

**Document Status: Updated May 2021**

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Owners: CEO/Company Secretary and Trustees

File Ref: 200601 FINAL Trustee Role Description 2020

**Becoming a Trustee**

Trustees of the Sheffield and Rotherham Wildlife Trust (SRWT) are volunteers who together lead the organisation in the planning, resourcing and delivery of its activities, so that it can achieve its charitable objectives. An enthusiastic, committed and active Board of Trustees, with a good range of knowledge, skills, experience and personal qualities is vital to the healthy and effective running of the organisation.

The Board of Trustees leads the strategic development and planning of the Trust, develops and adopts appropriate policies for the Trust to work to, ensures that everything the Trust does is legal, right and proper, and supports, guides and assists the Trust's professional staff and volunteers in taking forward the Trust's plans and programmes of work. The Trustees also play an important role in connecting the Trust to the local communities where its members live and where it delivers its work, and to the various significant external stakeholders – local politicians, businesses, community organisations, government agencies, Councils, influential individuals, etc.

The formal business of being a Trustee involves some induction to ensure awareness and understanding of the Trust and the role of a Trustee within it (including the relationship of SRWT to the wider Wildlife Trust movement and the Royal Society of Wildlife Trusts). It then involves reading papers, attending meetings and contributing to discussions or working groups concerning the governance and leadership of the Trust – including dealing with Development Strategies, Annual Plans, draft policies, budgets, accounts and financial reports. The formal business of the Board is arranged around 4 Board Meetings each year, held on weekday evenings at 7pm. Additionally, there are occasional events, meetings, training sessions and workshops to which Trustees are invited, including field visits to take a practical look at issues of importance to the Trust.

Some Trustees are appointed by the Board as a whole to perform particular formal roles as Officers of the Trust (Chair, Vice Chair, Treasurer, Secretary – though the role of Secretary is normally fulfilled by a paid staff member rather than a Trustee), or to hold other responsibilities (cheque signatories, Directors of subsidiary and other associated companies, representatives on external Boards and Forums of one sort or another). It should be noted that SRWT is both a Company and a Charity, and therefore Board members are both Trustees and Company Directors.

Trustees are elected by the Members of SRWT at the AGM and in the first instance serve for a term of office lasting three years. There is then the option of re-election for a second three year term after which the Trustee stands down.

## **Trustee Role Description**

### **Statutory Duties**

By becoming a Trustee, each member of the Board makes a commitment to undertake the following statutory duties:

- To ensure that the Sheffield & Rotherham Wildlife Trust complies with its articles of association, charity law, company law and any other relevant legislation or regulations, including reporting to Companies House and the Charity Commission.
- To ensure that the Sheffield & Rotherham Wildlife Trust pursues its objects as defined in its articles of association and that it carries out its purposes for public benefit.
- To ensure the Sheffield & Rotherham Wildlife Trust uses its resources exclusively in pursuance of its objects.
- To contribute actively to the board of Trustees' role in giving firm strategic direction to the Sheffield & Rotherham Wildlife Trust, setting overall policy, defining goals and setting targets and evaluating performance against agreed targets.
- To safeguard the good name and values of Sheffield & Rotherham Wildlife Trust.
- To ensure the effective and efficient administration of Sheffield & Rotherham Wildlife Trust.
- To ensure the financial stability of Sheffield & Rotherham Wildlife Trust.
- To protect and manage the property of the charity and to ensure the proper investment of Sheffield & Rotherham Wildlife Trust's funds.
- To appoint the chief executive officer and monitor his/her performance.
- To act with integrity and avoid any personal conflicts of interest or misuse of charity funds or assets – to act in the charity's best interests.
- To act with reasonable care and skill, taking expert advice when necessary.

*(From National Council for Voluntary Organisations. For more detailed information on the role of a Trustee please go to the Charity Commission website and download CC3: The Essential Trustee.)*

### **Fulfilling the Role**

In carrying out the above statutory duties, each Trustee is expected to:

- Familiarise themselves with the Trust's Strategy, governing documents and relevant Charity Commission guidance
- Attend and actively contribute to 4 Board meetings per year, the Annual General Meeting and 2 informal visits or workshops per year
- Use any specific skills, knowledge or experience they have to help the board of Trustees reach sound decisions
- Scrutinise board papers and other Trust documents
- Lead discussions and constructively contribute to debates
- Highlight new opportunities or threats to the Trust, drawn from their own networks and knowledge of the external environment in which the Trust operates
- Help the Trust to focus and address key issues and risks
- Provide guidance on new initiatives
- Contribute to issues in which the Trustee has special expertise

And potentially the following additional activities dependant on the Trustee's own time constraints:

- Serving on sub-committees, strategic outcome groups, steering groups or time limited working groups
- Attending events and external meetings as a representative of the Trust

### **Support from the Trust**

In return for this commitment, the Trust will:

- Provide induction and development to enable Trustees to carry out their role as effectively as possible
- Give adequate notice of relevant dates and events
- Provide reports and papers in advance of meetings
- Respond to information requests and Governance queries

More details concerning the role and expectations of Trustees can be found in the Governance Handbook, which will be provided to all new Trustees on successful election.

### **Person Specification**

#### **Professional experience in one or more of the following areas for 2021:**

- Conservation, natural environment, natural capital, rewilding etc
- Ecology, ecological principles: biodiversity net gain,
- Farming and land management
- Ecological/land management consultancy or contract management

#### **We are also keen to hear from people who:**

- Have a good knowledge of Rotherham communities and/or natural environment
- Or who can represent more of our diverse community in Sheffield & Rotherham

### **Skills & Experience**

Trustees should demonstrate some or all of the following:

- Passion for nature
- Interest in and enthusiasm for the work of the Wildlife Trust
- Experience of working as part of a decision-making group, board or committee either in a business or voluntary environment
- Experience or knowledge of the legal requirements of a charity
- Local knowledge of the places in which the Sheffield & Rotherham Wildlife Trust operates
- Experience of financial management and budgeting in a business or voluntary environment

The following areas of expertise are always welcome on the Board:

- Environmental Law/ Protected species
- Land Management and Conservation
- Access and Recreation
- Education & Training
- Working with Children and Young People
- Advocacy & Campaigning
- Research: relevant to the work of the Trust
- Fundraising