

# The Wildlife Trusts



The  
**Wildlife**  
Trusts

## Trustee Recruitment Pack, Spring 2025. Lead Trustee - Digital



## Dear Candidate

Thank you for expressing an interest in becoming a Trustee of the Royal Society of Wildlife Trusts, in the role of Digital Lead Trustee. You may be familiar with The Wildlife Trusts, but what you may not know is that we are a federation of independent charities composed of the Royal Society of Wildlife Trusts (RSWT, the central charity) and 46 independent Wildlife Trusts across the whole of the UK, Isle of man and Alderney.

The Wildlife Trusts are a movement of place-based independent charities putting nature into recover throughout the UK and its Crown Dependencies. These Wildlife Trusts are working to bring nature back and empowering people to take meaningful action for nature wherever they live. RSWT works to ensure a strong collective voice for Wildlife across those Trusts, coordinating work between individual Wildlife Trusts, and to lead the development of the movement and federation as a whole.

The Wildlife Trusts are on a significant digital transformation journey, recognising the vital role that digital services, strategy and innovation play in supporting nature's recovery, improving operational efficiency, and strengthening engagement with our supporters and communities. Across the federation, we are developing more integrated digital approaches, services, products and platforms, enhancing our use of data and AI, and exploring new ways to engage with volunteers, campaigners, and the public through digital channels. To help steer this transformation, The Royal Society of Wildlife Trusts is seeking a Trustee with expertise in digital strategy to guide and champion this work at the highest level of governance and strategy.

There are exciting digital opportunities ahead for The Wildlife Trusts. From developing data services and improving data governance to using AI to analyse conservation impact and personalise supporter engagement. Digital transformation is critical to building organisational capacity and resilience. Therefore, we are looking for a new Trustee to come alongside our existing Trustees, bringing their skills in strategic oversight, so that together in partnership with our Head of Digital Transformation, they can ensure that The Wildlife Trusts are at the forefront of digital innovation in the charity sector.

Perhaps you've never been a Trustee before? Do not let that stop you from applying. Our existing Trustees and our Governance Team will help support you and get you up to speed with the various but rewarding responsibilities of being an RSWT Trustee, so that you can bring your knowledge and expertise in digital strategy to the organisation.

We are keen to increase the diversity of our Trustees and would particularly welcome applications from groups under-represented in this sector. We want to make sure we reflect the communities that we work with and have a diversity of experience and perspectives at the table. We are aiming that at all levels The Wildlife Trusts are reflective of people from all backgrounds, identities and experiences. To this end our Trustees will continue to hold the charity to account on its commitment to equality, diversity and inclusivity, ensuring this is embedded right across The Wildlife Trusts and wider environmental sector.

Within this pack, you will find information about both RSWT and The Wildlife Trusts. We hope that this gives you a useful background to our successes as a charity and, details of the role and how to apply for this exciting opportunity.

Thank you and good luck!



Duncan Ingram  
Chair of RSWT

# Role Description - Digital Lead Trustee

## The Role

To take the lead on the Board (known as Council at RSWT) for Digital services.

## Key Duties

1. Support the wider Trustees in developing their individual and collective understanding of the importance of digital services, strategy and innovation and that they are regularly considered throughout all relevant debates.
2. Ensure the information being provided to Council regarding our various digital strategies is adequate, appropriate and easily understood by all Trustees.
3. Help provide additional scrutiny and support to the senior staff leading on digital transformation initiatives ensuring policies, practices and risks are regularly reviewed and effectively reported on to Trustees.
4. Promote and support our digital transformation and consequently how The Wildlife Trusts can be positioned at the forefront of digital innovation, not just within conservation, but also the wider charity sector.

## Desirable Skills

- The skills to analyse proposals and examine their consequences, especially regarding digital services.
- Experience and strong working knowledge of supporting the role out of integrated digital strategies.
- A clear understanding of data governance and GDPR legislation.
- Ability to input at a strategic and visionary level whilst understanding the details and complexities of rolling out enhanced digital services, products and platforms.
- Experience of charity governance procedures.
- An interest in nature and wildlife.



