

Essex Wildlife Trust

Job Description



Essex
Wildlife Trust

Job title: Chief Executive Officer

Location: Abbots Hall, Great Wigborough, Essex, with regular travel around Essex and more widely when required.

Reports to: Board of Trustees through the Chair of Essex Wildlife Trust

Responsible for: All staff and volunteers. Direct reports include: All SLT (x5 Directors), Executive Personal Assistant.

Job Purpose

As Chief Executive Officer, you will provide inspirational leadership to Essex Wildlife Trust in accordance with its charitable objectives, providing clear direction, setting strategic goals, engaging all members, supporters, staff, stakeholders and volunteers for the effective delivery of the Trust's objectives, whilst ensuring that all Trust activities are legally compliant and executed to the highest standard.

You will deliver the strategic framework of the Trust, ensuring that all activities and initiatives align with the Trust's vision, mission, values and purpose. This includes setting long-term goals and objectives that prioritise wildlife conservation and community engagement. You will also be responsible for overseeing the Trust's subsidiaries (Essex Wildlife Sales, Essex Ecology, Thameside Nature Park and Chafford Gorges), ensuring strong financial performance for return on investments for funding conservation across Essex.

Upholding and embodying the Trust's vision, mission and values will guide your decision-making and actions. You will prioritise being impactful, collaborative, united and proactive in all aspects of the Trust's work, in order to achieve the Trust's vision of a county rich in wildlife where people are connected to nature.

Through the Strategic Leadership Team (SLT) and Operational Leadership Team (OLT), and dedicated combined workforce of employees and volunteers, you will ensure that the Trust's strategic vision and charitable aims and objectives are achieved via a culture that enables a high performing, high impact workforce, that inspires passion and commitment towards wildlife conservation. Nurturing and retaining talent for the leadership of the Trust is paramount, as is your communication that will be marked by passion, authority and clarity, instilling a shared understanding of the Trust's purpose.

We are seeking an innovative Chief Executive to lead Essex Wildlife Trust during a period of significant opportunity in green finance. With the emergence of established codes like Biodiversity Net Gain and Carbon Codes, as well as new, innovative opportunities, our CEO must have the vision and an entrepreneurial mindset to navigate and capitalise on these prospects.

The successful candidate will assess where to invest our time and efforts, integrating short and long-term green finance opportunities into their financial strategy and planning. This role requires forecasting abilities and strategic insight to position Essex Wildlife Trust at the forefront of sustainability initiatives.

Overseeing the implementation of the Trust's strategic framework, which revolves around restoring habitats, taking proactive conservation actions, and enabling wildlife to thrive in Essex, will be a key aspect of your role. Equally, you will build and nurture relationships with external stakeholders, including landowners, local authorities, and government agencies, in order to promote wildlife-friendly policies and establish meaningful partnerships.

Key Tasks

Leadership and Advising the Board

- Work with the Chair, Board of Trustees and the SLT to continue developing the strategic vision for the future of Essex Wildlife Trust.
- Provide strong leadership to Essex Wildlife Trust, ensuring staff and volunteers are engaged with the Trust's vision and motivated to deliver it.
- Lead, develop and motivate the SLT to deliver Essex Wildlife Trust's mission, empowering their directorates and operational teams to deliver against agreed operational plans and individual/team goals.
- Through the SLT and OLT and employees and volunteers, ensure that the Trust's strategic vision is achieved via a culture that enables a high performing, high impact combined workforce, that inspires passion and commitment towards wildlife conservation.
- Identify the key issues facing the Trust in both the short and long term, and respond to these while mitigating operational, reputational and financial risk.

External Relations and Engagement

- Be pro-active and vocal in communicating the vision, philosophy and achievements of Essex Wildlife Trust through external advocacy.
- An ambassador for Essex Wildlife Trust.
- A key and active strategic participation in the federated wildlife trust movement.
- Develop productive and mutually beneficial relationships with key partners and individuals in the public, private and voluntary sectors to further the Trust's aims and elicit ongoing support for our work.
- Ensure timely and effective engagement with the Trust's extensive membership.
- Lead the Trust's representation and participation in the federated Wildlife Trusts movement, engaging proactively with RSWT and building relationships with other individual Wildlife Trusts.
- Host the Trust's Annual General Meeting where you will provide updates on achievements, challenges and future plans to members and stakeholders, ensuring open communication and engagement.

Governance

- Keep abreast of legislative, regulatory and governance issues which may impact the Trust, and ensure that strategies are in place to mitigate these.
- Ensure that communication with Trustees is open, timely and effective.
- Ensure that Essex Wildlife Trust maintains financial security in both the short and long term, and has procedures to manage both financial and reputational risk.
- Ensure that Essex Wildlife Trust meets all legal and compliance requirements, including legislation relating to health and safety, data protection, employment, safeguarding and the regulatory framework for charities, as well as all requirements associated with fundraising.
- Oversee management activities of the Trust's subsidiary undertakings (Essex Wildlife Sales, Essex Ecology, Thameside Nature Park and Chafford Gorges) and affiliated local groups, and any related and/or associated ventures for which the Trust has management responsibility.
- The postholder will have overall responsibility for all committees (for example, Finance & Audit, Health & Safety) albeit some lead responsibility being delegated to members of the Strategic Leadership Team.

