Kent Wildlife Trust

Kent Wildlife Trust is one of the largest of the 47 Wildlife Trusts, which together make up the Wildlife Trusts Partnership. We are supported and governed by our 32,000 members, and have the simple ambition of enabling the recovery of Kent’s wildlife. To this end, we own or manage some 65 nature reserves covering over 8,100 acres; we campaign and lobby politicians, decision makers and landowners to ensure site protection and good habitat management; and we run a full programme of education work with schools, colleges and adult groups. The Trust also has three Visitor Centres.

The Trust operates from its headquarters at Tyland Barn, just north of Maidstone. It is composed of over 100 professional and support staff who work within teams including Estates, Conservation Delivery & Partnership, Conservation Policy & Evidence, People Engagement, Marketing and Fundraising, Finance and Support Services.

Visit our website to see the range of our activities – [www.kentwildlifetrust.org.uk](http://www.kentwildlifetrust.org.uk/).

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**The statutory duties of a Trustee**

The key legal duties of a trustee are to act in the Charity’s best interest, manage resources responsibly and to act with reasonable care and skill as set out below using the wording given by the Charity Commission.

**Ensure your charity is carrying out its purposes for the public benefit**

You and your co-trustees must make sure that the charity is carrying out the purposes for which it is set up, and no other purpose. This means you should:

• ensure you understand the charity’s purposes as set out in its governing document

• plan what your charity will do, and what you want it to achieve

• be able to explain how all of the charity’s activities are intended to further or support its purposes

• understand how the charity benefits the public by carrying out its purposes

Spending charity funds on the wrong purposes is a very serious matter; in some cases trustees may have to reimburse the charity personally.

**Comply with your charity’s governing document and the law**

You and your co-trustees must:

• make sure that the charity complies with its governing document

• comply with charity law requirements and other laws that apply to your charity

You should take reasonable steps to find out about legal requirements, for example by reading relevant guidance or taking appropriate advice when you need to.

**Act in your charity’s best interests**

You must:

• do what you and your co-trustees (and no one else) decide will best enable the charity to carry out its purposes

• with your co-trustees, make balanced and adequately informed decisions, thinking about the long term as well as the short term

• avoid putting yourself in a position where your duty to your charity conflicts with your personal

interests or loyalty to any other person or body

• not receive any benefit from the charity unless it is properly authorised and is clearly in the charity’s interests; this also includes anyone who is financially connected to you, such as a partner, dependent child or business partner

**Manage your charity’s resources responsibly**

You must act responsibly, reasonably and honestly. This is sometimes called the duty of prudence. Prudence is about exercising sound judgement. You and your co-trustees must:

• make sure the charity’s assets are only used to support or carry out its purposes

• avoid exposing the charity’s assets, beneficiaries or reputation to undue risk

• not over-commit the charity

• take special care when investing or borrowing

• comply with any restrictions on spending funds or selling land

You and your co-trustees should put appropriate procedures and safeguards in place and take reasonable steps to ensure that these are followed. Otherwise you risk making the charity vulnerable to fraud or theft, or other kinds of abuse, and being in breach of your duty.

**Act with reasonable care and skill**

As someone responsible for governing a charity, you:

• must use reasonable care and skill, making use of your skills and experience and taking appropriate advice when necessary

• should give enough time, thought and energy to your role, for example by preparing for, attending and actively participating in all trustees’ meetings

**Ensure your charity is accountable**

You and your co-trustees must comply with statutory accounting and reporting requirements. You should also:

• be able to demonstrate that your charity is complying with the law, well run and effective

• ensure appropriate accountability to members, if your charity has a membership separate from the trustees

• ensure accountability within the charity, particularly where you delegate responsibility for particular tasks or decisions to staff or volunteers

Trustees who act in breach of their legal duties can be held responsible for consequences that flow from such a breach and for any loss the charity incurs as a result. When the Commission looks into cases of potential breach of trust or duty or other misconduct or mismanagement, it may take account of evidence that trustees have exposed the charity, its assets or its beneficiaries to harm or undue risk by not following good practice.

This document should be considered in conjunction with the full Charity Commission guidance on the [essential role of the Trustee](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/734288/CC3_may18.pdf).

# Specific Duties of Trustess of Kent Wildlife Trust

**Strategic Direction**

Trustees must make sure that Kent Wildlife Trust has a clear vision, mission and strategic direction and is focused on achieving these. Trustees work in partnership with the Chief Executive and other senior staff to make sure that:

a. The charity has a clear vision, mission, set of values and strategy, and that these are understood and put into practice, by trustees, staff and volunteers.

b. Operational plans and budgets and the fundraising strategy support the vision, mission and strategy.

c. There is regular review of the external environment for changes that might affect the charity (environmental, political, financial, competitive, partnerships, alliances).

d. There is regular review of the need for the charity and of strategic plans and priorities.

