



Game & Wildlife  
CONSERVATION TRUST

Appointment of

**Chair**

August 2025 TBVVA



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# Contents

- 1 About the Trust
- 2 The Role
- 3 Person Specification
- 4 Terms of Appointment
- 5 How to Apply

The GWCT is the UK's leading charity working for a thriving countryside rich in game and wildlife.



# About the Trust

For nearly 100 years, the Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust (GWCT) has worked closely with land managers, farmers, gamekeepers and estates across the country, offering these 'working conservationists' science-based support and advice to enable them to improve wildlife habitats, restore biodiversity and enhance the British countryside.

This work is largely funded by charitable donations and the GWCT's research covers a wide range of species under threat and habitats, from waders to woodland birds, game management to farmland ecosystems, wild salmon to pollinators.

The Trust's work demonstrates how sustainable land management can increase biodiversity and aid species recovery and its projects include globally important long-term wildlife monitoring studies.

Our values:

- Committed to conservation
- Following the science
- Collaboration
- Pride in our approach
- Putting people first

The Game & Wildlife Conservation Trust charitable objects are:

- To promote for the public benefit, the conservation of game and its associated flora and fauna.
- To conduct research into game and wildlife management (including the use of game animals as a natural resource) and the effects of farming and other land management practices on the environment, and to publish the useful results of such research.
- To advance the education of the public and those managing the countryside in the effects of farming and management of land which is sympathetic to game and other wildlife.
- To conserve game and wildlife for the public benefit including: where it is for the protection of the environment, the conservation or promotion of biological diversity through the provision, conservation, restoration or enhancement of natural habitat; or the maintenance or recovery of a species in its natural habitat on land or in water and in particular where the natural habitat is situated in the vicinity of a landfill site.

The Game & Wildlife Conservation Trust is a charity company limited by guarantee registered in England and Wales under number 05579632, registered charity 1112023.





## What do we do?

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- We use science to promote game and wildlife management as an essential part of nature conservation.
- We develop scientifically researched game and wildlife management techniques.
- We promote our work to conservationists, including farmers and landowners and offer an on-site advisory service on all aspects of game and wildlife management, so that Britain's countryside and its wildlife are enhanced for the public benefit.
- We influence government policy with sound science that creates progressive and effective policies.
- We support best practice for field sports that contribute to improving the biodiversity of the countryside.

## What do we believe?

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- Scientific research should underpin sustainable conservation practice.
- Game and wildlife management is the foundation of good conservation.
- Collaboration with those on the ground, such as farmers, gamekeepers and other land managers, is fundamental to realising our national ambitions for nature recovery
- Field sports (in particular shooting and fishing) can contribute substantially to the conservation of landscape, habitat and wildlife.
- Humane and targeted predator control is an essential part of effective game and wildlife conservation.
- We utterly oppose those who engage in wildlife crime.
- Good conservation goes hand-in-hand with economic land use.



# Conservation Built on Core Values

The countryside faces many competing challenges, to deliver for biodiversity and the environment, to increase our national food security, and provide a place of recreation for individuals and communities across the country. We believe that good conservation goes hand-in-hand with economic land use, especially when sustainable conservation practice is underpinned by sound scientific research.

The Trust's work has shown that game and wildlife management can be an effective way to deliver good conservation, that shooting and fishing can contribute substantially to the conservation of landscape, habitat, and wildlife and that intervention in our manmade landscapes is important to delivering balance.

## Putting scientific research into practice

All of GWCT's work is underpinned by scientific research. It has published over 1,850 peer-reviewed papers. The GWCT's scientific staff range from students to leading academics based at its Fordingbridge headquarters in Hampshire, and its four main satellite sites which put research into practice. The flagship Allerton Project, a 320-hectare demonstration farm in Leicestershire, researches the effects of different farming methods on wildlife and the environment, sharing results of its research through advisory and educational activities.

## Working with those Managing our Land to Deliver Positive Change

We work closely with working conservationists to enhance their impact and deliver for our countryside. Whether they are a gamekeeper, land manager, farmer, river keeper or forester, our research and advice guides them to do the right thing to provide productive land for food, recreation and, most importantly, the wildlife and ecosystems that require it. To support these goals, we draw on our research, and we bring research findings to policymakers who shape the future of our landscape. We amplify this work with the stories and evidence of our working conservationists, who are at the forefront of environmental best practice, experiencing the challenges and the successes first hand.

