

PRAESTA



## Board Performance Reviews

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“Praesta Partners did a board performance review for Darlington Building Society. They produced a very good and effective report. It was pragmatic and future focussed. It was conducted by people with experience as Board Reviewers who also have recent experience in executive positions as well as current experience as Non-Executive Board Members. They also have significant experience in the Building Society sector and were thus able to benchmark us against other organisations in this space”

**Jack Cullen**

Chairman  
Darlington Building Society

# Why complete a Board Performance Review?

Our Board Performance Reviews help businesses understand whether a Board is doing ‘the right work, on the right agenda, using the right information with the right people operating the right culture’. In this sense a review focuses on the effectiveness of the Board in terms of its processes, behaviours, the value it delivers to its shareholders or stakeholders, how it engages with its Sub-Committees and how it provides effective oversight of the setting and execution of the strategy of the organisation and its subsidiaries.



**In short, a Board Performance Review enables a Board to create a development plan to improve the Board's effectiveness, performance and capability to continue developing.**

## The Praesta approach

The Praesta approach to Board reviews is pragmatic and future focused. Our reviews go beyond Board evaluation and result in practical, clear to implement recommendations to improve Board performance.

Praesta has for two decades helped a range of Boards in the building society sector, which allows us to benchmark our reviews and enable comparisons across different building societies.

Our Board Practice Group members have significant experience of being members of Boards either previously as executives or currently as NEDs. We thus have real world Board level experience, understand how Boards work and are committed to the highest standards of Board practice.

Further, all our Board Practice Group members are qualified and experienced executive and team coaches. This coaching capability allows us to identify deep insights for the Board and informs the key focus areas of our reviews.

### These key areas are:

**“Commissioning”:** How well does the Board understand its stakeholders and their expectations and how fit for purpose is the team assembled?

**“Clarifying”:** How well does the Board work to formulate strategies and plans to meet stakeholder expectations?

**“Co-Creating”:** How well does the Board become greater than the sum of its parts through its dynamics, teamwork and translating ideas into action?

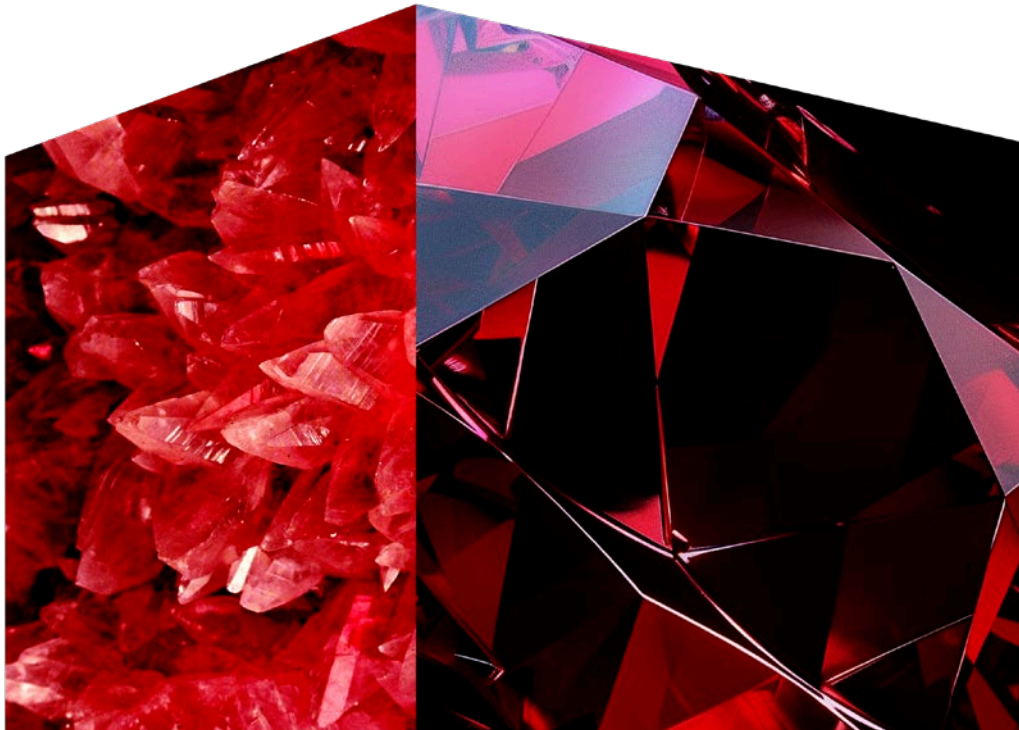
**“Connecting”:** How well does the Board engage and partner with the broader business and its key stakeholders to maintain relationships and to get things done?

