

Candidate Pack: Chief Executive

Location: Hybrid - Jedburgh, Scottish Borders

Salary: £65,000 - £70,000 per annum FTE

Hours: Part time, min 3/max 4 days per week (Salary pro-rata)

Closing date: Midnight Monday 13th October 2025



Welcome from Stephanie Young, Chair of the Board, Borders Forest Trust

Borders Forest Trust was founded in 1996 by a visionary group of people determined to address the lack of native woodlands in Southern Scotland. Our vision for Southern Scotland is a place where a rich tapestry of native woodlands and wild places flourish, cared for by volunteers and local communities.

Over the last 30 years we have engaged in landscape scale restoration, buying and restoring 3,250 hectares in the Southern Uplands. Our team has been planting woodlands, restoring peatlands, wetlands and meadows, giving nature a helping hand to survive and thrive. This restoration work is supported by a committed membership, a large group of volunteers, and a programme of education to connect future generations with nature, and strong partnerships. We extend our reach by encouraging and advising other landowners to embrace our vision, and by participating in cultural and heritage projects.

We are ambitious. Over the last five years we have grown and our team has expanded, bringing new skills, helping build the organisation to meet the challenges we and nature face. At the Trust, we have a clear goal: to be the place where a diverse mix of talented people want to come, to stay and do their best work. We pride ourselves on reaching for our vision, through the hard work and dedication of our passionate and creative team.

We want to do more.

To build on our achievements we seek a passionate and energetic Chief Executive. You'll need to harness your skills, all of your personality, and your network to increase our influence, our impact, and our outcomes.

I believe this is an incredible opportunity to lead a very special organisation with passionate people who are truly dedicated to our vital purpose.

Thank you for your interest and I very much look forward to meeting you soon.

Stephanie



Background on Borders Forest Trust

Our vision for Southern Scotland is a place where a rich tapestry of native woodlands and wild places flourish, cared for by volunteers and local communities.

Borders Forest Trust is a charity established to restore native woodland habitats to Southern Scotland, an area with the lowest percentage of native woodlands in mainland Scotland. Since 1996, we have been working towards planting trees, restoring peatlands and other natural habitats, enriching the biological diversity of 3,250 hectares in the Southern Uplands, near Moffat.

The Borders Forest Trust owns 3,250 hectares of land in the Wild Heart of Southern Scotland near Moffat, 2 Community Woodlands, a wildflower meadow and a willow carr nature reserve.

We support an extensive programme of education and volunteering, aiming to demonstrate large scale ecological restoration in action, and inspire landowners, statutory bodies, local communities and policy makers to embrace this alternative model for land use and conservation. We work in partnership with a wide range of local and national organisations as well as landowners, universities, colleges and schools. We are supported by a committed group of volunteers, supporters and donors.

Borders Forest Trust operates and has influence across the whole of Southern Scotland.



Borders Forest Trust – Strategic Direction

Our Vision

Our vision for Southern Scotland is a place where a rich tapestry of native woodlands and wild places flourish, cared for by volunteers and local communities

Our Strategic Priorities

Increase native woodland cover – ‘revive the Wild Heart’

BFT own land so that we can undertake large-scale ecological improvements on it, largely through the planting of new native trees and by restoring upland habitats.

Enhance existing woodlands and associated habitats

Beyond the sites we operate we also engage in inspiring, reaching out to, and advising other landowners, local communities, and professional foresters. We encourage them to embrace this alternative model for land use and conservation. We also engage with other bodies to advocate and promote best practice in restoration and planting.

Enable people of all ages to engage with woodland habitats

A key element of BFT’s work is fostering an interest in woodland culture with local communities. Since 1996 BFT has worked in over 100 sites across the south of Scotland, and with every school in the Borders, pioneering community forestry and innovative woodland education; setting up a sawmill and carpentry workshop; as well as promoting forestry skills development, especially with young people and vulnerable groups

A well-run organisation

BFT’s internal operation is run by a small, dedicated staff team and a board of volunteer Trustees from a range of backgrounds and experiences. We are governed by a Memorandum and Articles of Association, which are available on our website. There is an AGM every year, which allows members to ask questions and vote on who serves on the Board of Trustees.

Background on the Chief Executive role

The Chief Executive role oversees the charity, with the support of the board. As such this is a role of great strategic importance to the charity and the role is varied, with a broad remit.

The current in year budget is £1.3 million, with a subsidiary company KEH Brownlie Ltd comprising a farm and a number of properties. You can view the most recent Annual Accounts [here](#).

The Chief Executive role has organisational responsibility for 12 members of staff, some office based but most out and about across the countryside in which we work.

Key priorities

A key part of the role – and the most immediate priority - will be in developing, leading and embedding the next organisational strategy for Borders Forest Trust. The existing strategy has served the organisation well, but is now 6 years old and needs to be updated to maintain the focus on ambition and growth BFT has at our core. This project is an exciting piece of work that will have a wide-reaching impact on the future of the organisation.

