



THE
HEART
OF
ENGLAND
FOREST

CANDIDATE PACK

CEO

WELCOME

Thank you for your interest in becoming our next Chief Executive.

Now is an incredibly exciting time to join the Heart of England Forest as we look to scale our reach and impact even further. We're looking for a strategic thinker who shares our passion for the natural world who combines strong business and commercial acumen with the experience to lead an organisation through change and growth and deliver on our vision to grow and sustain a new native broadleaf forest for the benefit of people, wildlife and our precious natural environment.

As our next Chief Executive, you will be leading, motivating and inspiring a passionate and dedicated team of staff and volunteers, supported by an engaged, experienced and enthusiastic Board of Trustees. As well as your sound business acumen you will have an excellent understanding of charity governance and an appreciation of the importance of fundraising and managing complex stakeholder relationships. For those who know us we are an exceptionally well-regarded organisation but many are still not aware of the amazing work we do and the long lasting impact we are having on the environment. At this stage of our development, we are very keen to broaden and deepen our reach into new stakeholder and supporter communities on a national scale. Our new CEO should be able to inspire and influence others and demonstrate ways of realising our full potential and ambition.

We're therefore looking for an established charity or public sector leader with good networks both locally and nationally who has experience of influencing similar sets of key stakeholders across government and with key partners to help raise our profile and income. We have a great story to tell about the ground breaking work we do not only in forestry and biodiversity but also with our education outreach and supported intern programmes so whatever your background, you will be an exceptional communicator and an inclusive leader with proven success in leading growth and change.

Our current ten-year strategy has five main priorities which you can read more on within the pack but we are now at a stage in our development where our strategic priorities and longer term strategic plan require review to ensure we are making the most of the opportunities for future growth whilst stabilising our operational business model. As our new CEO you will be integral in developing and implementing a renewed short and long term strategic plan, embedding best practice in everything we do, encouraging a culture of digital transformation as well as ensuring we leverage our land estate to ensure we're sustainable for the next 100 years.

If you're driven and passionate about the positive benefits that the Heart of England Forest brings to the UK both now and for future generations, we'd love to hear from you.

Best wishes, Alison Hunter (Acting Chair)



INTRODUCTION TO THE HEART OF ENGLAND FOREST

The Heart of England Forest is an exciting and ambitious charity working hard to create a huge new woodland in the heart of the country that will benefit people and wildlife for generations to come. We take our mission very seriously; it has never been more important to invest in our natural environment. Planting trees and creating new woodlands is no longer just a positive ambition for the country, it's absolutely essential. It is the simplest solution to help mitigate climate change and create new green spaces that can help reconnect people and communities with nature and the natural environment.

Our goal is to reach 30,000 acres of semi contiguous forest by planting 13 million native broadleaf trees. To date we have planted more than 2 million trees. The significance and scale of our work cannot be underestimated: The Heart of England Forest - already the largest new native forest in the country - will become one of the largest forests in England.

Our mosaic of habitats already spans over 7,000 acres, and includes wetlands, grassland, new woodland, mature and ancient woodland, heathland and farmland. We are home to a wide variety of plants and animals, and have one of the largest populations of purple emperor butterfly in the country. Not only are we growing a Forest, we are growing a resource which contributes to sustainable development not just environmentally, but socially and economically, 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 three years ago, 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.

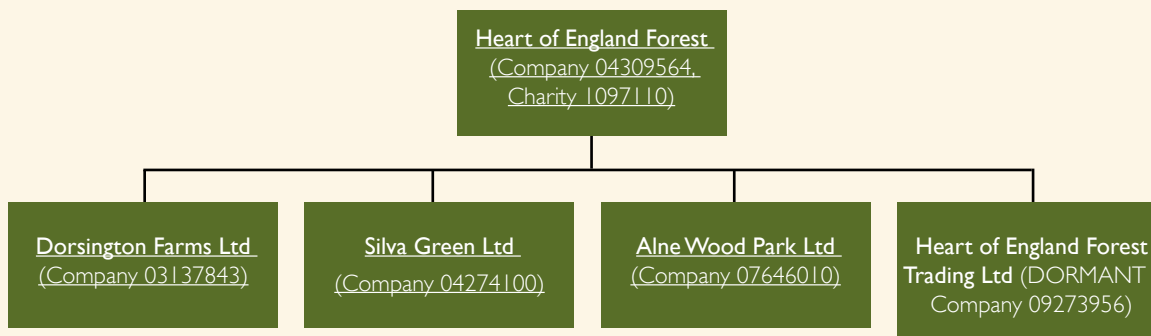
Our organic farm not only brings in income, but we also use traditional breeds of livestock for conservation grazing, to help us manage the Forest. And our woodland burial site nestled in a tranquil spot beneath our magnificent ancient woodland adds another string to our bow.

