

# Finance Director

## Essex Wildlife Trust



**Essex**  
Wildlife Trust



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We are the county's leading nature conservation charity, committed to protecting wildlife and inspiring a lifelong love of nature. We are proudly one of the largest Wildlife Trusts in the UK.

This is the most important decade in the history of nature conservation and an exciting time to be joining us. If we are to tackle the climate crisis and the ecological crisis, we need the best people to rally around environmental protection.

Our values are [Impactful](#), [Collaborative](#), [United](#) and [Proactive](#).





## Message from the Interim CEO

Dear Prospective Applicant

I am delighted to invite you to consider the role of Finance Director at Essex Wildlife Trust. This is a unique opportunity for an experienced and visionary finance leader to play a crucial role in shaping the future of our organisation. As the senior expert in charity finance, you will have the overarching responsibility for ensuring the robustness of our financial practices, driving the development and implementation of long-term financial strategies, and ensuring the delivery of all relevant objectives and targets as outlined in our strategic planning processes.



Your role will be multifaceted, encompassing leadership of key functions within your directorate, including Finance, Risk and Compliance, IT and Data, Systems, Procurement, Governance, Business Continuity and Facilities Management. You will be instrumental in promoting high levels of financial literacy throughout the Trust, ensuring our financial sustainability and implementing corrective measures when necessary.

As a critical member of our Strategic Leadership Team, you will contribute significantly to the strategic direction of Essex Wildlife Trust. You will work closely with our Board of Trustees, acting as a trusted advisor to myself, senior colleagues and the Board of Trustees, providing specialist expertise. Your role will involve scrutinising and evaluating our financial performance, ensuring we meet our charitable objectives and fulfilling the requirements of the Charity Commission.

We are looking for a leader who embodies our core values – Impactful, Collaborative, United, and Proactive. You will model these values and help embed them into our culture and ways of working. This position requires a suitably qualified Accountant with substantial senior financial management experience, preferably within the charity sector. You should have a strong understanding of compliance and governance within charitable organisations and a proven track record of leading high-performing teams and business transformations.

If you are passionate about making a difference and have the expertise and vision to lead our finance function, we encourage you to apply.

Thank you for considering this exciting opportunity. I look forward to receiving your application.

Warm regards, Rich Yates

**Interim CEO**



## About Essex Wildlife Trust

**We are a local wildlife charity supported by over 1,600 volunteers and 38,000 members. We are one of 46 other Wildlife Trusts across the UK that combined make up the federation of Wildlife Trusts under the Royal Society of Wildlife Trusts.**

**Founded in 1959 by a group of pioneering volunteers with the foresight to recognise the importance of a county-based Trust to protect wildlife and inspire a lifelong love of nature.**

**As one of the largest Wildlife Trusts in the country, we now have the benefit of over sixty years of experience in tackling environmental challenges, spanning terrestrial, freshwater, and marine ecosystems.**

**There has never been a more important time for Essex to have a Wildlife Trust that delivers high impact. We are at the centre of the nature crisis: our county is one of the most over-developed in the UK, a country which is, according to the Biodiversity Intactness Index, one of the most nature depleted countries on Earth.**

**With our track record of delivering tangible benefits for wildlife across the county, we are well placed to support stakeholders, landowners, and decision-makers to deliver solutions that secure wildlife gain and help nature's recovery, while also widening access to nature and bringing people and wildlife closer together.**

### **How we are run**

**Essex Wildlife Trust has a Board of Trustees that consists of 13 members, all of whom are unpaid volunteers. The Board meets around six times a year and is responsible for the overall governance and direction of the Trust, whereas operational management of the Trust is the responsibility of the Chief Executive Officer and Senior Managers of the Trust.**

**As well as Essex Wildlife Trust Ltd, there are a number of company subsidiaries which are; Essex Wildlife Sales Ltd (retail operations and visitor centre sales), Essex Ecology Services Ltd (consultancy arm), and two locational subsidiaries of Thameside Nature Park Ltd and Chafford Gorges Ltd. TNP, Chafford Gorges and EWT are all charitable bodies, registered with the Charities Commission.**



### Our Strategic Plan:

Our strategic plan serves as the roadmap guiding our actions, decisions and resource allocation to achieve our goals and objectives. It outlines a comprehensive framework that aligns our mission, vision and values with the dynamic external environment.

