



**Berkshire
Buckinghamshire
& Oxfordshire**
Wildlife Trust



Candidate Information and Application Pack 2022

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Introduction

Thank you for your interest in becoming a trustee or independent committee member of the Berkshire, Buckinghamshire & Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust (BBOWT).

This is an exciting time to be involved with BBOWT. Our recently approved strategy Wilder – More Nature Everywhere commits us to very ambitious plans to ensure 30% of Berks, Bucks and Oxon is well managed for nature by 2030. Nature is for everyone – we need to reach new communities and are committed to breaking down the barriers that have prevented people in urban areas from enjoying the natural world. Our governance will need to perform at the highest possible level to support our exceptionally capable leadership team and respond to the opportunities and challenges we will face, so we are looking for talented people from differing backgrounds to join our Board and committees.

This pack has been created by current trustees and staff members with the aim of providing the information you need before and during application. As an equal opportunities employer, to ensure you can participate fully in our recruitment process please feel free to contact Jan Honour on janhonour@bbowt.org.uk to discuss any adjustments that need to be made to the process so that it's more accessible for you. If you have any other questions or would like to arrange for a telephone call with a current trustee to discuss things further before deciding whether to apply, please email Jan.



George Levvy
Chair

BBOWT is deeply rooted to the beliefs, conservation actions and aspirations of our founding members of 1959. This legacy has provided strong foundations on which we continue to grow, as we confront the huge challenges of the nature and climate crisis. Despite this and the turbulent political and financial backdrop, we continue to think bigger, bolder and wilder, as we aim to put nature into recovery by 2030 across our three counties.

Today the Trust is, of course, bigger in size, and in recent years our impact has grown but there is headroom to do more. We know that nature is under immense threat locally, nationally, and globally. Our strategic plans for the future include ambitious, innovative and large-scale conservation approaches to protect and enhance wildlife; species reintroductions; wide-reaching education and community engagement activities through 'Team Wilder' programmes; and campaigning and advocacy work to protect and restore nature locally. Access to nature is uneven, and we need to do more to build meaningful relationships with those communities, particularly those from Black and Minority Ethnic backgrounds, that have been prevented from engaging with and enjoying the natural world.

This is an exciting time to be joining BBOWT as a trustee or committee member. You will be overseeing a period of change and growth as we realise our ambition to bring nature back from the brink.



Estelle Bailey
Chief Executive



About BBOWT



Founded in 1959 by a small group of volunteers, BBOWT is the only charity working across the Thames Valley to safeguard its unique natural environments and their wildlife.

BBOWT now has over 27,000 members, more than 1,700 volunteers, and 140 staff members. We have strong finances with an annual turnover of £6 million and are proud of our highly effective and dedicated staff team.

We work in partnership through collaborative projects with local communities, businesses, landowners and local authorities. Each year around 12,000 schoolchildren visit our four education centres. We are located on the margins of large urban centres with diverse populations.

As part of a national network of 46 Wildlife Trusts - known collectively as The Wildlife Trusts (TWTs) - we have national reach, so our work makes a difference for wildlife everywhere.

BBOWT operates one wholly owned subsidiary company:

Future Nature WTC LTD

Dormant subsidiary companies:

Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust Limited
Berkshire Wildlife Trust Limited
Buckinghamshire Wildlife Trust Limited
Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Naturalists' Trust LTD
Thames Valley Wildlife Trust Limited

Along with six other Wildlife Trusts, we jointly own and run Wildlife Fundraising (Central) Limited, a business which works to recruit new members.

Our website, bbowt.org.uk, provides a good overview of the range and reach of our work, as well as details about our many assets (properties and nature reserves).





Strategic Objectives – Wilder, More Nature Everywhere

Our Wilder plan for 2021-2026 sets one simple overarching aim: to create more nature everywhere. To do this, we need to inspire people to take action and we need to do all we can to restore wilder landscapes.

Our strategic plan is set out with three main goals. We aim to:

- Put nature into recovery
- Empower people to act for nature
- Secure our future



By 2030, the Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire region will have started to look and sound very different. There will be more natural processes creating wilder, connected landscapes, with thriving and diverse wildlife.