## A typical Board Performance Review programme

All our Board Performance Reviews are tailored to the needs of the organisation and Board, however, here is an outline of a Praesta programme that may take place over 3 – 6 months:

1. A comprehensive briefing from the Chair and the Company Secretary
2. Directors' responses to two electronic questionnaires that are brief and time efficient. One questionnaire compares how the Board spends its time today with how it would like to spend its time tomorrow. The other examines the Board's knowledge set and cultural dynamics.
3. Individual, semi-structured 'deep dive' interviews with every non-executive and executive director, as well as a small number of agreed executive officers who work closely with the Board.
4. Observation of a Board meeting.
5. Sight of any recent appraisals of directors' contributions to the Board conducted by the Chair, as well as any appraisals of the Chair and any other evaluations of Board competencies.
6. Sight of 12 months Board and relevant sub-Committee agendas and related information packs.
7. Sight of any correspondence between the regulatory authorities and the organisation, that is material to the Board's role and work, during the 12 months preceding the review.

The output of the review is a written report to the Chair. The report includes recommendations for the Board's consideration. A draft is sent to the Chair for discussion. The final report, incorporating any agreed amendments, is then provided, and used to support a facilitated discussion with the Board. This discussion enables the Board to reach consensus and create a development plan to improve Board performance and to continue developing.



# Board Performance Reviewers



## Janet Rubin

Board Performance Reviewer

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### About

Janet is an experienced executive coach and board performance reviewer. She has worked in many parts of the public and private sectors and her coaching and board review work is informed by her extensive senior leadership experience, both in executive and non-executive roles.

Janet has extensive financial services and retail experience. Her financial services experience includes Cornhill Insurance (now part of Allianz), Coutts, NatWest, First National Finance (now part of Santander) Sun Life Financial of Canada, the Association of British Insurers and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development. Her retail experience includes being on the main Board

of B&Q. She has also worked for a number of regulators. She has carried out a number of Board Performance reviews in the Building Society sector.

### Approach

Janet has a genuine, heartfelt enthusiasm to use her skills and experience to help people meet their goals. She thrives on seeing her clients raise their performance, and that of their organisations.

She enjoys working with senior leaders who are responsible for running complex organisations. Often under pressure to improve performance and navigate through complexity in a volatile environment, they need to see the big picture, make effective decisions, lead, communicate and influence a wide group of stakeholders.

Janet's broad experience in exceptionally challenging environments means she is able to offer valuable insight to her clients to help accelerate change and transform their organisations.



## Pete Freeman

Board Performance Reviewer

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### About

A highly experienced Board Reviewer and Coach, Pete works with Senior Executives and high potential leaders on a 1:1 basis as well as coaching Leadership Teams and leading Board Performance Reviews for Councils and Boards.

With a background as a both a Chartered Banker and a Derivatives trader, Pete is extremely numerate with a highly practical approach to board and individual

development and a constant eye for his clients' work priorities. Pete has also owned and grown a successful recruitment group, acquiring and selling two businesses along the way. He has worked as an Executive Coach since 2009 and has been lucky enough to coach across a remarkably broad range of clients from Financial Services to Aerospace and from high growth tech' companies to Regulators.

### Approach

Pete works with Boards to both review and develop their performance. He quickly establishes credibility and rapport with board members to get to the heart of the dynamics at play. He is skilled at bringing in new perspectives so that boards can better focus on strong governance, managing risk, overseeing performance and setting (and exemplifying) the culture of the organisation.