A full copy of our Strategic Plan (2020-2030) can be found on our [website](#).

### Our Vision:

**"A county rich in wildlife with people connected to nature".**

We are dependent on the natural world in every aspect of our lives. The air that we breathe. The water we drink. The food we eat. Our physical and mental health. We know that the state of nature is the best barometer for the overall health of our planet, and we know that the more connected we feel to nature, the more we strive to protect it. Bringing people close to nature is the key to unlocking a better, brighter future for everyone. We are ambitious for our county's future. We want Essex to be known for the richness of its wildlife, which will be the hallmark of a healthier, happier county.

We want Essex to be wilder because we need a wilder Essex. We want people to value natural capital, but we also want wildlife to be valued for its own sake, because of its beauty, its complexity, and its enduring power to inspire.

## Our Mission:

**"Protecting wildlife and inspiring a lifelong love of nature".**

We will achieve our vision of being a county rich in wildlife and connecting people with nature by focusing our efforts and resources on two areas: protecting and inspiring. Modern conservation must inspire people beyond the conservation community. We cannot do it all ourselves.

In this way, we see our engagement work as 'indirect conservation' because the outcome should be the same: a better deal for wildlife. Although we have relatively large landholdings in Essex, we cover a proportionally small area of the county and only some of these are coastal. If every garden in Essex were to become a mini nature reserve, the amount of space for nature in our county would be significantly higher.

We serve the entire county. We want to inspire people of all ages and backgrounds to develop a lifelong love of nature and to enable access, covering every area of Essex, urban as well as rural, coastal as well as terrestrial.

## Our Values:

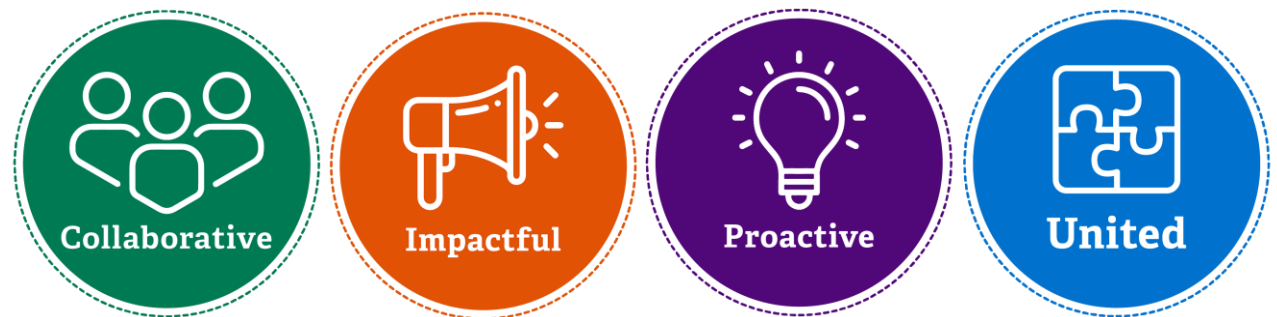
Our values are fundamental to who we are and how we operate as an organisation.

**Impactful:** We are science-led. We demonstrate impact across all activities. We start with the end in mind. We recognise the power of storytelling.

**Collaborative:** We work with partners for the greater good. We explore new opportunities and thinking. We embrace innovation and change. We share our vision and expertise.

**United:** We all play a part in achieving our mission. We show a united front. We support colleagues. We work together as one.

**Proactive:** We are solutions focused. We have a can-do attitude. We are optimistic about the future. We are not afraid to lead.