However, growing the forest is the easy part, and maintaining it in perpetuity for the benefit of people, wildlife and the environment is the challenge. The charity has a significant legacy which has largely been ring fenced for land purchase, which will take us part of the way to achieving our vision. Nurturing and growing this legacy is vital to long term success. This is an exciting time of growth and development for the charity, which has grown substantially in the last five years, and with a new CEO at the helm this will enable us to increase our already ambitious vision and deliver one of the most significant resources for climate change mitigation in the country.

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.

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 [here](#).

GROUP STRUCTURE



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.



SOME OF OUR MOST RECENT ACHIEVEMENTS'

TREES CALL TO ACTION PROJECT

A £499,446 grant from the Trees Call to Action Fund is enabling the charity to work together with the District Councils of Stratford-on-Avon, Warwick, and Wychavon, on a three-year project to support and deliver tree planting across our local landscape and community spaces.

GREEN RECOVERY

A £1.7 million Defra Green Recovery Challenge Fund grant secured by the Heart of England Forest is enabling a ground-breaking project which will support green recovery in the region, bringing environmental, social and economic benefits.

VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION

11,144 volunteer hours were given, the equivalent of more than five full time members of staff. We were immensely proud to be awarded The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service, which recognises outstanding work by volunteers to benefit their communities.

POLLINATOR PATHWAYS

As part of our five-year partnership with Severn Trent, we have started to create 30-metre wide 'pollinator pathways' covering 168 acres within the 2,471 acres of woodland in the Sernal area of the Forest.

FOREST GUARDIANS

A £240,700 grant from the government's second round of the Green Recovery Challenge Fund will support the 'Growing Future Forest Guardians' project at our new 62-acre site near Redditch.



EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION STATEMENT

The Heart of England Forest is committed to improving EDI as one of our core priorities.

Whilst we are mindful that we cannot achieve everything overnight, and meaningful work on this area takes time and thought, we have made a number of commitments.

The Heart of England Forest Board of trustees has adopted the Charity Governance Code, and committed to EDI as one of its two priority areas of work this year, providing leadership to the charity. This has included Board training, and a commitment to engage external expertise to support the charity to develop an effective EDI strategy, linking directly to the charity's mission and objectives.

All Senior Managers have undertaken a series of training to enable us to lead and model a positive and inclusive culture. We are rolling out this training to all staff over the course of the year.

We have commenced strategy planning for our key areas of work, looking at how we can focus on improving EDI and making the work of our charity more appealing and accessible to a wider range of audiences.

We have already produced action plans within the areas of communications, fundraising, HR, volunteering and commercial development, with further work planned to widen this scope across the remainder of the charity's work during the year.

The Heart of England Forest has set up a Supported Internship Programme, a yearlong placement for young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), to provide training and quality work experience placements to support young people to develop employability skills, with the aim of entering employment.

The charity has developed a new tree nursery as a social enterprise, which will be staffed by adults with SEND, providing a pipeline of real employment opportunities for our supported interns to consider. Other actions we have taken to improve EDI across the charity include an all access trail and car parking facility within the Forest, to allow better access to the natural world for people with limited mobility, parents and carers with prams, wheelchair users, etc.

We have opened our first accessible holiday cottage, allowing people with limited mobility to stay in the Forest, and we are considering accessibility and EDI in the design of all new building projects. We are a Living Wage Foundation accredited employer, meaning that all of our staff and contractors are paid at least the Real Living Wage.

We feel that it is important to offer a fair day's pay for a fair day's work, and want to ensure that finance and background are not barriers to coming to work for us. Our initial actions have helped us to start on the journey, and have open and honest conversations about the subject of diversity and inclusion. We have much work still to do, and look forward to working with others to learn and progress.