## Nick Brown

Board Performance Reviewer

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### About

Nick is a highly experienced coach with a very substantial executive and non-executive career across a range of sectors, both in the UK and internationally. He works particularly well with senior leaders in both the private and public sectors and with emerging talent in a wide range of organisations. His coaching and board effectiveness practice are informed by his Chairmanship of two boards currently and members as an NED on a third.

### Approach

Nick's approach engenders confidence and assurance through working with an individual's own experience and agenda. This is achieved through an integrated approach drawing from listening, questioning, challenging and exploring the individual's experience to help them develop and form their own solutions and pathways to greater leadership effectiveness. Values driven, his approach is empathetic, pragmatic and looks to identify positive outcomes in even the most challenging circumstances.

Nick's broadly based executive experience and his NED work has equipped him with a unique and authentic insight into how boards and people work best and most effectively.



## Nigel Holland

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### About

Nigel is an experienced executive coach, board performance reviewer and team coach. Nigel helps leaders, boards and teams build capability and transform their performance. He has successfully worked in a wide variety of business sectors and his coaching is informed by his own extensive senior international leadership and board experience, having served on many boards as both Executive and Chair.

### Approach

Nigel's approach when coaching individual executives is focused on finding different perspectives to their challenges. He has the business battle scars which give him credibility as a trusted sounding board and enable him to offer a point of view which often helps leaders quickly see new possibilities.

With boards, Nigel focuses on both board agenda and board dynamics to help improve board performance. He takes a pragmatic and future-focused approach resulting in clear, easy to understand recommendations to improve performance.



## Vonnie Alexander

Board Performance Reviewer

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Her style is a powerful combination of emotional intelligence, empathy, astute wisdom, and compassionate candour. Whether the content is challenging or uplifting, Board, individual or team sessions are always safe, stimulating, and instructive. She is calm, agile, steely, and quick thinking – unflappable and not fazed by much.

She has held Board positions for the last 25 years, beginning with her own start up and extending her reach into Advisory Boards for charities, venture capital funds and as an NED. She knows that the Board can be a force for good with the right inputs and composition and that critical feedback is essential to delivering ongoing success.

### Approach

Working with Boards, Vonnie is sensitive to the complex nature of their work, the importance of team dynamics and the need to focus on the right areas to deliver clear and usable insights to ensure that the Board Performance Review is both transformative and immediately actionable.

### Approach

Lynne is focused on coaching for results and on helping individuals, teams and Boards reach their full potential. When working with Boards and leadership teams, she is focused on team dynamics and interrelationships to improve overall business performance.

In addition to her coaching practice, Lynne has extensive experience in mediation within organisations, which allows her to assist clients in addressing and resolving interpersonal conflicts, quickly fostering a more productive and harmonious work environment.

Lynne's expertise extends to a broad range of industries, including FMCG, Investment Management, Media, Technology, Aerospace, Banking, and more.

### About

Vonnie is an outstanding coach and draws readily and consistently from her rich experience in business, and from a long-established interest in people, their development and in building high performing teams.

Her track record of running and selling successful businesses in the media, marketing and communications industry makes her strong commercially combined with excellent entrepreneurial instincts.



## Lynne Chambers

Board Performance Reviewer

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### About

With over thirty years of business experience in leading global companies, Lynne specialises in executive coaching, team coaching and board performance reviews. Her practical and empathetic coaching approach focuses on achieving measurable outcomes for her clients. She applies her own experience of leadership in complex organisations to enable her clients to achieve sustainable growth. Clients praise Lynne for her stretching, supportive, and insightful coaching style.



## Joy Harcup

Board Performance Reviewer

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### About

Since 2005, Joy has coached CEOs, Chairs and senior leaders from blue chip multinationals to startups, financial and professional service firms, public and third sector organisations. She also works with Boards to improve Board cohesion and relationships to reach their governance goals.

