

PRESS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

From the Boardroom's Quiet Corner: New Book Shines a Light on the Hidden Architects of Corporate Leadership

***The Secret Diary of a Company Secretary* by Erika Eliasson-Norris launches 1 July 2025**

LONDON, UK – 1 July 2025: Erika Eliasson-Norris, CEO and Founder of Beyond Governance, and Governance Assessor to the UK Post Office Horizon IT Inquiry, launched her debut book [*The Secret Diary of a Company Secretary*](#) today at the Chartered Governance Institute UK & Ireland Annual Conference. Addressing more than 800 governance professionals, Erika introduced a work that brings long-overdue visibility to one of the most essential roles in business leadership.

Blending memoir with frontline reportage, the book follows eight FTSE 100 and FTSE 250 Company Secretaries as crises unfold: a regulator's dawn raid, a pandemic "gold committee" grappling with survival, an AGM derailed by an exhibitionist shareholder, and whistle-blowers who refuse to be silenced. Each anonymised account shows how minute-takers become decision-makers when reputations, jobs and—in extreme cases—lives hang in the balance.

With nearly two decades of experience, including as the youngest FTSE 250 Company Secretary, Erika writes with authority and humility.

Erika Eliasson-Norris: "Governance isn't glamorous, but it is gritty. It underwrites every decision that endures, demanding stamina, discernment, and the composure to steady the board when tension peaks.

"Company Secretaries act as the board's conscience—articulating uncomfortable truths, charting routes through complexity, and defending integrity when convenience beckons. That is the story this book tells.

"I wrote it to honour the professionals who lead from the margins, shape outcomes without fanfare, and carry the burden of doing what is right when no one is watching. Lasting success rests on voices prepared to remain outside the spotlight yet resolute enough to bear the full weight of accountability."

The Secret Diary of a Company Secretary is published by **Styrning House Publishing** and will be available via Amazon, Waterstones, and directly through: erikaeliassonnorris.com.

Early Praise for the Book:

- "A must-read for board directors." – **Rose Marcario, Former President and CEO of Patagonia, Inc.**
- "A must for Chairs, CEOs, Board Directors, and senior managers. Erika surfaces the invaluable contribution of the Company Secretary. An easy to read desperately needed text." – **Andrew Kakabadse, Professor of Governance and Leadership at Henley Business School and Emeritus Professor at Cranfield School of Management**
- "This book brings a vital role out of the shadows. Erika writes with insight and real experience. It's a timely reminder that governance is not about bureaucracy, it is about people, judgement, and doing what's right when it matters most." – **Ram Charan, Global Adviser to Boards and CEOs. Coauthor of best seller EXECUTION**
- A great addition to the slim literature on this much misunderstood role. It opens the field to public scrutiny and is full of very human insights into the problems of the current role, and the potential joys of the future role as directors are being forces to

professionalise and face regular assessment and development. – **Bob Garratt, Author of 'The Fish Rots from The Head'**

- *"The Secret Diary of a Company Secretary* is highly recommended for anyone looking to be on a board, or for those who are just curious what boardrooms are really like. Boardrooms are not what most people think they are, and the stories here beautifully illustrate the 'truth can be stranger than fiction' reality of being on a board, as well as the crucial role played by the company secretary in most boards. There are so many great lessons here for anyone looking to be a company director." – **Randall Peterson PhD, Professor of Organisational Behaviour, London Business School**

Press invitation:

Members of the press are invited to an exclusive, invite-only reading event with Erika Eliasson-Norris: **Book Read – The Secret Diary of a Company Secretary** **Date:** Thursday, 24 July 2025 **Time:** 18:30 **Location:** Details provided upon RSVP to Leena Fatin, CEO Communications and PR, at Leena.fatin@beyondgovernance.com

Ends

Notes for Editors:

About Erika Eliasson-Norris

Erika Eliasson-Norris is a governance adviser whose career has combined technical rigour with a steady, people-centred approach to board leadership. Appointed Group Company Secretary of a FTSE 250 plc at 32—then the youngest person to hold such a post—she has since guided listed companies, public bodies, and global groups through strategic change and regulatory scrutiny.

In 2022 Erika was named Governance Professional of the Year and, in 2024, became the sole Governance Assessor to the UK Post Office Horizon IT Inquiry. She is the Chief Executive and Founder of Beyond Governance, a London-based consultancy helping organisations strengthen ethics, risk oversight, and stakeholder trust.

Educated in Law (LLB) and Commercial Law (LLM) at the University of Bristol, Erika is dual-qualified in governance: Fellow of The Chartered Governance Institute UK & Ireland and Certified Corporate Governance Professional (USA). Her work is noted for combining legal precision with commercial realism, bringing composure to complex situations and a clear moral compass to the boardroom.

Excerpt – The Secret Diary of a Company Secretary, pp. 14–16

"Throughout my career, I've been in rooms where—even in the most difficult situations—the board wanted to do the right thing. But let me tell you, it isn't always smooth sailing. I once found myself in the middle of a storm: a board blindsided by a Financial Conduct Authority Arrow visit.

For those unfamiliar, this is when the UK's financial regulator descends on your company like a hawk, tearing through every corner to see whether you are managing risk, treating customers fairly, and averting a ticking time-bomb for the financial system. It is as intense as it sounds, and this particular raid was brutal.

We were not talking about a slap on the wrist. The FCA unearthed all sorts of issues—misconduct that was nowhere on the board's radar. And here's the kicker: no one was corrupt; they truly believed it was 'business as usual'. But ignorance doesn't spare you. The stakes were enormous, and my task was to guide them through a minefield where any mis-step could trigger another explosion.

This wasn't just about compliance breaches; real lives hung in the balance. People cracked under the pressure. One colleague—someone we all knew—took his own life before the investigation closed.

That hit me like a freight train: governance is not paperwork. It is the thin line between order and implosion, ethics and catastrophe. When tension peaks, the Company Secretary may be the last steady voice in the room—and sometimes the only one still standing when the lights go out."