

AS A CO-OWNER, WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO YOU?



SEWELL ESTATES
SHARED OWNERSHIP



THE SUNDAY TIMES
Best Places to Work 2024

EO ANNUAL REPORT 2024

Our first year of employee ownership



A REFLECTION ON OUR FIRST YEAR OF CO-OWNERSHIP

Can you believe it's 18 months since we started on our employee ownership journey? So much has happened in our first year, from setting up the governance and structure of our Trust Board, interviewing and recruiting voice champions from all our businesses to sit on our Co-Owner Council to all the fantastic events and benefits that have been delivered for our Co-Owners.

I have not been surprised at how our people have embraced the change and got involved in driving our business forward. We are of course still working things out, but I am reassured you've been following my 'Founder's wishes' as we now look ahead to using this to benefit our customers, simplify what we do, and speed things up in order to go from 'good to great'.

Always remember - we must look after our business so our business can look after us!

Paul Sewell
CHAIR OF SEWELL GROUP

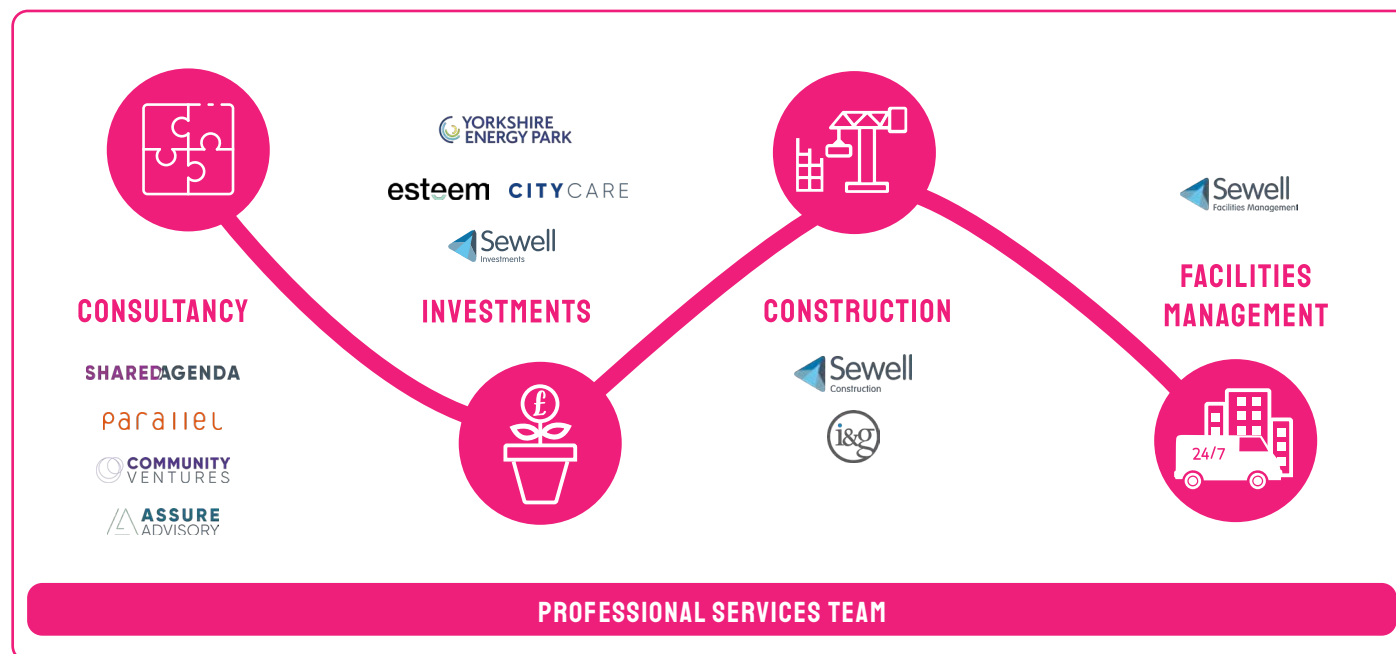
WELCOME TO THE FIRST SEWELL ESTATES EMPLOYEE OWNERSHIP REPORT

18 months into our employee ownership journey, this report looks back on what we've achieved so far, the impact co-ownership has had on the business, our people and our customers.

Everyone that works in our Estates businesses become Co-Owners after passing their probationary period; usually six months after their start date.

THIS REPORT COVERS:

- Our Founder's wishes
- Our Co-Owner Charter
- Achievements so far
- Governance, the Trust Board and Co-Owner Council
- What's next?



HOW IT ALL BEGAN

We've always been a business that prides itself on its culture, since first being established in 1876. Our people live by a set of shared values that drive our behaviours of being positive, professional, customer focused, team players and doing the right thing.