Originally qualifying as a City lawyer in commercial dispute resolution, she then held a management role at an award winning international law firm. Joy has also chaired or sat on boards in the public and not for profit sectors. In these roles she has personal experience of undertaking strategic reviews and overseeing change programmes.

Joy has co-written a book on how to successfully manage board relationships. Research based, it's a practical guide to the art and psychology of effective

board dynamics in various sectors – The Secret Life of Boards. It discusses how to navigate various board relationships such as: executive/non-executive tensions, standoff situations, bullying colleagues, complacent or compliant boards, lack of diversity, and board behaviours when facing a crisis.

### Approach

A highly experienced coach, Joy has worked with hundreds of leaders to help them build their self-awareness, resilience and strategic focus. To create a mind set and take action to be successful leaders in the ever changing work environment.

Clients describe Joy's coaching as "insightful", "balanced", "politically aware", and stretching. They say she's approachable and perceptive - good at putting them at their ease, as well as expanding their thinking. As a result, clients can talk honestly and openly about issues, and are challenged and supported to think and behave differently.

During board reviews/development, board members report feeling in "safe hands" and that Joy has the ability to draw out pertinent themes and support commitment to change.



## Toy Odiakosa

Board Performance Reviewer

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### About

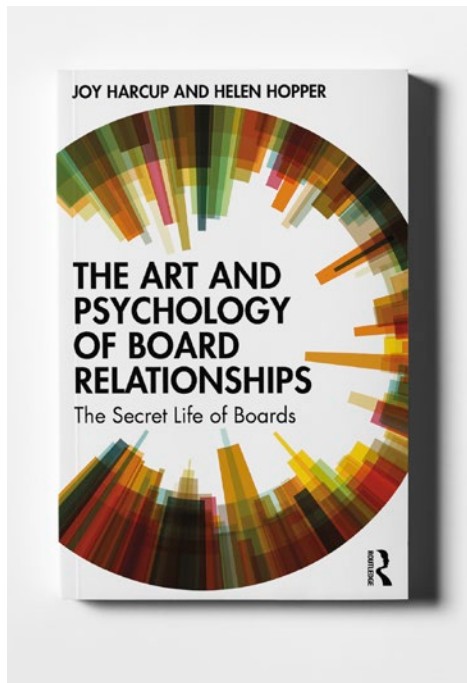
Toy is a proactive board-centric coaching psychologist, executive and team coach, and published author. She has over two decades' experience working with Board members on culture and roadmaps for development. Following a career in the City of London legal, Toy brings a wealth

of experiences from multiple sectors in the UK and internationally, in partnership and corporate environments. Her particular focus are board culture and board strategy.

### Approach

As high-performing units, Toy views Boards and their individual members as products of wider global forces, but also, as active producers of their own organisation's culture. She therefore engages board members in results-focused conversations that are highly supportive, while also bringing the right kind and levels of challenge. Toy is currently a trustee in the construction sector.

The relationships within boards can make or break an organisation, but well-functioning relationships take skill and effort to maintain. This book looks at the psychology behind individual and group behaviour and offers tactics and power tools to help make a success of your board career.



The book shares advice and practical tips from 40 experienced board members from the worlds of corporates, the public sector and charities on how to spot and manage complex dynamics. And each chapter ends with techniques for unlocking tricky board relationships that you can put into practice immediately. The authors examine case studies and explore topics such as psychodynamics, cognitive behavioural psychology and neuroscience for insights into how boards react under pressure. They then demonstrate how to practise the ART of managing board relationships by increasing Awareness, Relating constructively to others, and choosing Tactics to ease tensions and foster collaboration.

The Art and Psychology of Board Relationships: The Secret Life of Boards reveals why board relationships lie at the heart of organisational success – and how you can use them to gain competitive edge. It is essential reading for current and aspiring board members, coaches, facilitators and anyone with an interest in boardroom dynamics.

## Contact

We would be delighted to understand your organisation and Board needs, and to discuss further with you.

We look forward to hearing from you:

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