

# The Vincent Wildlife Trust

Chief Executive  
Appointment brief  
September 2017

[www.vwt.org.uk](http://www.vwt.org.uk)



The  
Vincent Wildlife  
Trust

# Welcome

As founder of The Vincent Wildlife Trust, Vincent Weir had a great concern for the decline of key mammal species in the UK and Ireland. He sparked a new age of nationwide surveys that led the way to the recovery of species such as the otters, water voles, horseshoe bats and more recently the pine martens. The VWT is now respected internationally as the 'go to' organisation for the demonstration of innovative methods based on pioneering research that halts and reverses declines in threatened mammal species.

Building on this legacy, we are seeking a Chief Executive who will provide inspirational leadership and strategic direction. You will care passionately about the natural environment and its native wildlife, and have the ability to communicate a clear vision for the charity to all audiences.

You will take the charity through its next developmental phase - aspiring to be a high profile and respected charitable organisation playing an integral role in changing the fortunes of UK and wider European mammals in need.

We are seeking an individual who will bring the necessary drive and ambition to realise the vision of a thriving, sustainable wildlife conservation charity, based in England but with a remit that stretches from Ireland to continental Europe.

Our field team work on a range of projects within our conservation programme supported by innovative research, and work closely with our business and communications team. We have wide-reaching networks into continental Europe and amongst landowners in the UK.

If I have inspired you to want to lead us, then apply today.

**Dr David Bullock**

Trustee and Chair of Appointment Committee



# Introduction

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**The Vincent Wildlife Trust is at an exciting crossroads. The last ten years have focused on building an ambitious, whilst sustainable, organisation without its founder. During this period, strategically important partnerships have been secured, enabling us to embark on new flagship projects including the nationally important Pine Marten Recovery Project.**

As a result of our current CEO moving on to take up another position, a vacancy for a new CEO has arisen. We are looking for someone to join us

to complement the skills and experiences of the existing staff and trustees and to lead the VWT through a new period of growth based on a 10-year Strategic Framework currently in development.

We are looking for a person who is enthusiastic about species conservation, especially mammals at risk in the UK, Republic of Ireland and the rest of Europe. Preference will be given to those who have a wide network of relevant connections, excellent business and fundraising skills, and a good communicator with new perspectives to help navigate the Trust through any challenges ahead.

# About us

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The Vincent Wildlife Trust is a charitable company limited by guarantee that has been at the forefront of techniques for wildlife conservation for over 40 years. We are not campaigners or lobbyists or a membership organisation; our specific niche is as an organisation that focuses on finding practical solutions to mammal conservation problems.

We pioneer survey methodologies and field research on the smaller native mammals: usually those that are difficult to study or are under-studied. After long-term trials and pilot projects to prove the effectiveness of our approach, we promote solutions (the best and most cost effective) to others and support this through hosting workshops and field visits. Practical demonstration is our forte.

Our work to date has focused on the needs of British and Irish mammals, mostly mustelids (the weasel family) and the rarer bats. Going forward, we would like to adapt our model and work with an even greater range of partners and a wider range of mammal species in mainland Europe. We have a legacy of some 40 bat roosts for the greater and lesser horseshoe bats that were acquired through funding from our late founder.

Our turnover in 2017 is forecast to be just under £1M. This funds 18 staff (the most we have employed since the early 1980s) who work alongside some 300 volunteers. Our head office is based near Ledbury in Herefordshire, along with six staff. The rest of the staff are based in outlier offices; most of these are home working and largely field workers. We have two members of staff based in the Republic of Ireland. See Annual Accounts for further details.

## **The VWT's conservation priorities are:**

- 1. To promote the conservation of threatened mammals through a greater understanding of their ecology**
- 2. To conserve mammals through the practical management of strategically important sites**
- 3. To advise on the needs of mammals within habitats and landscapes, working with others**
- 4. To undertake and publish innovative applied studies on threatened mammal species.**

More detailed information is available on our website: [www.vwt.org.uk](http://www.vwt.org.uk)



## Our brand values

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We have worked hard in recent years to understand what the Trust means to others and how that might be reflected in what we do.

We use this summary crib sheet to ensure we consistently follow our brand vision in everything we do.



# The opportunity

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The VWT appointed its first CEO in 2007 which marked a transition period for the VWT from being founder-led to one that is independently led. This was part of a succession plan to coincide with Vincent Weir stepping down from the Board.

Since then the organisation has developed from what was Vincent's personal organisation to one of a high profile, established charity with a substantial legacy on which to build.

We are seeking an individual who will bring the necessary drive and ambition to realise the vision of a thriving, sustainable mammal conservation body.

