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Role Description

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Deadline: 5pm on 21 November 2025

1 Applying for this post

If you feel you meet the role requirements, we would love to hear from you. Please tell us about yourself by submitting a CV with covering letter.

If you would like to know more about the post, please contact Lucy Rogers, VWT CEO, at lucy.rogers@vwt.org.uk or Prof Robbie McDonald, VWT Chair of Trustees at r.mcdonald@exeter.ac.uk

Deadline for applications is 5pm on 21 November 2025
by email to lucy.rogers@vwt.org.uk

Interview dates

First interview Friday 16 January 2026

Second interview February – Date to be confirmed

2 Background to Vincent Wildlife Trust

Today, at fifty, VWT is respected internationally as a leader in developing and implementing innovative evidence-led approaches that halt and reverse declines in threatened mammal species such as otter, horseshoe bats and, more recently, pine marten.

This is possible thanks to a firm financial base left by our founder, the late Honourable Vincent Weir, that is independent of membership income. Long-term financial security has enabled VWT to focus on mammals with particular and often challenging conservation needs, with which other organisations are unwilling or unable to engage.

For example, acquiring and managing greater horseshoe bat maternity roosts and surrounding land in the 1980s and 1990s enabled VWT to protect 50% of the British population of this European Protected Species. Our bat reserves remain a unique resource as exemplars of roost management. Combined with research into their ecology and habitat needs, this has led to the population of these rare bats more than doubling in recent years.

While VWT is not a campaigning or lobbying organisation, our expertise, advice and impartial evidence provide support to a wide range of decision makers.

Over the last ten years, VWT has grown in size and impact with the aim of delivering significant change to the fortunes of threatened mammals in the UK, Ireland and parts of mainland Europe. It is delivering an increasing number of flagship projects such as the nationally important Pine Marten Recovery Project, Horseshoes Heading East, Martens on the Move and Landscapes for Lessers.

As we prepare for the next 50 years we aim to continue to drive a step-change in the size and effectiveness of VWT's mission. Our strong track record of successful evidence-led conservation work shows what can be achieved and inspires us to continue.

This post is to replace the current Chair who is coming to the end of his term in 2026.

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

3 Job Description

Location and travel requirements

The Trust's Head Office is based at Eastnor, near Ledbury in Herefordshire, where 12 of our staff are based. The rest of our team work from home offices, including two in the Republic of Ireland.

The Trustees meet for four board meetings each year at a range of locations, with an expectation of one online meeting each year and at least one overnight meeting. Field visits are sometimes part of the meeting format and could be anywhere in Britain or Ireland.

Remuneration

The role of Chair is not accompanied by any financial remuneration, although expenses for travel and subsistence may be claimed.

Time commitment

Chairing of the Trust requires a significant time commitment. It involves preparing for and being available to Chair quarterly meetings of the Board of Trustees and maintaining regular contact with the CEO. Routine meetings with the CEO facilitate oversight, good management and dealing with routine administrative duties. At a minimum, effective performance of the role will require between eight and ten days' commitment each year.

Reporting

To the Board of Trustees.

Role

Working with the Board and CEO, the Chair will enable delivery of the Charity's mission and vision, providing inclusive leadership to the Board of Trustees, ensuring that each Trustee fulfils their duties and responsibilities for the effective governance of the charity. They will be an ambassador and the public face of the charity in partnership with the Chief Executive.

Principal Responsibilities

With other Trustees, to hold the charity 'In Trust' for current and future beneficiaries by:

- Provide confident leadership, strategic direction to the Charity and the Board, balancing the need for long term vision with short term delivery to ensure that the Charity has maximum impact for its cause
- Ensure that Trustees fulfil their fiduciary duties and responsibilities for the effective governance of the Charity
- Ensure that the Board operates within its charitable objectives and adheres to charitable and company law.

Governance

- Ensure good governance of the Charity
- Develop the knowledge and capability of the Board of Trustees, and ensure its performance is kept under review
- Ensure that the Board of Trustees retains the right balance of skills, knowledge and experience needed to govern and lead the charity effectively
- Ensure there are adequate systems in place to enable the Board to identify, manage and mitigate risk
- Line manage and cultivate a strong, constructive working relationship with the Chief Executive for the effective delivery of the Trust's Strategic Plan and Operational Programmes
- Conduct an annual appraisal and remuneration review for the Chief Executive in consultation with other Trustees
- Ensure that the Board fulfils its duties to ensure sound financial health of the charity, with systems in place to ensure financial accountability
- Chair meetings of the Board of Trustees effectively and efficiently, bringing impartiality and objectivity to the decision-making process

External relations

- Act as an ambassador and advocate for the Charity
- Maintain close relationships with key stakeholders, funders and influencers
- Represent the Charity at external events when appropriate

Personal characteristics and experience

Essential qualities and attributes of all Trustees

- Willingness and ability to understand and accept their responsibilities and liabilities as Trustees and to act in the best interests of the organisation
- Ability to think creatively and strategically, to exercise good, independent judgement and to work effectively as a board member
- Effective communication skills and willingness to participate actively in discussion
- A strong personal commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion
- Enthusiasm for our vision and mission
- Willingness to lead according to our values
- Commitment to Nolan's seven principles of public life: selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership

In addition to the qualities and attributes required of a Trustee of the Charity, the Chair must also meet the following requirements:

Personal characteristics

- Demonstrable passion and commitment to the NGO conservation sector and the mission of the Trust
- An ability to communicate with impact, and to lead and inspire the Board, the staff and VWT's partners
- Strong networking capabilities and strong existing networks that can be utilised for the benefit of the charity

- An ability to foster and promote a collaborative team environment
- Strong inter-personal and relationship building abilities and confidence in playing an ambassadorial role

Experience

- Have operated at a senior strategic leadership level within an organisation
- Successful track record of achievement throughout their career, preferably in the environmental sector
- Experience of working with High Net Worth Individuals (HNWI) and donor community
- Experience of charity governance and working with or as part of a Board of Trustees
- Financial management expertise and a broad understanding of charity finance issues
- Experience of external representations and managing stakeholders
- Significant experience of chairing meetings and events

4 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 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 taken through an induction programme, arranged with the Chair and CEO according to the individual Trustee's needs.

5 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 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.

Conflicts of Interest

The Trust has a robust process for dealing with any potential conflicts of interest that may arise in the performance of its duties and in the delivery of its work programme. Any perceived conflict of interest need not preclude prospective candidates from applying for the post. However, in their application prospective candidates should note any aspect of their personal or professional life that has the potential to create a conflict of interest and suggest why this should not be an impediment to their appointment as Chair.

Terms

The Charity's Chair (and board members) will serve a three-year term to be eligible for re-appointment for a maximum of two additional terms. We expect the successful candidate to first take on the role of Trustee and attend a number of meetings in that capacity before appointment as Chair.

Equity, Diversity and inclusion

Vincent Wildlife Trust values diversity and is committed to supporting an inclusive culture. We wish to provide an environment where everyone, regardless of background, characteristics, identities or abilities can develop their full potential. Vincent Wildlife Trust is committed to equal opportunities in all its employment and volunteering practices, policies and procedures.

To help us monitor our recruitment process to ensure they meet our Equal Opportunities Policy, all applicants are requested to download and complete our Diversity Monitoring form. Please return this with your completed Application Form.