Operations and Delivery

- Work closely with the SLT to ensure their teams are accountable and empowered to deliver the smooth and effective day to day running of the Trust, meeting the delivery of operational plans and longer-term strategy, reporting to the Board on strategic and financial performance against agreed objectives on a regular basis.
- Ensure that Essex Wildlife Trust is able to respond rapidly to emerging opportunities, challenges and risks.
- Ensure the effective deployment of the Trust's resources of people, land, buildings, equipment and finance to deliver its objectives.

- Support a culture of feedback and learning and development that will encourage staff and volunteers to grow, flourish and enhance their skills.
- Actively promote a recognition culture in relation to volunteers, recognising volunteer impact and service, ensuring that volunteers and local groups remain integral to the operation of the organisation, and are encouraged and supported.

Person Specification

Skills, Knowledge and Experience

Passion for Wildlife Conservation

- Demonstrable understanding of environmental issues as they pertain to the aims and objectives of Essex Wildlife Trust, including a broad strategic view of the issues affecting Essex Wildlife Trust and its role in the voluntary sector.
- Demonstrable and genuine passion for wildlife conservation and environmental sustainability.
- Strong commitment to protecting and enhancing biodiversity in Essex.

Educational Background

- Hold a degree (or equivalent qualification)
- Additional qualifications Level 6 or above in business management, leadership, or nonprofit management are desirable (or demonstrate equivalent experience).

Personal Attributes

- Strong integrity and ethical conduct in professional and organisational practices.
- Resilient, adaptable, and capable of leading through change and uncertainty.
- Inspiring, visionary and capable of motivating others towards conservation excellence.
- Able to welcome, support and develop a diverse workforce and membership, promoting inclusivity and diversity of thought, background and history.

Strategic Vision and Strong Leadership

- Substantial leadership and senior management experience preferably at Chief Executive level, gained within a wildlife, environmental, community and/or not-for-profit organisation.
- Proven experience in developing and executing strategic plans that align with the organisation's mission and goals.
- Ability to inspire, empower and lead a diverse team of employees and volunteers towards achieving the Trust's strategic aims and objectives.

Stakeholder Engagement and Relationship Building

- Excellent interpersonal and communication skills, with the ability to engage effectively with stakeholders, including government bodies, local authorities, landowners, and community groups.
- Demonstratable experience of working with Boards, Chairpersons etc.
- Demonstrable track record of building and maintaining positive relationships with key stakeholders.

Communication and Organisational Skills

- Strong communication skills at all levels (public speaking, clear and persuasive writing, media relations, listening and engagement, negotiation and diplomacy, internal communication).
- Strong organisational abilities, with experience in overseeing complex projects and teams.
- Capable of making informed decisions and managing resources efficiently.
- Willingness to listen to other's opinions and understanding of differing needs and viewpoints.

Financial and Commercial Acumen

- Sound financial management skills, including budgeting, fundraising, and grant management.
- Clear understanding of charity finances, specifically restricted and unrestricted funds.
- Strong commercial and business management and leadership skills.
- Experience in diversifying funding streams and maximising financial resources for conservation initiatives.

Community Engagement and Advocacy

- Experience in top-level community engagement and advocacy, fostering public awareness and support for wildlife conservation.
- Skilled in promoting nature-based solutions and encouraging public participation in conservation activities.

Strategic Thinking and Innovation

- Proven ability to think strategically and innovatively, identifying new opportunities and approaches for wildlife conservation and the Trust as a whole.
- Capable of adapting to changing environments and emerging challenges, both internal and wider operating environment.

Collaboration and Partnership Development

- Collaborative approach to working with diverse stakeholders and partners to achieve strategic objectives.
- Experience in developing and nurturing strategic partnerships for conservation impact.

Advocacy and Policy Influence

- Knowledge of environmental policies and regulations, with the ability to advocate for wildlife-friendly policies and practices.
- Experience in influencing policy development and engaging with policymakers at local, regional, and national levels.

Commitment to People, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

- Excellent human resource and business leadership practices.
- Commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion in the workplace and organisational practices.
- Ability to foster an inclusive and supportive work environment for staff and volunteers.

Additional Information

- The role requires a keen interest in working for a charity that is determined to protect wildlife for the future and for the people of Essex.
- The role will involve working outside of standard office hours.
- The role requires the ability to drive, including a full driving licence and use of a vehicle, though pool vehicles may sometimes be available.
- The role is based at Great Wigborough, Essex, but requires regular travel across the county and beyond, with mileage paid for additional travel.

As a Disability Confident employer, we are committed to offering an interview to anyone with a disability that meets all the essential criteria for the post. Please let us know if you require any adjustments to make our recruitment process more accessible.

Essex Wildlife Trust Rewards

- Pension of 3% from you and 5% from EWT for qualifying staff.
- Enhanced annual leave allowance starting at 26 days, rising by one day a year to a maximum of 29 days plus bank holidays (pro-rata for part-time staff).
- Enhanced sick pay increasing with length of service.
- Staff days and staff social.
- Up to 20% discount on retail and food and beverage within EWS Nature Discovery Centres.
- Ability to take two days out annually to work in another part of the business.
- Employee Assistance Programme providing advice on many areas for you and your family, plus a counselling service you can access.
- Free Life Assurance worth three times basic salary (T&C's apply).