader national traction.

Required skills and experience

- Proven strategic leadership and Board-level experience
- Proven experience engaging with and influencing a broad range of stakeholders, from policymakers to business leaders
- Proven ability to work across complex ecosystems involving multiple stakeholder groups
- Strong governance understanding and ability to steward organisational health
- Outstanding communication skills
- Ability to convene, collaborate, and build consensus

Desired skills and experience

- Experience shaping policy, economic development or societal change
- Understanding of employee ownership, employee voice or alternative business models
- Experience operating across both large institutions and smaller enterprises
- Experience of scaling organisations, sectors, or communities
- Media or public-affairs experience

Personal attributes

- Alignment with the purpose and values of the eoa; strong cultural sensitivity, with a commitment to preserving the ethos of employee ownership
- Strong strategic capability with a future-focused mindset
- Values-driven and commercially grounded, able to balance idealism with pragmatism
- High emotional intelligence, with the ability to build trust across diverse groups
- Curious and willing to immerse themselves in employee owned businesses



How to Apply

Nurole is partnering with the Employee Ownership Association to recruit a Chair of the Board. You can view more information and submit an application [here](#).

Candidates should submit a CV and covering letter (in the Reasons for Application) section by **17 June 2026**.

Individuals interested in learning more are invited to get in touch for a detailed and confidential conversation about the opportunity with one of the consultants handling the appointment:

Connie Vincent - connie.vincent@nurole.com

Jamie Walsh - jamie.walsh@nurole.com