



— THE —  
HEART  
OF  
ENGLAND  
FOREST

CANDIDATE PACK  
CHAIR

# WELCOME

Dear Candidate,

Thank you for your interest in joining as our new Chair at a pivotal point as we take forward our exciting and ambitious vision for the Heart of England Forest.

We are England's largest new native broadleaf forest, and you will be joining us as we embark upon an ambitious 10-year growth plan that will also see us raise our profile and influence.

The Forest we are planting and protecting here in the heart of the country will not only benefit our local communities, but it will also help to address some of the most pressing social and environmental challenges we face as a nation. There has never been a more important time to take action against climate change and the biodiversity crisis and grow our next generations of future Forest Guardians who will care for the legacy we are creating for decades to come.

An ambitious and growing charity, led by our Chief Executive Beth Brook, we currently have a staff team of c. 80 who are supported by an army of volunteers comprising passionate and enthusiastic ambassadors for the Forest, and a range of committed and supportive partners spanning the public, private and voluntary sectors.

We are looking for an experienced non-executive with strong commercial acumen and a deep understanding of what constitutes good governance who shares our vision and is passionate about creating a 30,000 acre forest in the heart of England. You will be an experienced and inclusive leader who will recognise and bring out the strengths within a group and who can work effectively and collegially in partnership with others as an active and influential ambassador for the charity and our vision. A strategic thinker who demonstrates a commitment to the Nolan Principles of Public life, you will ideally have Vice Chair or Chair experience.

We actively encourage candidates from a range of professional backgrounds who bring the skills to Chair our Board of dedicated Trustees and work closely with our talented and committed staff team and our President, Jon Snow.

If you are passionate about creating, restoring and protecting an incredible woodland legacy; a beautiful forest which positively contributes to the landscape and environment and which is an important source of both education and inspiration for young and old alike, we hope you will read on to find out more.

**The Board of Trustees,  
Heart of England Forest**



# INTRODUCTION TO THE HEART OF ENGLAND FOREST

This candidate pack will help to give you an insight into the charity. You will see it is a vibrant blend of operations which includes growing and managing a huge new forest for the benefit of people, wildlife and the environment. Not only is the Forest growing, but the scale and reach of our operations is expanding, too.

Our large forestry team includes an internship programme – a year long, paid placement which allows young people, or people changing career, to gain training and experience in all aspects of social forestry. We are also one of the first organisations to deliver the forestry apprenticeship, again as an important mechanism to address the skills gap and improve diversity within the sector. Our Supported Internship Programme launched in 2021. With the aim of supporting young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) to develop employability skills, 100% of our first cohort who applied for jobs with the charity were successful in gaining permanent employment and are now employed across the charity in our forestry, tree nursery and learning and skills teams. We have developed a specialism in neurodiversity which is reflected across our team.

Our learning and skills team delivers all aspects of the curriculum outdoors in the Forest as part of our formal Forest Learning Programmes, working with young people from tots to teens and beyond. We run informal learning programmes such as Mini Foresters, our family learning club, and Young Foresters, inspiring young people to consider future volunteering with the Forest. Throughout this work we are creating our future Forest Guardians, who will care for the Forest long after we are gone.

Our habitat connectivity and corridors allow wildlife to flourish, and we recently completed two new wetland development projects which have already improved biodiversity within the Forest.