Ideally from within the Wildlife Conservation sector, the new CEO will build on the current strategies and business plan in place, working with the Trustees to improve these and ensure a sound financial basis for future plans. Key to the role will be the furthering of positive relationships with key stakeholders including funders, landowners, 'Friends of VWT', corporate and NGO partners, potential major donors, the media and the broader conservation community.

Skills in fundraising, high profile communication and partnership working

are likely to be crucial at this point as the CEO will be the lead public face of the VWT.

The CEO will be responsible for structuring the operational running of the charity – recruiting and leading the team; taking responsibility for the financial probity of the charity, and for the management and development of the Trust with the appropriate resources.

Whilst the CEO will need to take an overview of operational matters, and ensure that plans are on track, the core of the role will be to determine the strategy and to inspire and lead the various stakeholders critical to its delivery. The CEO will have the skills to communicate clearly and effectively to a variety of different audiences. Public speaking, working through a variety of media, inspiring staff and volunteers and the ability to build strong and sound relationships with major partners will be key success factors.

Change management skills will be helpful to ensure that the Trust is fit for future challenges. Managing the charity's position within the sector and its brand values, along with generating high worth funding streams will be a key challenge in the next five years.

# Future challenges

Our key challenge is to have a greater impact in our field of work and to generate the resources to support this. Our strategy has identified growth opportunities which could make our work deeper and wider.

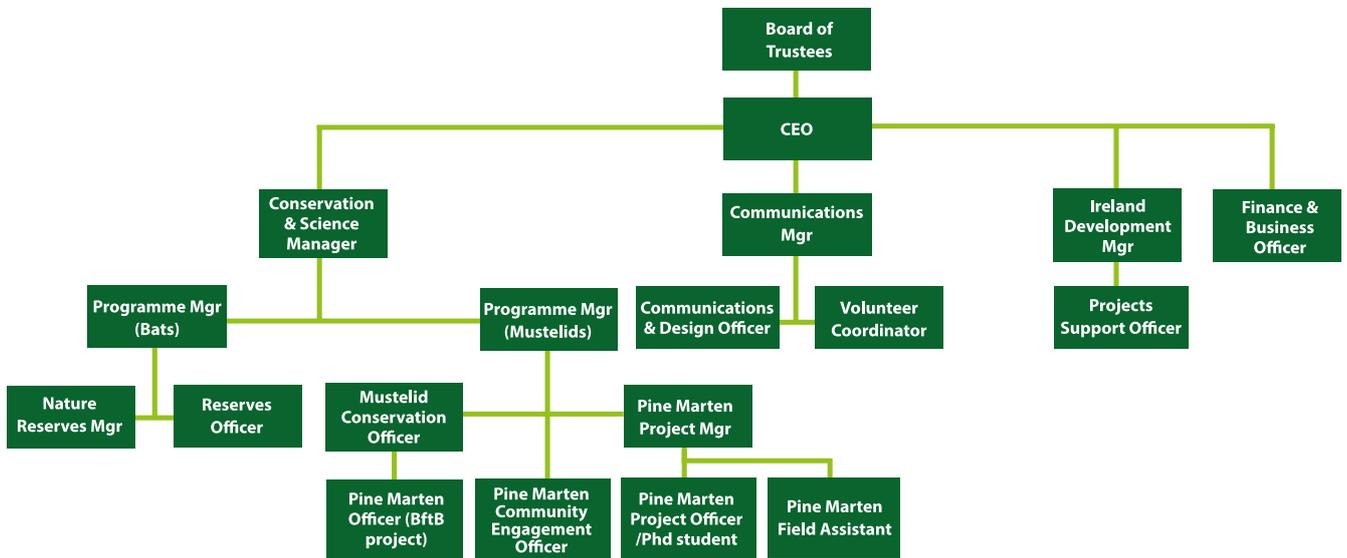
Most of our work is currently focused in Wales, SW England and western Ireland. Earlier in 2017, we were able, through Heritage Lottery Funding, to start a new project in Northumberland. There is scope to develop work in England, Scotland and the eastern counties of Ireland as well as into Northern Ireland. Furthermore, there are species that are being identified as part of a European Strategy for native mammals on the Continent that might benefit from our input and leadership.



Funding the VWT expansion and new projects will be an ongoing challenge. We have a strong financial base to build from given our high value investment portfolio for an organisation of our size; this provides unrestricted income in line with long-term investment returns. Protecting this strong financial base is paramount to our sustainability.