## Natural Capital Advisory

Natural Capital Advisory is the GWCT's subsidiary business, whose mission is to use its expertise in natural science and business to deliver the very best environmental and financial outcomes from the Natural Capital sector. The NCA provides advice and services to farmers, investors, corporates, housing developers and local authorities across the UK. These advisory and consultancy services include biodiversity auditing, convening groups of farmers and landowners for the purposes of Natural Capital Trading, brokering trading of Natural Capital services between farmers, investors and buyers, and monitoring of environmental contracts.





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Supporting  
breeding lapwing

Our Waders For Real project has  
increased lapwing numbers

## The Future

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The Trust has built on its long history and established itself as a leading, high-impact conservation charity with a distinctive role at the heart of the environmental ecosystem.

Earlier this year, Nick von Westenholz was appointed as Chief Executive, having previously been Director of Strategy for the NFU. This marks a new era for the GWCT with exciting opportunities for the future.

The incoming Chair will be joining an organisation that has a talented, multi-disciplinary leadership team and an experienced and committed Board of Trustees. The Trust is ambitious for growth, in terms of fundraising, expanding a diverse supporter base, exploring new services, and growing interest in the Trust's scientific research to a broader community of stakeholders. At a time when biodiversity is under great threat, the GWCT seeks to work in partnership with other leading charities, with landowners and with the Government to find sustainable solutions for nature.

Strategic planning is already underway amongst Trustees and the senior leadership, and three clear priorities are emerging for the GWCT from this year onwards.

First is the necessity for the Trust to increase its voice in order that the research is amplified and achieves its intended impact. The Trust is committed to ensuring it is communicating in a bolder, broader and more accessible way, with its existing audiences and new ones, embracing the potential of digital communication, and ensuring effective, evidence-based policy influence.



# Continued

Second is delivering ambitious, landscape-scale solutions to climate change and biodiversity loss. With 72% of the UK agricultural land, GWCT has pioneered the Farmer Cluster concept: collective, scalable action in the farmer and land manager community, first helping to establish the ground-breaking farmer-led Marlborough Downs Nature Improvement Area ten years ago, and then the first pilots of 'farmer clusters' in partnership with Natural England and Defra. Based on the gains made by the Farmer Clusters, in 2022 the Trust launched its ambitious Environmental Farmers Groups initiative, a significant step up from Farmer Clusters. These groups are growing at pace and have the potential to reach 1.6 million hectares by 2025, equating to 15% of England. By joining EFGs, farmers and land managers can coordinate their environmental actions and decisions across whole catchments. This is a game-changer for nature conservation, where the vision for a whole landscape is translated into reality on the ground. GWCT advisers and coordinators remain central to the success and growth of the initiative, and in areas where the Trust can achieve the most for nature and biodiversity in the years to come.

Lastly, as an evidence-based organisation, the Trust is committed to building on

sustainable conservation practice. Sustainable game management should achieve broader net biodiversity gain, and with decades of data and evidence, the Trust is well equipped to find and deliver long-term solutions for species recovery. It is also uniquely placed to help navigate inevitable tensions and competing pressures that exist between land use and nature conservation priorities. The Trust will continue to advise farmers on pragmatic and workable management solutions, and remain a trusted, impartial and evidence-based partner to its stakeholders.

To ensure the success of these objectives, the Trust must also continue to evolve as a modern and accessible brand, with a culture that attracts and retains diverse talent, where fundraising continues to rise, and where proper structures and systems enable the best possible performance. Leading an engaged and expert group of Trustees, the Chair will bring wisdom, judgement and experience to support the GWCT in its renewed focus, at a time when its mission is more important than ever for nature and biodiversity. Their tenure will also see the preparations of the Trust's centenary celebrations in 2030, for which it is hoped they will have a genuine interest and enthusiasm, and play a significant part.



# Governance and Leadership

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The Game & Wildlife Conservation Trust's patron is HM The King and its President is the Duke of Northumberland. The Board of Trustees has overall responsibility for the Trust and provides us with a breadth of experience and expertise in the countryside and wildlife conservation.

