



# Chief Executive Officer

## Job Information

**Education | Exploration | Adventure**



28 March 2022

Dear Applicant

Thank you for your interest in the post of Chief Executive at SOEC.

SOEC has a long and inspirational history and we hope that we can inspire you to join us and lead our organisation into the next phase of its development.

Throughout the last 2 challenging years our small core team of staff have remained committed to facilitating outdoor learning. The organisation has been in existence for 75 years, and our Centres for 80. We seek to continue our recovery from the pandemic by recruiting a new, dynamic, resilient Chief Executive with leadership and business skills, inspiration, motivation and vision, and the experience to take SOEC to where it needs to be.

SOEC is primarily an educational organisation and we are looking for someone who can develop and guide the organisation in this direction while keeping true to our charitable aims.

SOEC stands ready for the next major stage of its development and there has never been a time of greater opportunity for a committed and innovative management team to move our organisation forward.

To apply for the post please complete an application form and return it with your CV to [admin@soec.org.uk](mailto:admin@soec.org.uk) by 22 April 2022.

The dates may be subject to change and we will keep applicants informed if this is the case.

To find out more about the role before applying please contact [admin@soec.org.uk](mailto:admin@soec.org.uk)

Yours sincerely

*Gavin Calder*

*Dave Preece*

Gavin Calder  
**Chair, SOEC Ltd**

Dave Preece  
**Chair, SEOECA**



# Introduction

SOEC is an independent Scottish charity providing quality learning opportunities for schools and groups.

Our Mission is ***to inspire, motivate and empower young people to develop the qualities and skills they will need to survive and thrive in their future.***

We do this by offering outdoor learning experiences at our 3 residential outdoor learning centres in Scotland and their surroundings. We have Centres as undernoted, and also an office in Biggar where a small Head Office team is currently located.



- Belmont Centre, Meigle
- Broomlee Centre, West Linton
- Dounans Centre, Aberfoyle

We understand the huge impact that going on an outdoor residential can have for young people.

We want to make a positive difference to the lives of as many young people as possible.

We support [A Vision for Young People 2021-2031](#) which looks to guarantee all young people in Scotland a residential experience.

## Governance

SOEC is the wholly owned subsidiary of the charity Scottish Environmental & Outdoor Education Centres Association. The Chief Executive reports to a [Board of Directors and Trustees](#) and manages the organisation through leadership of the Senior Management Team.

The SMT currently consists of 3 Centre Managers plus the Admin and Finance Officers.

Each Centre has a staff team, with tutors working between all 3 Centres when required.

Each Centre provides outdoor learning, meals and accommodation; or a combination thereof.

We welcome 12,000 young people to our Centres each year. We want to do more.



## Our History

SOEC Ltd is the wholly owned subsidiary of the charity Scottish Environmental & Outdoor Education Centres Association with its origins in the “Camps Act” of 1939. This enlightened piece of legislation, coming towards the end of an extended period of severe economic depression, reflected government concern about the health of children - particularly those from inner city areas. The Act set aside very substantial funds for the construction of around 25 Residential Outdoor Centres in England and Wales, and a further 5 in Scotland.

Work commenced immediately, using robust cedar wood structures imported from Canada, and our Centre at West Linton was opened by the Secretary of State for Scotland in January, 1940. With the onset of war, the strategy was modified and these Centres were temporarily retained for use by evacuees, including many from Europe.

In 1947, the Scottish National Camps Association and the English Camps Corporation were finally established. By that stage the wider benefits of Outdoor Education and Residential Experience had been recognised, and the emphasis had changed from health to education. Education Authorities were encouraged to send children and young people for as much as a month at a time, and the demand for places guaranteed full occupancies.

SNCA was structured as a Company Limited by Guarantee and enjoying full charitable status. As a Non-Departmental Public Body, its Chairman was appointed by the Secretary of State for Scotland and this position was maintained for 40 years through to 1987. In the first “quango” bonfire, the organisation was restructured, and re-designated as a Voluntary Body Approved for Grant Aid Purposes. Our Board accepted the challenge, appointed its own Chairman, updated the list of statutory and other agencies entitled to representation on the Board, and changed the name of the Charity.

