Alfie Renn's cover letter for the Treehouse Board Game Café :)

Hi! I'm Alfie! I am writing to apply for the Treehouse team, as advertised on www.treehousesheffield.com/jobs. Below I explain why I am a good fit. Please find my CV attached, or online on cv.alfierenn.dev. Also find a copy of this cover letter online at alfierenn.dev/treehouse/.

PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE

As a very social, understanding, and accommodating person, I have extensive experience creating spaces where people feel comfortable and understood, and organising events where attendees have memorable experiences and form meaningful connections.

I am a fast-learner, and very motivated to learn. This manifests itself in my love of learning new things (making fonts, websites, my own games) and my love of doing new things (collecting sketches from every university society, building a tyre swing, making chain mail).

I am dependable

As well as previous employment as a software developer in a fast-paced and high-pressure environment, I currently volunteer at BHF, a charity shop. While there, I must be social with the team and customers, as well as becoming adept in the tasks needed to get on smoothly.

I have experience helping at board game socials

Last year, I lived in Birmingham, where I was a regular at my local board game café's Monday Social Nights (Chance & Counters, Digbeth). After getting to know the people who worked there, I took an active role in the community, and was invited to help run the events, by greeting new people who had not been before, helping them say hi to others at the event, and suggesting games for groups to play together.

I enjoy being in social spaces. For example, I spend a lot of time at Sheffield Hackspace, which is a community-run venture. As such, at dedicated social evenings, there are always new people arriving to check it out, and I go out of my way to make them to feel welcome at their first time in the space.

I am an organiser

I get great joy from getting to see people interact, and from facilitating that interaction by organising recurring events, like my book club, and a board game club I started at sixth form. In the past years I have been organising weekly sessions for up to 15 people to play video games like Barotrauma and Factorio together, hosting a collaborative environment they would not be able to have otherwise.

RELATIONSHIP WITH BOARD GAMES

I love board games! The term covers such a wide topic of games and experiences, and I think board games are amazing for social lubrication, introducing people to one another, and just having fun together as a social species. Even better, they take so many forms! From dexterity games, to humorous ones, to games requiring sneakiness and deep thinking.

There are so many games I love, and the "favourite" question is ever too specific. I'll give you a few that I thoroughly enjoy!

Games good for introducing people to each other

The first game I'll always name is Catan. I've spent enough time with it that I've started experimenting with friends to play games in 15 minutes, or to play without revealing the tiles at the start of the game (dubbed "fog of war Catan" by us). I think it remains one of the best. Others I recommend for

beginners or introductory games include Kingdomino, Klask, Yogi, and - for fewer players - Santorini or Patchwork.

Games great for deepening social relations and generating laughter

I love games that fit this description. They're always what I go for when people ask for games with less thought, for more people, or just for fun. Some that I enjoy are Medium (which brings a level of randomness and teamwork that combine brilliantly), Klask (again... because it's that good), Reigns (which I own, but sadly can no longer be bought, but encourages light role-play in a way I haven't seen elsewhere), and - more rarely - Captain Sonar, one of my all-time favourite games.

Games requiring thought

I have to include this category, and I love to play them too. These are games that call you to look down at a board in-front of you for 5 minutes just to figure out which square in the middle of the table you want to place your tiny wooden cube. Personally, I have a rule that if a group wants to play a game that will take a long time, someone at the table should have played before, which - as well as being practical - I think is a poetic way of game-knowledge travelling through friendship groups and communities. My favourites are Viticulture, Terraforming Mars, Captain Sonar, and Mahjong.

WHY THE TREEHOUSE?

I live in Sheffield full-time, having moved in mid 2023. It already seems to me like a great place to live! I live close to The Treehouse, and have been several times and greatly enjoyed it.

Recommending board games, and helping everyone around me feel comfortable and have fun is what I do as a hobby, so I would more than love the opportunity to do it professionally! I have worked with and socialised with people from all walks of life (even southerners), which provides me immense value and enjoyment. I think this is a great opportunity for more of that.

Wherever I visit in the UK, I like to go to the local board game café, and I do believe that everyone I've met working at these places have been some of the friendliest people I've met. I would love the opportunity to work with you at the Treehouse, and to fall under this description myself.

I love Board game cafés

A phrase my friends hear a lot from me is "I only ever want to live in cities that have a board game café". I love board games a lot and have a small collection, but I have a deeper fondness for board game cafés, because they make the hobby affordable and visible for everyone, and there is nothing better than seeing a highly used board game box, as proof of the love that it has given everyone that has played it.

I believe board game cafés are third spaces, a concept I love so much that I have written a blog about it (blog.alifeee.co.uk/what-is-a-third-space/). In brief, places where people meet up and make new social connections. I spend a lot of time in third spaces, and greatly enjoy the ability to greet new faces often and make everyone feel welcome. I would love to have the opportunity to do this at The Treehouse, as it seems to me like a very social enterprise with lots of social events, and plenty of opportunity to help all feel welcome.

What I already do for money

I am a freelance web developer. This is a career that involves a lot of networking and being very social in order to find work, which I enjoy a lot. Being freelance also allows me a level of flexibility whenever required, to decrease or increase my workload, and be flexible with when I work. In this way, I am very able to start a part-time position, and I would love the opportunity to work in a social environment where I can help everyone have a great time at the café.

Thank you for your time. I look forward to hearing back from you!

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