

Scottish Wildlife Trust

Chair of Council



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Application Information

Welcome from existing Chair of Council

Thank you for taking time to consider applying to become Chair of the Scottish Wildlife Trust.

I was delighted to be appointed to the position of Chair in 2017 and have greatly enjoyed my role over the last five years. I will be standing down in September 2023 having served for two full terms. In passing on the responsibility, I am pleased to say that the Trust is in good heart and well governed, with soundly managed finances.

My time at the Trust has been incredibly rewarding despite the challenges of the last few years. The Trust has proved very resilient and adaptable. Council has worked well with Jo Pike, our excellent Chief Executive, and the wider staff team through the challenges posed by the pandemic. The Trust has continued to perform well as Scotland's leading nature conservation charity.

My role involves more than chairing Council. I have had the privilege of supporting events for volunteers, attending meetings run by our network of extremely dedicated Local Groups and, of course, chairing the Annual General Meeting and National Members' Day. There is also the potential to represent the Trust in Scotland and beyond, as well as supporting the Trust's fundraising events. As António Guterres, Secretary General of the United Nations has said, "making peace with nature is the defining task of the 21st Century", so there is no shortage of opportunity to spread this message far and wide.

As Chair, I have been proud to lead a supportive and collegiate Council. In 2018 Members agreed to a new set of Articles for the Trust, which brought our long-standing governance arrangements up to date. This meant we could better manage the skillset on Council, and the additional financial expertise we recruited has been particularly helpful over the last few years. I am also pleased that members of our Young Leaders successfully stood for Council, which has helped us on our journey towards greater diversity in all aspects of the Trust's work.

The Trust has a wealth of expertise, passion and commitment across its 40,000+ members, volunteers, staff and trustees, making us well-placed to meet the challenges and opportunities of our age. We look forward to celebrating the charity's 60th Anniversary in 2024.

The Chair is a great role where the right person can make a real difference to Scotland's incredible wildlife and wild places – and, in so doing, ensure the Trust continues to be a major force in putting nature – and people's connection with it – at the heart of Scotland's future.

I wish you well in your application.



Linda Rosborough, December 2022

Introduction to the Scottish Wildlife Trust

The Scottish Wildlife Trust is Scotland's leading nature conservation charity. Our vision is for a network of healthy, resilient ecosystems on land and sea, supporting Scotland's wildlife and people.

The Scottish Wildlife Trust is a vibrant, impact-focused organisation which works with its members, partners and supporters to protect and restore Scotland's wildlife. We champion the importance of nature and the natural world, we demonstrate best practice on the ground through projects and wildlife reserve management, and we seek to inspire others to join us in achieving our vision.

Simply put, we are a committed and passionate group, seeking to inspire others to take action through an array of inspiring projects, spectacular wildlife reserves, campaigns, advocacy work, education and outreach activities.

Our Trust now has over 40,000 members. Staff and members work closely together with a wide range of partners and supporters in pursuit of our vision. Our staff are supported by over 1,000 volunteers, who deliver a huge range of tasks from wildlife reserve management, species protection, surveying and recording to the running of events and children's Wildlife Watch groups.





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Governance and structure

The Trust is a company limited by guarantee and without share capital, as well as a registered charity (Scottish charity number SCO005792). The Trust is led by a board of directors, known as Council, comprising between 8 and 14 members and the Chair. Ten members are elected and four members are co-opted. Council members have a breadth of skills and experience and are central to the delivery of the Trust's governance through the provision of strategic leadership and oversight.

A scheme of delegation exists which outlines how Council delegates delivery of the Trust's plans and strategies to the Executive. The Chief Executive is accountable to Council for the efficient management of the Trust and for the implementation of Council-agreed policies and the Five Year Plan. The Chief Executive is assisted in this task by the Directors of the three departments: Finance and Resources, Conservation, and External Affairs. The Trust currently employs around 100 staff.

The Trust depends upon financial support from membership subscriptions, donations and legacies. It is also supported by players of People's Postcode Lottery, and receives grant income from a range of organisations including NatureScot and the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

The Scottish Wildlife Trust is a member of the Royal Society of Wildlife Trusts which operates as an umbrella body for 46 individual Wildlife Trusts, covering the whole of the UK, the Isle of Man and Alderney. The Wildlife Trusts manage around 2,300 nature reserves. The Royal Society of Wildlife Trusts helps to co-ordinate the Trusts' activities and campaigning for wildlife at a UK level.