In addition;

- Provide strategic leadership: we need this post holder to guide BFT's long-term growth and development, building on our strong foundations and ambitious vision. The Chief Executive will harness the full potential of our team, skills and resources to ensure the organisation thrives and expands its impact. A demonstrable affinity for nature, coupled with energy and passion, will be essential to lead the organisation authentically and credibly.
- Lead on future land acquisition opportunities: central to BFT's mission, land acquisition requires a long-term, but proactive approach. The Chief Executive will play a pivotal role in preparing for and delivering these purchases, ensuring they are sustainable and aligned with organisational priorities.
- Monitor ethical investments and financial stewardship: the Chief Executive will ensure policies are upheld and performance is closely monitored. A strong grasp of finance and investment principles will be key to safeguarding and growing BFT's resources.



Areas of opportunity

The entire role is ripe with opportunity!

- Shape and drive the organisation's strategy
- Lead on future land acquisitions
- Develop and empower the new management team, maximising skills and supporting growth in areas such as fundraising and marketing
- Capitalise on emerging funding opportunities, cultivating donor relationships and driving major projects



Areas of potential challenge

Borders Forest Trust is in a good, solid position. As a charity, the funding landscape is of course always a key priority and can be an area of challenge. However, early this year we welcomed our Development Manager who is exploring many opportunities and there will be scope for the Chief Executive to work with them on relationships with funders and donors.

To help candidates get a flavour of Borders Forest Trust, please [click here](#) to view a video made in 2022 celebrating their 25th Anniversary.

Why is this role vacant?

Our previous Chief Executive (termed Director previously) was in post with Borders Forest Trust for over 5 years. A great deal has been achieved in that period, and we wished them the very best in taking on new opportunities.

The previous post holder left the organisation in September, and we have interim support in place to help with resource during this period of recruitment.



Job Description: Chief Executive

The Chief Executive role is one with vast potential. Borders Forest Trust is at the forefront of restorative conservation and there is great scope to develop the organisation.

To be successful as Chief Executive, you will have a proven track record of successful leadership and management at a senior level coupled with the ability to get the very best from a motivated team of staff and volunteers.

Borders Forest Trust engages a wide spectrum of people from our volunteers, conservationists, researcher, donors and those engaged in environmental policy. The Chief Executive needs to be a natural communicator, with the diplomacy skills needed to engage and influence diverse audiences.

As a charitable organisation, income generation is a core priority. The successful candidate will be comfortable with this, ideally with experience of generating substantial income in the not-for-profit sector, along with a track record of strategic planning and initiating and developing projects and programmes.

We are also keen to ensure our Chief Executive can authentically communicate the positive impact of the Borders Forest Trust, so an intrinsic understanding of conservation and a passion for nature and educating others about the value of our countryside will be important. As the public face of the Trust, you will act as an ambassador for the Trust and build lasting relationships with individuals and organisations, who can help us achieve our ambitions.

You will work closely with an active Board of Trustees, a growing team and a dedicated group of volunteers to deliver our ambitions. You will be responsible to the Trustees for the leadership and effective management of the Trust operations, finances, people, partnerships and profile.

Key Responsibilities:

Leadership

- Provide clear, coherent and motivational leadership to ensure that the Trust meets its aims and objectives
- Further the Trust's regional and national reputation, developing our profile at every level and establishing relationships with a wide range of local and national stakeholders
- Develop and implement the Trust's business plan and ensure the overall financial stability of the Charity



- Lead the Trust to ensure appropriate and sustainable income from individual, corporate, legacy trust donations, as well as grants.

Finance

- Assume overall financial responsibility and ensure full accountability and accurate and timely reporting to the Trustees.
- Ensure strong financial management, governance and full compliance with all relevant regulatory bodies, including accurate budgeting, annual reports, clear financial controls, cash flow and tax obligations.
- Prepare and present annual budgets and ensure that operations are consistent with these budgets
- Ensure effective operation, maintenance and development of software and technology infrastructure

People management and development

- Oversee the recruitment, management and professional development of staff
- Ensure that HR procedures and processes are fully compliant and meet best practice standards
- Ensure that the Trust is fully committed to equal opportunities for everyone, and the avoidance of any form of discrimination on the basis of gender, race, religion, sexuality, disability or age

Governance

- Ensure effective governance and sufficient resources, guidance and professional advice for the Board to perform its duties
- Ensure compliance with all relevant legislation, including employment law, charity law, company law, health and safety legislation, requirements of funders and relevant agencies