During our annual Convention Week in 2023, our Chair, Paul Sewell, laid out his wishes for becoming a co-owned business and these should always be our focus as we move the business forward.



A LETTER TO MY CO-OWNERS

“I HAVE ALWAYS BELIEVED IN EMPLOYEE OWNERSHIP – THAT EMPLOYEES MAKE OR BREAK A COMPANY AND SHOULD HAVE A GREATER STAKE THAN JUST SALARY AND BONUS CAN PROVIDE. THAT THEY SHOULD FEED INTO THE STRATEGIC CONCEPT OF A COMPANY, ITS SUSTAINABILITY AND OVERALL VALUE.”

OUR FOUNDER'S WISHES

1. PURPOSE

To serve our customers with excellence and with profit, enhancing people's lives as we do, proving that business can be a force for good.

2. VALUES

To stick to our behaviours, care deeply about what we do, and apply maximum effort always.

3. PERSONALITY

To keep our 'twinkle in the eye and sense of fun', and not to get too corporate. Be the best kind of Mittelstand family business.

4. LOCALISM

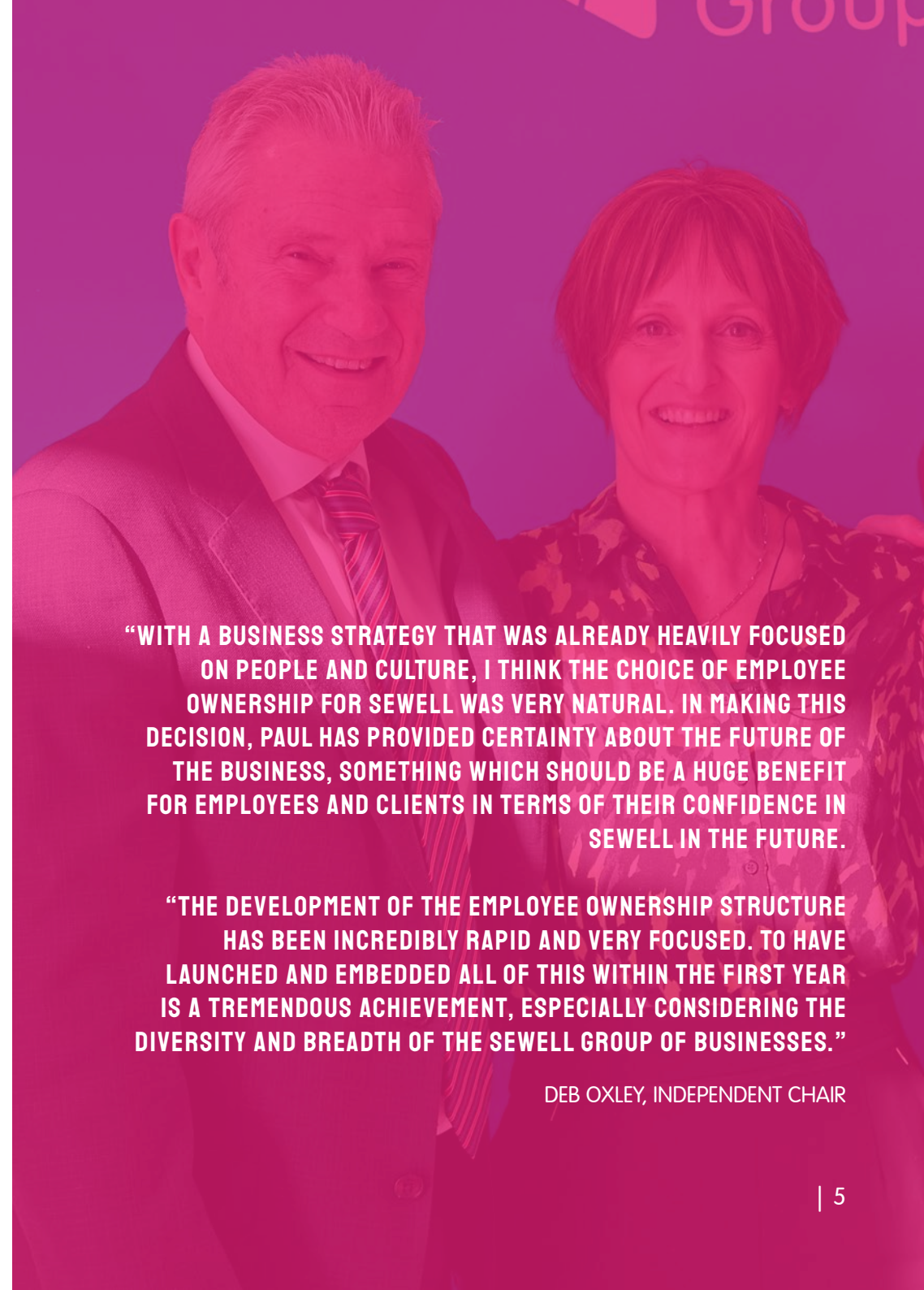
To remain a business of 'place' and always appreciate the towns and cities we are working in.