Conservation

Nature is our life support system but it's under threat. Between now and 2030, we need the biggest effort we've ever seen to help nature recover. [Our Strategy 2030](#) sets out our goals and how we plan to achieve them. We want everyone to have the chance to be part of this, so that we can put nature at the heart of Scotland's future.

With around 120 wildlife reserves, the Trust is committed to the protection and restoration of species, habitats and ecosystems. Our practical wildlife management ensures over 90% of important natural features on our reserves are in a healthy condition. Our knowledge and evidence team also collect data and track trends in species and habitats to help us make the right management decisions on the ground.

Our practical work extends well beyond our own reserves into a growing number of Living Landscape projects and other landscape-scale initiatives. These big partnership projects aim to restore nature on a bigger scale than ever before.

The Trust currently leads on three Living Landscape projects as well as delivering a Living Seas Programme to support the rich wildlife and natural habitats within our seas.

The Cumbernauld Living Landscape programme uses innovative urban design to enhance, restore and reconnect green areas of the town. This includes work to integrate new and existing developments into a connected green network as well as involving communities in conservation projects.

Edinburgh Living Landscape is a partnership between the Scottish Wildlife Trust, City of Edinburgh Council, Edinburgh and Lothians Greenspace Trust, GREENSURGE and the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh. It aims to bring a transformational change to the city's urban environment through greening at multiple scales from tiny gardens to large parks and open spaces.

Through another flagship project, the Trust is leading the charge on Saving Scotland's Red Squirrels, again working in partnership with landowners and other conservation charities to save the red squirrel from extinction in Scotland and the UK.



© Steve Gardner

The Trust completed the Coigach-Assynt Living Landscape (CALL), supported by funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund, which was an ambitious partnership project to deliver one of the largest landscape-scale restoration projects in Europe. CALL was and still is, a ground-breaking project with a 40-year vision to restore our natural environment and in doing so help create jobs and stimulate the local economy.

The Trust was also host to the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) UK Peatland Programme which aimed to restore peatlands throughout the UK on a massive scale.

The Scottish Wildlife Trust is a leading member of the Royal Society of Wildlife Trusts which operates as an umbrella body for 47 individual Wildlife Trusts, covering the whole of the UK, the Isle of Man and Alderney. The Wildlife Trusts manage around 2,300 nature reserves. The Royal Society of Wildlife Trusts helps to co-ordinate the Trusts' activities and campaigning for wildlife at a UK level.

External Affairs

Our External Affairs department focuses on maximising the influence, profile and impact of the Trust with external audiences.

Our Policy team develops and advocates evidence-based policy on a wide range of issues related to the health of Scotland's natural environment. This involves engaging with politicians, civil servants, academic institutions, other environmental NGOs and a range of other stakeholders including businesses.

Our Marketing and Communications team works proactively to engage Scotland's people in understanding the importance and benefits of Scotland's wildlife and wild places. This is done through a combination of print, online and face-to-face communications, including the Trust's flagship magazine, its website and social media platforms. The team works closely with policy colleagues to ensure we convey our message clearly to business leaders and decision makers.