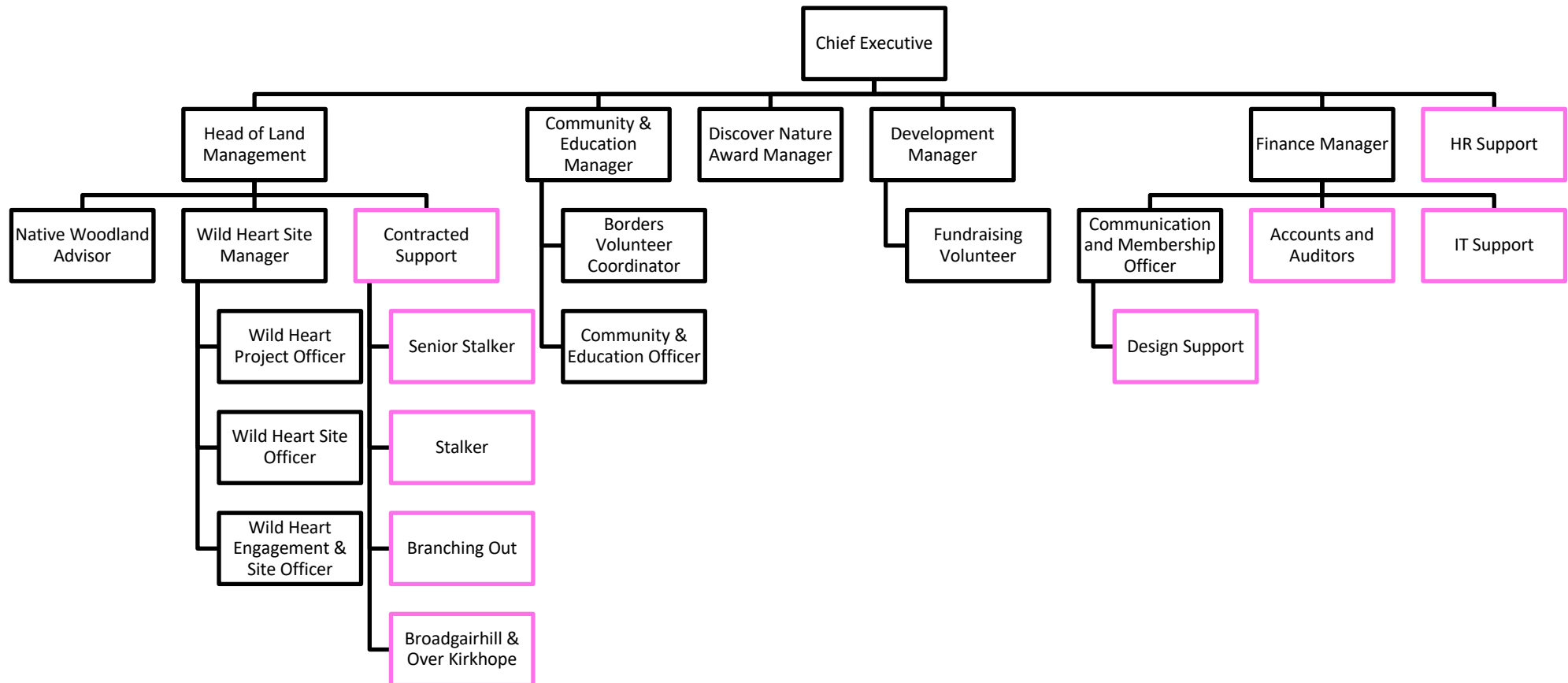
Person Specification: Chief Executive

	Person Specification
Essential	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proven leadership experience within an NGO, charity, or similar mission-driven organisation, ideally within the environmental and/or land management sector. • Demonstrable experience in planning, managing, and reporting on income and expenditure budgets, ensuring effective use of resources and identification and mitigation of risk areas. • Substantial people management experience, including building, motivating, and developing teams to achieve results. • Confident use of IT systems, with practical knowledge of digital communication tools and platforms to support engagement and efficiency. • Demonstrable experience of strategic thinking and decision-making skills, with the willingness and ability to operate at a strategic level mixed with hands-on working as part of a small, growing team. • Communication skills that demonstrate an ability to inspire, influence, and adapt messaging for diverse audiences including funders, policymakers, local communities, volunteers, and staff. • Experience of running a charity and knowledge of charity law (OSCR) • A successful track record of fundraising or working with fundraisers, including securing and growing income from multiple sources (trusts, major donors, statutory bodies, corporate partners), and personally cultivating relationships with funders. • Organisational and time management skills that demonstrate an ability to prioritise effectively, meet deadlines, and remain flexible in a fast-changing environment. • Knowledge of health and safety and risk management.
Desirable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An understanding of ecological restoration and conservation practices, with the ability to translate this knowledge into strategy, advocacy, and impact. • Knowledge of the social, environmental and economic issues related to woodland creation, restoration and promotion.