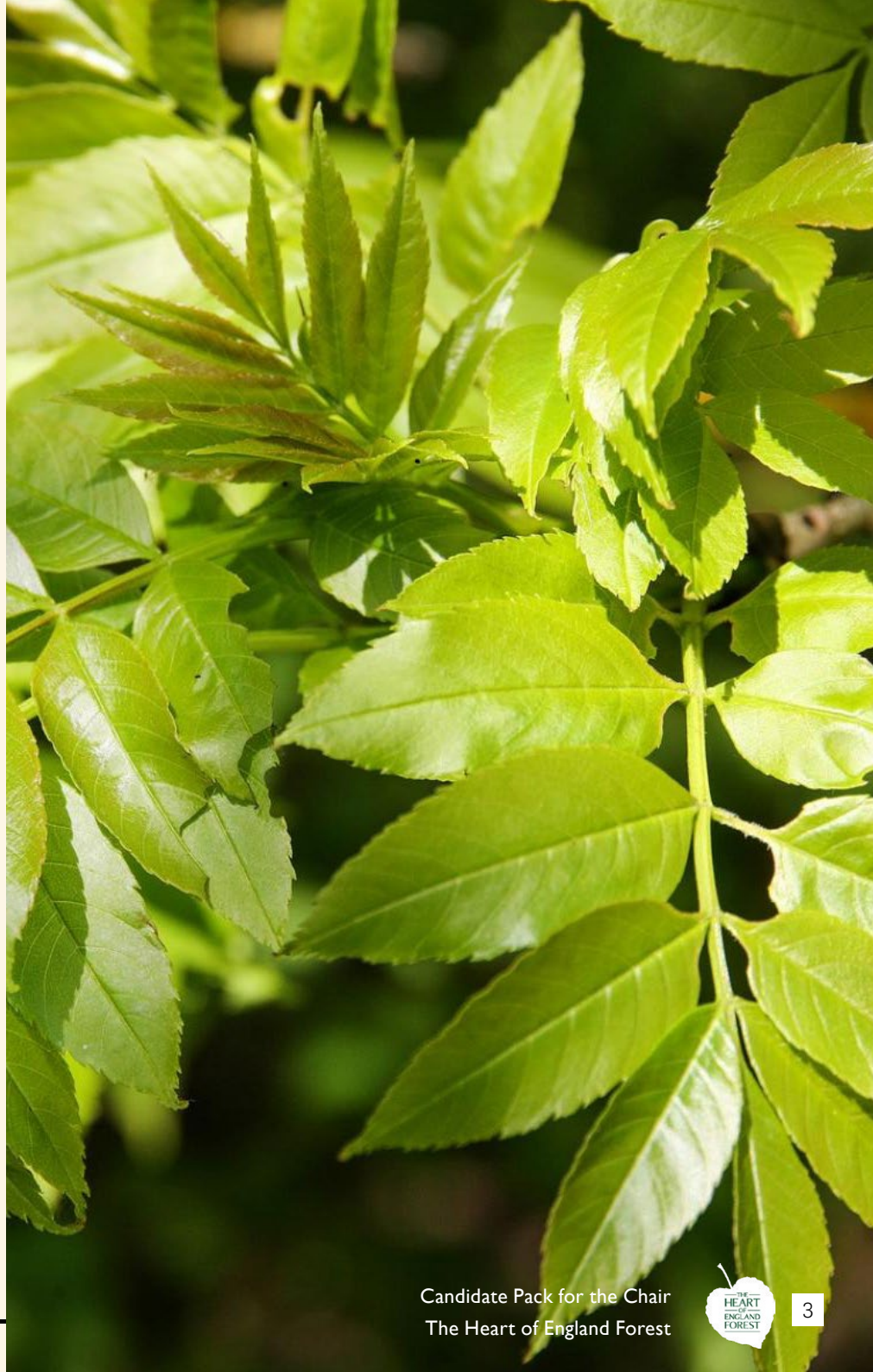
Volunteers support all of the work we undertake, and we are very proud to have been awarded the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service, recognising the incredible support our volunteers give to the charity.

We have a diversified income stream, which includes profits from our trading subsidiaries, and we have created two marinas, a static caravan park, two touring camping and caravan sites and new holiday cottages which have been designed with sustainability in mind – all popular ways to spend more time in the Forest.

Our organic farm not only brings in income, but we also use traditional breeds of livestock for conservation grazing, to help us manage the Forest. And our woodland burial site nestled in a tranquil spot beneath our magnificent ancient woodland adds another string to our bow.

If you are inspired by our vision and our energy and would like to join us in creating an incredible breath of fresh air for the nation, we would love to hear from you.

