



Candidate Pack Chair of the Board of Trustees



Welcome

Dear applicant

Thank you for your interest in becoming our next Chair at the RSPCA. We are the world's oldest animal welfare charity: we've been at the forefront of animal welfare in England, Wales and internationally since 1824. While social attitudes, behaviours and laws have been transformed beyond recognition since that time, we retain our prominent position in the animal welfare sector where we're recognised as a trusted and prolific household brand.

In our time, we've rescued, cared for, rehomed, and released millions of animals that have needed our help. Yet as we approach our 200th anniversary, we know that our ability to keep advancing animal welfare will depend on us being able to adapt to a rapidly changing environment. We've been working hard to establish a new strategy and to develop our culture and performance; we've also transformed our governance. Our new strategy requires us to push our cause further into the public consciousness, inspiring society to defend and improve animal welfare, so we're also working to further strengthen our influence.

Our next Chair will help us think about and connect with a far wider world, helping the RSPCA to tap into and mobilise new audiences, including the younger generations, groups and communities that haven't traditionally been involved with our cause. You will lead our Board in providing clear strategic direction to the charity and will offer oversight, advice, and support to our talented Executive team.

We're looking for someone with deep leadership experience, ideally gained in different sectors, and who is already a trusted and influential presence. It's likely that you have already chaired another organisation or held a substantial non-executive role such as Vice Chair, Senior Independent Director or equivalent.

As this role also needs someone who can lead with common purpose and stimulate co-operation, we're particularly interested in people with personal experience of fostering strong partnerships and alliances, and who inspire commitment to shared goals. Indeed, how you bring about your influence is more important than your subject knowledge: detailed knowledge about animal welfare is not essential, although a demonstrable commitment to it is.

If you believe you can bring the experience, skills, and leadership attributes we're looking for, we very much look forward to hearing from you.

Rene Olivieri
Chair – RSPCA



About us

The Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA) is a registered charity in England & Wales (registered number 219099), and a statutory corporation. As such, the Board of Trustees has full legal responsibility for the actions of the charity under the Charities Act 2011 and the RSPCA Act 1932.

The RSPCA is also a membership charity (having approximately 15,600 members) and operates in partnership with a network of 138 separately registered RSPCA Branches throughout England and Wales.

200 years of the RSPCA – a timeline of achievements

- Championing the 1835 Pease's Act which prohibited cruelty to dogs and other domestic animals, outlawed bearbaiting and cockfighting and insisted on better standards for slaughterhouses
- Inspiring the creation of SPCAs around the globe including in the USA in 1860, Australia in 1872, New Zealand in 1882 and Hong Kong in 1903. Today there are over 200 SPCAs all around the world from the Lilongwe SPCA in Malawi to the Ontario SPCA in Canada
- Leading the call for improved legislation which resulted in the 1911 Protection of Animals Act, creating the first comprehensive approach to protecting animals
- The establishment of the RSPCA Inspectorate in England and Wales which investigates allegations of animal abuse and cruelty and enforces animal welfare legislation in England and Wales
- The establishment of the RSPCA branch network across England and Wales to support the Inspectorate with our rescue, care and rehoming work as well as making a significant impact in the communities they serve
- During the first world war the RSPCA set up 13 animal hospitals to care for horses injured during service, including the provision of over 200 animal ambulances
- In 1980 we set up Eurogroup for Animals, bringing together animal welfare organisations from across Europe and further afield to work together to call for EU- wide animal protections. Eurogroup has been instrumental in achieving legislative change from banning the routine tail docking of pigs, sow stalls and veal crates through to the recognition of animals as sentient in European law and the ban on cosmetics tested on animals
- In 1994 we created RSPCA Assured (formerly Freedom Food) the only welfare- focused food assurance scheme in the UK. Millions of farm animals and fish have had better lives as a result of being farmed to the RSPCA's welfare standards since the RSPCA Assured scheme began.
- In 2006, after many years of campaigning by us the 2006 Animal Welfare Act was passed which actively set out to prevent unnecessary suffering and improve animal welfare by embedding the five welfare needs into Law
- Following a high-profile campaign, working in partnership with other organisations, the Animal Welfare (Sentience) Bill was passed in 2022; restoring the recognition of animal sentience in law, legally recognising the sentience of cephalopod and decapod crustaceans for the first time, and establishing the Sentience Committee tasked with scrutinising the extent to which any government policy has taken animals' welfare needs into account.



Together for Animal Welfare: our Plan up to 2030

Our vision is a world where all animals are respected and treated with kindness and compassion. It's a bold vision and we know that we can't achieve it alone. It takes all of us to create a world that is kinder to animals.

Our mission is to ensure animals have a good life by rescuing and caring for those in need, by advocating on behalf of all animals and by inspiring everyone to treat them with compassion and respect.

We are celebrating 200 years in 2024 but it isn't just an anniversary, it's a new chapter in our story. This is a chance to work together, everyone for every animal. We want to celebrate the bond between us and inspire more people to action. We believe a world that is better for animals, is better for us all.

