



ANCIENT  
TREE  
FORUM

# ANCIENT TREE FORUM

**CHAIR OF TRUSTEES RECRUITMENT**

**CANDIDATE INFORMATION PACK 2022**



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

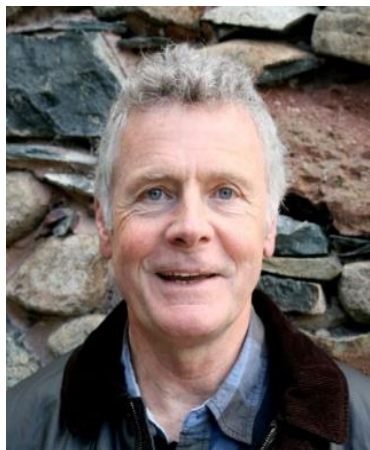
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## 1. Introduction

### Note from the Interim Chair, Ancient Tree Forum- Tim Hill



Thank you for your interest in applying to be the Chair of the Ancient Tree Forum. This is a unique opportunity to lead a highly regarded and specialist organisation at an important stage of its development.

This is a critical time for ancient trees, the habitats they support and the landscapes in which they can survive and flourish. Their protection is crucial, not least because these living monuments represent a globally important resource. The profile of the Ancient Tree Forum (ATF) - the only organisation in the country specialising in the conservation of ancient and veteran trees - continues to grow and its expertise is sought at the highest level. It works with a mix of national charities, landowners, local authorities, and national government. It offers training, outreach projects, advice, and guidance to other organisations on their work.

The ATF has been on a journey of building on success as well as change over the last three years. We have recently started work on a new strategy, secured new contracts and grants which support the training and outreach work that have been key to our success over the past decades. We are improving and continuously reviewing our governance and finance procedures and have completed a review and updating of our wider organisational policies.

So, you will be joining us as we start to deliver the future direction and impact of the charity. I very much hope that you will be able to join the Board and lead us during this next exciting journey.

Yours sincerely,

Tim Hill  
Interim Chair



## 1.1 About the Ancient Tree Forum

Ancient and other veteran trees are a vital and treasured part of our history, as well as our natural and cultural landscape. Britain is thought to have the greatest number of ancient trees in northern Europe. The Ancient Tree Forum (ATF) is the leading authority on the conservation of ancient and other veteran trees and is the only organisation in England and Wales focusing solely on their protection and sustainability.

The ATF seeks to secure the long-term future of ancient trees through advocacy of no further avoidable loss, good management, and the development of a succession of future ancient trees. We do this by raising awareness and understanding of their value and importance.

We achieve awareness raising and increased understanding through an active and expert network of volunteers and small staff team, promoting best management and conservation practice, lobbying governments over their recognition and protection, encouraging research, and increasing peoples' enjoyment of old trees.

You can read more about our history here: <https://www.ancienttreeforum.co.uk/who-we-are/history-of-the-atf/>

You can read our latest ATF Annual Reports and Accounts [here](#).

## 1.2 The role of the ATF Board of Trustees

The Board oversees and is accountable for the efficient running of ATF, ensuring it is solvent, well run and of good reputation, safeguarding assets and applying them for the charitable purposes as detailed in the objects of the ATF. Our Board is, however, much more than that: it is engaged in and supportive of our work, providing inspiration and constructive challenges. The Board and staff team work together to develop our mission and strategy.

The ATF is a charity registered in England and Wales and is a registered company. Note that when people become a trustee of the ATF, they also become a director of a registered company with the responsibilities that come with this role. The ATF has sufficient insurance to cover our activities including Trustee Indemnity insurance.



## 2. About the role of Chair of Trustees at the ATF

We are seeking someone who is strategic and flexible, with tree or environmental knowledge and networks, to lead the Board and support the CEO in achieving our exciting plans.

### 2.1 Role description

In addition to the general responsibilities of a trustee, the duties of the chair include:

- Providing leadership to the organisation and the board by ensuring that everyone remains focused on the delivery of the organisation's strategic plan, charitable purposes to provide public benefit, and supporting and providing oversight to the CEO who will ensure the plan is delivered by:
  - Chairing the board of trustee meetings (usually four meetings a year, plus a strategic away day)
  - Undertaking annual review of board structure, role, and effectiveness, ensuring the Ancient Tree Forum works towards the highest standards of governance, and its systems and processes adhere to the Charity Governance Code
  - Giving a performance review of and support or challenge to the trustees
  - Developing the board of trustees including skills and diversity, induction, training, appraisal, and succession planning, managing conflicts and liaising with the CEO to achieve this
  - Providing oversight of the CEO so that decisions taken at board meetings are implemented
  - Representing the organisation at functions and meetings, and acting as a spokesperson as appropriate
  - Bringing impartiality and objectivity to decision-making
  - Supporting and appraising the CEO
  - With the board ensuring the ATF employs staff in a way that is compliant with employment law
  - With the CEO, planning the annual cycle of board meetings and other general meetings where required, for example annual general meeting and set agendas for board and other general meetings and ensuring, along with the CEO, that preparation is done in advance of the board meetings, so that the trustees at the board meetings can scrutinise that there are appropriate resources for the achievement of the strategic, and annual work plans
  - Working with the Treasurer and the CEO to support financial forecasting and preparation of financial statements
  - Working with the Company Secretary, ensuring the charity and company complies with regulations, provides timely reviews of the articles of association, and any changes of company and charity law are understood by the board and implemented
  - Leading the board to ensure the organisation meets its diversity plan, delegated to the CEO to deliver
  - Delegates responsibilities of the Chair's role to any vice-chair, who then acts for the chair when the chair is not available and undertakes assignments at the request of the chair - see vice-chair role description

## 2.2 Person specification

The chair should have the following:

<b>Skill or experience</b>	<b>Essential or desirable</b>
Leadership skills and experience from a similar role for at least 3 years	Essential Desirable
Strategic yet flexible in approach- seeking opportunities as well as working towards the ATF's strategy - with examples and experience from similar roles	Essential
Experience of contributing to a committee for at least a full term (around 3 years)	Essential
Assertive but collegiate	Essential
Tact and diplomacy	Essential
Excellent communication and interpersonal skills for both internal and external relationship-building	Essential
Impartiality, fairness, and the ability to respect confidential matters	Essential
Experience of line management	Essential
Knowledge of the tree/ environmental NGO sector Knowledge of ancient and other veteran trees	Essential Desirable
Well-connected with a wider involvement with the environmental sector and other networks	Essential
Good links within the tree NGO sector	Desirable
Strong affinity with the ATF's strategic direction and vision	Essential

## 2.3 Terms of appointment including time commitment

The time commitment for the role of Chair is expected to be 3-4 days per month, including:

- Board meetings and other trustee meetings – 4 board meetings and AGM. Mostly these are remote, with one per year in person.
- Sub-committee – all trustees including the Chair join a sub-committee (nominations and HR (Human Resources)) or sub-groups (finance and fundraising), meeting every 6 weeks for 1.5 hours per meeting.
- Monthly meetings to support and appraise the CEO plus an annual performance appraisal.
- Annual performance review of board officers and trustees – 6-8 meetings of around 1.5 hours each.
- Strategic thinking – taking time to consider the priorities for the organisation.

- External meetings – occasional external meetings, as agreed with the CEO.
- ATF events and field trips – around once a year with an overnight stay.

The term of office is initially for three years, from November 2022. The Chair can stand for re-election for two further terms of three years.

## **2.4 What ATF offers in return**

You will be joining and leading an active and positive board: ATF has a strong commitment and contribution from its trustees, and staff work closely to support good governance. We are a small team who work closely with staff, with a professional yet personal approach to our work. ATF will offer full support to its new chair in the form of induction, membership of the Association of Chairs, and other development, reflection and learning opportunities.

All trustee roles are unremunerated, although out of pocket expenses will be paid. All trustees are invited to attend one field trip per year – these are often fully booked out and led and attended by environmental specialists. ATF will pay reasonable expenses, including the cost of an overnight stay and travel for attending one of these events per year for trustees.



### 3. How to apply for the role of Chair

To apply, please send your application to [daniel.richards@ancienttreeforum.org.uk](mailto:daniel.richards@ancienttreeforum.org.uk) by **Midnight Monday 11 July 2022** and include three things:

**1. A written, 2-page description of your full work and any volunteering history (or curriculum vitae – CV) including names of two references**

**2. A supporting statement** – in one of two formats, **either:**

- In writing - a maximum of two-sides of A4 covering how you meet the person specification and the questions below.

**or**

- By video – covering how you meet the person specification and the questions below.

**Questions you should answer in your supporting statement letter or video:**

- Describe how you meet the person specification for the Chair's role – in no more than two sides (or equivalent if applying by video)
- Answer the following questions in no more than one further page of A4 (or equivalent if applying by video):
  - I. What previous experience from chairing Boards, or similar structures, will you bring to the ATF?
  - II. What main opportunities and challenges do you see ahead for the ATF?