We will have delivered new conservation projects, directly influenced landowners to do more for nature, and we will be on the journey towards establishing a rewilding demonstration project.

Our nature reserves will be rich in wildlife spilling out into the countryside that surrounds them, connecting pockets of wildlife and rebuilding habitats.

We will have inspired people to act for nature and worked with partners across the spectrum of farming, government, business and communities to join up action and nature.

We will continue to be a resilient, financially-robust charity delivering measurable impact, underpinned by sound values and an inclusive workplace for all staff and volunteers.

We will live our brand and tell captivating and compelling stories that are rich in diverse narratives and will entice people to support us.





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Our culture and people

We strive to be a welcoming and inclusive community of people who share a common goal to celebrate and protect the wildlife of Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire. We are committed to ensure that we meet our responsibilities as set out under the Equality Act 2010. As a Charity, we recognise that there are barriers within our society that can prevent some communities and people from engaging with the opportunities we offer. In particular, our focus is on dismantling barriers for those from Black, Asian and Ethnic Minority backgrounds and LGBTQ+ people so they feel welcome in our spaces. To do this, we actively create opportunities for engagement, participation and employment to achieve equity.

BBOWT is committed to recruit and retain the best suitably qualified people and ensure that underserved groups have equality of opportunity in recruitment. Our values are summarised below.

Our values

We are bold

We speak up for local nature and are determined to transform our ambitions into reality.

We are passionate champions for nature

We put nature at the heart of everything we do.

We are guided by science

We look to science to help us solve the difficult problems and build our understanding of the natural world.

We are committed to collaboration

We embody a spirit of co-creation to deliver change, for people and nature.

We act with integrity

We are professional, transparent and objective in all that we do.

We are inclusive

We are empathetic and reflective in our practice to deliver work that is impactful and inclusive for communities and nature.



The Board of Trustees

BBOWT is governed by a Board of Trustees. We are responsible for ensuring effective governance, setting the Trust's strategic direction and policies, and ensuring compliance to all relevant regulations (including the Charities Act and Companies Act).

The Finance and Audit Committee (FAC) is chaired by the Treasurer with four other trustees as members plus two independents who provide their skills and external perspectives and challenges to ensure the Committee fully discharges its responsibilities effectively and efficiently (the roles we are currently seeking to fill). The CEO and the Directors leading on Finance and Fundraising attend the Committee.

BBOWT's Board applies the Charity Governance Code, which sets standards of best practice for governance, and can be found at charitygovernancecode.org/en.

Trustees are normally expected to use their skills and experiences to take part in a variety of leadership roles, working groups and committees.

For example:

- the Chair of the Board and Honorary Treasurer are trustees elected annually by the Board
- this pack has been prepared by the Nominations Committee
- a Finance and Audit Committee meets five times a year with a particular focus on finance, fundraising and risk. This committee also has two independent members.
- time limited working groups are established from time to time e.g., to progress a particular new work area

Trustees attend Board Meetings (usually two away days and four evening or afternoon meetings), the Annual General Meeting and Conference, and any committees or working groups they are involved in.

We will aim for a mix of video calls and in-person meetings in the future. Meetings may be at the BBOWT office in Littlemore, Oxford, or at nature reserves such as College Lake, near Tring, or the Nature Discovery Centre at Thatcham.

We are fortunate to have the exceptional support of the Trust's experienced, passionate and dedicated Chief Executive and Senior Leadership Team.

Being a trustee – FAQs

How much time do trustees devote to their role?

Being a trustee requires a range of voluntary work – time preparing for and attending meetings; effort spent understanding the work of the organisation and staying updated on the conservation sector. The precise time commitment varies, but probably averages around 12 days a year.

An independent member of the Finance and Audit Committee is more likely to need to commit around six to eight days a year.

The Chair and Treasurer need to devote considerably more time to their leadership roles, around 30 days a year for the Chair and 25 days a year for the Treasurer.

Trustees serve in terms of three years, and don't normally serve for more than two consecutive terms, though a third term is possible in certain circumstances.

What is it like to be a trustee?

Our current trustees find their role a rewarding experience. They contribute to the direction and oversight of an amazing organisation – while being careful not to overstep the line between governance and day to day management. They enjoy working in a team, with a group of like-minded people from different backgrounds.