## Our Digital journey statement:

**We have developed a digital transformation roadmap taking us to 2030, based on a collectively developed framework and approach, that will support a critical path to creating a digital culture within The Wildlife Trusts.**

**Will you join us in delivering this?**

# Duties of a Trustee

## The Board of Trustees

Known as 'Council' this is the governing body of RSWT and its members are the Trustees of the Society. It is ultimately responsible for ensuring the strategic direction of The Wildlife Trusts and safeguarding its brand and reputation. Governance arrangements are currently being reviewed so that we become more effective and responsive as a federation of charities. Council is made up of:

- Three officers: Chair, Honorary Secretary and Honorary Treasurer
- Up to eight Trustees elected from leadership roles from Wildlife Trusts
- Up to five additional independent Trustees possessing specialist skills, knowledge or expertise

You can meet our current Trustees [here](#)

## Duties of the Board & Trustees

- To ensure that the charity complies with its governing documents, charity law, company law and any other relevant legislation or regulations
- To ensure the strategic direction of The Wildlife Trusts and review this direction when appropriate
- To ensure the organisation uses its resources in accordance with its strategy and vision
- To safeguard the good name and values of the organisation
- To ensure the effective and efficient administration of the organisation
- To ensure the financial stability of the organisation
- To protect and manage the property of the charity and to ensure the proper investment of the charity's funds
- To appoint the Chief Executive Officer and monitor their performance

To find out more about the role of a Trustee take a look [here](#)

## Additional duties of a Trustee

- Scrutinising Council papers
- Leading discussions
- Focusing on key issues
- Taking part in other meetings or work groups within The Wildlife Trusts

No prior knowledge is necessary, however applications from candidates with trustee experience would be welcomed

Full training and support will be given

## Trustee Personal Specification

**Contextual:** A Trustee should have an ability to understand the charity, its values, culture and philosophy and a willingness to show commitment and devote necessary time and effort

**Strategic:** A Trustee should have the ability to help to actively shape the charity's vision and future and be prepared to take responsibility for the charity's long-term success or failure

**Educational:** A Trustee will be expected to take steps to learn actively and about the charity, their role, legal duties, responsibilities and liabilities of trusteeship, and how the performance of the charity and key individuals are measured

**Interpersonal:** A Trustee should put energy into acting as part of a team and helping to develop it and its shared sense of purpose and group decision-making

**Analytical:** No matter how passionately committed a Trustee is, each Trustee must have the capacity to look at situations dispassionately and analytically, drawing on multiple perspectives and to apply good, independent judgment

**Political:** A Trustee must respect the charity's governance processes and be prepared to challenge any threat to Council's essential stewardship role arising from either individuals or small groups within Council

# The Wildlife Trusts

## Who we are

The Wildlife Trusts are a grassroots movement of people from a wide range of backgrounds and all walks of life, who believe that we need nature, and nature needs us. We have more than 944,000 members, over 39,000 volunteers, 3,800 staff and 600 Trustees.

There are forty-six individual Wildlife Trusts, each of which is an independent charity with its own legal identity, formed by groups of people getting together and working with others to make a positive difference to wildlife and future generations, starting where they live and work.

Every Wildlife Trust is part of The Wildlife Trusts federation and a corporate member of the RSWT, a registered charity in its own right, founded in 1912 and one of the founding members of IUCN – The International Union for the Conservation of Nature.

The role of RSWT – the central charity - is to ensure a strong collective voice for wildlife, to help coordinate work between individual Wildlife Trusts, and to lead the development of the movement and federation as a whole.

Taken together this federation of charities is known as The Wildlife Trusts.

## **Where we operate**

The Wildlife Trusts are the only charity for nature established across the UK and Crown Dependencies.

The dual challenges of declining biodiversity and a warming climate will require us to work collaboratively across the political, administrative, and organisational boundaries which exist within and between the nations of the UK and Crown Dependencies.

There are thirty-seven Wildlife Trusts in England and five Wildlife Trusts in Wales, as well as the Scottish Wildlife Trust in Scotland, Ulster Wildlife Trust in Northern Ireland, Alderney Wildlife Trust in the Channel Islands and Manx Wildlife Trust in the Isle of Man. While each Wildlife Trust is independent, we are united in our common purpose to bring wildlife back, to empower people to take action for nature, and to create a society where nature matters.