Our five strategic priorities up to 2030 are as follows:

1. Rescue and care – We rescue and care for animals in need
2. Advocacy – We change attitudes, behaviours, and laws
3. Prevention – We inspire kindness and compassion to all animals
4. Supporters – We will grow support and income
5. Organisational effectiveness – We strive for excellence in all that we do

Our strategy *Together for Animal Welfare* focuses our role on a core set of activities and will require RSPCA to work differently in response to a changing world. These include:

- **Partners for animal welfare** – a concerted and determined effort to work in partnership with other individuals, communities, and organisations to provide a holistic, more joined up animal welfare response.
- **Community engagement** – we will look to engage more people in animal welfare through our Animal Champions initiative with a view to recruiting one million Animal Champions.
- **Prioritising universal information, education, and support** – developing and expanding our range of information, education, and support services to ensure that people have the knowledge, skills and understanding to get it right for animals.
- **Co-ordinating animal advocacy** – we will act as a leader and convenor of animal welfare organisations in advocating for animals.
- **Modernising our inspectorate** – we will establish and embed our new role of Animal Rescue Officer in our rescue teams, and we will continue our work to modernise our vital and unique inspectorate and secure statutory powers for our inspectors under the Animal Welfare Act 2006.
- **Modernising our field operations** – we will act as the gateway to animal welfare services, signpost people to our partners and modernise and improve the pathway for animals through our services.
- **Rebalancing our animal welfare provision** – we will rebalance our animal welfare provision across the country to ensure a fair distribution of our services.
- **Strengthening our branch network** – we will develop a new branch sustainability programme to ensure the branch network remains strong and we will look to modernise our branch rules governing the relationship between the national RSPCA and branches
- **Deepening our relationship with our supporters** – we will look to grow our income and support as we approach our 200th anniversary in 2024.

Find out more

Visit our website at <https://www.rspca.org.uk/>



Role Profile

As Chair of the Board of Trustees you will oversee and drive delivery of the RSPCA's mission to ensure that animals have a good life by rescuing and caring for those in need, by advocating on behalf of all animals and by inspiring everyone to treat them with compassion and respect.

Working alongside the Chief Executive, your leadership of the Board will enable the RSPCA to realise the eight bold ambitions set out in Together for Animal Welfare with a strategy refresh due in 2024.

In addition to providing inspirational leadership, the Chair of the Board of Trustees will actively promote and support the RSPCA's work across local Branch and national networks, providing visible leadership and embodying the "OneRSPCA" approach to its federated structure.

You will work in partnership with the Board, the Chief Executive and Executive Leadership Team (ELT) to ensure the RSPCA delivers and achieves its strategic goals and objectives. Also, you will work with the Chair of the Governance & Nominations Committee to ensure that the overall governance of the RSPCA is fit for purpose.

The Chair acts as a mentor and line manager of the Chief Executive.

Key responsibilities of the appointment

Leadership of the Board of Trustees

- Lead and Chair meetings of the Board of Trustees to ensure high-quality, inclusive debate and well-informed, timely decision-making, in the best interests of the charity.
- Offer inclusive and engaging leadership to the Board that ensures clear strategic direction and impact through effective investment and deployment of organisational resources.
- Work with the Chief Executive to ensure that agendas and meetings are well-planned, supported by high standards of reporting, including the measuring, and monitoring of the execution of strategic plans, the overall management of risk, organisational performance, and financial outcomes.
- Ensure that Trustees are fully engaged and that decisions are taken in the best, long-term interests of the RSPCA and that the Board takes collective ownership.
- Ensure that the Board of Trustees is supported by a structure of sub-committees consistent with the needs of the charity, and that appropriate reports are received from each and, where required, feedback given.
- Ensure that the combined processes of election and co-option to the Board of Trustees provides the right balance of skills, knowledge, experience, and diversity needed to govern and lead the RSPCA effectively.
- Ensure that the RSPCA's governance arrangements are of the highest standard and are up-to-date and fit for purpose.
- Ensure that the necessary procedures are in place to manage any actual, potential, or perceived conflict of interest for trustees and senior staff.
- Ensure that all Trustees have access to appropriate advice, training, and information and that the performance of the Board, its committees and individual trustees is evaluated at least once a year (acting on the results of such evaluation by recognising the strengths and addressing the weakness of the Board).
- Provide feedback to Trustees on their contribution to the organisation and handle any issues in Trustee suitability or performance.



- Work with the Executive to create a positive culture: role model, champion and hold others to account for demonstrating the behaviours that underpin the RSPCA's values and behaviours framework and the Trustees' Code of Conduct.
- Provide clear leadership with regard to the RSPCA's commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion, and anti-discrimination in all forms recognised by law
- Ensure the Board recognises and discharges all of its legal responsibilities
- Ensure that there is an open and fair process for the recruitment of Trustees, future Chairs, and future Chief Executives

Support to the Chief Executive

- Establish and build a strong, effective, and constructive working relationship with the Chief Executive.
- Ensure regular contact with the Chief Executive, maintaining an open relationship where each can speak freely about achievements, concerns, and challenges.
- Provide a sounding board for the Chief Executive to encourage reflection on complex and demanding issues and offer counsel to support their decision making.
- Liaise with the Chief Executive to maintain an overview of the charity's affairs, and to seek assurance, particularly in the context of identified risks.
- Agree annual objectives and, in consultation with Trustees, conduct the Chief Executive's annual appraisal.
- Ensure there is an annual review of the Chief Executive's pay and remuneration.
- Identify Trustees to assist the Chief Executive in the recruitment of members of the Executive Leadership Team as required.
- Be responsible for leading the recruitment and selection process for any new Chief Executive.

