Trustee Recruitment and Induction

**Kent Wildlife Trust**

**Policy**

**How our Trustee Board works**

Working together on the trustee board, our trustees provide leadership to the charity. They decide on our strategy and direction so that we can support the restoration of Kent’s wildlife and achieve what we were set up for as described in our Memorandum and Articles of Association (linked).

The Board must seek to be representative of the people and organisations that it works with and must have all the required knowledge and skills to run the Charity. Individual trustees must have sufficient knowledge of the role of a charity trustee and be able to effectively represent Kent Wildlife Trust at meetings/events.

Our trustees are also legally responsible for making sure that the charity is solvent, well-run, spends its money wisely and complies with all relevant laws and regulation.

The trustees support the Chief Executive and his team who manage the operational work of the charity.

We can have up to 11 Trustees + 3 Honorary Officers on our trustee board and a majority of them must be elected by our members. Our Honorary Officers consist of:

* + Treasurer
  + Chair
  + Vice Chair

These elected trustees have to be members of Kent Wildlife Trust. Additionally a small number of co-opted trustees are appointed by the Board to bring specific skills or experience.

The Honorary Chair of the Trustee Board is appointed by trustees from among their number and will have served at least one year on the Board of Trustees. Our trustees are not paid for being members of the Trustee Board.

The responsibilities of the Trustee Board are set out in detail in its Governance Document (linked) and the role of individual trustees is set out in the trustee role description (linked).

The Trustee Board is supported by the Finance and Risk committee which oversees all financial and administrative matters in the charity, ensuring its financial health and operational viability, and making sure that major risks are identified and effectively managed.

## **Who can be a Trustee?**

We have rules about who our trustees are, how they are recruited and how long they can serve as a trustee. These rules are set out in our governance document (linked).

The majority of our trustees are members elected by the membership following recruitment and nomination by the trustee board. A small number of trustees may be appointed for specific skills or experience. These trustees are not elected and do not have to be members.

Elected trustees must be re-elected at least every 3 years and co-opted trustees must be reappointed every 2 years. Trustees may serve up to a maximum of 9 years on the Trustee Board. Our trustees are not paid for being members of the Trustee Board.

**Trustee Recruitment**

We invite applications from people who are willing to ask challenging questions about our work, help make decisions about the future of the charity as part of the trustee team and who can commit to attending Board and committee meetings.

We will recruit annually to fill vacancies that open up due to the retirement or standing down of existing trustees. This annual campaign will normally take place 6 months before the AGM and, as long as there are openings on the board, vacancies will be continually advertised.

When a need has been identified to recruit trustees the Appointments Committee consisting of the Chair, two appointed trustees and The Chief Executive will manage the process. They will have responsibility for ensuring that the remainder of the recruitment and induction process is carried out.

* Responsibility for recruiting trustees will not be delegated to employees although employees may be given specific administrative tasks by the sub-committee.
* Whenever a trustee departs a skills audit of the board will be done. Efforts at recruiting a replacement will take account of the skills audit and of the skills being lost by the departure. Consideration must also be given to any specific roles or duties that the individual leaving the board was undertaking.
* Once the ideal skill/experience profile has been identified a recruitment plan will be formulated. This will identify the most appropriate resources from which applicants might be found. The vacant positions will be advertised through the media, volunteer network, direct approaches to professional bodies and to other voluntary organisations. The trustees will consider approaches to personal contacts however will ensure that we promote diversity and avoid conflicts of interest
* People enquiring to become trustees will be sent appropriate documentation about the charity, introductory material about trusteeship and will be asked to complete an application form. Arrangements will be made to assist any potential applicant with specific needs in relation to completion of the form or access to the supporting materials.
* In the event of there being a large number of applicants those most closely matching the skills required will be approached at this stage in preference to less suitable applicants however, consideration will be given to appointing more than one suitable applicant.
* As a minimum, and if not sent earlier in the process, applicants will be provided with:- a copy of the latest accounts of the charity; Charity Commission Publication CC3- ‘Responsibilities of Charity Trustees’; a copy of the charity’s governing document; a copy of the minutes of the last three board meetings (edited to conform with the principles of GDPR if necessary); a trustee ‘role description’; relevant policies including those regarding equal opportunities and conflicts of interest; a copy of this policy.
* Applicants who appear suitable will be invited to attend an interview with the Appointments Committee and a recommendation to appoint or not will be made to the full Board. If the appointment is approved then referees will be approached to provide references as to the individual’s suitability for the role.
* Following this process, successful candidates will be invited to attend the next Board meeting.
* The ratification of the appointment will be sought at the next AGM or if deemed necessary, a Special General Meeting (SGM).