**Performance management**

Trustees are responsible for the performance of Kent Wildlife Trust, for its impact against its charitable objects, and for its corporate behaviour. Trustees work in partnership with the Chief Executive and other senior staff to make sure that:

a. There are policies to direct key areas of the charity’s business.

b. The charity measures its impact and progress towards its strategic objectives and to regularly consider reports on the charity’s performance.

c. There are quality and service standards for major areas of delivery and that these are met.

d. The Chief Executive is held to account for the management and administration of the charity, with regular constructive feedback on his/her performance.

g. The charity has effective employment policies and processes in place, to recruit, train and develop staff and volunteers.

h. There are processes for trustees, staff and volunteers to report activity which might compromise the effectiveness of the charity.

**Compliance**

Trustees must make sure that the charity complies with all legal and regulatory requirements:

a. To make sure, with professional advice as appropriate, that the charity complies with all constitutional, legal, regulatory and statutory requirements.

b. To understand and comply with the governance document and rules that govern the charity, and to review the governance document regularly (at least every three years) to make sure it is fit for purpose.

**Finance and assets**

Trustees must be stewards of the charity’s assets, both tangible and intangible, taking care over their security, and how they are used:

a. To make sure that the charity’s financial obligations are met and that there are adequate financial controls in place to make sure all money due is received and properly applied, and that all assets and liabilities are recorded.

b. To make sure that there is an effective fundraising strategy in place.

c. To be accountable for the solvency of Kent Wildlife Trust.

d. To act reasonably and prudently in all matters relating to Kent Wildlife Trust and always in the interests of the charity.

e. To make sure that intangible assets such as organisational knowledge and expertise, intellectual property, the Kent Wildlife Trust’s brand, good name and reputation are recognized, used and safeguarded.

f. To review the condition and use of the properties and land owned by Kent Wildlife Trust.

g. To make sure that the major risks to the charity are regularly identified and reviewed and that systems are in place to mitigate or minimise these risks.

h. To make sure that trustees take professional advice when needed, and record the advice received.

**Governance**

Trustees must make sure that Kent Wildlife Trust’s governance is of the highest possible standard:

a. To make sure that the charity has a governance structure that is appropriate to a charity of its size/complexity, stage of development, and its charitable objects.

b. To make sure the Board regularly reviews the charity’s governance structure and its own performance, to an agreed programme.

c. To make sure that major decisions and policies are made by the trustees acting collectively.

d. To make sure that Board decisions are recorded in writing by means of minutes.

e. To make sure that the Board’s delegated authority is recorded by terms of reference for board committees, job descriptions for honorary officers, trustees and key staff, and that reporting procedures back to the Board are recorded in writing and complied with.

f. To make sure that there is a systematic, open and fair procedure for recruitment of trustees and of the Chief Executive; and to appoint the Chief Executive.

g. In consultation with the Chief Executive, to make sure that the Board has on it the skills it requires to govern the charity well, and that the Board has access to, and considers, relevant external professional advice and expertise.

h. To make sure that all members of the Board receive appropriate induction on their appointment and that they continue to receive appropriate advice, information and training (both individual and collective).

j. To make sure that trustees have a set of principles and comply with it, and that there are mechanisms for the removal of trustees who do not abide by the trustee principles.

**Safeguarding**

One trustee will be nominated as a safeguarding lead with the following additional responsibilities:

a. To make sure that the charity has a safeguarding policy which is reviewed by the full board at least annually

b. To make sure that charity complies with all legal and good practice requirements in relation to safeguarding, has clear up-to-date procedures and a clear training strategy for staff and volunteers.

c. To advise the board on all safeguarding matters and make sure they are up-to-date with legislation.

d. To support the senior member of staff responsible for safeguarding specifically to discuss safeguarding issues which have arisen since the last review.

e. To be clear about specific safeguarding issues where the trustee safeguarding lead – and indeed the board as a whole – may need to become more involved. Typically these could include:

* Allegations against staff and volunteers
* Safe recruitment of staff in associated positions
* Disciplinary proceedings that follow on from safeguarding concerns about members of staff and volunteers
* Complaints
* Examples of whistleblowing
* Risk management

In carrying out the above duties trustees are required to comply with the governance document.

# Trustee Person Specification

Kent Wildlife Trust works actively to make sure that its Trustee Board has the right skills and experience to lead the charity effectively. All trustee vacancies are advertised. Application is normally by application, followed by interview with the Chair and Chief Executive. The application form and interview are evidence based and we will look for **clear examples** of how candidates meet the criteria below.

**Commitment**

Trustees are expected to demonstrate their:

a. Understanding and acceptance of the duties and liabilities of being a charity Trustee

b. Empathy with the vision, mission and aims of Kent Wildlife Trust

c. Ability and willingness to devote the necessary time and effort (see section below on time commitment and personal development)

**Competencies**

a. Ability to think and apply knowledge strategically,

b. Ability to think creatively

c. Ability to keep mission-focused

d. Ability to analyse, evaluate and learn from management information and other evidence

e. Ability to understand the difference between governance and management.

