



Candidate Pack for Trustees



Welcome

Dear Candidate,

Thank you for your interest in joining as a new Trustee at a pivotal point as we take forward our exciting 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 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 develop our next generations of future Forest Guardians who will care for the legacy we are creating for decades to come.

As a developing charity, led by our Chief Executive, Andy Parsons, we currently have a staff team of c. 65 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 three new Trustees who share our vision and are passionate about creating a huge, connected forest in the heart of England.

We are looking to diversify the Board and are searching for people from a broad range of backgrounds which could include leadership gained within an NGO or commercial setting, land management and forestry, income generation, marketing and communications, digital engagement (social media, digital content and communications) and people with the necessary skills and behaviours to be an effective board member.

We are open to those looking for their first trustee role who can demonstrate experience of making board level decisions and will work closely with our talented and committed staff team. You will be a collegiate and inclusive individual who can work effectively in partnership with others, think strategically and demonstrate commitment to the Nolan Principles of Public life.

If you are passionate about creating, restoring and protecting an incredible woodland legacy in the heart of England; a beautiful forest which contributes positively 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.



Heather Acton
**Chair of the Board of Trustees,
Heart of England Forest**

About us

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 forest 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 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 emerging new strategy has a mission to plant 12 million trees over 12,000 hectares. To date we have planted nearly 2.5 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 3,500 hectares, 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 habitat connectivity and corridors allow wildlife to flourish, and we recently completed two new wetland development projects which have significantly improved biodiversity within the Forest.

Volunteers support all 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.

Our woodland burial site nestled in a tranquil spot beneath our magnificent ancient woodland adds another string to our bow.

However, growing the forest isn't our hardest challenge; maintaining it in perpetuity for the benefit of people, wildlife and the environment is. 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 long-term vision. Nurturing and growing this legacy is vital to long term success. This is an exciting time of development for the charity, and with a new Senior Leadership Team in place this will enable us to increase our already inspiring 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](#).

OUR EMERGING NEW STRATEGY

This year, the Board of Trustees is working with the Senior Leadership team to renew our longer-term strategic ambition, to ensure that we continue to make significant impact to our natural environment whilst transitioning into an environmental charity of regional and national significance. The strategy is led by two key themes of Growing the Forest and Belonging to the Forest – bringing together the Heart of England Forest’s positive impact on both nature and people.

Vision

Together we will create and care for the largest new connected forest in England

Mission

We will achieve our vision by:

- ✓ Planting 12 million trees over 12,000 hectares
- ✓ Designing and creating a resilient Forest
- ✓ Connecting people and communities with the Forest
- ✓ Working with our neighbours to develop a diverse and thriving landscape

The details of the strategy are still in development, and we hope to launch it publicly in the autumn. Joining us now as a Trustee means that you will be part of our exciting long-term strategy from the very beginning.



Our Impact

In the year 2024/25...



Over 82,000 trees were planted (a third of which were grown in our own nursery)



21,450 metres of native hedgerows were planted



Over 100 biodiversity surveys were completed, with the information helping to inform our future plans and management



15,075 volunteer hours were given, a record-breaking number



5,625 learning days were delivered for children and adults



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 several 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.

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 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.

Trustee Role Description

We require enthusiastic individuals wishing to work as part of a small team, be a passionate ambassador for the Heart of England Forest charity whilst continuing to contribute through their own professional expertise and background as a collegiate member of the team, to ensure the Charity is positioned to deliver its strategic priorities.

As Trustee this role combines leadership oversight and strategic advice to the Board, contributing to the overall strategic decision making and governance of the Heart of England Forest.

As a member of the Board of Trustees, you will:

- Ensure that the Heart of England Forest pursues its objects as defined in its governing document.
- Ensure that the charity has a clear vision, mission and strategic direction and is focused on achieving these.
- Be responsible for the performance of the charity and for its “corporate” behaviour.
- Ensure that the charity complies with all legal and regulatory requirements.
- Act as a guardian of the charity’s assets, both tangible and intangible, taking all due care over their security, deployment and proper application.
- Ensure that the charity’s governance is of the highest possible standard in pursuit of its objects. This includes compliance with its governing document, charity law, company law and any other relevant legislation or regulations.
- Ensure that The Heart of England Forest uses its resources exclusively in pursuance of its objects - the charity must not spend money on activities which are not included in its own objectives, no matter how 'charitable' and 'worthwhile' those activities are.
- Safeguard the reputation and values of The Heart of England Forest.
- Periodically evaluate the board's effectiveness in consultation with the senior management.
- Set the strategy and budgets and establish the policies of The Heart of England Forest.
- Ensure the effective and efficient administration and operations of The Heart of England Forest in accordance with its strategy, budgets and policies.
- Ensure the financial stability and sustainability of The Heart of England Forest.
- Appoint a chief executive officer, support him/her in the role and monitor his/her performance.
- Set the remuneration of the chief executive officer.
- Ensure the charity’s fundraising is carried out lawfully and in a way that encourages public trust and confidence, having regard to national guidance in overseeing the fundraising activities of the charity and any third parties fundraising on the charity’s behalf.

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.
- 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.

General

In addition, trustees must:

- Demonstrate and promote the values of the Heart of England Forest.
- Maintain a commitment to high standards of health and safety at all times. Ensure all work, including any work undertaken by contractors and volunteers, is undertaken within the Heart of England Forest health and safety policy and processes.
- Commit to continued professional development as a Trustee.
- Play an active part within the wider Heart of England Forest organisation.
- Make active use of information and resources gained via personal networks to inform the development of this role.



Person specification

Experience

We are looking for strategic thinkers with board level decision making to contribute their skills and experience from a wide range of backgrounds including but not limited to:

- o Leadership within a NGO or commercial setting
- o Digital engagement
- o Development (fundraising, income generation and marketing and communication)
- o Land management and Forestry

- Knowledge of the Heart of England Forest region would be advantageous but not essential
- Demonstrable experience of building and sustaining relationships with key stakeholders and colleagues to achieve organisational objectives
- A proven track record of sound judgement and effective decision making
- A history of impartiality, fairness and the ability to respect confidences
- A proven commitment to the Nolan seven principles of public life: selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership
- A track record of commitment to promoting equality and diversity

Skills, Knowledge & Attributes

- Commitment to the organisation and a willingness to devote the necessary time and effort
- A willingness to bring a diverse range of perspectives to the table.
- Willingness to be available to staff for advice and enquiries on an ad hoc basis
- Good, independent judgement and strategic vision
- An understanding and acceptance of the legal duties, responsibilities and liabilities of trusteeship
- An ability to work effectively as a member of a team
- An understanding of the respective roles of the Chair, Trustees and Chief Executive

Terms of appointment

Remuneration

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 during the day, 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 a mixture of in-person and virtual, and video conferencing technology is available to support hybrid meetings. 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, plus at least four committee meetings, normally held online plus associated discussions, reviews in liaison with the Chair and CEO.



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 Rebecca O'Connor rebecca.oconnor@starfishsearch.com and we will be happy to arrange a call. To make an application, please go to <https://starfishsearch.com/jobs/thoef-trustees/> 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:

Preliminary interviews with Starfish online:

Final Panel interviews with Heart of England Forest:

Friday 5th June 2026

w/c 15th June 2026

w/c 7th July 2026