5. WINNING

Never to indulge in the 'it's the taking part that counts' nonsense! Disrupt, challenge and win, proving doubters wrong.

6. POTENTIAL

To see the business reach its full potential and ensure that everyone in the company can do the same individually. Be in the top echelon in all of our chosen business areas.



“WITH A BUSINESS STRATEGY THAT WAS ALREADY HEAVILY FOCUSED ON PEOPLE AND CULTURE, I THINK THE CHOICE OF EMPLOYEE OWNERSHIP FOR SEWELL WAS VERY NATURAL. IN MAKING THIS DECISION, PAUL HAS PROVIDED CERTAINTY ABOUT THE FUTURE OF THE BUSINESS, SOMETHING WHICH SHOULD BE A HUGE BENEFIT FOR EMPLOYEES AND CLIENTS IN TERMS OF THEIR CONFIDENCE IN SEWELL IN THE FUTURE.

“THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE EMPLOYEE OWNERSHIP STRUCTURE HAS BEEN INCREDIBLY RAPID AND VERY FOCUSED. TO HAVE LAUNCHED AND EMBEDDED ALL OF THIS WITHIN THE FIRST YEAR IS A TREMENDOUS ACHIEVEMENT, ESPECIALLY CONSIDERING THE DIVERSITY AND BREADTH OF THE SEWELL GROUP OF BUSINESSES.”

DEB OXLEY, INDEPENDENT CHAIR



SO HOW DOES IT ALL WORK IN PRACTICE?

We've started our employee-ownership journey on a firm footing, being consistently recognised by the Sunday Times as being in the best Top 100 places to work in the country, recognised with a Queen's Award and many other accolades across our businesses.

Our group has diversified a lot over recent years, entered new markets and widened our geography, working with new customers and welcoming new talent to the business. We believe in creating opportunities for people to engage, develop and be the best they can be – so they in turn can serve our customers in the best possible way.

But, we also believe that we can always get better.

As business owners we need to consider the long term sustainability of the group. We need to think about the short, medium and long term impacts of our activities, which is why we established a Co-Owner Charter in our first year.

As Co-Owners, we have a unique opportunity to actively participate and engage in discussions with our Council, to give feedback and share ideas to help move the business forward.

OUR CO-OWNER CHARTER

RESPONSIBILITY

As Co-Owners of the business, it is our personal responsibility to deliver Paul's wishes and make Sewell Group great. We must deliver against our personal business plans/job roles, meeting all expectations, and we should highlight colleagues that are not delivering and encourage them to step up.

RIGHTS

As employees we own 25% of Sewell Estates, where key decisions and items will benefit from the input of our Co-Owners. Each business unit has 'voice champions' who, together, form our Co-Owner Council. Working hand in hand with the Estates Board and Sewell Estates Trust, they ensure the voice of our people is heard.

RISK

Not everything always goes to plan in business and, as Co-Owners, we need to accept this. Our efforts combined will make the business sing. If we don't always act in the best interests of the business, it will have a detrimental effect. We need to be proactive, not passive passengers, and we must understand the need to take the long view.

REWARD

As Co-Owners we will share the benefits of working for Sewell Group, with rich and diverse training and development opportunities, wellbeing support, advice and guidance, benefits and a positive culture. If we have financial success as a business, our Co-Owners will share in the retained profits.



“BEING A CO-OWNER COUNCIL MEMBER, WE CAN DRIVE FORWARD BUSINESS PLANS THAT ARE SET BY THE ESTATES BOARD ALONGSIDE ALL OUR CO-OWNERS. THE AIM OF THIS IS TO ENSURE WE ARE ALL FOCUSING ON THE RIGHT THING FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE COMPANY.”

JANE BARRETT, I&G

ACHIEVEMENTS

SO, WHAT HAVE WE BEEN UP TO?

During our first 18 months, we've achieved lots of great things – attended lots of events to get inspiration from other employee owned businesses, delivered new benefits for our Co-Owners, and generated new ideas for improving the business and making efficiencies.