We celebrate the autonomy of individual Wildlife Trusts and support each other to make decisions within each Trust's jurisdiction, respecting Trusts' independence and right to establish their own policies and approaches in line with The Wildlife Trusts' Strategy.

We recognise and respect that differences between individual Wildlife Trusts may arise as a result of regional, national, and operational differences. While this may sometimes result in challenging situations for us collectively, our differences are our strength, creating space for innovation and experimentation.

We agree to work together, with mutual respect, determination, and in good faith, to find solutions in accordance with our values as a movement, and to overcome strategic, political, and technical barriers to achieve our common vision of a thriving natural world, with our wildlife and natural habitats playing a valued role in driving global change, and people inspired and empowered to take action for nature.



GUY EDWARDS

# The Wildlife Trusts

## OUR LAND

We manage over **105,000** hectares of land  
**120** information centres  
Over **2,600** nature reserves

## OUR PEOPLE

Over **38,000** volunteers  
**c.1.66 million** hours dedicated by our volunteers  
**3,600** staff  
Over **944,000** members  
**c.600** trustees

## OUR REACH

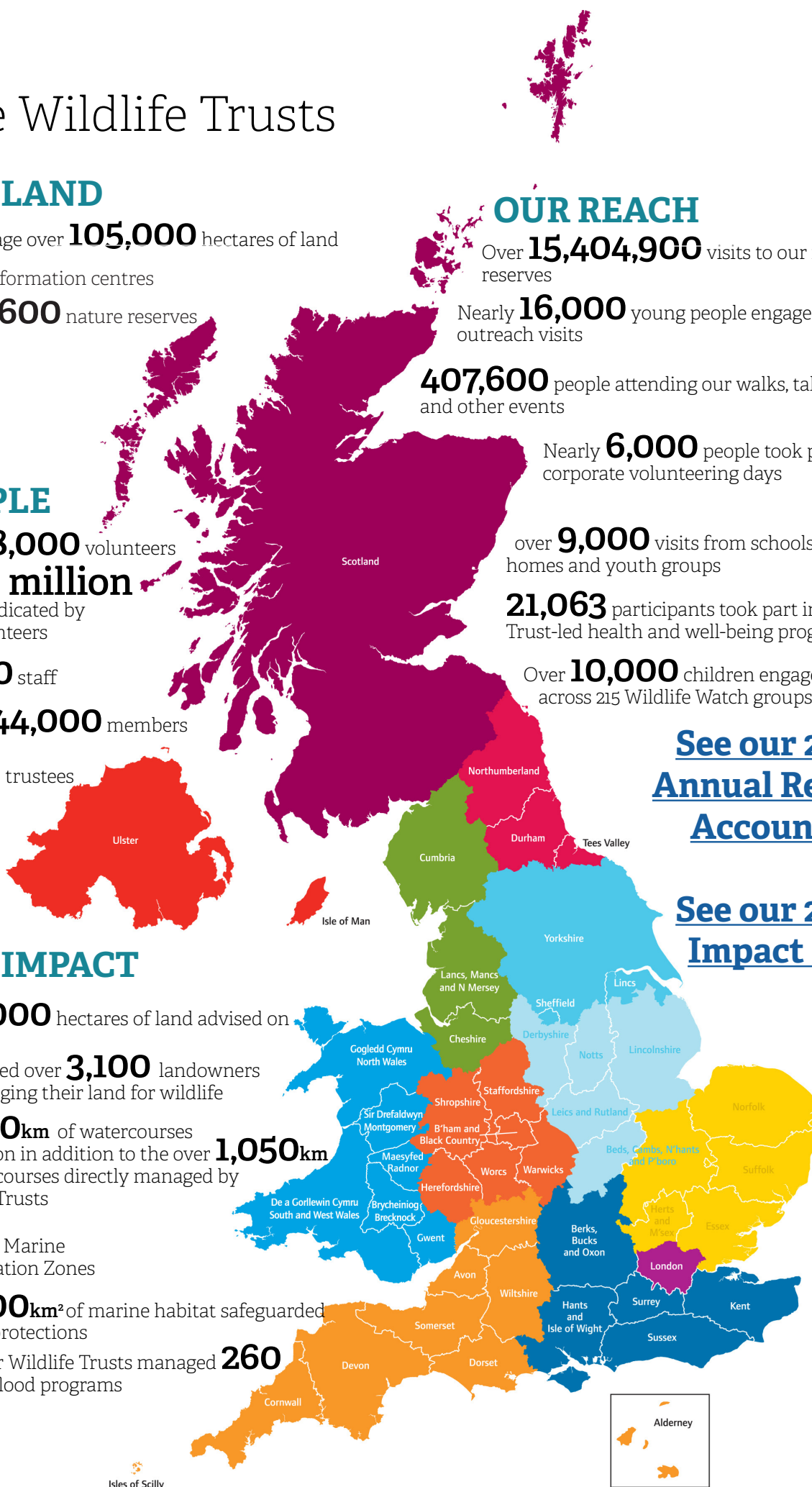
Over **15,404,900** visits to our nature reserves  
Nearly **16,000** young people engaged through outreach visits  
**407,600** people attending our walks, talks and other events  
Nearly **6,000** people took part in corporate volunteering days  
over **9,000** visits from schools, colleges, care homes and youth groups  
**21,063** participants took part in a Wildlife Trust-led health and well-being programme  
Over **10,000** children engaged across 215 Wildlife Watch groups