More emphasis in the future is likely to be placed on transferring our knowledge to third parties, and supporting the impact others can have on mammal conservation using the techniques we have 'brought to market'. To have meaningful impact this will need to be at a national/international and strategic partnership level.

# Organisation chart



# Job description

**Role:** CEO

**Reports To:** Board of Trustees  
(Chairman on a day-to-day basis)

**Location:** Eastnor Castle Estate, near Ledbury, Herefordshire

**Salary:** c. £45,000

**Key Responsibilities/Duties:**  
The role will require a range of skills and experiences as follows.

## Strategy and Governance

- Agreeing the strategic priorities with the Board of Trustees, developing and publishing the strategy and vision for the VWT
- Developing the business plan and budget for the implementation of the strategy
- Ensuring that all governance reflects Charity Commission best practice, including annual returns and reporting
- Setting out clear processes for decision making and financial procedures

## Leadership

- Inspiring, leading and building relationships at all levels within and beyond the organisation
- Successfully managing any necessary change processes building on an established charitable organisation with a considerable legacy to protect
- Demonstrating a strong personal commitment to, and knowledge of, the business of the charity – the natural environment, and specifically the challenges facing smaller mammal recovery in different countries – through social media, traditional media and speaking engagements
- Leading the VWT team, acting as a role model for the staff members, articulating the vision and building strong relationships with the team
- Leading the senior management team, and delegating where appropriate



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## Fundraising and Communications

- Building relationships with appropriate players within and outside the sector to ensure that the benefits of the Trust's work are understood and positioning the VWT so that it can develop effective partnerships
- Creating a strategy for publicity, including online presence and personal speaking / lecturing engagements, media engagement
- Establishing strong relationships to ensure that the Trust is built and funded in the most appropriate ways, and supported by key stakeholders
- Seeking to raise funds as detailed in the strategy and working closely with the conservation and communication teams to develop funding bids



## Finance and Management

- Overseeing the VWT budget and presenting key financial decisions to the Trustees
- Devising an organisational structure and recruiting highly skilled individuals
- Ensuring that policies and practices within the organisation demonstrate good practice and are robust and professional
- Working with investment advisors, banks and other business suppliers
- Building strong relationships with the Board of Trustees including working to individual trustee strengths and expertise to support the Trust's plans

## Stewardship and Sustainability

- Demonstrating a commitment to the vision of the VWT, considering the principles of sustainability in all decisions
- Acting as a responsible steward in using the resources of the charity to promote the aims of the VWT, building a strong income stream and acting with integrity



# Person specification

With excellent communication skills and business acumen, the person selected will likely have had experience in the environmental sector. They will have the ability to successfully influence and engage in meaningful dialogue with other like-minded organisations and partnerships and will also need to communicate well with funders, the media and corporate businesses to build effective and significant relationships for the benefit of the organisation.



## Essential Experience, Skills and Qualifications:

- Proven experience in a leadership role (preferably charity leadership) demonstrating strong change management abilities
- Strategic thinking and implementation
- Able to inspire and persuade others
- Engaging stakeholders and partners at a high level
- Commercial acumen
- Excellent communication skills, comfortable in front of varied audiences
- Strong analytically with experience of managing budgets and financial matters
- Demonstrated commitment to the natural environment
- High emotional intelligence
- Management and business expertise – leading teams, working with other professionals and contractors
- Gravitas and integrity
- Ability to work with Trustees/Non Executives and build strong professional relationships at Board level.



# How to apply

To apply, please complete the application form provided and send along with a comprehensive CV using the details below. Please provide evidence of your suitability against the criteria in the job description within the application form and explain why you are interested in the position.

You should give the names, positions, organisations and telephone contact numbers of two referees, relevant to this role. References will only be taken once your express permission has been granted.

Finally please ensure that you have included mobile, work and home telephone numbers.

Applications should be sent preferably by email, subject line 'CEO application' to:

Hilary Macmillan - [hilarymacmillan@vwt.org.uk](mailto:hilarymacmillan@vwt.org.uk)  
HR and Communications Manager

The Vincent Wildlife Trust  
3 and 4 Bronsil Courtyard  
Eastnor  
Ledbury  
Herefordshire  
HR8 1EP

## Recruitment Timetable

**Published closing date:** 27th October 2017 at 5.30pm

**First interviews in London with Trustee recruitment panel:** Wednesday, 22nd November 2017

**Second interviews (if short-listed):** Thursday 7th December 2017

These dates may be subject to change and candidates will be advised in advance should this happen.

If you wish to have an informal discussion about the opportunity, have any queries on any aspect of the appointment process, or need additional information please contact Hilary Macmillan or Natalie Buttriss on tel. 01531 636441



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