280
CO-OWNERS



8 COUNCIL
MEETINGS



4 TRUST
BOARD MEETINGS



5 CO-OWNER
TASKS



50+ IDEAS
SUBMITTED



ENHANCED
WORK SPACES



357.5 HOURS OF
TRAINING & EVENTS



NEW EVP
BENEFITS



COST OF LIVING
INCREASES

“IT’S BEEN FANTASTIC TO SEE OUR IDEAS AND SUGGESTIONS NOT ONLY HEARD BUT IMPLEMENTED THROUGHOUT THE BUSINESS. THE POSITIVE FEEDBACK I’VE RECEIVED FROM THE EO HAS BEEN SO ENCOURAGING AND HAS MOTIVATED ME MORE AND MORE TO SHARE MY THOUGHTS AND IDEAS.”

DIETER FRANKS, SEWELL CONSTRUCTION



“THE FIRST 18 MONTHS OF OUR JOURNEY AS A CO-OWNED BUSINESS HAS GIVEN ME AN EVEN DEEPER INSIGHT INTO THE ENTHUSIASM AND COMMITMENT OF OUR TEAM. WE DIDN’T HAVE A TEMPLATE OF WHAT TO EXPECT, BUT TOGETHER WE’VE FIGURED OUT WHAT WORKS FOR US.

I AM SURE WE WILL CONTINUE TO EVOLVE AND GET SMARTER AT HOW WE APPROACH SOME OF OUR CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES, BUT OUR PEOPLE HAVE THROWN THEMSELVES WHOLE HEARTEDLY INTO CO-OWNERSHIP AND IT’S BEEN WONDERFUL TO WATCH OUR TRUST BOARD AND VOICE REPRESENTATIVES GROW IN CONFIDENCE AS TIME HAS PASSED. I AM INCREDIBLY PROUD OF WHAT THEY HAVE ACHIEVED IN THEIR FIRST 18 MONTHS AND I LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING WHAT HAPPENS NEXT!”

JO BARNES, ESTATES MD

NEW CO-OWNER BENEFITS

The first task that the Council set out on was to consult our people on our Employee Value Proposition (EVP) to see if there was anything we could do to enhance our offer. As a result, several new or enhanced offers were put in place:

- Enhanced cost of living pay increases
- Health screening offered to all employees
- A new payroll saving scheme offered through HEY Credit Union for any Co-Owner to opt in to should they wish
- Will writing services – A new partner brought on board to offer discounted will writing support
- Mobile phones added to the Tech Scheme to help people spread the cost
- Prescription safety glasses for anyone working on site that needs them
- Standard eye tests reimbursed for everyone, not just computer users
- New and improved uniforms for many of our businesses
- Length of service holiday uplifts standardised and enhanced across our businesses
- Offering the option for people to carry forward up to one week of holiday into the following year across all of our businesses, as long as the standard legal minimum holidays are still taken
- Baby changing facilities introduced at head office

“I WAS HAPPY TO SEE THE RECENT UPLIFT IN ANNUAL LEAVE IN RECOGNITION OF LONG SERVICE AND LOYALTY TO THE COMPANY BEING ADDED TO THE EVP, REFLECTING THE GREAT VALUES OF THE SEWELL GROUP.”

WAJ JAMIL, COMMUNITY VENTURES

OUR FIRST YEAR OF EMPLOYEE OWNERSHIP | EO ANNUAL REPORT 2024



IDEAS KEEP FLOWING...

Mid-way through 2023 we asked our Co-Owners to come forward with ideas for developing the business, making efficiencies or improving what we do. As a result, over 50 ideas were submitted!

Throughout the last few months, our business units have also been looking for ways to make efficiency savings, be more productive with their time and cut waste. Some of these things have been big changes, but many of them are just small things that everyone can do to use their time more wisely.



TIME
SAVING



LESSONS
LEARNT



SYSTEM
UPDATES

“WE’VE RECENTLY UNDERGONE A WHOLE REVIEW ON OUR TECHNOLOGY, INFRASTRUCTURE AND SOFTWARE AND HAVE BEEN ABLE TO IDENTIFY WHERE WE CAN REDUCE OVERHEADS AND MAKE EFFICIENCIES.