# Our strategic framework

## 1. Restore

- Objective 1.1**  
Leading wildlife gain across the county
- Objective 1.2**  
Enhancing the conservation value of our land

## 2. Take Action

- Objective 2.1**  
Creating places of wonder
- Objective 2.2**  
Bringing people and wildlife closer together

## 3. Thrive

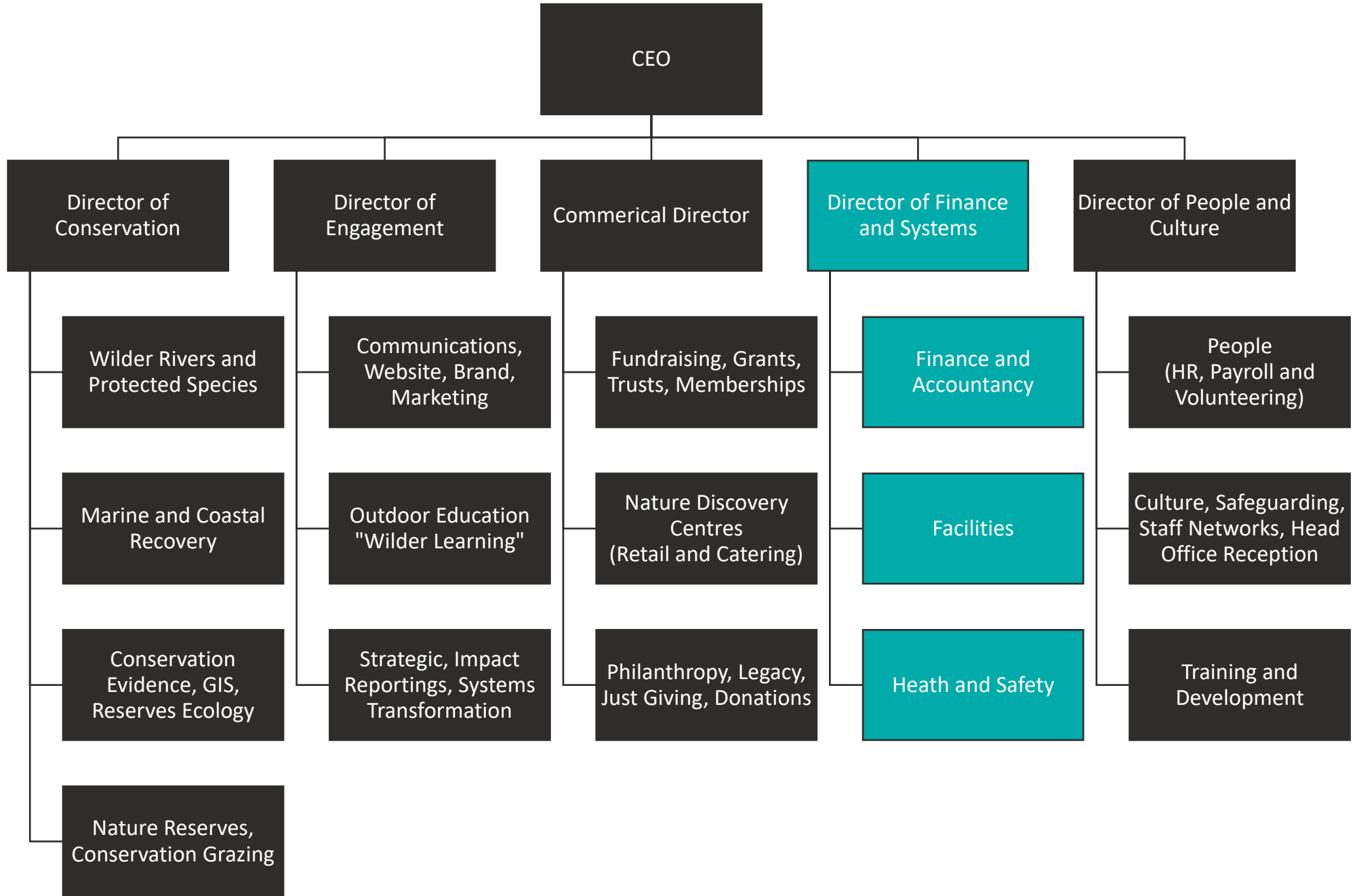
- Objective 3.1** Working together for wildlife
- Objective 3.2** Making the best use of our resources