## OUR IMPACT

**198,000** hectares of land advised on  
We advised over **3,100** landowners on managing their land for wildlife  
**17,700km** of watercourses advised on in addition to the over **1,050km** of watercourses directly managed by Wildlife Trusts  
**41** new Marine Conservation Zones  
**12,000km<sup>2</sup>** of marine habitat safeguarded by new protections  
This year Wildlife Trusts managed **260** natural flood programs

[See our 2023-24 Annual Report & Accounts here](#)

[See our 2023-24 Impact Report here](#)



# Our 2030 Strategic Goals

We are in an ecological and climate crisis. The work of The Wildlife Trusts is critical to help bring wildlife back and inspire everyone to do their bit. The Wildlife Trusts are championing nature-based solutions to climate change and the importance of nature for health and wellbeing for everyone.

Our three strategic goals set out what we believe needs to happen by 2030 in pursuit of our longer term vision

**1** People are taking action for nature and the climate, resulting in better decision making for the environment at both the local level and across the four nations of the UK

**2** Nature is playing a central and valued role in helping to address local and global problems

**3** Nature is in recovery, with abundant, diverse wildlife and natural processes creating wilder land and seascapes where people and nature thrive

[Download our 2030 strategy here.](#)



DAVID PARKYN / CORNWALL WILDLIFE TRUST

# Our Shared Values

The Wildlife Trusts share the following fundamental values and beliefs, which underpin our work across the movement.

- **Passion** - Everything we do is driven by our desire to make the world a better place. Our passion for nature is the prime motivator for our skilled, motivated and dedicated team. We focus our energy on where we are uniquely placed to deliver the most impact for wildlife, enabling us to work with purpose and focus.
- **Respect** – We act with respect for nature, respect for people, and respect for diversity. We work collaboratively and champion inclusion and diversity within our communities, being locally sensitive whilst ensuring that we have impact beyond our borders..
- **Trust** – We seek first to find common ground. We accept that difference, competition and conflict exist, but we work openly, collaboratively and with tolerance.
- **Integrity** – We are committed to transparency and inclusivity within our actions and projects, co-designing to deliver the greatest impact for nature. We will always uphold our values and beliefs and speak truth to power..
- **Strength in diversity** – We are comprised of 47 independent organisations that work as one movement, who hold unparalleled knowledge of the wildlife and natural systems within their communities across England, Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland, Isle of Man and Alderney. We celebrate our differences and work to our common strengths.
- **Pragmatic activism** – We seek radical change and bold thinking, but we are evidence-led and solution-focused and are convinced that working with partners and communities is the way to maximise our impact for nature.

Each year, there should be **more wildlife & more wild places**, and people should become **closer to nature**.



PENNY DIXIE



# How to apply

## Application process

The application process is overseen by a Nominations Advisory Panel made up of The Chair, selected Trustees and senior Wildlife Trusts staff to ensure a fair and balanced process. To request an application form, please email: [governance@wildlifetrusts.org](mailto:governance@wildlifetrusts.org).