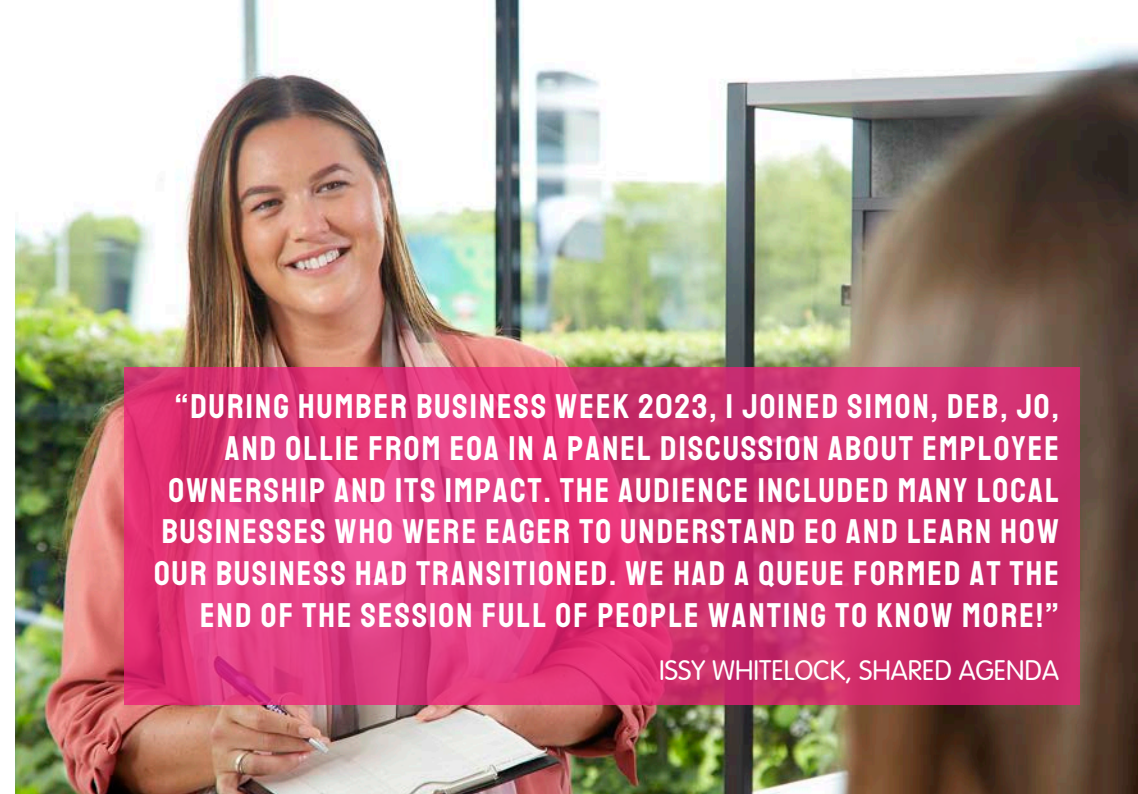
THIS ENSURES WE CAN DELIVER MORE EFFICIENTLY FOR OUR CLIENTS AND OFFER VALUE FOR MONEY - A WIN WIN!”

MICHAEL BOLAND, PARALLEL

EVENTS AND CONFERENCES

Throughout the year, many of our Council and Trust Board members have visited events, both to showcase our business but also to learn from other EO businesses.

- Employee Ownership Association conference
- The Business Day 2023; showcasing our journey and inspiring the wider business community to see the benefits of employee ownership
- Learning from EO businesses
- Training for all our Council and Trust Board reps
- Visits to EO business Gripple to learn from their Co-Owners
- Trust Board members attended a board meeting of GLIDE, the employee-owned company behind Gripple and their wider group of companies to see how their governance is structured



“DURING HUMBER BUSINESS WEEK 2023, I JOINED SIMON, DEB, JO, AND OLLIE FROM EOA IN A PANEL DISCUSSION ABOUT EMPLOYEE OWNERSHIP AND ITS IMPACT. THE AUDIENCE INCLUDED MANY LOCAL BUSINESSES WHO WERE EAGER TO UNDERSTAND EO AND LEARN HOW OUR BUSINESS HAD TRANSITIONED. WE HAD A QUEUE FORMED AT THE END OF THE SESSION FULL OF PEOPLE WANTING TO KNOW MORE!”

ISSY WHITELOCK, SHARED AGENDA



“ATTENDING THE EOA CONFERENCE WAS A GREAT EXPERIENCE AND AN OPPORTUNITY THAT I WOULD RECOMMEND TO ANYONE INTERESTED IN LEARNING MORE ABOUT EMPLOYEE OWNERSHIP.

IT WAS FASCINATING HEARING HOW BUSINESSES HAVE IMPLEMENTED EO IN THEIR OWN WAYS AND HOW THIS HAS DEVELOPED AND CHANGED THEIR CULTURE!”