### Delivering our strategy

We will support the delivery of the strategy by ensuring that all staff, volunteers, and members understand how they can contribute to achieving our aims and objectives and are supported by clear, relevant work plans and an Impact Framework that drive the direction of travel and measure success.



# Organisational Structure



## About the Role

As the Trust's senior expert in charity finance, the Finance Director has overall responsibility for ensuring robust financial practises at the Trust, driving the development and implementation of long-term financial strategies, and ensuring the delivery of all relevant objectives and targets as set out in the Trust's strategic planning processes.

This role is responsible for leading the development of key functions within the Finance & Systems directorate, including: Finance; Risk and Compliance, including Health and Safety; IT and Data; Systems; Procurement; Governance; Business Continuity; and Facilities Management.

Taking ownership of the Trust's financial performance and the overall financial literacy of the organisation, the postholder helps ensure ongoing financial sustainability, recommending remedial action if this falls below agreed budgets, and driving the delivery of the Finance Strategy for the Trust, ensuring proper controls are in place.

As a member of the Strategic Leadership Team (SLT), the Finance Director contributes to the strategic direction of the organisation, working closely with the Board of Trustees, and acting as a trusted advisor to the CEO, senior colleagues, and Trustees, providing specialist expertise.

A key aspect of the role is to scrutinise and evaluate the financial performance of the Trust, reporting progress against strategic objectives and ensuring that the organisation is delivering against its charitable objectives and fulfilling requirements of the Charity Commission.

The postholder models the Trust's four core values – Impactful, Collaborative, United and Proactive – and ensures that our people understand our culture and adhere to it at all times, working collaboratively to embed it in our ways of working.