If you would like an informal discussion about the role, please do not hesitate to ask. We would be happy to arrange a convenient time for you to talk to Beth or one of our trustees. You can also find out more about the charity on our website at <https://heartofenglandforest.org> and in our most recent annual report, which can be found at <https://heartofenglandforest.org/annual-report>



# OUR VISION AND PURPOSE

## *Planting tomorrow's great native woodland.*

The charity's vision is to create 30,000 acres of contiguous forest in the heart of England to benefit the environment, wildlife and people for hundreds of years to come. The mosaic of habitats we are creating will help mitigate climate change, enable wildlife to thrive, and provide a haven for people to visit which benefits their health, happiness and wellbeing.

# OUR STRATEGY

As an ambitious charity, we recognise that trees are just the start. Woodland planting creates far greater opportunities than merely growing England's largest new native forest.

Our Strategic Plan provides an ambitious motivational framework to achieve our aims and has five strategic priorities:

1. **Growing the Forest** involves just that – meeting our ambitious targets to create and maintain a mosaic of forest habitats for both people and wildlife to enjoy.
2. **Optimising Biodiversity** sees us doing more for wildlife. As well as plants and animals which make their home in woodland, our mosaic of habitats encourage animals like otters and water voles in our wetland areas, and colourful spring orchids in our meadows.
3. **Attracting People** is all about finding new ways to engage with people to encourage them to use and appreciate the Forest. We are constantly expanding the activities on offer, in order to grow our active supporter base, encourage local communities to access the Forest and welcome a diverse range of groups.
4. **Learning and Skills** includes formal and informal education, encouraging young and old to be inspired by the Forest. Our volunteering programme provides a range of ways for people to practically support our work and gain skills, get fit and meet new friends.
5. **Strong Governance** is essential as we transition from a dream of a visionary individual into a national charity. It is vital that the charity has robust governance in place to ensure that it continues to operate effectively, efficiently and ethically.

These priorities form the pillars of the Heart of England Forest's strategy and are underpinned by four cross-cutting themes, to enable us to bring in income and support to continue to grow and maintain the Forest for everyone to enjoy:

- A Communications
- B Fundraising
- C Volunteering
- D Farming and agroforestry

Across the plan we will work towards key social, economic and environmental objectives as part of sustainable development. In addition to our strategic priorities, we introduced two additional priorities last year – Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) and Climate Change, which are interwoven like golden threads throughout all of our work. Our aspiration is to make the Heart of England Forest somewhere for all to enjoy, and with over 7,000 acres already, there is plenty of space for everyone to find their special place.



# CHAIR ROLE DESCRIPTION

What does being the Chair for the Heart of England Forest look like?

## RESPONSIBILITIES AS A TRUSTEE

The Chair is a member of the Board and, as such, is required to fulfil all the duties and responsibilities he or she assumed on becoming a Trustee.

## GENERAL RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE CHAIR

The Chair provides leadership for the Board as it works toward meeting its charity governance responsibilities by helping in particular to:

- formulate the Charity's vision, values, strategy and high-level policy in accordance with the Articles and with applicable legislation and regulations;
- monitor the Charity's performance against agreed targets;
- review major risks and make provision for the Charity to respond appropriately; and
- ensuring the performance of the Chief Executive is reviewed, and by ensuring that Board functions are delegated appropriately.

## EACH TRUSTEE IS EXPECTED TO

- Use his/her specific skills, knowledge, experience, and perspectives to help the Board reach sound decisions;
- Contribute actively to the Board's role in giving strategic direction to the Heart of England Forest, setting overall policy, defining goals, setting targets and evaluating performance against agreed objectives and targets;
- Scrutinise Board papers;
- Take an active part in discussions;
- Focus on and analyse relevant issues;
- Exercise good, independent judgement;
- Demonstrate commitment to the Heart of England Forest;
- Act in the best interest of the Heart of England Forest;
- Lead by example and actively support the raising of funds for the charity;
- Comply with the policies of the Heart of England Forest, including the policy on conflicts of interest and the Trustee Code of Conduct;
- Devote the necessary time and effort to fulfil his/her role as trustee.