The process runs as follows:

1. Complete and return your application form to [governance@wildlifetrusts.org](mailto:governance@wildlifetrusts.org) by Monday 2nd June
2. Shortlisted candidates invited for interview
3. Chosen candidate introduced to our Board of Trustees
4. Formal nomination to our AGM
5. Election at AGM
6. Induction begins

Interviews will be held at our Head office, The Kiln, Waterside, Mather Road, Newark. NG24 1WT. If you require any special provision should you be called to interview, please do let us know. Also, please inform us of any dates that you may not be available or might have difficulty with the indicated timetable.

If you would like to have an informal chat with our Head of Digital Transformation to understand more of our current progress on our journey of digital transformation, please email [governance@wildlifetrusts.org](mailto:governance@wildlifetrusts.org). Or, for a broader conversation around being a Trustee of RSWT, our Chair or our Deputy Chief Exec would be more than happy to make some time for that, again simply email [governance@wildlifetrusts.org](mailto:governance@wildlifetrusts.org).

We look forward to hearing from you.

## Recruitment timetable

Deadline for applications	<b>Monday 2 June</b>
Interviews	<b>Wednesday 16 July</b>
Election at Annual General Meeting	<b>Thursday 4 December</b>



PAUL HARRIS/2020VISION

# Frequently asked questions

## Am I eligible?

Trustees have to be at least 18 years old and have not been disqualified from serving as such. The application form will ask for some questions to enable us to follow Charity Commission procedure in checking you have not been disqualified.

## Do I need to have Trustee experience?

Not at all! Training in the core requirements of a trustee will be provided alongside your induction. We are more interested in your wider skills and experiences and attributes that make a successful trustee by bringing something new to the Council.

## How long does a Trustee serve for?

Each Trustee is elected to the Council for a term of up to 3 years. Trustees can serve a maximum of two terms.

## How much time do I have to give?

Trustees meet 6 times per year, including two face to face meetings, these are all usually during the day. The typical length of a Council meeting is 4 hours, preparation time for these meetings is also needed. Trustees are supported in their role through induction, development and annual review processes. It is expected that most of these will be undertaken remotely via video conferencing. Trustees are also required to attend the Annual General Meeting, this year our AGM is being held on December 5th.

It is hoped that at some point during your term you will take the opportunity to join a sub-committee, task and finish groups or a Community of Practice - these would typically add a further 4 half days per year.

## Will I get paid?

The role is voluntary but travel and subsistence expenses can be claimed in line with the organisation's expenses policy.

## What support will be given?

As well as an induction, we will work with you, and your employer (if relevant), to identify what support you might like to fulfil their role.

**We would love to hear from you. To find out more about this role and for an informal chat, please contact Eddie Rich, our Governance & Compliance Officer at: [governance@wildlifetrusts.org](mailto:governance@wildlifetrusts.org)**

## What sort of things will I be asked if invited to interview?

The sort of questions we may ask will include: your reasons for becoming a Trustee and why you chose this environmental charity, as well as the aspirations, skills and experiences that you will bring to the role and what development needs you may have so that we can provide support.

## Do I need to have conservation knowledge?

Not at all! Although we are keen all Trustees share our passion for the cause, conservation knowledge is not needed. In fact, we are keen to have different experiences and challenge from individuals who have not necessarily worked or volunteered in the conservation sector.

## What will be the legal responsibilities of a Trustee?

We also have full trustee indemnity insurance in place in order to protect all of our Trustees. Follow the link below to full Charity Commission guidance on the legal responsibilities of a Trustee:

[GOV.UK - legal duties of a Trustee](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/legal-duties-of-a-trustee)



DONALD SUTHERLAND

No matter where you live in the UK, there is a Wildlife Trust inspiring people about the natural world. Each day we work to save, protect and stand up for the wildlife and wild places near you.



The  
**Wildlife**  
Trusts

Supported by more than 900,000 members, we act for wildlife on our 2,300 nature reserves, through our work with landowners, farmers and policy makers, and by encouraging everybody to look after wildlife where they live. We hope that you will join us.

### **The Wildlife Trusts**

[enquiries@wildlifetrusts.org](mailto:enquiries@wildlifetrusts.org)

[wildlifetrusts.org](http://wildlifetrusts.org)

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