## Job Description

### Finance

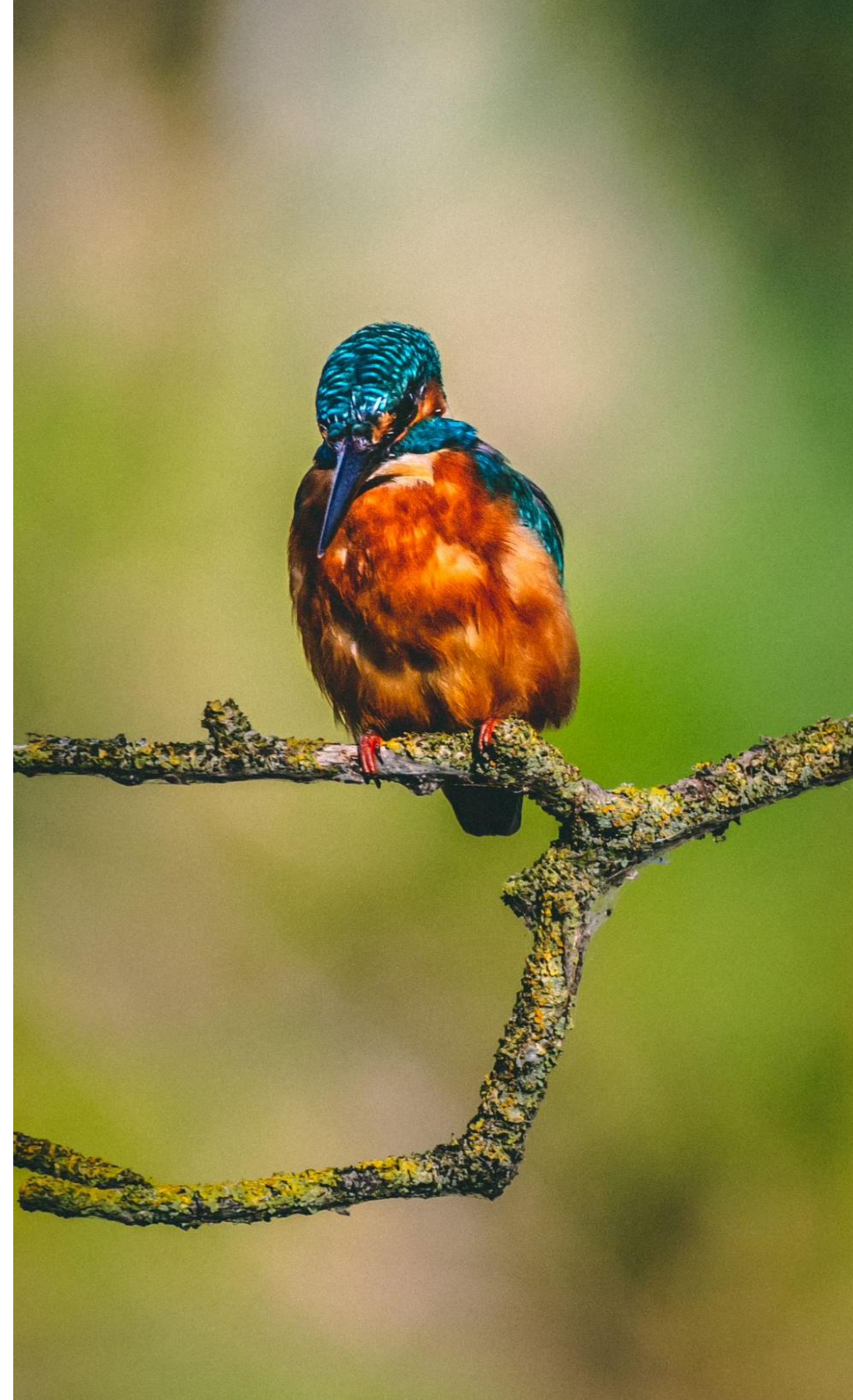
- Lead on the development and delivery of the Trust's financial strategies and ensure that appropriate and effective financial controls are in place.
- Review and ensure that the best possible financial management systems and processes are in place and being used effectively throughout the organisation.
- Take responsibility for the Trust's financial performance, ensuring its ongoing financial viability and recommending remedial action when required.
- Take responsibility for the overall financial literacy of the organisation and promote a culture of continuous development and improvement of financial knowledge, putting in place training and development where appropriate.
- Ensure that the Trust is operating in an efficient manner and working to fully costed business plans, whilst monitoring its commercial performance and advising the CEO and Trustees of any corrective actions that might be required.
- Apply a strong commercial approach to strengthening the financial elements of the Trust's strategies, working with the CEO, SLT and Board.
- Oversee the financial planning process and providing high-quality organisational development to support the delivery of the Trust's mission and strategic objectives.
- Ensure that budgets and resources are managed effectively across the Trust.
- Effectively horizon scan to identify future constraints and external issues that could impact the Trust's strategies, recommending creative and cost-effective solutions.
- Lead the development and implementation of cost recovery policies and practices for covering core work and facilities.



- Ensure the charity complies with all regulatory and tax requirements.
- Ensure the appropriateness of key assumptions included in the charity's annual budget proposals and its forecasting, providing advice to the CEO, senior colleagues and the Board as required.

