



Role description – Trustee (finance specialist)

Accountable to: Chair of Trustees

Works with: Trustees
CEO
Head of Finance and Operations
SWT auditors
Other Wildlife Trusts, through the Finance 'community of practice'

Overview

Shropshire Wildlife Trust (SWT) has a vision of a thriving natural world, where Shropshire's wildlife and natural habitats play a valued role in addressing the climate and ecological emergencies, and people are inspired and empowered to take action for nature. We combine projects across Shropshire (including Telford & Wrekin) with advocacy and campaigning to restore nature and to engage people. We manage over 40 nature reserves and have more than 50 staff, 300 volunteers, and over 9000 members. SWT is an autonomous charity, but we are increasingly working collectively, as part of The Wildlife Trusts (TWT), to ensure that our local actions have a national impact and help to address global issues. Turnover in FY2024 was £3.3m.

SWT is governed by a board ('Council') of around 12 trustees – volunteer non-executive directors – including Chair, Vice-Chair, Treasurer and Honorary Secretary. The board sets overall strategic direction and ensures that charitable funds are used effectively in support of agreed goals. Operational management is delegated to the CEO and senior leadership team, including the Head of Finance and Operations.

Trustees serve for up to two four-year terms. The current Treasurer is now in their second term and we wish to broaden the financial skills on the Board and to plan for a smooth succession in due course. Council meets four times a year in addition to an annual away day. The Finance sub-committee also meets four times a year.

SWT is committed to achieving equality and valuing diversity across the organisation and is seeking to better reflect this commitment in relation to the Board of Trustees. We particularly welcome applications from people aged under 40; people with disabilities; and Black, Asian, and minority ethnic people.

Overall Purpose of Role

To provide advice, information and assurance to the Trustees about the financial stewardship of SWT and to support and assist management staff in the exercise of their responsibilities for financial affairs.

Key Responsibilities and Tasks

- To ensure, in close co-operation with the Chief Executive Officer, that SWT operates within the legal and financial guidelines set out in current legislation and its own standing orders.
- To ensure that adequate financial controls are in place and that SWT operates within a sound financial framework.
- To work with and support the Chief Executive Officer and/or the person in SWT who has responsibility for financial matters, in order to be satisfied that the financial information presented is comprehensive and accurate.
- To develop a close understanding of the key assumptions included in medium-term financial plans and annual budget proposals. To advise the Council on the financial implications of its strategy and policy objectives.
- To advise Trustees on major financial issues which arise and which are outside the agreed boundaries of management authority.
- To identify any additional financial risks facing SWT and recommend appropriate action.
- To chair an annual meeting with external Auditors (and any other delegated members of the Council) to discuss the Auditor's report and accounts; to report formally on this to the main Council.
- To ensure, with the Chief Executive Officer that an internal audit policy operates effectively.
- To undertake any specific tasks in the financial area requested by the Council.
- To lead in the interface between Trustees and management on financial matters.
- To include a statement about Fundraising in the annual report.

About you

We are seeking a qualified accountant with experience at senior management level in a business of comparable size or larger. An understanding of charity finance would be advantageous but is not essential. Specialist conservation knowledge is not required but trustees are encouraged to take an interest in the Trust's work.

How to apply

To apply please send your CV to hr@shropshirewildlifetrust.org.uk with a covering email saying why you are interested in the position no later than 23 May 2025. If you would like an informal discussion with the Chair about the role please email gordons@shropshirewildlifetrust.org.uk.

Potential trustees are normally put forward for election at the AGM in October. Alternatively, a trustee can be co-opted at any point, in which case they will stand for election at the next AGM.

A detailed induction process is provided and training and support is available, including through TWT 'communities of practice' which bring together counterparts in other Wildlife Trusts.