The change of status was a considerable challenge. It brought a dramatic reduction in entitlement to annual headquarters support grant, eliminated entitlement to government funding for capital development projects, and resulted in substantial additional costs including full commercial insurance of premises. All at a time when the Centres were already almost 50 years old, and in serious need of modernisation and refurbishment.

At the same time, an HMI Report in 1985 had taken stock of a deteriorating situation. Local government no longer met the cost of visits to these Centres, and a requirement for increasing parental contributions had impacted seriously on customer numbers. As important, the organisation had maintained its original purpose of providing accommodation and facilities to be used by customer groups, but had not moved forward to provide customer support in the form of Outdoor Instructors, Environmental Tutors, and other key Education and Training staff. Without an early initiative to provide this essential support, the prediction was that customer demand would continue to fall, and revenue would quickly drop below viable levels.

Participation in a series of government training initiatives provided the basis for development of



a self-financing Education and Training Division, and from the early 1980's became the key element of our activity.

The company has undergone a series of changes over the last 20 years including a further change of trading name and disposal of two of its Centres, which has funded refurbishment and development at the remaining properties. In 2012 a wholly owned subsidiary company SOEC Ltd was formed. SOEC employs all staff and is the focus of all trading. The charity is the owner of all SOEC's assets.

All development is enabled via trading and securing funding.



## WHAT WE DO

SOEC is all about learning, with the development and education of children and young people the key focus of our activities. We are guided by the principles that outdoor education should be fun but that learning about ourselves and our place in the world is a natural outcome of activities and programmes.

We use outdoor activities primarily via our residential Centres which can accommodate from 10 up to 150+ people, mainly senior primary pupils on a school transition to secondary programme. The programmes offer a mix of adventure and environmental activities with the residential element of the visit being paramount to achieving the outcomes that schools are looking for. We also work with small groups of young people with additional needs in transition to work.

Our ethos is informed by key values of sustainability, inclusion and environmental awareness.

The start point for SOEC is that which is good for children and young people. Our aim is to deliver learning priorities and commitments such as improving the life opportunities of young people, citizenship, confidence building, leadership, healthy lifestyles and sustainable development. All of these outcomes will contribute to a healthier, more confident society.

We believe that what we do has real value. See our [SROI information](#).

Across all Centres, a wide range of educational and youth groups take part in a variety of outdoor learning activities, led by our staff and structured to support personal and social development objectives. Educational input is organised in partnership with customer or client groups.

# The Role of Chief Executive

SOEC are seeking a new Chief Executive to be the driving force of the organisation and help continue our journey to make SOEC into the 21st century exemplar for outdoor learning we strive to be, whilst at the same time keeping sight of our origins, ethos and charitable aims.

We are ambitious with our plans, and seek applications from candidates looking for an opportunity to join an organisation at a time of change.

[Job Description](#)

[2020 Annual Report & Accounts](#)

[Articles—Company](#)

[Articles—Charity](#)

[Organisation chart—governance](#)

[Organisation chart—operational](#)

## Summary of Terms & Conditions

|                 |  |
|-----------------|--|
| Salary scale:   | Starting salary from £50,000 depending on skills and experience  |
| Hours:          | Full time  |
| Annual leave:   | 28 days of annual leave per annum  |
| Location:       | SOEC's Head Office in Biggar   |
| Sick leave:     | According to length of service. Further details available.   |
| Pension:        | NEST Pension. Employee contribution 5%. Employer contribution 3%.  |
| PVG:            | The job is determined to be Regulated Work and therefore dependent upon membership of the PVG scheme and satisfactory records issued by Disclosure Scotland. |
| Qualifications: | Originals of certificates will be required where necessary   |
| Eligibility :   | shortlisted candidates will be required to show proof of eligibility to work in the UK   |
| Probation:      | 6 months   |
| Notice:         | 6 months   |

### Apply now:

[Application form](#)—please complete and return with your CV and supporting statement demonstrating how you meet the required criteria and why you are the ideal candidate for the job.

No more than 500 words.

Closing date: 22 April 2022. Interviews will take place week commencing 2 May.

To arrange an informal initial discussion please contact Karen Lamb, Admin/HR on 01899 221115 or [admin@soec.org.uk](mailto:admin@soec.org.uk) in the first instance,