**Board diversity**

We value fairness and equity; we aim to create an inclusive environment that supports differences and encourages diverse perspectives. Our ambition is to recruit the best people from the broadest pool of applicants and across the full spectrum of sex, race, age, national origin, social background, marital status, pregnancy and maternity, gender reassignment, disability, sexual orientation, education and religion or belief.

We seek to ensure diversity in our board of trustees as well as in our staff base and consideration will be given to ways in which groups that are under-represented on the board might be reached and encouraged to apply. However, at the point of selection the board will not discriminate unfairly on any of the grounds listed in the Equal Opportunities Policy.

**Appointment of new Trustees**

Before a new Trustee is appointed, s/he must understand what is involved, and how they will be supported in holding the office and doing the role effectively. Best practice demands that reliance on the recruitment alone to ensure the candidate is aware of the expectations of the role is not enough.

The recruitment, selection and subsequent induction of a new Trustee, provides an opportunity to ensure the continued effectiveness of the Board. They are responsible for ensuring that the Kent Wildlife Trust’s income is used only for the purposes set out in the governing document and for no other purpose.

Trustees retain overall responsibility and control of the Trustee recruitment, selection and induction process.

**The role of the Board in recruitment**

When recruiting new Trustees, the existing Board has regard to Kent Wildlife Trust’s purpose and aims, their duties and responsibilities as trustees and the skills required by the Board. They must ensure that they are acting in the best interests of the Trust and that they are in a position to explain to new trustees what is required of them.

The Trustees recognise that they can benefit from seeking to recruit and retain Trustees who reflect and have knowledge of the Trust’s purposes and are aware that potential conflicts of interest are also a factor in recruitment.

**Election of Trustees**

It is accepted that members have the right to elect those individuals that they feel represent their interests, however, existing board members have the responsibility to ensure that the needs of the organisation in terms of governance are met by those elected. The Board will seek to do this by adopting a system of recommending trustee appointments to the membership using the process outline below. The membership will then be able to choose and elect a recommended candidate(s) to the Board.

* One third of the elected Board must retire by rotation at each Annual General Meeting (AGM). Where the existing members seek re-election and have the support of their organisation, the other trustees will vote on whether or not to approve the re-election. If a simple majority approve the re-election then this person will be recommended to the membership for election.
* Where an elected Trustee is retiring by rotation they must, if circumstances allow, indicate their intentions in terms of seeking re-election three months prior to the AGM. This ensures that the Board have the opportunity to vote on whether they should be recommended for re-election at the AGM at a Board meeting. If circumstances do not allow sufficient time for a meeting then a postal ballot of members on the re-election of the retired trustee is acceptable.
* Where an elected trustee is retiring by rotation and does not seek re-election, or the re-election is not supported by a majority of the other trustees, the retiring trustee will not be recommended for re-election to the membership. In this case a potential vacancy will occur.
* Where there is sufficient time before the AGM invitations to apply to become an elected member of the Board will be widely promoted to the membership of the organisation. Prospective candidates must have the support of their organisation and apply within the deadline set by the Board. Applications will then be scrutinised by the Chair and two appointed trustees and recommendations made to the Board for full approval.
* The membership will elect their representative(s) at the AGM or, if deemed necessary, a SGM taking account of the recommendations from the Board.

**Induction process**

We provide new Trustees with induction support and reference materials to ensure that they are fully informed as to Kent Wildlife Trust’s purposes, operations, fundraising activities and their own responsibilities.

With confirmation of appointment, a new Trustee will receive a Trustee Handbook, which includes:

• Memorandum and Articles of Association of Kent Wildlife Trust.

• Annual Report and Accounts.

Trustee Role Description

• Current policies, processes and procedures

• Charity Commission Trustee Guidance.

All new Trustees are expected to complete induction training to understand their role within and knowledge of Kent Wildlife Trust and its activities.

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| Post responsible for this policy: | Last approved by Conservation Committee:  Last ratified by Council: |
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