



Wilkin & Sons: Chairperson Role Profile

About Wilkin & Sons

Wilkin & Sons is one of the East of England's most distinctive and longstanding businesses, with a heritage stretching back more than 140 years and deep roots in Tiptree, Essex.

Best known for its Tiptree preserves, the Group today encompasses a diverse portfolio of businesses. Alongside its preserves and own-label manufacturing operation, these include its farming business, a collection of Tiptree tea rooms across Essex, a patisserie business supplying high-quality products to customers and partners, and Cole's Puddings.

The Group has a number of important strengths. Its farming business has benefited from significant investment over recent years and is performing strongly, while the tea rooms, patisserie and other parts of the portfolio provide further opportunities for growth and development. At the heart of the Group, Tiptree remains a highly regarded British brand with an international reputation for quality and provenance built over generations.

While Wilkin & Sons is no longer family-owned, its family heritage remains an essential part of its identity and culture. Today, the business is owned through an Employee Benefit Trust, providing a long-term ownership structure that reflects its strong sense of stewardship and commitment to the future of the organisation.

Wilkin & Sons is now entering an important period in its development. The business is working through its strategy for the next phase of growth, with ambitions to increase Group revenues significantly over the coming years. This comes against a changing consumer and retail environment and at a time when the Board is considering a number of important choices about the future shape of the Group.

For Tiptree, there is potential to strengthen its position within the major grocery retailers, grow volumes and market share, and explore further opportunities within export markets, while continuing to protect the quality and provenance on which the brand's reputation has been built. Alongside this, there are opportunities to develop other parts of the Group and consider where future investment can best support their growth.

At the same time, the business is looking ahead to the longer-term requirements of its manufacturing operations and the investment that may be needed to provide the capacity and capability to support its ambitions for the future.



The historic Tiptree site has served the business for generations and remains central to its identity. With ageing infrastructure and constraints on capacity and efficiency, the Board is now considering what investment may be required to support the business over the coming decades, including the potential for significant investment in new manufacturing facilities.

The decisions taken over the next few years will therefore have a long-term impact on Wilkin & Sons. The opportunity is to build on the strengths of the business and its brands, while making thoughtful commercial and investment choices that will support a successful and sustainable organisation for many years to come.

The Opportunity

The appointment of a new Chairperson comes at an important point for Wilkin & Sons.

Walter Scott will step down as Chairman in 2027, having chaired the business for ten years following his earlier career as Managing Director. His leadership has provided considerable continuity, experience and knowledge of Wilkin & Sons through an important period in its development.

His succession provides an opportunity for Wilkin & Sons to appoint an independent Chairperson for the first time, bringing an additional external perspective and experience to the Board while building on the values, heritage and long-term outlook that have shaped the organisation.

The incoming Chairperson will join at a time when the Board is considering choices that will influence the business for many years beyond their own tenure. They will bring perspective, experience and sound commercial judgement to those discussions, helping the Board consider where best to invest, where the strongest opportunities for growth lie and how the different parts of the Group can contribute to its longer-term ambitions.

This is an opportunity to play an important role in the next chapter of a distinctive British business: protecting what makes Wilkin & Sons special while helping it evolve and invest confidently for the future.



The Role of the Chairperson

The Chairperson will lead the Board and work closely with the Managing Director, Board and wider leadership team to support the successful development of Wilkin & Sons.

A central part of the role will be helping the Board navigate the strategic and investment choices ahead. This will include bringing perspective and challenge to discussions around the future of the Tiptree brand, its position within the grocery market, manufacturing capacity and investment, and the growth opportunities across the wider Group.

The Chairperson will bring relevant commercial experience and independent thinking to these discussions, helping the Board explore different perspectives, test assumptions and reach well-considered decisions with confidence. They will also support the continued evolution of the Board, creating the conditions for open and constructive debate and effective collective decision-making.

As with any successful Chairperson appointment, the relationship with the Managing Director will be fundamental. The Chairperson will build a relationship based on trust, openness and mutual respect, acting as a trusted sounding board and providing support, perspective and constructive challenge as Chris leads the business and leadership team. The Chairperson will also play an important mentoring role, supporting Chris's longer-term ambition to transition from executive leadership into a Chair role.

The Chairperson will maintain a long-term perspective alongside the immediate commercial priorities of the business. This will be particularly important as Wilkin & Sons considers investments and strategic choices whose impact will extend well beyond the next five or ten years.

The Chairperson will also develop a strong and constructive relationship with the Employee Benefit Trust, taking the time to understand its priorities and perspectives as a significant shareholder and ensuring there is open and effective communication between the Trust and the Board. More broadly, they will build positive relationships with the Group's key stakeholders, recognising the importance of balancing different perspectives while maintaining a clear focus on the long-term interests of Wilkin & Sons.



Beyond the Board, the Chairperson will be a respected and influential ambassador for Wilkin & Sons, representing the business and its values with credibility. They will build strong relationships with key stakeholders and use their experience and networks to make connections and open doors where appropriate, helping to strengthen the profile and opportunities of the Group.

Experience and background

The successful candidate is likely to bring substantial senior leadership experience from a consumer, food and drink or FMCG environment. The right Chairperson will combine strong commercial judgement with a style and values that complement Wilkin & Sons including:

- Strong commercial understanding of branded FMCG businesses and experience of working with the major grocery retailers. Experience of developing export or international markets would also be valuable.
- Experience of leading or overseeing meaningful organisational change and business transformation.
- Commercially astute, while recognising that long-term success at Wilkin & Sons is about more than financial performance alone. They will be attracted to the opportunity to contribute to a business with a strong sense of purpose, place and responsibility to its people and communities.
- Experience of significant capital investment, manufacturing development or decisions concerning operational footprint and capacity.
- Experience of businesses of a comparable scale and complexity.
- Previous Chair or Non-Executive Director experience would be valuable. Equally, Wilkin & Sons would consider an experienced senior leader from an FMCG environment who is ready for a Chair appointment and has the time and capacity to commit fully to the role.
- Experience of privately owned, family heritage or employee-owned organisations would be beneficial but is not essential.
- A track record of developing senior leaders and helping leadership teams perform at their best.
- Personally aligned with Wilkin & Sons' long-term stewardship ethos, with an appreciation of the responsibility that comes with making decisions today that will shape the organisation for future generations.



Time commitment and remuneration

The anticipated time commitment for the Chairperson is approximately three to four days per month, including Board and committee meetings, time with the Managing Director and wider leadership team, and engagement across the business. There will be periods when greater flexibility and availability may be required, particularly around significant strategic or investment decisions. This role is remunerated at a level reflecting its significance and time commitment.