BRANDON LONG, PST

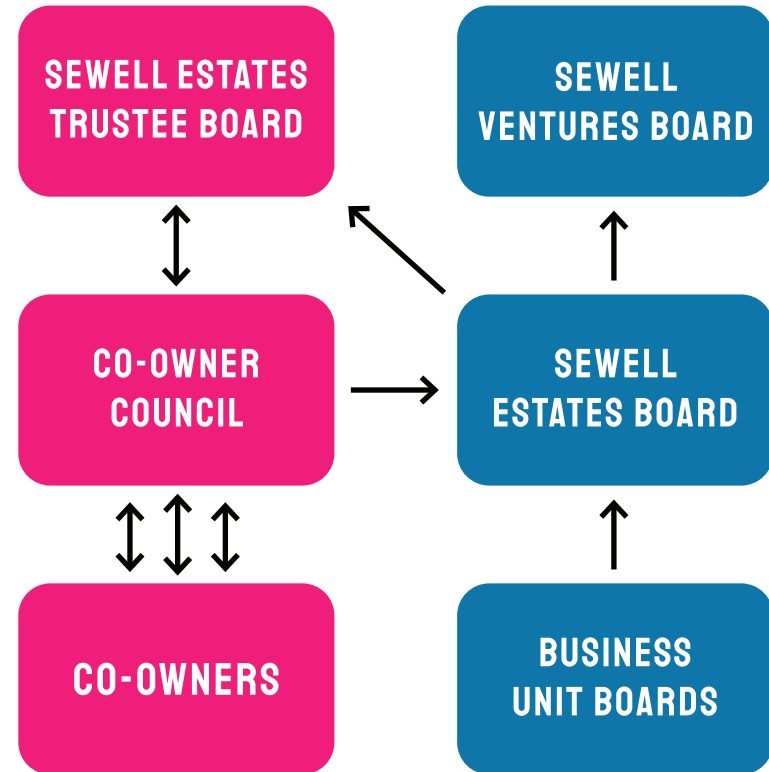
GOVERNANCE & REPORTING STRUCTURE


Starting our co-ownership journey we looked at lots of different EO businesses and examined different models for running it. There isn't a one-size-fits-all, so we made a judgement based on what we'd seen worked well elsewhere and what would fit with the nature of our business.

The way the structure works is that the Co-Owner Council seek the views of our people and feed these through to the Sewell Estates Board and Trust Board. Our Senior Leadership Team is still responsible for managing the running of the business, but this new set up gives all our people a greater say in decision making.

“AT THE START, THERE WAS A LOT TO SET UP WITH ALL THE LEGAL AND GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS OF HAVING AN EMPLOYEE OWNERSHIP TRUST, NOT TO MENTION THE RECRUITMENT PROCESS. JO AND I INTERVIEWED OVER 30 PEOPLE TO TAKE POSITIONS ON OUR TRUST BOARD AND CO-OWNER COUNCIL AND EVERY ONE OF THEM WAS FANTASTIC, MAKING THE DECISIONS VERY TOUGH.”

BECKY OUGHTIBRIDGE, PST





**“ATTENDING THE ESTATES BOARD
CERTAINLY GIVES US A TRUE REFLECTION
ON THE IMPORTANCE OF WHAT WE ALL DO
AS INDIVIDUALS WITHIN OUR BUSINESS
UNITS AND THE IMPACT IT HAS ON
SEWELL AS A WHOLE.”**

DAVE HEALEY, SEWELL FM

OUR TRUST BOARD

Our Trust Board includes our Founder, Paul, two representatives from Ventures Board, an independent chair in Deb Oxley, and three employee representatives. They meet three times a year and their job is to ensure that the company is being well led, in a way that maximises engagement and commitment.

TRUST BOARD

ISSY WHITELOCK

Employee Representative

KATIE CROSBY

Employee Representative

PAUL RUSSELL

Employee Representative

PAUL SEWELL

Founder

SIMON DAVISON

Ventures Director

PATRICK SEWELL

Ventures Director

DEB OXLEY

Independent Chair



“THE SEWELL ESTATES TRUST BOARD PLAYS A VITAL ROLE ON BEHALF OF OUR CO-OWNERS. WHILE WE DO NOT DIRECTLY MANAGE THE BUSINESS OPERATIONS, WE CLOSELY MONITOR ITS PERFORMANCE AND ASSESS THE BUSINESS AGAINST ITS PLANS, FINANCIAL STANDING, AND OVERALL PERFORMANCE.”

KATIE CROSBY, SEWELL FM

“HAVING LED ON THE FINANCIAL AND LEGAL ASPECTS OF OUR EOT IT’S BEEN GREAT TO SEE IT BROUGHT TO LIFE. I’VE ENJOYED SITTING ON THE TRUST BOARD AND SEEING HOW THE MEMBERS HAVE DEVELOPED AND GROWN IN CONFIDENCE, HELPING THEM BECOME MORE ROUNDED INDIVIDUALS IN THEIR DAY JOBS TOO.”