As a BBOWT trustee, you can expect to be:

- inducted to your role and provided with ongoing support
- offered a mentor or buddy, particularly if you haven't served on boards before and are looking to develop these skills
- part of the team, sharing in the Trust's successes and challenges
- provided with high quality, timely information to support your statutory responsibilities
- involved in aspects of the role that particularly interest you, have your views heard and respected, and to feel that your skills and your contribution are valued

Am I eligible to be a trustee - and do I have to declare conflicts of interest?

All trustees are required to either be or become a member of the charity. To be eligible to serve as a trustee, you must not have unspent convictions for any offence involving deception or dishonesty; have been adjudged bankrupt and not been discharged; have made an arrangement with creditors and not been discharged; have been removed from the office of charity trustee on the grounds of misconduct or mismanagement in the administration of a charity; or be subject to a disqualification order under the Company Directors Disqualification Act 1986 or the Insolvency Act 1986.

Trustees are asked to make declarations relating to financial, professional, personal or prejudicial interests - anything which conflicts with the charity's mission and values and/or which hinders their ability to act fairly, impartially and in the best interests of the charity.

Is there any remuneration?

No – trustees are volunteers and are not paid for the role – except in the satisfaction they receive. Where a trustee incurs expenses beyond the day-to-

day attendance at meetings, it is possible for these to be met by BBOWT.

Is being a trustee right for me?

As a trustee, your energy, passion and enthusiasm for nature and wildlife will bring drive and direction to our work at BBOWT. We place equal value on professional and lived experiences from those who wish to champion nature and the role it can play to reconnect our communities with greenspaces. We strive to ensure that our Board is a safe space for trustees, and welcome applications from those who have been underserved and historically excluded from the natural heritage sector.

You don't need to have had previous Board experience to be a great trustee or to have a long employment history. We are looking for the skills and experiences you can bring to the role. Current and previous trustees include people skilled in business and finance; ecology and conservation; human resources, fundraising, marketing etc, all with their own unique experiences and perspectives on our wildlife.

To be an independent member of the Finance and Audit Committee, we are looking for relevant financial skills. Most of the points made above about trustees also apply to independent members but they have a more focussed remit, and don't need to give quite as much time. However, we hope that one of the appointees to this committee might progress to become a trustee and possibly the successor to our current treasurer over the following two years. The FAC role will give some useful initial grounding for this.

If being a Trustee is not be right for you at this moment in time, please get in touch so we can explore how you can get involved in a way that suits you. Your enthusiasm and passion for nature is something we share and we'd love to know more about how we can support you and build on that.



Trustee role description

Trustees are committed to devoting time and effort to use their skills, knowledge and experience to help achieve the aims of the Berkshire, Buckinghamshire & Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust.

They are expected to:

- govern in line with our mission, values and charitable objectives
- provide strategic direction (e.g. set policy, monitor performance) at Board level and in any sub-committees and working groups they are involved with
- be responsible for ensuring compliance with charity law, company law, and all other statutory and regulatory requirements
- ensure that we effectively apply our resources exclusively in pursuance of the objects defined in our governing documents
- examine organisational risks and the actions needed to minimise them, including those to our property and assets
- enthusiastically contribute in meetings and via email
- ensure efficient organisation administration, delegate day-to-day management to the CEO, and support and hold the CEO to account
- treat all BBOWT staff and volunteers, including other Trustees, with respect and consideration; and abide by the decisions of the majority
- put the interests of the charity first, and safeguard its reputation and values.

Trustees are individually accountable to the Board and to BBOWT's members.