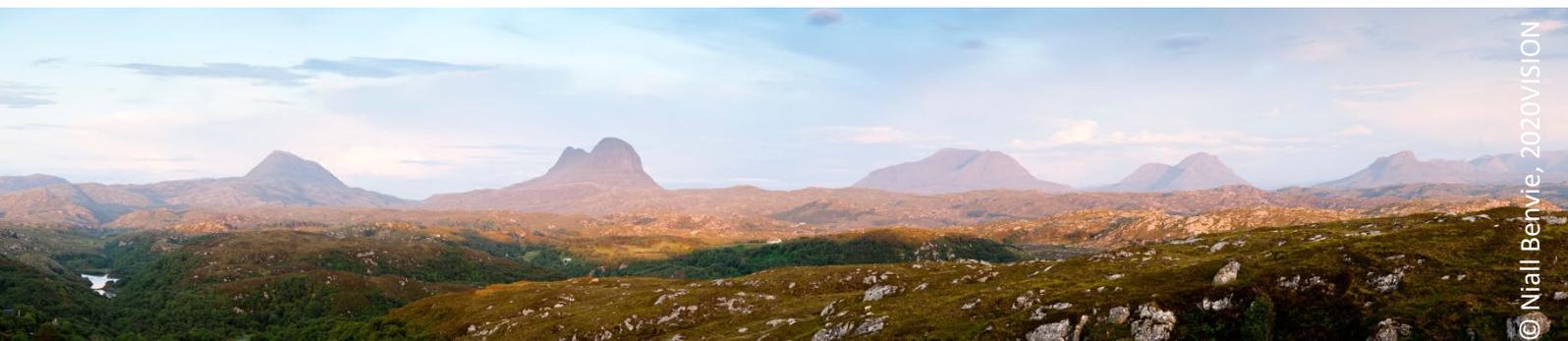
Our Engagement Team support around 1,000 volunteers, including 18 local groups, over 30 Wildlife Watch Groups, our Young Leaders Network, Planners network and our Reserve committees, running inspiring events and activities throughout Scotland all year round. Volunteers not only support reserve staff with practical conservation and engaging in the planning system but also engage local communities by leading hundreds of events and activities throughout the year, including our flagship national webinar series.



Finance, Resources and Governance

The Finance and Resources department includes finance, fundraising, HR, IT and administration. Its main functions are to support governance, secure and manage resources, manage and develop IT infrastructure, and recruit and retain a high quality staff team. All of these activities are essential to supporting front-line delivery and the achievement of the Trust's impact.

The Trust's latest Annual report and financial statements can be found [online here](#).



Council

Council meets five times a year, including an annual planning day. Regular (at least quarterly) meetings are usually held on a Thursday 12pm to 4pm/4:30pm via Zoom.

Papers are distributed a week in advance electronically. The Chair runs Council on the assumption that all Trustees have read the papers.

Council has supporting committees which new Trustees may be asked to join:

- Conservation Committee meets quarterly and advises Council in relation to nature conservation matters.
- Finance & Audit Committee meets quarterly to consider and advise on audit and financial risk.
- Nominations Committee provides oversight of the structure, composition and effectiveness of the Council of the Scottish Wildlife Trust and advising Council on all Board (and CEO) appointments. Meets as required.

The Board of Trustees are ultimately responsible for the management and administration but operational delivery of the Trust's vision is delegated to the Chief Executive, Jo Pike. Jo is accountable to Council for the efficient management of the Trust and for the implementation of Council agreed policies and the Five Year Plan. The Chief Executive is assisted by the Directors of the three operational departments: Conservation, Finance and Resources, and External Affairs.

In addition to five Council meetings each year, Trustees are invited to attend the Annual General Meeting, training events and a small number of visits to members groups and field operations.

Appointment process and how to apply

The Chair will be appointed by the Scottish Wildlife Trust Council, assisted by its Nominations Committee.

If you are passionate about wildlife, have experience in wildlife conservation and would like to apply to be co-opted to Council, please send your CV to recruitment@scottishwildlifetrust.org.uk. We welcome applications from individuals of all backgrounds representing areas across Scotland.

Your CV should be accompanied by a short (100 words) biography. By providing the biography the candidate consents to its publication (which may be summarised) in printed material relating to members to Council.

At the time of co-option, candidates must confirm that they are fully paid-up members of the Trust.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us, we look forward to hearing from you.

Newly appointed members of Council will be invited to the next Council meeting and will be given a formal induction by senior staff prior to this. The Chair and all Trustees will be registered at Companies House as Directors of the Scottish Wildlife Trust. All members of Council must sign the Trust's Code of Conduct and must adhere to the conditions therein on taking office.