The Board is led by a Chair, who is supported by two Vice-Chairmen, John Shields and Jeremy Young. There are currently 18 trustees, both elected and ex-officio. The names of the members of the Board of Trustees are available here: [Our trustees - Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust](#)

Trustees meet three times a year and delegate some issues to a number of committees, including finance, investment and risk management; membership and marketing; and research steering.

Trustees usually serve a four-year term.





# The Role

## Context

The current Chair, Sir Jim Paice, will complete his term of appointment in June 2026, when the new Chair will need to take up the position. It is hoped that the incoming Chair may be able to attend at least one Board meeting ahead of that time.

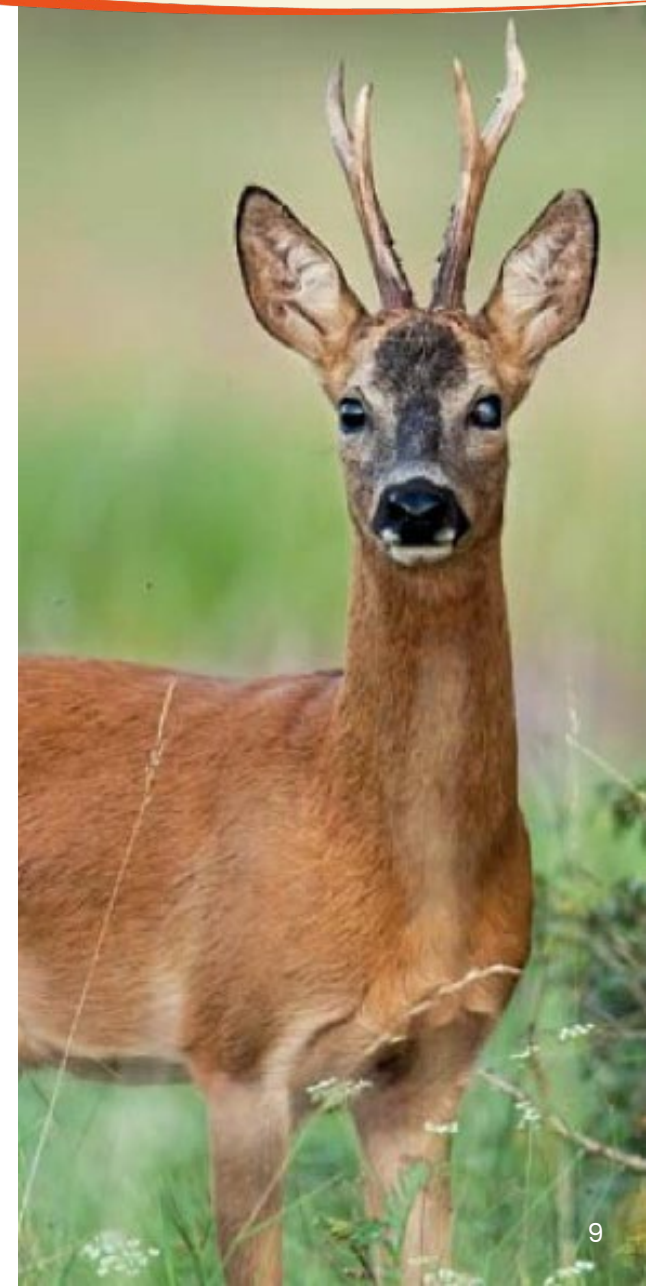
The Chair will lead the Board, ensuring a strong level of governance and performance, while serving as a critical friend and mentor to its chief executive. The Chair will ensure that the Trust delivers on its charitable objectives to enhance wildlife in the environment, whilst maintaining and improving its financial position, and ensuring the relevance and influence of the Trust's research.

## Role Specification

1. Lead Trustees and support the Leadership Team in the development and delivery of the organisation's strategy and the monitoring of the organisation's impact and performance against agreed targets.
2. Chair Board meetings and some committee meetings, ensuring that all Trustees are helped and encouraged to participate in board meetings and in the committee structure.
3. Ensure that the Board of Trustees fulfils its responsibilities for the governance of Game and

Wildlife Conservation Trust, protecting the financial stability, ensuring that major risks are regularly reviewed, managed and mitigating actions and appropriate policies are in place and implemented.