**3. In your covering email, please also give details of**

- I. Business or other interests which might give rise to conflict of interest, and how you could address this should your application be successful
- II. Specific dates in the timetable below that you will be unavailable for interview, for example, due to holidays
- III. Where you heard about the role e.g., Reach volunteering, Environment Job
- IV. Diversity - you are invited to complete and return the diversity monitoring form downloadable from the vacancy page on the website. The form will not be treated as part of the application and will be treated as confidential and used for statistical purposes.

Note that:

- The roles are subject to two satisfactory references.
- We will be sending all interview questions to successful applications around one week in advance of the interviews – this is part of our attempt to be more inclusive in our interview processes. See a full timetable for the recruitment process below.



## Deadlines and timetable

Applications open	19 May 2022
Open House – you are invited to find out more about the ATF, meet our interim chair and trustees and staff in this online hour. Book by email: <a href="mailto:daniel.richards@ancienttreeforum.org.uk">daniel.richards@ancienttreeforum.org.uk</a> Note that this is not part of the application process.	Wednesday 25th May 5 – 6pm
Board meeting - Interested candidates can choose to attend the 5th of July board meeting (in person – currently planned in the East Midlands of England) as a guest – to reserve a place, please contact <a href="mailto:daniel.richards@ancienttreeforum.org.uk">daniel.richards@ancienttreeforum.org.uk</a>  Note that this is not part of the application process.	5th July 2022 (book by 22 June 2022)
Deadline for applications	Midnight Monday 11 July 2022
Shortlisting complete	15 July 2022
Successful candidates invited to interview and sent interview questions around one week in advance	19 July 2022
Interviews with successful candidate	26 - 29 July 2022
Decision and all candidates informed	9 August 2022

Interviews will be by zoom, with the nominations committee (interim chair and another trustee) and will be supported by the CEO.

The chair and nominations committee will then determine their preferred candidate and advise the full Board on their decision and recommendation.

## 4. Diary dates: board meetings for 2022-2023

The following are board meeting dates for the remainder of 2022-2023.

Board meeting – in person	5 July 2022	Interested candidates can attend the 5 July board meeting as a guest – please book a place by contacting <a href="mailto:daniel.richards@ancienttreeforum.org.uk">daniel.richards@ancienttreeforum.org.uk</a>
Board meeting - online	6 September 2022	All successful candidates will attend this board meeting to be co-opted onto the board
AGM (Annual General Meeting) – venue tbc	1 November 2022	All successful candidates will attend this 1.5-hour meeting for voting of trustees and officer roles
Board meeting – venue tbc	13 December 2022	First official board meeting of new Chair and trustees
Board meeting – venue tbc	7 March 2023	Final board meeting of this financial year

## 5. Diversity

We actively welcome applications from people from diverse backgrounds, including and especially people of colour. The ATF recognises a lack of diversity in our field and on our board. We had not taken enough action before to specifically address this and have therefore been working on our EDI programme since 2020. The Ancient Tree Forum is committed to equality, diversity, fairness, and inclusion and eliminating unlawful discrimination and believes we all have the power to reduce injustices through educating ourselves on inequalities.

We aim to create a culture that is open about the imbalance of power for many people, and that respects and values each other's differences, which promotes dignity, equality, and diversity, and that encourages individuals to develop and maximise their true potential. At the end of June 2020, our trustees approved a new equality, diversity and inclusion policy and action plan, which you can see on our website. We have created this policy and plan with our trustees, our local groups volunteers and our staff and contractors - these conversations and plans represent a small step but constitute the beginnings of further action on our part to address diversity, equalities, and inclusion.

Our equalities, diversity and inclusion policy can be found here:

<https://www.ancienttreeforum.co.uk/who-we-are/diversity-at-the-atf/>



## **6. Reasonable adjustments**

We recognise and welcome our responsibility to remove any barriers in our recruitment and selection process for people with disabilities. We have made changes to do this, and if you have a disability and identify any further barriers in the job description or recruitment process, please tell us of these in your application, or contact us (see below). We are committed to making reasonable adjustments to the role wherever possible and it would help us to know your needs to do this. Any such enquiries will be treated as strictly confidential.

## **7. How to ask questions during the recruitment process**

If you have any queries about any aspect of the recruitment process, need additional information or wish to have an informal and confidential discussion then please contact Laura Alcock-Ferguson, Chief Executive Officer of the Ancient Tree Forum at [lauraalcock-ferguson@ancienttreeforum.org.uk](mailto:lauraalcock-ferguson@ancienttreeforum.org.uk) or Daniel Richards, Administrative Officer – [daniel.richards@ancienttreeforum.org.uk](mailto:daniel.richards@ancienttreeforum.org.uk)