Chair of Council role description

In general terms the Council is responsible for determining the Trust's strategy and ensuring that the proper procedures are in place for the Trust's management. The main responsibilities of the Chair of Council are to:

Strategic leadership and governance

- Lead Council in providing sufficient strategic direction in order to realise the Trust's vision of a connected network of healthy, resilient ecosystems supporting Scotland's wildlife and people
- Chair meetings of both Council and AGM effectively and efficiently, bringing impartiality and objectivity to the decision-making process and helping to ensure decisions taken are implemented.
- Ensure that Trustees are fully engaged, take collective ownership and that decisions taken are in the best, long-term interests of the Trust
- Ensure that constructive relationships exist with and between the Trustees and senior staff
- Ensure that the Council fulfils its duties to ensure adherence to charitable objects, as well as legal and constitutional compliance
- Support the Trust's membership ethos, including attendance at events
- Ensure that the Council regularly reviews major risks and opportunities, and has systems in place to take advantage of opportunities, and manage and mitigate the risks
- Ensure that the Council fulfils its duties to ensure sound financial health of the charity, with systems in place to ensure financial accountability
- Develop the knowledge and capability of the Council, appraise the performance of the Council individually and collectively on a regular basis

Getting the best out of the organisation

- Establish and build a strong, effective and a constructive working relationship with the Chief Executive, ensuring they are supported and held to account for achieving strategic objectives
- Ensure regular contact with the Chief Executive and Company Secretary and develop and maintain an open and supportive relationship within which each can speak openly about concerns, worries and challenges, as well as affording an overview of the Trust's affairs
- Work closely with the Chief Executive and Company Secretary to give direction to ensure that meetings are well planned, meaningful and reflect the responsibilities of trustees
- Conduct an annual appraisal of the Chief Executive in consultation with other Trustees
- Ensure that the Chief Executive has the opportunity for appropriate development and support

Looking outwards

- Represent the Trust at appropriate external and internal events
- Build and maintain influential links to key decision makers and opinion formers in matters relating to achieving the Trust's vision and objectives
- Help increase income for the Trust
- Act positively to facilitate change and resolve potential conflict with external stakeholders

Nature Conservation

- An ability to communicate a passion and commitment in wildlife and wild places

Note: It is not the duty of Chair of Council to become involved in the Operational Management of the Trust. Having laid down the strategic direction of the Trust's affairs, it is right and proper for the Chair of Council to delegate the management of the Trust to the staff via the Chief Executive, subject to adequate monitoring and action by Council in pursuance of the responsibilities listed above. The Chair of Council is the line-manager for the Chief Executive.

Person specification

The Chair must be able to demonstrate a range of skills and competencies for the post:

Strategic leadership and governance

- Proven track record of success in a senior leadership role
- Ability to react positively to challenging situations
- Ability to balance conflicting or competing issues, with impartiality and objectivity
- Experience of managing change successfully