## **IT, Data and Systems**

- Provide leadership and drive the development, implementation, and evaluation of IT, data and systems projects in line with organisational objectives.
- Manage the high-level relationship with the Trust's external IT provider, TechWyse.
- Ensure the continuous development of IT, data and systems strategies that respond to the existing known challenges and also identify future opportunities to deploy solutions that add value to the business and its stakeholders.
- Liaise with other departments, determining their IT needs and data and systems requirements through a business partnering approach, supporting teams across the Trust to collaborate and use systems, processes, and technological solutions in an effective way.
- Develop relevant metrics and indicators to provide insights that enable the Trust to drive high performance in teams.
- Identify vulnerabilities, the need for upgrades, and opportunities for improvement.
- Propose strategic solutions, either utilising existing tools or recommending new systems and software.
- Build and maintain relationships with external advisors and suppliers, overseeing contractual commitments and ensuring they are aligned with organisation needs.
- Develop the Trust's risk management framework and ensure that the organisational risk register is regularly reviewed and reported on to relevant internal and external stakeholders.
- Act as the Trust's Data Protection Officer.
- Access expert advice on data protection as required and lead the internal management of any complex cases/risk areas.



- Develop systems and processes to effectively manage contracting arrangements and ensure that any associated risks to the charity are appropriately mitigated.

### **Health and Safety**

- Ensure all Trust processes and practices adhere to Health & Safety Law and best practice, representing the Trust as the designated H&S Lead.
- Chair any relevant high-level H&S management groups and oversee all H&S reporting to the Board of Trustees and Subsidiary Boards.
- Lead on embedding a positive culture of Health & Safety across the whole organisation.

### **Facilities**

- Have strategic oversight of the Trust's buildings and facilities, ensuring safe and high-quality environments that are operationally appropriate for staff, volunteers, visitors, and users.
- Ensure professional facilities management services are delivered in line with the Trust's core values, policies and procedures.

### **Procurement**

- Oversee the Trust's procurement strategy and processes to maximise efficiencies with suppliers, ensuring compliance with the Trust's sustainability agenda and achieving value for money for the Trust.

### **Business Continuity**

- Ensure robust planning and processes are developed and implemented to manage the emergency closure of various aspects of the Trust. through the development of appropriate business continuity plans and strategies.







## Person Specification

### Knowledge and Skills

- A professionally qualified accountant, with substantial senior financial management experience, with experience of charity accounting and financial regulation.
- Management qualification or equivalent experience.
- Experience of successfully running a financial function in a complex organisation.
- A high level of understanding regarding compliance and governance within charitable organisations.
- An understanding of the risks and challenges of working within the conservation sector.
- Demonstrable experience within or working with an IT, data and systems transformation function.
- Experience of leading and developing a high-performing, multi-disciplinary team.
- Experience of leading business transformations, planning and executing programmes to harmonise processes and converge IT systems, which are outward facing as well as internal.
- Experience ensuring that operational work aligns to strategic aims and organisational outcomes.
- Experience having reviewed and revised internal processes to ensure maximum organisational efficiency including high level involvement in organisational restructure and change processes.
- Advanced knowledge of Health & Safety.

### Additional Information

- The role involves occasional weekend or evening work, for example Board Meetings, new member meetings, AGM and special events.
- The role requires an interest in working for a charity that is determined to protect wildlife for the future and for the people of Essex.
- 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.





## Terms

This role is a permanent full-time position. We are proud of the flexible working practices at Essex Wildlife Trust including offering flexible homeworking arrangements.

The post holder will be based at our Head Office at the beautiful Abbots Hall in Great Wigborough, near Colchester.

Annual leave entitlement starts at 26 days per annum increasing annually to 29 days plus Bank Holidays. We provide company sick pay increasing with length of service, an employee assistance programme, a combined 8% contribution pension scheme, staff social days, peer nominated Merit scheme and discounts in our Nature Discovery Centres.

## How to apply

To make an application, please complete an online application form on our website by 12:00 noon on Wednesday 24 July 2024. Please note, there will be two rounds of interviews with first week commencing 12 August 2024.

Thank you for your interest in this position and I look forward to receiving your application.

Rich Yates, Interim CEO of Essex Wildlife Trust

