

Recruitment Brief

Directors / Trustees



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 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 Director / Trustee



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Role Profile

Wessex RT is governed by a board of directors which meets quarterly. The board provides guidance on Wessex RT's strategy, key objectives and targets, and major decisions involving the use of its resources. Day-to-day responsibilities are delegated to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and other staff.

Wessex RT funds its activities through supporters' subscriptions, grants from trusts, gifts, service level agreements and a variety of river restoration and educational projects.

Directors are appointed for the skills they can contribute to the company's governance and activities. They must observe the highest standards of impartiality, integrity and objectivity and ensure that high standards of corporate governance are observed at all times.

Wessex RT is committed to encouraging equality, diversity and inclusion at all levels of its governance and workforce, and eliminating unlawful discrimination. It is our aim that our staff and directors / trustees are representative of all sections of society, and for each to feel respected and able to give their best irrespective of their background.

Role Summary

Wessex RT is seeking applications for up to three new members of its board of directors, who are also trustees of the charity, to help it grow and develop its vital environmental and educational work. The board has particularly identified the need to bolster its expertise in finance, communications and education.

Directors of Wessex RT are expected to prepare for and attend four board meetings each year. They may also be asked to serve on committees of the board according to their experience and expertise, or to fill a board role such as chair or vice-chair.

There is no minimum or maximum period of appointment. Directors give their time at no cost to Wessex RT although they are able to claim reasonable out of pocket costs if any are incurred.

As a director and charity trustee, successful applicants will have to ensure that Wessex RT undertakes the work for which it has been established and will be responsible for developing and maintaining a high standard of governance. Terms of reference for Wessex RT's directors can be found at www.wessexrt.org.uk/vacancies.html.





Skills

Essential Skills:

- Commitment to Wessex RT's mission with knowledge of, and a strong personal interest in, some areas of its work.
- A willingness to act corporately on Wessex RT's board of directors and to contribute to board discussions.
- An interest in, and understanding of, the roles and responsibilities of a charity trustee.
- An ability to address difficult issues with energy and diplomacy, and to work with Wessex RT's board in reaching conclusions.

Desirable Skills for the role:

- A proven track record of working at a senior level with experience of managing organisations.
- Prior experience as a company director and/or charity trustee with an ability to exercise judgement across a broad spectrum of policy issues.
- Prior experience of the education, financial services, IT, land management or communications sectors.
- Experience of fundraising in the charitable sector.
- Broad expertise in issues surrounding river and catchment management.



Benefits to You

Becoming a Director of Wessex Rivers Trust offers the opportunity to:

- Play a pivotal role in protecting and restoring some of the world's most important chalk streams and river habitats.
- Help to guide a thriving, growing charity at an exciting stage of development.
- Collaborate with a dedicated board, an experienced senior team, and leaders across conservation, policy, and community engagement.
- Enhance your governance, strategic planning, and stakeholder engagement skills in a respected environmental organisation.
- Connect with influential partners in the environmental, charitable, and corporate sectors regionally and nationally.
- Advocate for nature recovery, climate resilience, and community engagement in river conservation.
- Contribute your expertise and passion to a cause that improves both the environment and people's lives across Wessex.