



Farm Advisor - FINCH

Accountable to: Head of Landscape Recovery

Responsible for: Landscape Recovery Department Project work and delivery and development of its Farm Advisory Service

Works with: Landowners, farmers, contractors and consultants

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.

We value courage, respect, integrity, trust, and responsibility. Whilst we are passionate in promoting our aims, we are not judgmental and are inclusive. We want our people to be as diverse as nature, so we particularly encourage applications from people who are underrepresented within our sector, including people from minority backgrounds and people with disabilities. We are committed to creating a movement that recognises and truly values individual differences and identities.

As a Disability Confident employer, we are committed to offering an interview to anyone with a disability that meets all the essential criteria for the post. Please let us know if you require any adjustments to make our recruitment process more accessible.

Objective of the job

Shropshire Wildlife Trust has secured funding from Natural England to explore how private finance and new farm-based business opportunities can help reduce environmental pressures on the River Clun Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and inform a possible future Protected Site Strategy (PSS) for the area. This project is known as FINCH, an acronym of Facilitating Investment in Natural Clun Habitats.

The River Clun has supported one of the last populations of Freshwater Pearl Mussels in England, which are highly sensitive to pollution from nutrients and sediment but is now failing them. Agriculture plays an important role in addressing the pressures the SAC faces, and this

project focuses on working positively with farmers to support land use change and diversification of income.

The project, which was commenced in April 2024, is part of a national Protected Site Strategies pilot programme and involves research and direct engagement with farmers and land managers across the Clun catchment. To date, around 40 farms have been engaged over the previous two years. Participants have gained understanding of private finance and through individual farm audits have learned and considered how this could apply on their farms.

The role involves building trusted relationships with farmers, supporting on-farm discussions, and helping link environmental outcomes with viable farm businesses opportunities.

Alongside individual optioneering reports capturing opportunities for mandatory BNG, carbon or nutrient neutrality units on individual farms, the first two years of the project has also looked at a collaborative approach in selling ecosystem services off farm jointly with others in the catchment. With a working title of 'the Clun Catchment Collective (CCC)', we have worked with the participants to scope out how they could be organised, governed, and promoted to sell green products such as (but not limited to) carbon, biodiversity uplift, green social prescribing products, tourism related products, access, flood alleviation and water quality improvements. This has been done through a close relationship with a number of consultants and this will continue into the final phase with the aim to develop the CCC investment ready.

The role will therefore also include contractor and project management of all of these supporting relationships, not just the farmers and landowners, often being the 'translator' and facilitator to balance the research element of furthering learning and understanding, with making it work for the landowner.

Going into its third year, the project has developed specific understanding of three elements representing the vehicles of opportunity/barriers to utilising private finance to bring about land use change; Government Incentive, Local Policy & Regulation, and Nature Finance. Given that the first two are out of our control we will now focus on nature finance, farm business changes and supply chain opportunities, testing financial feasibility of implementing certain changes. We aim to continue to bring this group of landowners (as well as new ones) along on the investment readiness journey, developing the market offering and continuing market engagement with the aim of the landowners making their first sales.

This role will also contribute to the Trust's growing general farm advisory work, with a focus on the delivery of nature and wildlife friendly agricultural advice and land management, in order to further the Trust's goals to restore wildlife and connect people with nature throughout Shropshire and may require the delivery of practical on-farm project work.

Key results expected

1. A demonstration of leadership and expertise in wildlife and nature friendly agricultural advice and land management covering private finance as well as traditional alternatives like Agri-environment schemes and other grant funding in relation to water, habitats or biodiversity.

2. The FINCH project facilitated and managed effectively, to time and budget and delivery of the agreed outcomes.
3. The current cohort of FINCH participants retained, nurtured and expanded
4. Working with the Land Management and Farm Advisor, further business development opportunities identified, to create a financially sustainable model of farm advice for the trust throughout Shropshire
5. An increase in uptake of support from SWT to Shropshire's Farmers and Land Managers to reduce and reverse biodiversity loss and to manage the effects of climate change.