Organisation Chart

Black – in house staff

Pink – contracted support



Benefits & life at The Borders Forest Trust

Salary	<p>Salary band is £65,000 – £70,000 per annum, full time equivalent.</p> <p>This is not a full-time role and Borders Forest Trust are willing to consider working patterns of 3, 3.5 or 4 days per week, salary pro-rata.</p> <p>Candidates will be appointed along the scale based on level of experience and performance at interview.</p>
Location and travel	<p>This post is based at our offices at Monteviot Nurseries near Jedburgh. Due to the importance of this role for leadership and visibility, the candidate will need to be able to be in Jedburgh for around two days a week, or out at other BFT sites or external meetings as required. Remote or home working will be required at other times.</p> <p>Due to the need to travel independently to BFT sites, candidates will need their own car. Agreed mileage is re-imbursed at a rate of 45p/mile.</p>
Annual leave	<p>34 days annual leave per year inclusive of Bank Holidays(pro-rata for part time staff). Employees can choose to use bank holidays on alternative days to suit their work/life balance.</p>
Pension	<p>5% employer contribution if matched by 3% employee contribution.</p>
Hours and flexible working	<p>We envisage this as a part time role (3-4 days per week), including occasional evening and weekend work.</p> <p>Weekend/evening work is acknowledged through time off in lieu.</p> <p>Focus on outputs and deliverables, rather than strict work patterns. Employees are empowered to manage daily working patterns to suit their work/life balance and the needs of the business. Compressed hour working patterns can be considered.</p>
Other	<p>BFT will contribute to membership of a relevant professional body.</p> <p>Equipment provided for working from home (laptop, phone etc.)</p>

If you have questions about the benefit package, or if there are policies you would value seeing before continuing in the selection process, please do reach our via recruitment@thinkcs.org and we will be happy to find out the information you need.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

The Trust is committed to promoting equal opportunities in all areas of recruitment, employment, training and promotion. It is the Trust's Equal Opportunity, Anti-harassment and Bullying policy not to discriminate against its workers on the basis of their gender, sexual orientation, marital or civil partner status, gender reassignment, race, disability, colour, nationality, religion or belief, ethnic or national origin, age, pregnancy or trade union membership or the fact that they are a part-time worker or a fixed-term employee.

Our employees and applicants for employment shall not be disadvantaged by any policies or conditions of service which cannot be justified as necessary for operational purposes. The Trust shall, at all times, strive to work within legislative requirements as well as promoting best practice.

We value diversity in the workforce as a means of broadening our talent base and achieving the highest level of performance.

Recruitment and Selection

Managers will ensure that no applicant, whether internal or external shall receive less favourable treatment on any of the grounds listed above at any stage of the recruitment process. When interviewing job applicants, managers should ask fair and consistent questions which do not intrude unnecessarily into the candidate's private life. The Trust considers it best practice to avoid questions on a candidate's family commitments or medical history unless they are clearly relevant to the job and are asked of all candidates.

It is good practice to demonstrate that all staff, regardless of background, are potentially suitable for all vacancies, including management positions. All applicants for employment and all employees applying for alternate positions or promotion within the Trust shall be assessed according to their skills, experience and suitability to do the job.

If there is anything THINK Recruitment can do to make any reasonable adjustments to ensure you can engage fully in the selection process please contact Jo McGuinness at recruitment@thinkcs.org for a confidential discussion.



How to apply

To express interest in this role, please email recruitment@thinkcs.org with a copy of your CV.

Our recruitment manager will have a conversation with all credible applicants prior to shortlisting. Please ensure you get in touch with enough time to have an initial call and receive the screening questions ahead of the role closing.

Rather than requesting candidates submit a supporting statement or cover letter, we will provide interested candidates with 4 screening questions to answer ahead of the role closing.

Screening calls with THINK Recruitment	19 th September – 13 th October
Informal conversations with recruiting manager	Week commencing 6 th October
Closing date	Midnight Monday 13 th October
Stage 1 interviews (virtual)	Wednesday 22 nd or Thursday 23 rd October
Stage 2 interviews (in person)	Wednesday 29 th October
Decision by	EOD Friday 31 st October

The selection process will be two stages. At point of invite candidates will be provided with further information to support with preparation.

- Stage 1 will be a short virtual interview
- Stage 2 will include a panel interview and a meet the team session

If a third stage is required, this will be an informal conversation and scheduled to accommodate the candidate. THINK Recruitment will do our utmost to keep the process to two stages if possible.



If there are any reasonable adjustments THINK Recruitment can make to ensure ease of participation in the selection process, please do get in touch. All discussions are confidential.

Thank you for your interest, please do get in touch if you have any questions.

Jo McGuinness
Senior Recruitment Manager / recruitment@thinkcs.org

THINK Recruitment

THINK Consulting Solutions Ltd

Registered Office

24 Vicarage Road
Winslow, Bucks
MK18 3BE

thinkcs.org