

# THE APPLICATION PACK

CHAIRPERSON APRIL 2024



## THE COMPANY

Thank you for your interest in the Northern Ireland Football League, we are proud to be the second oldest football in world football – but with our proud history, also comes a bright future!

There has never been a more exciting time to be involved in professional football in Northern Ireland.

The Northern Ireland Football League (NIFL) has grown exponentially since its inception over a decade ago and continues to lead the way within the sporting sector.

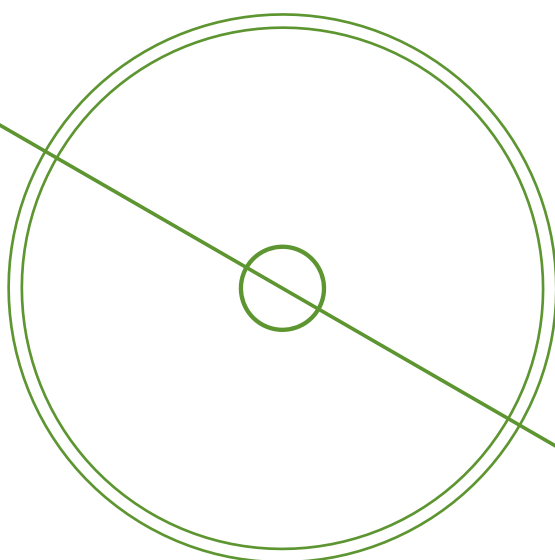
More people than ever have fallen in love with the unique drama and sense of community that Irish League football offers, with attendances at matches increasing over 86% in the last ten years, millions of fans are tuning into live broadcast games both at home and across the world, and high-profile commercial partners now investing in our league, more than ever before.

With 47 member clubs from across all six counties, NIFL represents all aspects of our diverse society through the thousands of players, fans and volunteers of the top ranked men's and women's teams. The proud heritage of the company dates back as far as 1890, NIFL remains one of the beloved sporting institutions in the country with a clear mission to lead, promote & deliver professional football within NI.

There is a truly inspiring future ahead for us with the launch of our new strategy 'A bold & brighter future for professional football' which provides an ambitious roadmap for the next five years to take the organisation to unprecedented new levels.

As active members of organisations such as the European Leagues, NIFL has flourished on and off the pitch in recent years to become a key player in the European football family and also at the centre of Northern Ireland's commercial conversations.

Now is the unique opportunity for you to play a key role in leading the Northern Ireland Football League into this important new phase and build on our heritage to transform our future.



## OUR MISSION

LEAD, PROMOTE & DELIVER  
PROFESSIONAL FOOTBALL  
WITHIN NI.

## **THE ROLE**

# **CHAIRPERSON - INDEPENDENT DIRECTOR THE NORTHERN IRELAND FOOTBALL LEAGUE**

## **ROLE DESCRIPTION**

Reports to: The Northern Ireland Football League Board (NIFL)

## **ROLE PURPOSE:**

- The Chair provides strategic leadership to the Board and to the organisation, working with the Chief Executive to ensure the success of the organisation.
- The Chair ensures that the Board delivers its key strategic role and provides effective governance of the organisation, securing its viability and sustainability, and looking to maximise its effectiveness.
- The Chair plays a lead role in shaping the Board's development as a strong team, working in a complementary way with the Chief Executive's leadership of the executive team, to encourage quality discussions and debate.
- The Chair contributes to the promotion and positioning of the organisation with a wide range of external stakeholders.
- The Chair reports on the business of the organisation to member clubs of NIFL at regular General Assembly meetings and to all shareholders and members at an Annual General Meeting.
- The Chair helps the organisation deliver its 2023-2028 strategic plan 'A bold & brighter future for professional football', which can be found here (['Strategic Plan'](#)).

## **CORE RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP**

- Ensures the Board sets the league's vision, mission, values, and standards that meets its obligation to its stakeholders and others, including any funders, are understood and met. This includes those set out in NIFL's Strategic Plan.
- Promotes good governance and ensures that the NIFL's financial controls and systems of risk management are robust and defensible.
- Contributes to the effective governance of the NIFL through membership of any committees or subgroups.

### **CONDUCT OF BOARD BUSINESS**

- Ensures that the business of the Board is conducted efficiently.
- Ensures that Board members are given the opportunity to express their views and their views are sought before important decisions are taken.
- Deals with paperwork associated with the function of chairing board meetings, including development of the agenda and papers with the Chief Executive.



## **OUR VISION**

**BUILDING ON OUR  
HERITAGE TO TRANSFORM  
OUR FUTURE.**

- Ensures that the Board receives and procures professional advice when it is needed from external sources and engages with professional advisers to ensure good governance and whenever reasonably necessary (e.g. legal, finance, PR).
- In the case of urgent business occurring between meetings, takes necessary decisions on behalf of the Board, in accordance with agreed urgency arrangements.

## STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

- Ensures that a constructive working relationship is established with, and support is provided for, the Chief Executive and senior leadership team.
- Ensures that the Board make proper arrangements to appraise the performance of the Chief Executive, to set objectives and to determine the remuneration for this role.
- When necessary (e.g. following a resignation) ensures that any new Chief Executive is recruited in a timely and orderly manner in line with the NIFL employment policies.

## DEVELOPING THE BOARD TEAM

- Considers what the business needs from non-executive skills and takes an active role in fulfilling the skills gap.

## BOARD RENEWAL, RECRUITMENT, AND SUCCESSION PLANNING

- Ensures that annually the performance of individual Board members, including the Chair, and the Board's collective performance, is evaluated.
- Establishes a constructive working relationship with any deputy and with fellow Board members.