## BOARD MEETINGS

The Chair is expected to lead meetings of the Board and facilitate discussion at those meetings. He or she should encourage all Trustees to participate and aim to prevent more talkative members from dominating the debate.

It should be noted, however, that the Chair's vote at meetings at the Board carries the same weight as the vote of any other Trustee. In accordance with the Articles, the Chair only has a second or casting vote if there is an equality of votes for and against a particular proposal.

## BETWEEN BOARD MEETINGS

The Chair will act as the point of contact between Board meetings when required.

He or she should also work in partnership with the Chief Executive to help him or her to implement decisions of the Board.

## REPRESENTING THE ORGANISATION

The Chair may act as a spokesperson for the Charity, provided that he or she has the requisite authority from the Board. In appropriate circumstances, the Chair, the Vice-Chair and the Chief Executive may decide between them how and when they speak on behalf of the Charity, in accordance with the Charity's media plan. Neither the Chair, the Vice-Chair nor the Chief Executive is permitted to make unilateral announcements purporting to be on behalf of the Board or the Charity.

The Chair may also represent the Charity at public gatherings when asked by the Board to do so.



# PERSON SPECIFICATION FOR THE CHAIR

## THE BOARD CONSIDERS THE FOLLOWING TO BE ESSENTIAL FOR THE ROLE OF CHAIR:

- a commitment to the Charity and the fulfilment of its objects;
- an understanding of the legal duties, responsibilities and liabilities of trusteeship;
- the capacity to be respected and trusted by other Board members.

## THE CHAIR IS EXPECTED TO EXHIBIT THE FOLLOWING PERSONAL QUALITIES:

- good, independent judgement;
- good communication skills;
- impartiality, fairness and a respect for confidentiality;
- a willingness to speak his or her mind;
- tact, diplomacy and wisdom; and
- respect for others.

## THE CHAIR IS EXPECTED TO HAVE THE FOLLOWING ABILITIES:

- strategic vision;
- creative and innovative thinking;
- the ability to manage change, and to handle uncertainty and ambiguity;
- leading and facilitating meetings and processes;
- working effectively as a team member; and
- good interpersonal and intrapersonal skills.

## THE CHAIR WILL GENERALLY ALSO HAVE HAD:

- previous chairing experience; and
- previous leadership positions.



# TERMS OF APPOINTMENT

## RENUMERATION

Trustee positions are voluntary and unpaid. However, all reasonable expenses will be reimbursed.

## LOCATION

Face to face Board meetings are held four times a year in the Heart of England Forest. These are currently held on Fridays, but with potential to change to accommodate working patterns, etc. - 4 hours plus lunch networking, plus site visit or further topic discussion. Other meetings are virtual, and video conferencing is available. Trustees may sometimes be called upon to attend the Heart of England Forest events, or represent the charity at national events, dependent upon availability and skillset.

## TIME COMMITMENT

Four Board meetings per year in the Heart of England Forest. Some committee work between meetings, much of which can be done virtually.

# HOW TO APPLY

We hope you will consider making an application. If you have questions about the appointment and would find it helpful to have an informal conversation, please contact Katy Giddens [katy.giddens@starfishsearch.com](mailto:katy.giddens@starfishsearch.com) and we will be happy to arrange a call. To make an application, please go to <https://starfishsearch.com/jobs/hef-chair/> and click on the apply now button, with the following prepared:

- Your CV (no more than three sides).
- A supporting statement (no more than two sides) that sets out why you think this role is the right move for you and how you meet the knowledge and experience criteria.

We would also be grateful if you would also complete the Equality and Diversity monitoring form on the online application process. This form is for monitoring purposes only and is not treated as part of your application.

Closing date:

Friday 15th September 2023

Preliminary interviews with Starfish online:

w/c Monday 9th October 2023

Final Panel interviews with Heart of England Forest:

w/c Monday 6th November 2023