**Communication and team working**

a. Ability to communicate clearly and sensitively and to take an active part in discussions, expressing their own opinion in a reasoned way

b. Ability to work effectively in a group, listening to the views of others, challenging constructively and asking questions appropriately

c. Ability to influence and engage

**Accountability**

a. Ability to exercise sound and independent judgement

b. Willingness to make and stand by collective decisions, including those which may be unpopular

c. Ability to manage difficult and/or challenging situations

d. Ability to maintain confidentiality on confidential and/or sensitive information

**Skills and experience**

The knowledge, skills and experience in the list below are relevant to Kent wildlife Trust’s main areas of activity, and they are represented across the charity’s executive and staff, who apply them at operational level.

Kent wildlife Trust is looking for Trustees who have the knowledge and understanding to maintain an oversight of these activities at a strategic level in a complex charity, and who can contribute well informed views, constructive challenge and a commitment to best practice. We would normally expect each Trustee to be able to do this in at least one of the areas below. A Trustee’s ability to contribute in this way will often, but not always, draw on professional and/or practitioner experience at a senior level.

**Management**

Strategic leadership and management within a medium sized or large organisation (budget or annual turnover above £4 million pa).

**Stewardship and governance**

Trusteeship in a similar size or larger organisation, together with implementation of best practice in UK corporate governance.

**Specialist expertise**

* A relevant area of expertise such as:
* Accountancy/financial management, law, project or programme management, human resources or organisational development
* Public policy formulation and influencing techniques across parliaments and national assemblies
* Fundraising
* Marketing, communications or public relations.
* Safeguarding
* Knowledge and/or qualifications related to the conservation movement and an understanding of the current economic, social and environmental policies/issues impacting on environmental conservation

**Eligibility**

You must make sure you are allowed to be a trustee:

• there are some restrictions on who can be a trustee – there are minimum age limits and some factors that automatically disqualify people from being trustees

• you must be properly appointed, and should know how long your appointment lasts

• if you are not properly appointed, the trustees’ decisions or actions may be invalid, potentially creating disputes or putting charity assets at risk

• if you are a trustee of a charity that provides ‘regulated activities’ for children or adults, be prepared for your charity to request a DBS check on you

Full guidance on Trustee eligibility is provided in the guidance by Charity Commission on the [essential role of the Trustee](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/734288/CC3_may18.pdf).

# Time Commitment and Personal Development

The following gives an indication of the time commitment which we would expect of a Trustee:

* Attendance at four quarterly Trustee Board meetings each year normally held at our HQ just outside Maidstone on a weekday, lasting a full afternoon with lunch beforehand.
* For those on our Risk and Finance committee, attendance at at least two meetings each year normally held on a weekday lasting a full afternoon with lunch beforehand.
* If Trustees do not attend for 3 consecutive meetings, then membership should be revoked unless - at the Chairman’s discretion - exceptional circumstances are considered to be at play
* There will be opportunity to attend additional specific Committee meetings in a time-limited fashion to deal with specific needs
* The maximum term for Trustees is 9 years: equating to 3 terms of 3-years.
* Preparation for Trustee Board and committee meetings. The agenda and papers for meetings are uploaded to the Trustee intranet space at least one week in advance and will be taken as read. There can numerous reports per meeting so reading and thinking time in advance of meetings is essential.
* Attendance at AGM – The Kent Wildlife Trust annual general meeting is usually held on a Saturday in September lasting several hours from 10am with a networking lunch.
* There may also be opportunities to attend 2–3 events each year, which may range from a campaign launch (involving MPs, media and opinion formers) or an event for donors and supporters.
* Participate on behalf of the Kent Wildlife Trust at events such as professional conferences, where a trustee can contribute personal expertise.

Kent Wildlife Trust is committed to supporting and developing trustees in their role. All trustees receive an induction and training as appropriate.

# Other Considerations

1. The post is advertised as a voluntary unpaid post
2. Appointment will be subject to regular review and commitment.
3. No person shall be treated less favourably than another on the grounds of sex, sexual orientation, marital status, race, ethnic or national origin, religion, colour, age or disability.
4. Appointment is conditional upon receipt of satisfactory references and DBS Disclosure statement (If safeguard lead).
5. The Trust operates a no smoking policy.
6. Kent Wildlife Trust is an equal opportunities employer and applicants for staff and voluntary vacancies shall be short-listed for interview and appointed purely on the grounds of their suitability for the role as laid out in the advertised description.
7. All staff and trustees share a common duty to recruit members and volunteers and enhance the good reputation of the Trust whenever the opportunity arises.
8. KWT aims actively to enhance, wherever possible, the opportunities for people with disabilities to experience, understand and enjoy the natural environment. All staff and trustees share the responsibility in achieving this. Further information is available from the Director of Education and Engagement.

# Procedure for Applicants

For an application pack visit our website: [www.kentwildlifetrust.org.uk](http://www.kentwildlifetrust.org.uk).

To apply, please submit a short covering letter and CV by email to HR@kentwildlife.org.uk.

The interview process will consist of an informal chat with Evan Bowen-Jones, Chief Executive followed by a formal interview with the Trustees and Senior Management.

**Kent Wildlife Trust has a positive approach to equality and welcomes applications from all sectors of the community**