Developing and building the RSPCA's profile and interests

- Where appropriate to act as a high-level representative for the charity, attending and representing the RSPCA at key events (such as high-profile fundraising events), or in the media, and in high level discussions with opinion formers and policy makers within government, the corporate world and with key stakeholders.
- Represent and promote the RSPCA at appropriate external events such as working groups, conferences, committees, and partnership bodies, and through networking. Act as a spokesperson and figurehead for the RSPCA as appropriate.



Person Specification

Your knowledge and experience

- Senior organisational leadership experience gained in more than one sector; senior non-executive experience is essential, as Chair, Vice Chair, SID or equivalent.
- Strong experience of overseeing, protecting, and promoting the reputation of an influential or high-profile organisation with a significant heritage.
- Personal experience of building co-operation and shared commitment across competing perspectives.
- Practical experience of leading or overseeing programmes of development, and of helping to stabilise and refocus organisations during periods of modernisation or transformation.
- Substantial experience of leading or working as part of multi-skilled non-executive boards and of fostering inclusive and diverse boards.
- Knowledge of big charity governance principles, practices, and the legal responsibilities of the Board
- Able to understand and relate to the specific challenges of federated structures.

Your skills and abilities

- Strategic mindset: you will be focused on the long term, looking to the future with an appreciation of wider trends, and will bring and integrate perspectives from different contexts.
- Astute: you will bring sharp commercial and other acumen.
- Strong chairing skills: you will have a great track record of actively facilitating discussion, summarising points of discussion to support decision making, and resolving potential areas of conflict to build consensus.
- Personally influential: you will be someone known for their compelling communication style, listening skills, excellent judgement, and diplomacy.

Your personal style and behaviours

- A visible and trusted presence, with low ego and high personal credibility, you will bring an engaging and collaborative style that inspires confidence.
- Strong organisational development orientation: you will be interested in developing our Board and in supporting wider organisational development.
- We are looking for someone with undisputed personal integrity and a fair, inclusive, and open leadership style. You will be practical and commonsense in approach.
- You will have a demonstrable commitment to animal welfare and the values and beliefs of the RSPCA.
- You will be sensitive to the political, social, and economic environment in which the RSPCA operates, as part of the animal welfare and broader charity sector.



Terms of Appointment

Time commitment

On average 3 to 4 days a month. (This may be more in our bicentenary year 2024.)

Core commitments are:

- chairing approximately 4-6 Board meetings a year (in London, virtual or hybrid) including two two-day meetings (in March and September)
- attending sub-committees / meetings as required
- participating in 2 – 3 external events per year and
- chairing the Society's AGM

The Chair would additionally be expected to meet colleagues across the RSPCA and its Branch network from time to time, as well as attending occasional site visits and supporting Philanthropic meetings as required.

Term of office

The Chair is eligible to serve for up to three Terms of Office, each for three years duration.

Remuneration

This role is offered on a voluntary basis with reasonable expenses incurred on RSPCA business reimbursed.



How to express an interest in the role

We hope you will consider making an application to become Chair of our Board at the RSPCA. To make an application, please go to <https://starfishsearch.com/jobs/rspca-chair/> and click on the apply now button, with the following prepared:

- a CV (no more than three sides) or equivalent biographical information
- a short covering letter that explains your motivation, suitability, availability and confirms that you would not be subject to any conflict of interest
- please tell us if there are any dates during the selection process (outlined below) when you would not be available to participate.
- If you have a disability and identify any barriers in the job description or person specification, please tell us.

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.

The closing date is **Friday 27th October 2023**.

Selection timetable

Closing date	Friday 27th October 2023
First stage discussions	w/c 6th November 2023
Agreement of the shortlist	Wednesday 15th November 2023
Informal conversations with stakeholders	16th-23rd November 2023
Final interviews	Friday 24th November 2023
Appointment made by RSPCA Board	Tuesday 12th December 2023

Forward meeting dates for 2024

- 27th March
- 26th and 27th June (this will be in person - probably in London – and will include a Board dinner on the evening of 26th June)
- 24th July
- 18th September
- 11th December

All meetings (with the exception of June) are likely to be held virtually. Board meetings usually run from 10.00-15.00 with a short break for lunch.

Our 2024 AGM will be held on Saturday 5th October. This will be in-person, probably in London, and likely to run from 11.00 until 13.30. This may be extended to become an all-day meeting in 2024, but plans are yet to be finalised.

