

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



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:
Communications Officer



Wessex
Rivers Trust



Role Profile

The main purpose of the role is to build the Trust's profile by promoting its work of protecting and restoring rivers, increasing the public understanding of the importance of chalk stream and river conservation, and broadening people's knowledge and empowering them to act.

Reporting to the CEO but working closely with all teams within the Trust, the role will deploy a range of approaches to inform and inspire current and new audiences across the communities we want to reach. This includes celebrating project successes, changing attitudes and behaviours, demonstrating our impact, and bringing our work to life using vibrant images, headline data, and meaningful stories. Keeping tabs on the effectiveness of our communications will be part of the role, as well as planning and innovating. External partnerships are of fundamental importance to the Trust, and the role will involve working with a range of external contacts on joint initiatives and, from time to time, the media.

Role Summary

The Communications & Engagement Officer plays a key role in promoting the work and impact of Wessex Rivers Trust through effective communications, digital engagement, and brand management. Working closely with colleagues across the organisation, the role is responsible for delivering the Trust's annual communications plan, supporting project and campaign communications, and acting as a first point of contact for media and public enquiries.

The postholder will lead on maintaining and developing the Trust's online presence, including website management, social media engagement, e-newsletters, and digital storytelling, ensuring content is engaging, accessible, and aligned with organisational objectives. They will also oversee the production of printed communications materials, including the Trust's magazine Wessex Rivers News, promotional resources, and event signage.

The role involves building strong relationships with external partners and stakeholders, supporting community and supporter events, and ensuring consistent application of the Wessex Rivers Trust brand across all communications. The successful candidate will be creative, organised, and proactive, with the ability to use analytics and audience insight to continually improve engagement and communications effectiveness.





Skills

Essential Skills:

- Sound knowledge of digital communications and how best to gain followers and engagement
- Knowledge of the use of printed communication materials in dissemination and promotion
- At least two years' experience of working in communications
- Proven record of organising and delivering communications to a variety of audiences
- Good IT skills, including use of Office 365 and social media
- Effective website maintenance and development
- Able to communicate with a wide range of audiences
- Excellent administrative and organisational skills
- Ability to manage workload effectively and prioritise to demanding timelines
- Experience of working according to Safeguarding and wider Health & Safety policies / legislation
- Adept at creating positive, professional relationships with a wide range of people
- Highly resourceful and creative, with a proven ability to solve problems
- Ambitious, self-motivated and target driven and able to work on own initiative
- Genuine enthusiasm and passionate about communicating with people about chalk streams in the Wessex region



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!