Getting the best out of the organisation

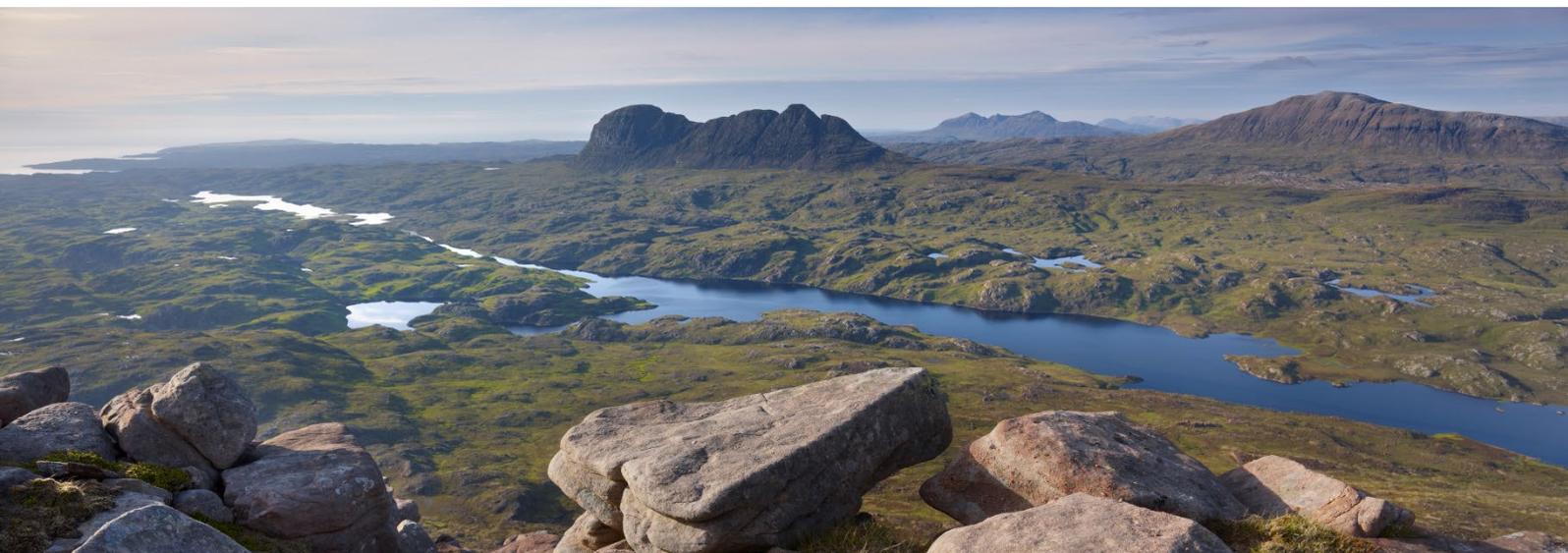
- Ability to chair Council to ensure effective use of their time and expertise
- Ability to build effective and trusted relationships with the Chief Executive and Senior Management Team in order to optimise the Trust's ability to deliver its vision
- Work with the executive team and the Board to increase the Trust's income and levels of fund-raising.
- Commitment to the highest levels of governance
- Experience of working with a board of directors
- A consultative, transparent and consensual style

Looking outwards

- Act as an ambassador for the Trust to increase the profile and awareness of the Trust's work.
- Build relationships with philanthropists in line with the agreed strategies.
- Ability to play a leading role in building strong external relationships which deliver positive outcomes for wildlife and wild places
- Be comfortable in an ambassadorial role with the ability to earn credibility with key influencers as the Chair of Scotland's leading conservation charity
- Ability to inspire a national external audience as well as engage with staff, members and volunteers
- Experience of external representation, delivering presentations and managing stakeholders
- Strong communication and inter-personal skills, with an ability for cultivating relationships, building consensus and soliciting funds
- Strong communication and influencing skills at all levels and across a wide range of stakeholders

Nature Conservation

- An ability to communicate a passion and commitment for wildlife and wild places
- Broad knowledge and understanding of the conservation sector and associated current issues, particularly the potential consequences of Brexit for environmental protection and funding.



Additional information

Remuneration

The position of Chair of Council is without remuneration, although reasonable out of pocket expenses for travelling to meetings may be claimed.

Location

The Scottish Wildlife Trust main office is based in Leith, Edinburgh. Council particularly welcomes applications from outside the central belt.

Time commitment

Time commitment is expected to be around 30 days per annum.

There are five Council meetings per year. The Chair is expected to have regular meetings with the Chief Executive and Company Secretary, represent the Trust at various events and meetings with key stakeholders as well as a small number of visits to members groups and field operations.

Oversight

An annual performance appraisal occurs to ensure the Council is operating effectively.

Term

the Chair and Board members can serve two three-year terms. A retiring Chair is not eligible for re-appointment until they have been out of office for one year.

Charity requirements

The Scottish Wildlife Trust is a registered Scottish charity. Charity Chairs have general control and management of the charity and must meet certain legal requirements and be aware of their responsibilities. More information is available [here](#).

Legal requirements

The Chair must comply with charity law regarding chairmanship. This means they must be at least 16 years old and they cannot be a Chair if they have an unspent conviction for an offence involving dishonesty or deception; are bankrupt or have entered into a formal arrangement with a creditor; have been removed as a company director or charity trustee because of wrongdoing.

Other

The Chair must be a fully-paid up member of the Trust throughout their appointment.



Scotland *n.*

Nation of spectacular wildlife including red squirrels, golden eagles, dolphins and Caledonian pine forest. The Scottish Wildlife Trust has fought to protect Scotland's wildlife for over 50 years and provides safe havens for wildlife on around 120 reserves.

scottishwildlifetrust.org.uk