## PROMOTING THE ORGANISATION

- Acts as an ambassador for the league externally and helps to build its brand and public image, ensuring an effective local and regional profile in consultation with the Chief Executive.
- Represents the NIFL with key stakeholders, such as the Irish Football Association and other influential decision-makers.
- Attends ad-hoc meetings as required (for example stakeholder meetings) to promote the values and purpose of the organisation.

## PERSON SPECIFICATION

### CORE COMPETENCIES

- Communication and Leadership – exceptional communication and leadership skills. Ability to chair meetings, listen, contribute to the discussion as required, interpret debates, and drive the Board to decisions, with a willingness to speak their mind.
- Strategic thinking – demonstrates strategic vision, thinking, foresight and insight. Can encourage the Board to think about the level of risk it can entertain to achieve organisational objectives and has ample experience of business planning and review.
- Judgement – can provide clear, independent, balanced advice and guidance with the ability to challenge constructively.



### OUR VALUES

- PASSION
- PROGRESSION
- INCLUSIVITY
- ACCOUNTABILITY
- INTEGRITY



- Compliance – Experienced in appreciating the importance of corporate compliance, with a track record of its application across a public-facing organisation.
- Negotiating and influencing – demonstrates effective skills in persuasion and negotiation to influence others. Can set the style and tone of Board meetings to promote effective debate and decision making. Can network and make an impact with wider audiences.
- Team working – ability to develop positive relationships that generate confidence and respect. Ability to engage and enthuse people individually and in groups. Experience of working in collaboration with others, working towards common goals and shared objectives. Can bring team unity from a range of different backgrounds and experiences.
- Change management – can find ways of keeping everyone on board with change, is willing to challenge unhelpful or disruptive behaviours and can keep everyone to task around the evidence for decision-making.

### **ABILITY, SKILLS & KNOWLEDGE:**

- Has non-executive experience, including having chaired in a team environment (e.g. a committee or Board).
- Has a proven track record of leading or having high level management experience in an organisation, whether commercial, charitable, or public sector, and delivering impact.
- A strategic thinker, who can apply creative and imaginative solutions, with good judgement and a commitment to results.
- Has the ability to connect NIFL and the Board with networks of potentially useful people and organisations.

### **PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES:**

- An excellent and persuasive communicator, with strong interpersonal skills, able to build strong relationships.
- Sound judgement, willing both to challenge and encourage.
- Enquiring and inquisitive mind - with an ability to assimilate, assess and analyse information.
- Ability to think strategically with a strong business and commercial acumen.
- Leadership and self-awareness; ability to gain respect and attention.
- Understand how conflict occurs and how to deal with it effectively.

### **TIME COMMITMENT:**

- Six scheduled board meetings per annum (occurring on the 4th Monday of the month) and are currently held from 6.00pm - 8.30pm.
- Three quarterly meetings with member clubs.
- Informal meetings with CEO.



## **OUR KEY PILLARS**

- **COMPETITIONS**
- **GOVERNANCE**
- **REVENUE**
- **ENGAGEMENT**

## REWARDS:

- The role is a voluntary role however re-imburement of all reasonable and properly documented expenses incurred in preforming the duties will be provided.

## TIMESCALE:

- The Northern Ireland Football League is targeting the appointment being made by June 2024 and the appointee joining the Board for approval at the AGM on the 20th June 2024.

## YOUR APPLICATION

### TO APPLY, YOU SHOULD SUBMIT:

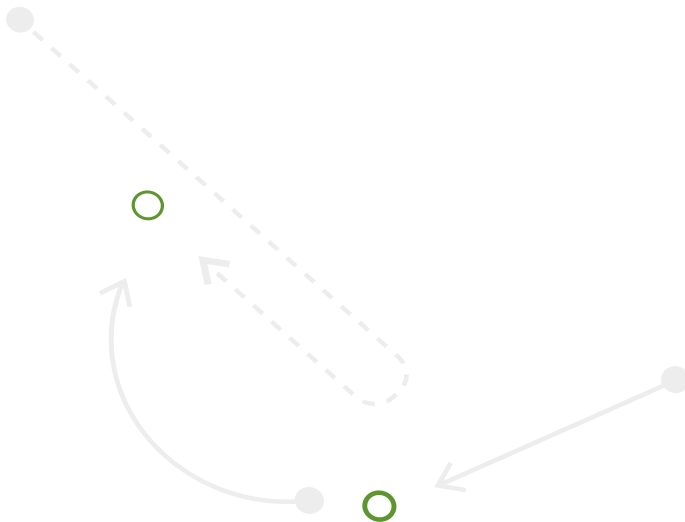
- An up-to-date CV, which shows your full career history.
- A supporting statement explaining why you are interested in this role, how you are a good candidate for this post, and how you fulfil the role requirements as set out in the person specification (we recommend that this is no longer than three pages).

Please send your application by email to: [ceooffice@nifootballleague.com](mailto:ceooffice@nifootballleague.com).

If you wish to have an informal discussion about the role and organisation or if you have any other questions to help you decide whether to apply, please do not hesitate to contact either:

Colin Kennedy, Current Chair ([colin.k@talktalk.net](mailto:colin.k@talktalk.net)) or Gerard Lawlor ([ceooffice@nifootballleague.com](mailto:ceooffice@nifootballleague.com))

Applications must be received by noon on Friday 10th May 2024.



# NIFL MEMBERS CLUBS

