

Trustee wanted

for wildlife conservation charity



Vincent Wildlife Trust has been at the forefront of innovative techniques for wildlife conservation for more than 40 years. Our specific niche is the conservation of native mammals under threat, providing scientifically sound, practical solutions to conservation problems locally and internationally. Our work to date has focused primarily on British and Irish mammals, notably the rarer bats and members of the mustelid (weasel) family, including the pine marten and polecat. Historically, the pioneering work of VWT helped in the recovery of the otter to Britain's rivers. More recently, VWT has re-established a viable pine marten population in Wales.

We are now two years into a Ten-year Strategy, which gives VWT a strong foundation from which to increase its impact. The strategy will take the charity through its next developmental phase as it plays an integral role in conserving threatened mammals in Britain, Ireland and mainland Europe.

We have a vacancy on our Board of Trustees for someone with specialist skills in investment management to join us and complement the skills and experiences of the existing six Trustees and to help VWT deliver its strategy. Whilst an interest in the conservation of wildlife is important, there is no requirement for experience or specialist knowledge in this field. Preference will be given to those who have good knowledge and proven experience of financial products and can contribute to the investment policies and strategy of the Trust.

For a recruitment briefing pack and further information please email: Chief Executive, Lucy Rogers at lucyrogers@vwt.org.uk or call 01531 636441 or visit www.vwt.org.uk



Trustee

Person and Job Specification

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1. INTRODUCTION

Vincent Wildlife Trust (VWT) is at an exciting point in its development. The last ten years have been focused on building an ambitious, whilst sustainable, organisation without its late founder, the Hon Vincent Weir. We have a secure financial base and have attracted almost £1.5M of external funding since 2008. During this period, strategically important partnerships have enabled us to embark on new flagship projects, including the nationally important Pine Marten Recovery Project.

Our Ten-year Strategy:

<https://www.vwt.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/VWTTenYearStrategy2020-2030.pdf>

gives VWT a strong foundation from which to increase its impact. Published in 2020 and running for ten years, it will take the charity through its next developmental phase as it plays an integral role in conserving threatened mammals in Britain, Ireland and mainland Europe.

We have a vacancy on the Board of Trustees for someone with specialist skills in investment management to join us and complement the skills and experiences of the existing six Trustees helping VWT to deliver on its Strategy.

Whilst an interest in the conservation of wildlife is important, there is no requirement for experience or specialism in this area. Preference will be given to those who have good knowledge and proven experience of financial products and can contribute to the investment policies and strategy of the trust.

2. BACKGROUND

Vincent Wildlife Trust is a charitable company limited by guarantee that has been at the forefront of developing techniques for wildlife conservation for more than 40 years. We are neither campaigners nor lobbyists, or a membership organisation; our niche is finding practical solutions to mammal conservation problems.

We are a specialist mammal conservation and research NGO, working on threatened mammals in the UK, Republic of Ireland and increasingly mainland Europe. Through ground-breaking research and conservation projects, we deliver conservation interventions using innovative monitoring schemes, promote population restoration and address conflict management issues.

Our work to date has focused on mustelids (the weasel family), including pine marten and polecat, and the rarer bats. We have a legacy of some 40 bat roosts for the greater and lesser horseshoe bats. These were acquired through funding from our founder.

Our turnover is c. £1.1 million, with funding from grants, donations and investment drawdown. This funds 19 staff who work alongside some 300 volunteers. Our Head Office is near Ledbury in Herefordshire, where nine staff are based. The remainder work out of home-based offices and spend a lot of time in the field. Two members of staff are based in the Republic of Ireland. See Annual Accounts for further details.

More detailed information is available on our website: www.vwt.org.uk

3. FUTURE CHALLENGES

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

At the moment, most of our work is focused in Wales, south-west England and western Ireland, with further projects in north-east England and Scotland. There is scope to increase our impact in the UK, Republic of Ireland and mainland Europe, working on a wider range of species, and at a landscape scale.

Funding VWT expansion and new projects will be an ongoing challenge. We have a strong financial base to build from, given a high value investment portfolio for an organisation of our size. This provides income in line with long-term investment returns to support staff and pump prime projects. More emphasis in the future will be on knowledge transfer to third parties, and monitoring/supporting the impact others can have on mammal conservation using the techniques we have developed. To have meaningful impact, this will need to be at a national/international strategic partnership level. This will be a challenge for a specialist, small/medium-sized charity.

4. 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. VWT is uniquely positioned in using the returns from its investment portfolio to fund its core activities, and there is a high responsibility on Board members to ensure those funds are well managed. As noted above, a fresh or different perspective would be favoured as well as an enthusiasm for wildlife

conservation and the sector within which VWT operates (although the latter is not essential).

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

5. JOB SPECIFICATION/skills

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
- the skills needed to understand the Trust's finances and investment strategy
- support of the fundraising effort
- support of public relations and marketing of the Trust when out and about

Specific to this role:

- Investment management, ideally with expertise in equities or multi-asset strategies

6. TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

The Board reviews its own progress and skillset 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 Board members are asked to assess in relation to their personal requirements. Reasonable and appropriate 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 taken through an Induction programme, arranged with the CEO according to the individual's needs.

7. 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 appointments. The Trust is required to check Companies House, Charity Commission and other public records for trustee eligibility checks as well as any other due diligence deemed necessary.

8. MEETINGS AND TRAVEL

The Board usually meets four times a year - March, June, September and December in a variety of venues such as VWT's Head office near Ledbury in Herefordshire, Birmingham or London, as well as virtually. Field visits are sometimes part of the meeting format and could be anywhere in the UK or further afield.

Travel and overnight expenses are reimbursed according to our expenses and environmental policy. One day meetings usually start late morning and finish mid-to late afternoon.

Meetings are held virtually for any Trustee decisions that are required in between meetings. Investment manager reviews also take place throughout the year.

9. APPOINTMENT PROCEDURE

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

A CV, along with a covering letter outlining why you think you are suitable for the position, should be sent to the CEO at the VWT Head office address at the bottom of this page. The CEO will forward this information to the Chair and, if appropriate, a meeting will be arranged.

If the Chair and CEO short-list your application, your details will be circulated to the rest of the Board for its 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 September 2021.

For further information on this recruitment pack, please contact:

Dr Lucy Rogers, CEO

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