4. Ensuring that the Trust complies with its charitable objectives and charity legislation.
5. Carry out regular appraisals of the Trustees and an annual appraisal of the CEO – in keeping with conventional governance arrangements – the CEO is accountable to Trustees and so reports to the Chair.
6. Providing advice to the CEO and executive leadership, especially regarding policy and finance.
7. Demonstrating to staff the significance of the Trust's work and their part in it.
8. Representing the Trust to external organisations, including Government, relevant NGOs and similar.
9. Promoting GWCT at all opportunities, including through public events, speeches and articles.
10. Provide commitment to all parts of the Trust and across all activities.



# The Role

## Likely Time Commitment

The Trust is headquartered in Hampshire, and supports projects across England, Scotland and Wales. The Chair currently visits the Trust HQ on occasion and for some Board meetings, as well as attendance of meetings in London, and will visit the Trust's projects where possible. Given the geographical breadth of the Trust's reach and interests, it is hoped that the Chair will feel able to travel, within reason, on behalf of the Trust. This includes attending annual events such as the English and Scottish Game Fairs, as well as various functions throughout the year, some of which will be at weekends or evening events.

## Attendance of Meetings

- three Trustee meetings a year, as Chair
- four Finance & General Purposes meetings a year, as Chair
- two Audit Committee meetings a year
- two Remuneration Committee meetings a year
- four NCA board meetings a year
- four Aim to Sustain board meetings a year

In addition to this, the current Chair is in regular contact with the CEO in support of their work, as well as with other Trustees as required. It is understood that the incoming Chair will establish their preferred ways of working with key stakeholders, once in post.

It is likely that the role requires, on average, a day a week although there will be some periods in the year which are busier than others, so a degree of flexibility will be needed.





# Person Specification

Candidates for the role are likely to demonstrate many of the following credentials:

## Experience, skills and knowledge

- Board-level experience, including previous chairing experience, working at some significant scale, with a track record of having developed and delivered strategy
- Understanding of good governance, ideally supported by previous experience in a charitable board context
- Significant leadership experience, with the ability to support and mentor the CEO and their team as required
- Strong financial and commercial acumen
- Experience of moving organisations forward and helping them to develop strategy, evolve and diversify
- Understanding of organisations which are public facing, including the development of public engagement, confidence, and brand
- Excellent communication skills, with a compelling presentational style
- Knowledge of government and policy, particularly in the area of conservation and land management

## Personal attributes

- Excellent relationship builder, with the ability to engage with a range of different stakeholders
- Wisdom, diplomacy and judgement
- Data driven and analytical
- Decisive, whilst also listening to and hearing the views of others
- Enjoys variety, and able to assimilate and digest wide-ranging information
- Enjoys networking and comfortable in an externally facing role, including public events and media engagement
- At ease with donors and supporters, and willing to play an active role in the charity's fundraising efforts
- A convincing champion of GWCT's role, based on an understanding the ways in which economically viable land management, conservation and field sports can go hand in hand
- Comfortable operating in the environs of politics
- Enjoys the idea of being part of a membership organisation



# How to Apply

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**Saxton Bampfylde Ltd is acting as an employment agency advisor to the Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust on this appointment.**

Prospective candidates should apply for this role through our website at [www.saxbam.com/appointments](http://www.saxbam.com/appointments) using code TBVVA.

Click on the 'apply' button and follow the instructions to upload a CV and cover letter and complete the online equal opportunities monitoring\* form.

The closing date for applications is 9am on **Monday 6 October**.

\* The equal opportunities monitoring online form will not be shared with anyone involved in assessing your application. Please complete as part of the application process.

## **GDPR personal data notice**

According to GDPR guidelines, we are only able to process your Sensitive Personal Data (racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs, trade union membership, genetic data, biometric data, health, sex life, or sexual orientation) with your express consent. You will be asked to complete a consent form when you apply and please do not include any Sensitive Personal Data within your CV (although this can be included in your covering letter if you wish to do so), remembering also not to include contact details for referees without their prior agreement.







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