SIMON DAVISON, GROUP FINANCE DIRECTOR



MEET OUR COUNCIL

The Council is a collection of our people representing all the teams across our Estates businesses. Co-Owner Council members are responsible for two-way communications between their represented team, and the wider teams in the business.

CO-OWNER COUNCIL

CAROLINE HAVLER
Shared Agenda

AMY WOOD
FM Salaried

TOM KENNERLEY
Construction Salaried

DAVE HEALEY
FM Weekly York

STUART VERRY
Community Ventures

SAM WHARTON
FM Weekly Hull

GARRY HIGGINS
I&G Weekly

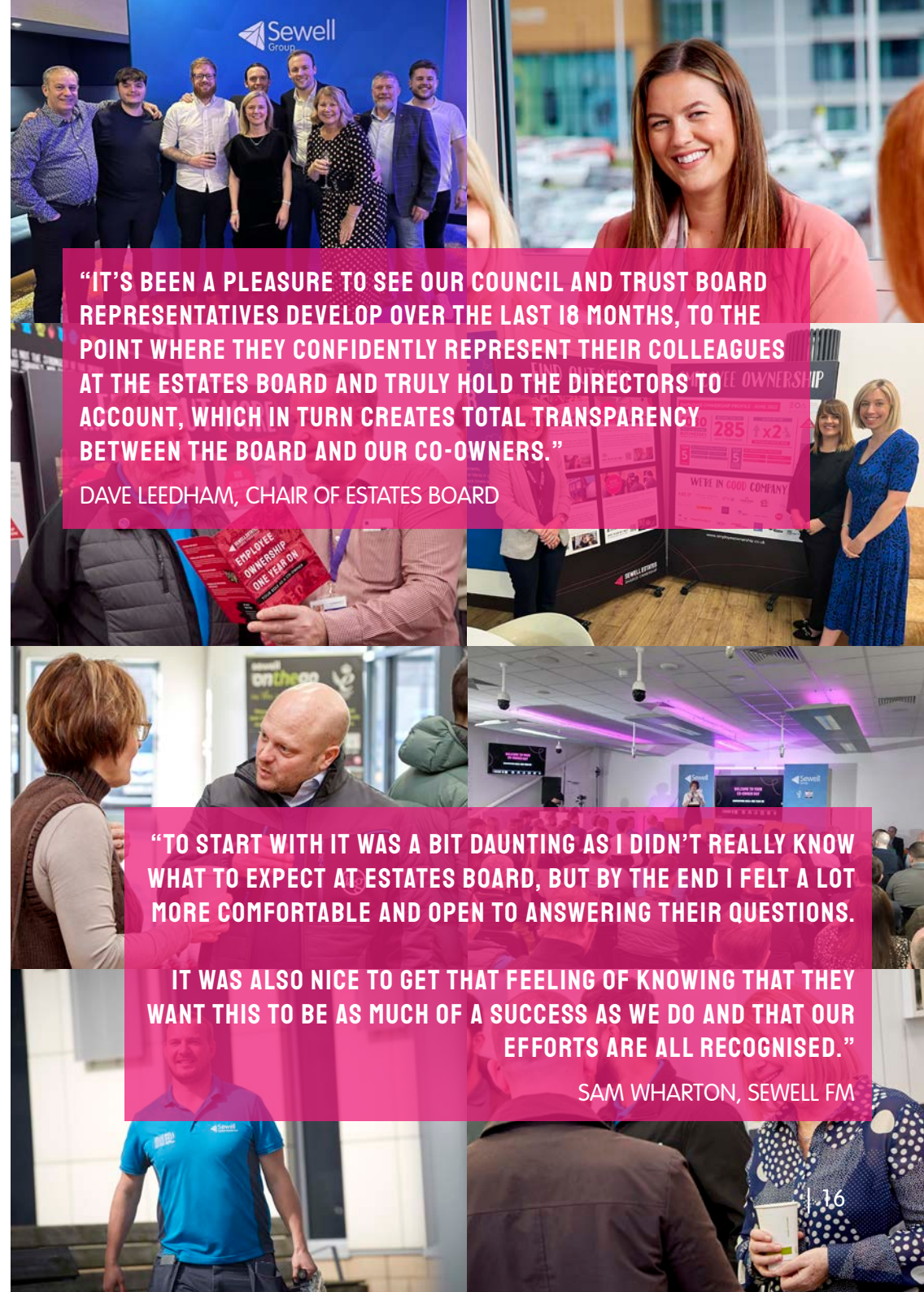
JANE BARRETT
I&G Salaried

BRANDON LONG
PST

MICHAEL BOLAND
Parallel & Assure Advisory

JOSH TROUPE
Construction Services

ESTATES EMPLOYEES



“IT’S BEEN A PLEASURE TO SEE OUR COUNCIL AND TRUST BOARD REPRESENTATIVES DEVELOP OVER THE LAST 18 MONTHS, TO THE POINT WHERE THEY CONFIDENTLY REPRESENT THEIR COLLEAGUES AT THE ESTATES BOARD AND TRULY HOLD THE DIRECTORS TO ACCOUNT, WHICH IN TURN CREATES TOTAL TRANSPARENCY BETWEEN THE BOARD AND OUR CO-OWNERS.”

DAVE LEEDHAM, CHAIR OF ESTATES BOARD

“TO START WITH IT WAS A BIT DAUNTING AS I DIDN’T REALLY KNOW WHAT TO EXPECT AT ESTATES BOARD, BUT BY THE END I FELT A LOT MORE COMFORTABLE AND OPEN TO ANSWERING THEIR QUESTIONS.

IT WAS ALSO NICE TO GET THAT FEELING OF KNOWING THAT THEY WANT THIS TO BE AS MUCH OF A SUCCESS AS WE DO AND THAT OUR EFFORTS ARE ALL RECOGNISED.”

SAM WHARTON, SEWELL FM

COUNCIL RECRUITMENT

Since the formation of the Co-Owner Council, we've already had one replacement, with Callum Campbell from FM changing roles within the business and Amy Wood stepping forward to join as the FM voice champion.

The process gave us the chance to test a model for recruiting new members, which will continue to happen at natural intervals as we move forward. Anyone interested in becoming a member of the council can talk to their rep to find out more about the role and express their interest should an opportunity arise.



"I WANTED TO UNDERSTAND THE BUSINESS CHALLENGES MORE AND TO BE ABLE TO SUPPORT THESE WITH NEW IDEAS FROM OUR VERY OWN FM PEOPLE. WHAT A FANTASTIC EXPERIENCE SO FAR, I LOVE BEING A PART OF THE COUNCIL AND BEING A PART OF HOW WE CAN WORK ON THE BUSINESS TO MAKE IT EVEN GREATER."

AMY WOOD, SEWELL FM

"I AM EXTREMELY PROUD OF WHAT THE COUNCIL HAS ACHIEVED SO FAR. A GROUP OF PEOPLE FROM VARYING ROLES ACROSS THE GROUP HAS DEVELOPED INTO A COHESIVE UNIT WHO SUPPORTED EACH OTHER AS THEY NAVIGATED THROUGH THE FIRST YEAR OF EMPLOYEE OWNERSHIP."