ROLE DESCRIPTION

Job title: Chief Executive Officer

Reports to: The Board of Trustees

Direct reports: Chief Operating Officer; Director of Forestry/Conservation (vacant), Functional Leads of Biodiversity, Learning & Skills and Community Engagement.

ROLE PURPOSE:

As our Chief Executive Officer (CEO), you will lead the day-to-day operations of the forest, be responsible for providing inspiring leadership whilst developing and implementing our strategic and operational plans. You will also lead on partnership and business development and be an effective advocate for the charity and its mission. You will be ultimately accountable for the delivery of major aspects of the charity's activity and oversee work to develop the charity's membership, profile, networks, partnerships, and income.

In the immediate term, our new Chief Executive will work in close collaboration with the Board to set and execute the renewed strategic vision, ensuring financial sustainability, effective risk management, and robust business productivity. You will ignite and inspire the staff team, overseeing policies, practices, and budget controls in close working partnership with our Chief Operating Officer (COO).

The successful candidate must have the leadership and strategic capabilities needed to take the charity forward, working effectively with the Board. You will also have excellent management skills and a capacity for strategic analysis, vision, and planning. This is an exciting time to be joining us following our first CEO having served us well for the last seven years setting up the charity with the Board. We are now looking for an experienced charity CEO to take us to the next level and for the forest to have a nationally recognised presence as an exemplar in woodland creation and biodiversity leading the way in climate change.

MAIN RESPONSIBILITIES:

STRATEGIC

- Agreeing a new set of strategic priorities with the Board of Trustees,
- Shape and deliver the forest's long-term vision for growth and the organisational strategy to deliver it, integrating all aspects of the charity's activities and outputs
- Develop the next 3-5 year strategy for the forest together with the Board, in support of our ambition and objectives. This will involve supporting the SLT to develop an economically viable and robust operational business plan for the charity and strategies for key delivery areas, including: forestry and biodiversity, learning and outreach, marketing communications, and income generation – both commercial and fundraising.
- Identify and assess strategic risks, issues and opportunities and take responsibility for initiating and leading associated changes including seeking out and implementing opportunities for innovation and diversification of income streams.



MANAGEMENT AND FINANCIAL

- Provide executive leadership of the forest, ensuring a strong foundation of best management practice.
- To assess and refresh the organisational structure as the charity continues to develop and grow.
- Ensure the ongoing financial stability and sustainability of the charity to fund its own activities and operations within a ten-year time frame, working with the COO to present key financial decisions to the Trustees.
- Alongside the COO to work closely with the charity's investment managers, advisors and Trustees to maximise return for the charity.
- Drive and support the furtherance of our fundraising culture within the charity, and play a pro-active role in fundraising for the forest.
- Use the charity's emerging brand and profile, along with its multitude of assets, to maximise income generation from commercial opportunities.
- Work towards the achievement of long-term sustainability, developing the charity's operating business model and maximising income, for example from fundraising, service contracts, and earned income.

PEOPLE LEADERSHIP

- Provide inspiring leadership within the charity at all levels by recruiting, motivating, coaching, and developing excellent people, working collaboratively to enable them to achieve the highest level of professional outcomes from all staff, and fostering a culture of energy, commitment and diversity.
- Leading and supporting the senior leadership team in their delivery of the strategic plans whilst nurturing and developing the management team to establish and role model a high performing culture.
- Lead, support and motivate all staff at all levels of the organisation and secure their loyalty and commitment to the charity's aims, objectives, and ambitions.
- Seek out, develop and maintain effective working relationships with all relevant organisations and individuals to promote the work of the charity and facilitate the implementation of its strategic objectives.
- Lead by example, instilling a culture of professionalism and inclusion, supported by coaching, training, and development.

