

Recruitment Pack



Wessex
Rivers Trust





About Us

Wessex RT is a company limited by guarantee (company no. 06822819) and a registered charity (charity no. 1130991). We are dedicated to conserving chalk streams and rivers — principally the Stour, Avon, Test, Itchen and Meon — across Dorset, Wiltshire, Hampshire and the Isle of Wight.

We focus on delivering practical environmental enhancements, championing the catchment-based approach, and engaging people in the importance of healthy rivers.

Wessex RT is part of the UK's Rivers Trust movement, a network of over 60 local trusts that has been at the forefront of influencing policy and delivering catchment-wide initiatives for more than 30 years. This membership places us in an excellent position to shape and deliver action for these unique, threatened and globally important habitats.



Our Vision

Our vision is for healthy rivers for wildlife and people.

Over the last 15 years, the Trust has grown from a single part-time employee to more than 25 staff, with turnover rising from a few thousand pounds to over £1 million.

We hold healthy financial reserves, enjoy a strong reputation with stakeholders regionally and nationally, and are known for chalk stream restoration, schools outreach, and catchment leadership.

We seek to increase the value of rivers to society, building long-term support for the future of these fragile environments. We deliver this through:

- Direct restoration of rivers and floodplains
- Public education and community engagement
- Partnerships, including hosting the Hampshire Avon and Test & Itchen Catchment Partnerships and working with adjoining catchments

A group of people, including adults and children, are walking away from the camera on a grassy path. They are heading towards a river in the distance. The sky is blue with some clouds. The path is lined with trees and grass. The overall scene is peaceful and natural.

Our People

At Wessex Rivers Trust, our people are our greatest strength. We're a small but highly skilled team of environmental managers, communicators and educators - all deeply committed to improving the health of our rivers.

Some of the things we're proud of:

- We've delivered award-winning river restoration work alongside partners like the Environment Agency and Southern Water.
- We've grown a passionate community of volunteers
- We've developed strong education and outreach programmes that connect schools and communities with their local rivers.
- We've become a trusted voice in river catchment management — shaping decisions that affect water quality, biodiversity and climate resilience.

We value collaboration, initiative, kindness and a love of rivers. If that sounds like you - you'll fit right in.

Our Area

The Wessex region is home to some of the most iconic and ecologically rich rivers in the UK:

- The River Test and River Itchen are globally rare chalk streams, celebrated for their clear waters, rich biodiversity, and heritage of fly fishing.
- The vast Hampshire Avon system with its many tributaries is one of the most important rivers in the UK for biodiversity, supporting Atlantic salmon, sea trout, eel, and aquatic invertebrates.
- The River Stour is varied and predominantly rural, including chalk headwaters rising from the Cranborne Chase National Landscape.
- The New Forest catchment comprises a mosaic of streams, wetlands, and heathland habitats, home to an exceptionally rich and unique flora and fauna within a famed but small National Park.
- In East Hampshire, rivers like the Meon and Hamble meander through urban settings to harbours often containing rich mudflats and wading bird populations.
- The Isle of Wight hosts a varied and complex series of watercourses, which, although generally small, have a strong link to the Solent and marine environments.

These rivers, and the surrounding landscapes of chalk downland, wet woodland, and lowland farmland, are precious but fragile. Our work aims to protect and restore them in the face of mounting challenges, and raise peoples' awareness to ensure their stewardship into the future.





About the Role:

Head of Business & Finance



Wessex
Rivers Trust



Role Profile

The Head of Business and Finance will provide strategic leadership across the charity's financial management, business operations and organisational governance, ensuring the long-term sustainability and effectiveness of the organisation. The role is responsible for leading financial planning, budgeting, forecasting and reporting, maintaining robust financial controls, managing cashflow and reserves, and ensuring compliance with charity accounting standards, grant conditions and donor requirements. Working closely with the Board and its committees, the postholder will provide high-quality financial insight to support informed decision-making and the delivery of the charity's strategic objectives.

The role also leads the organisation's business management functions, overseeing contracts, procurement, commercial arrangements and legal commitments. Acting as a trusted adviser to the Board and Senior Management Team, the Head of Business and Finance will identify and manage organisational risks, develop effective contract management processes, and work with external legal and professional advisers where specialist support is required. The postholder will ensure that business processes are efficient, transparent and deliver value for money.

In addition, the Head of Business and Finance will oversee the charity's organisational infrastructure, including office operations, facilities, IT systems, governance and business support services. They will ensure that employment policies, organisational procedures and internal controls remain compliant, effective and fit for purpose, while driving continuous improvement across the organisation. As a member of the Senior Management Team, the postholder will promote a culture of accountability, collaboration and high performance, providing leadership to colleagues and contributing to the overall success and development of the charity.

Role Summary

This is a rare opportunity to help take the Trust on the next stage of its development journey from the core of the organisation, playing a key role in securing its mission for rivers. We are seeking a well-rounded professional to take up the position of Head of Business & Finance: this is a new role which will be responsible for providing strategic and operational oversight of the Trust's core business functions, spanning finance, contracts, legal, and organisational support functions including governance.

The postholder will ensure the organisation maintains strong financial controls, an accountability culture, robust contractual and legal arrangements, and efficient business processes, that help manage risk and support the delivery of the charity's mission and objectives.

The role will also oversee the core functions of HR, administration, organisational resources, and operational systems, ensuring compliance with legal requirements and supporting a positive, effective working environment.

The role will be a member of the Senior Management Team who, working closely with the CEO, take collective responsibility for the Trust's operations, ensuring effectiveness, integration, professionalism and alignment to policy and strategy.





Skills

Essential Skills/Experience:

- Knowledge of charitable finance and trading subsidiaries.
- Working understanding of relevant legal terminology.
- Sound knowledge of contracts and agreements.
- Well-developed understanding of partnership working in practice.
- Educated to at least degree level
- Relevant finance qualification
- Interest in, and commitment to, the natural environment
- Career experience as Financial Controller or similar.
- Experience of reviewing and managing contracts, service agreements or grant agreements.
- Experience of supporting governance, compliance and risk management processes.
- Experience of successfully managing staff.

Desirable Skills/Experience

- Understanding of Human and Business Resources in theory and in practice.
- Financial management within the charity, public or not-for profit sector.



Benefits to You

We know that looking after our rivers begins with looking after our people. Here's what we offer:

Pay

We benchmark our salaries against the sector to ensure fairness and competitiveness. All roles are paid at or above the Real Living Wage.

Pension

We offer a workplace pension scheme, equating to a 9% contribution.

Holidays

All full-time staff receive 25 days annual leave plus bank holidays. Part-time staff receive a pro-rata allowance.

Flexible Working

We support flexible and hybrid working where possible, recognising that life is busy and different ways of working help everyone thrive.

Health and Wellbeing

We offer access to an Employee Assistance Programme providing confidential advice, mental health support and counselling.

Learning and Development

We want you to grow with us. We support professional development through training, CPD opportunities, and learning alongside experienced colleagues.

Team Culture

Our team culture is friendly, supportive and mission-driven. We enjoy team away days, river walks, shared learning sessions - and a good lunch spot never goes unnoticed!