

# Trustee

## Person and Job Specification

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## 1.0 Introduction

The Vincent Wildlife Trust is at an exciting crossroads in its development. The last ten years have been focused on building an ambitious, whilst sustainable, organisation without its founder. We have a secure financial base and have attracted almost £1.5M of external funding since 2008. During this period, strategically important partnerships have been secured that have enabled us to embark on new flagship projects including the nationally important pine marten recovery project.

Due to the upcoming retirement of one of our long-standing trustees, a vacancy has arisen on the Board. We are looking for someone to join us to complement the skills and experiences of the existing trustees (x5) and to help move the VWT through a new period of growth based on a 10-year Strategic Plan currently in development.

We are looking for a person who is enthusiastic about species conservation, especially those at risk in Europe; perhaps someone who is developing their career in this sector. Preference will be given to those who are developing their network or already have good connections (preferably in the wildlife conservation world) and can bring a new perspective to the table to help navigate the Trust through the challenges ahead.

## 2.0 Background to the Trust and the Board of Trustees

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 forwards, we would like to adapt our model to working with others on 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 founder.

Our turnover in 2017 is forecast to be just under £1M. This funds 17 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 five 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)

### 3.0 Our brand values



### 4.0 The future challenges

As with most organisations, the key challenge is to increase resources and have a greater impact in our field of work. We have no great desire to become a large environmental NGO beyond our niche position, but we do feel there is room to grow, in making our work deeper and wider.

At the moment, most of our work is focused in Wales, SW England and western Ireland, although a new project is about to start in Northumberland, and we are currently carrying out a programme of field work in Scotland. There is scope to develop work in England 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 species on the Continent that might benefit from our input and leadership.

Funding VWT expansion and new projects will be an ongoing challenge, although we have a strong financial base to build from given our high value investment portfolio for an organisation of our size; which provides unrestricted income in line with long-term investment returns.

More emphasis in the future will most likely need to be on transferring our knowledge to other third parties and monitoring/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 strategic partnership level, which will be a challenge for a specialist small-medium sized charity.

## 5.0 Trustee qualities and person specification

Clearly we are looking for a person who understands the role of a trustee for a charitable entity, both within the UK context and preferably in other European countries.

As alluded to above, a fresh or different perspective would be favoured as well as an understanding and enthusiasm for wildlife conservation and the sector within which the VWT operates (although the latter is not essential).

To encourage diversity on the Board, we are looking for persons from different backgrounds and with different experiences to those trustees already appointed (see the VWT website for profiles of trustees). In particular, the Board is looking for young persons whose additional trustee experience would be beneficial to their careers.

The style of the Trust and its Board is one of informal professionalism; a friendly, supportive, and intellectually challenging culture is the order of the day. Trustees report back that the time spent on VWT work is informative, stimulating and enjoyable. Furthermore, trustees feel that their experience on the Board of the VWT forms part of their broader learning, which they can apply to other aspects of their professional lives.

## 6.0 Job specification

Generally:

- integrity
- a commitment to the organisation and its objectives
- an understanding and acceptance of the legal duties, responsibilities and liabilities of trusteeship
- a willingness to devote the necessary time and effort to trustee duties
- strategic vision
- good, independent judgement
- an ability to think creatively
- willingness to speak your mind
- an ability to work effectively as a member of the Board team
- monitoring and evaluating Trust/CEO performance and programmes
- an understanding of the Trust's finances
- support of the fundraising effort
- support of public relations and marketing of the Trust when out and about

Specific to the VWT:

The Board has recently undertaken a skillset analysis and would like to fill the following gaps if possible:

- Fundraising/major donor networking
- Financial systems/accountancy
- Republic of Ireland experiences
- European networks/ways of working in mainland Europe

## 7.0 Training and development

The Board reviews its own progress and skillset as a whole from time to time to ascertain what collective or individual plans need to be actioned. In addition, the CEO circulates trustee training and development information as appropriate, which trustees are asked to assess in relation to their personal requirements. Reasonable and appropriate training expenses are reimbursed for agreed training sessions.

Where an individual trustee has a specialist skill that is useful for other trustees or staff, they may be asked to lead on a training or briefing session.

All new trustees are provided with an induction pack, and an induction programme is arranged with the CEO according to the individual trustee's needs.

## 8.0 Outline conditions

All appointments must follow Charity laws and the Trust's Articles of Association. Membership forms, conflicts of interest and other necessary declarations and documentation must be completed before or shortly after trustee appointments. The Trust has the right to check Company House, charity trustee and other public records for trustee eligibility checks as well as any other due diligence deemed necessary.

## 9.0 Meetings and travel

The Board usually meets four times a year - March, June, September and December. A variety of venues are used - currently the VWT's head office near Ledbury, Birmingham or London. Field visits are sometimes part of the meeting format and could be anywhere in the UK, Republic of Ireland or, in the future, further afield depending on the issues and projects with which the VWT is involved.

Travel and overnight expenses are reimbursed according to our expenses and environmental policy. As the meetings are during working days/hours, lunch is provided as the meetings usually start late morning and finish mid-late afternoon.

Other meetings with staff and trustees are optional to move forward any areas where trustee input is helpful.

## 10.0 Appointment procedure

Interested candidates are invited to call the CEO first for any initial questions/discussion about the VWT.

A CV along with a covering letter outlining why you think you are suitable for the position should be sent by email to Natalie Buttriss (CEO) at [nataliebuttriss@vwt.org.uk](mailto:nataliebuttriss@vwt.org.uk) or by post to the VWT head office address: 3 & 4 Bronsil Courtyard, Eastnor, Ledbury HR8 1EP.

The CEO will forward this information to the Vice Chairman and, if appropriate, a meeting will be arranged.

If the Vice Chair and CEO short-list your application, your details will be circulated to the rest of the Board for their comments, and actions agreed as to how to take your application forward. This will depend on the number of other applicants, whether a Board meeting is imminent and other factors.

With each step, you will be notified as soon as possible as to the way forward.

A formal decision for appointment, if appropriate, will be made at the next available Board meeting.

Our target date for appointment is March 2018.

### For further information on this recruitment pack, please contact:

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