FIGUREHEAD ADVOCACY

- Be the figurehead ambassador and champion for the forest and a leading voice for the charity, within the sector, wider social and policy-making circles and to the public. Champion and advocate for the charity with a broad range of stakeholders, including its visitors, supporters and public authorities, and lead the planning and execution of establishing a national presence for the Heart of England Forest in the UK.
- Demonstrate a strong personal commitment to, and knowledge of, the business of the charity – the natural environment, and to the importance of woodland habitats and forestry – through social media and online presence, public speaking/lecturing engagements, thought leadership opportunities and media engagement.
- Clearly articulate the value and impact of the forest to a wide range of audiences to make the most of any diverse income opportunities.
- Building relationships with local and regional communities to ensure that the benefits of the forest are understood, and that the charity works in partnership with all of its stakeholders and users.
- Actively demonstrate a commitment to equality, inclusion and diversity, ensuring that the organisation is an inclusive and actively anti-discriminatory organisation and that its volunteers, partners, supporters, staff and Trustees reflect the UK's diverse population. Develop and exceed the commitments set out by the charity's EDI strategy and policies.

GOVERNANCE

- Be accountable to, work transparently with and maintain exemplary and supportive relations with the Chair, the Board, and all Board Committees.
- Working with the COO, ensure that all Governance reflects Charity Commission best practice including annual returns and reporting.
- Working with the COO, ensure that all proper systems and procedures are in place and followed so that the organisation and its subsidiaries are managed appropriately with adherence to all legal and fiscal responsibilities and public accountability, keeping the Board informed as necessary.
- Diligently uphold health and safety and other legal responsibilities under relevant legislation and other compliance frameworks.
- In partnership with the COO, ensure that all major risks are identified and regularly reviewed and that systems and procedures are in place to mitigate all such risks; be responsible for the development and implementation of the charity's Risk Register.

These responsibilities are intended to convey a sense of what the role requires but are not exhaustive.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

It is essential that the CEO cares passionately about the natural environment, with a love of trees, forestry and woodland creation an advantage, and enjoys enhancing awareness through the clear communication of our vision to all audiences and supporter groups.

KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE

- Proven leadership in the charity/public sector, preferably from within the environmental sector.
- Outstanding track record of strategic leadership with experience of leading growth and change across a range of disciplines, teams, projects and responsibilities.
- Passionate about climate change and the natural environment
- Adept at fostering positive relationships with stakeholders.
- Strong experience in strategy implementation and commercial acumen.
- Success in expanding income-generating activities.
- Dynamic personal presence and commitment to the natural world.
- Successful track record of leading a positive culture, enhancing productivity and business efficiency and sound financial control at a senior level.
- Possess a good understanding for the long term legacy which the Charity is providing for future generations.

SKILLS AND ABILITIES

- Excellent communication, diplomacy and advocacy skills with the natural presence to represent the Forest externally with stakeholders, partners, supporters and to influence senior figures across governments and public authorities throughout the environmental sector.
- Able to use sound judgement and decisiveness when making tough decisions in challenging circumstances
- Capacity to lead, inspire and motivate high performing management teams
- A clear vision for how strategy translates into delivery.

STYLES AND BEHAVIOURS

- You will be driven by strong values and empathy.
- You will possess a collaborative and participative leadership style.
- Be deeply committed to our mission and that of the wider global climate change agenda.
- Be confident, resilient and forward-thinking.
- Be strong at maintaining a high degree of humility, integrity, and trustworthiness.



TERMS OF APPOINTMENT

SALARY

The salary for this role is up to c.£120,000 per annum on a full-time permanent basis.

LOCATION

You will be located within a reasonable distance and reach of the forest and its estate but will also have the benefit of hybrid working; being based in the Heart of England. The Forest head office is in Dorsington (CV37) and you are expected to be present and visible across the forest on a regular basis as well as having the flexibility to work from home. You will also be willing to undertake travel across the Heart of England Forest region and the wider country on a regular basis to meet the demands of the role.

HOURS

Such hours that may reasonably be required or as may be necessary for the proper and efficient performance of your duties. This may include evenings, weekends and bank holidays.

ANNUAL LEAVE

- 28 days holiday plus bank holidays

ADDITIONAL BENEFITS

- Contributory Pension Scheme (matched at 4.5%)
- Group Income Protection Scheme
- Group Life Assurance Scheme (x4 death benefit)
- Employee Assistance Programme
- Medical cash plan

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 Chris Milo chris.milo@starfishsearch.com and we will be happy to arrange a call.

To make an application, please go to <https://starfishsearch.com/jobs/hef-ceo/> 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 March 2024

Preliminary interviews online: w/c Monday 1st April & w/c Monday 8th April 2024

Final Panel interviews in person: w/c Monday 29th April 2024