Essential criteria for trustees - You are:

- committed to meeting the expectations above
- eligible under charity law to act as a Trustee
- a member of BBOWT (or will become one)

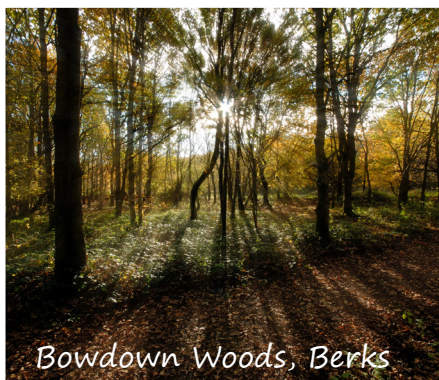
- a confident user of email and the internet
- confident in communicating your views and making collective, impartial decisions
- able to objectively analyse information, ask questions, and debate and provide challenge when necessary
- able to show some records of behaviours consistent with Nolan's Seven Principles of Public Life: selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty, and leadership
- a team player, able to build mutually respectful relationships with others
- willing to act as an organisation champion

Desirable criteria for trustees - You are:

- happy to act as a spokesperson, ambassador and advocate for BBOWT (e.g. at events, on social media)
- able to help develop the Trust's networks with key partners, funders, donors and other stakeholder groups
- knowledgeable and passionate about the value of nature and how it can enrich communities.

We value lived experiences equally to professional qualifications and recognise how this broadens our engagement with underserved audiences, especially those from ethnically diverse backgrounds. We critically reflect on our actions and behaviours to ensure that our Board is a safe and empowering space for ethnically diverse people and welcome a conversation if you would like to find out more about our work and ethos for change.

We would be keen to support candidates for whom joining a Board would be a developmental experience with training and mentoring.



Independent committee member role description



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Independent committee members are committed to devoting time and effort to use their skills, knowledge and experience to help achieve the aims of the Berkshire, Buckinghamshire & Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust.

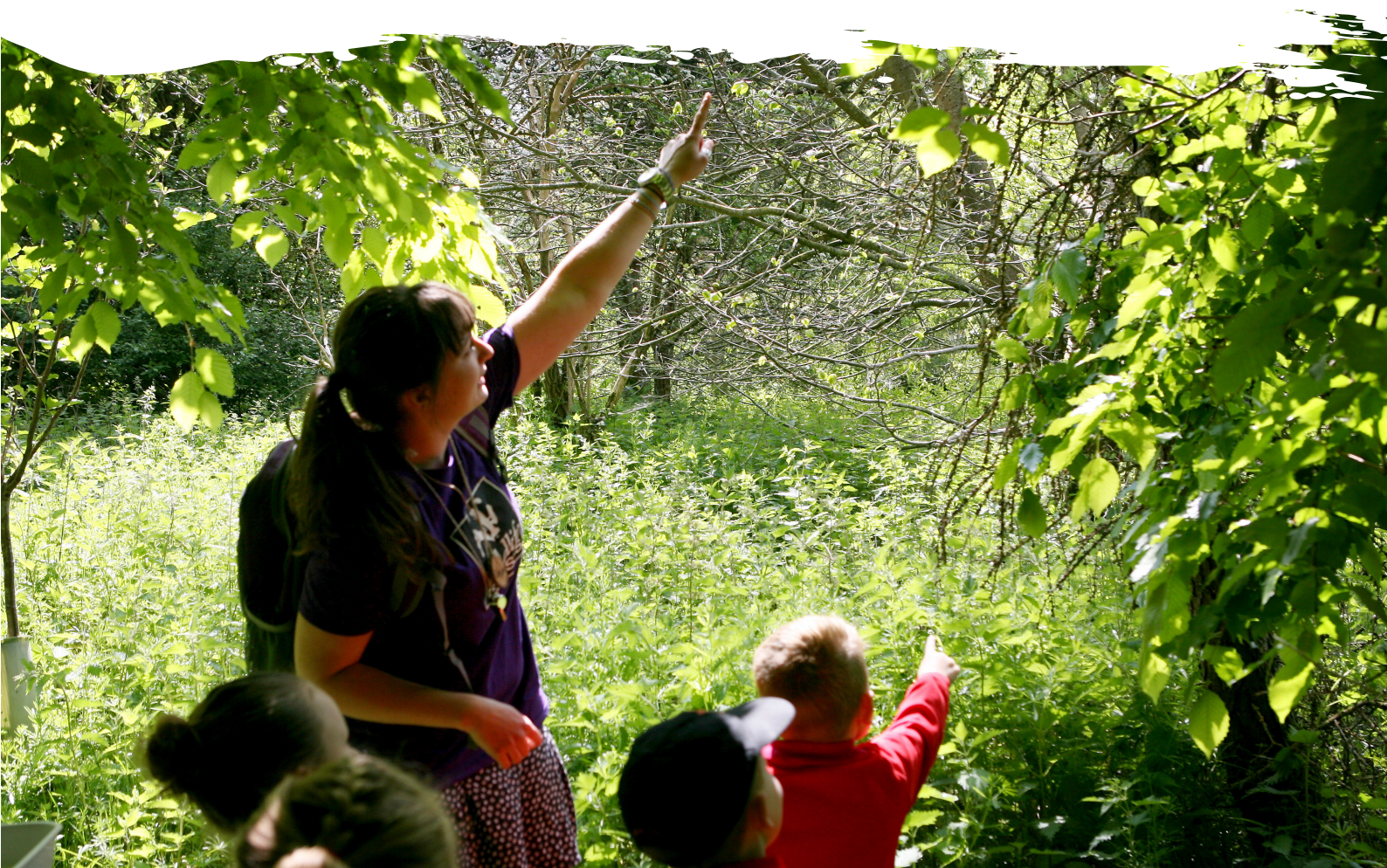
They are expected to:

- govern in line with our mission, values, and charitable objectives
- utilise their skills and experiences to ensure that BBOWT is financially well managed, optimising income and resources, pro-actively managing risks, setting and delivering high standards of governance and meeting all relevant regulation and legislation
- enthusiastically contribute in meetings and via email
- treat all BBOWT staff and volunteers, including other trustees, with respect and consideration; and abide by the decisions of the majority
- put the interests of the charity first, and safeguard its reputation and values.

Essential criteria for Finance and Audit Committee Independent Members - You are:

- committed to meeting the expectations above
- highly financially competent and literate, ideally with a professional accountancy or relevant financial qualification
- confident in communicating your views and making collective, impartial decisions
- able to objectively analyse information, ask questions, and debate and provide challenge when necessary
- able to show some records of behaviours consistent with Nolan's Seven Principles of Public Life: selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty, and leadership
- a team player, able to build mutually respectful relationships with others
- motivated and inspired by BBOWT's vision and purpose

Although we welcome professional experience in finance, commercial and risk management we also place value on lived experiences you may have in these areas. Please contact us to discuss how you can contribute to our work in this way.



Application instructions

If you would like to apply for either a trustee or independent committee member role, please send an up-to-date CV with a covering letter to Jan Honour, Governance & Business Support Officer, janhonour@bbowt.org.uk

The cover letter should set out why you are interested in the role and how you meet the relevant role description.

Alternatively, you can send us a short video of yourself explaining why you are interested in the role and what you would bring to it. Please send your video via [WeTransfer.com](https://www.wetransfer.com) to janhonour@bbowt.org.uk

The deadline for applications is 23 May 2022.

Selection Process

Applications will be reviewed and shortlisted by the Nominations Committee on 8 June.

Short-listed applicants will be invited for a short Zoom interview on 16 or 20 June. This will enable further shortlisting and the remaining candidates will be invited to spend time in person with current trustees and the CEO, in two-way conversations to discern the best fit for each role. These conversations will take place on 30 June or 6 July.

The Nominations Committee will then recommend candidates to the BBOWT Board of Trustees for appointment.

Successful applicants will be invited initially as observers to the Board and relevant committees and appropriate induction will be arranged. The next AGM (Autumn 2022) will be asked to vote the recommended trustees onto the Board. It is possible that we may co-opt them to the Board in advance of that AGM.

The Finance and Audit Committee independent members will join the committee from its next meeting after confirmation by the Board. Their appointments do not need to be approved at the AGM.

(The Board of Trustees has the power to co-opt trustees. You become a trustee from the date of the Board's decision to co-opt, and the Charity Commission and Companies House are notified of your appointment. BBOWT's Articles of Association require that any trustee co-opted during the year has to be voted in by the membership at the next AGM.)

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To read about a trustee's experience within the Wildlife Trusts, please see this article:
<https://environmentjob.co.uk/blog/becoming-a-wildlife-charity-trustee>.

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[youtube.com](https://youtube.com/bbowt)



43,000

followers on social media

Photographs: Rob Appleby, BBOWT, Ric Mellis, and Claire Williams. Graphic: Nik Pollard

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