STUART VERRY, COMMUNITY VENTURES



FOCUS GOING FORWARD...

The first 18 months of co-ownership has been an exciting and rewarding journey so far. None of us really knew what to expect, but everyone has got on board, continued to live and breathe our behaviours and look for opportunities to drive the business forward.

Our focus now is on going from good to great and empowering our Co-Owners to have autonomy, deliver on their personal business plans and look for more opportunities to develop. We know that being Co-Owners means we have more responsibility and have to be aware of the risks of running a business, but there's also lots of rewards to be had, as we've seen this year.

Next up is the announcement of our Co-Owner Profit Share, which will be announced in July and is likely to be paid out in August each year. The profit share will be shared between anyone who's been a Co-Owner for 6 months or more in 2023, worked out on a pro-rata basis for those who work part-time. This is above and beyond our usual pay and bonus arrangements, which remain in place for individuals.



WHAT YOU CAN DO

The next year will see our business develop even more as we look forward to new opportunities, continue to invest in our people and work with the communities we serve to help improve people's lives. Ensuring our customers are happy is our ultimate driving force, and we can all play a role in this by striving for excellence for our customers, because without them we wouldn't have a business!

As a Co-Owner, you can all play your part. Continue to deliver on your personal plans and job responsibilities, call out any behaviour that goes against our behaviours and always be on the look out for how we can get better or do things differently.

And remember the four Rs of our Co-Owner Charter: Responsibility | Rights | Risk | Reward



THANKS FOR READING

This report has been put together by Tom and Caroline of the EO Council, here is what they said on the experience:

"It's been a great opportunity to understand how far we've come, what we've got to work on and what our key goals are for the upcoming year. This will only aid the Sewell mantra of going from good to great for our people and our customers."

If you've got any ideas for how we can improve the business, make efficiencies or do things differently, contact your Council rep or email the EO council at: co-owner.council@sewell-group.co.uk