Key tasks

1. Manage the day-to-day aspects of the FINCH project, including the relationship with the participating farmers as well as any external consultants, to time and budget and appropriate reporting standards
2. Facilitate learning and growth of understanding around emerging nature markets for various audiences including farmers and landowners, colleagues and partners
3. Build a positive relationship with farmers and landowners around nature/wildlife friendly farming, habitat creation and maintenance and bring about land use changes where appropriate
4. Give Land Management and Farm Advice and undertake practical steps, appropriate in a variety of settings and to benefit different habitats including riparian corridors and river systems
5. Work with colleagues to develop Shropshire Wildlife Trust's Farm Advisory Service and identify new contacts/clients to advise on nature/wildlife friendly farming practices
6. Work with colleagues to develop a system of evaluation and feedback from landowners and farm managers
7. Deliver on-farm practical measures through third party funding.
8. Support farm businesses in entering government schemes or environmental assurance schemes.
9. Conduct farm surveys and develop whole-farm plans for environmental goods delivery
10. Organise and facilitate events, workshops, meetings and talks

While delivering this role, the postholder will need to work with due regard to Health and Safety, the General Data Protection Regulations, the Fundraising Code of Practice, Safeguarding and other policies and procedures.

All staff are expected to support and manage volunteers in the course of their duties and maintain and uphold the good reputation of the Trust.

Core skills (essential and desirable)

Essential:

- Degree or equivalent level of experience in agriculture, or another relevant countryside discipline

- Experience of Project Management to time, budget and agreed outcomes
- Experience in delivering agricultural advice and/or management incl Government grant schemes and newly emerging Nature Finance Markets
- Experience in delivering environmental and wildlife sensitive farm surveys, and whole-farm management plans
- Willingness to travel within the county to meet farmers, landowners, and colleagues as required
- An ability to work under pressure, and experience of managing own workload with minimum supervision whilst meeting deadlines
- Excellent verbal and written communication skills applied in a professional manner in a variety of situations
- A current UK-valid driving licence
- Well-developed IT skills with a working knowledge and understanding of MS Office functions such as Word, Excel, Outlook, email and the internet.

Desirable:

- Good working knowledge of Geographical Information Systems (GIS)
- Experience in facilitating Farmer Clusters
- Experience in undertaking practical land management on agricultural land to deliver environmental improvements and enhancements for nature and wildlife
- Up to date knowledge and understanding of ecology, wildlife conservation and land management issues
- Knowledge of Green Finance, Nature Markets and Nature Related Ecosystem services
- FACTS qualified
- BASIS qualified

Terms of Employment

Salary:	£13,034 and £17,378.67 (FTE £32,585 per annum) + 7% pension contribution
Hours:	Part Time - 21 (0.6) - 28 hours (0.8) hours per week Evening and weekend work may be required from time to time. Paid overtime is not available, but time off in lieu of hours worked will be given.
Pre employment checks:	The post does not require a DBS (Disclosure Barring Service) check. The successful applicant will need to provide proof of right to work in the UK and qualifications, presented at interview.
Probationary period:	Fixed Term Contracts up to 1 year = 2 months
Contract	Fixed term 8 months
Holidays:	A full-time member of staff has 25 working days per annum in addition to normal public holidays. An additional day is added for each year's service up to a maximum total of 30 days holiday.
Pension:	After three months the employee will be eligible to join the Trust's group personal pension scheme and if they pay a minimum of 3% of salary the Trust will contribute 7% of salary to this scheme.
Notice Period:	During your probationary period, the period of notice for termination of your employment will be one week on either side. After successful completion of your probationary period the minimum period of notice is one month.
Place of Work:	193 Abbey Foregate, Shrewsbury, SY2 6AH
Home working	The Trust is committed to building a diverse workforce and has an Agile Working policy which will allow colleagues to work in a flexible manner.
Travel:	Pool vehicles are not normally available. You are required to have insurance to cover business use and a mileage allowance of 45p per mile will be payable from home or office as appropriate. If you use a pedal cycle, you may claim a mileage allowance of 20p per mile.
Training:	The Trust is fully committed to personal development and training. Employees have an annual appraisal and regular progress meetings.
Closing date:	21/05/26
Interview dates:	01/06/26