

Title	Trustee Recruitment Policy
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## **Trustee Recruitment Policy**

### **Statement**

Durham Wildlife Trust recognises that an effective and diverse board of trustees is essential if the charity is to achieve its objectives.

The Board must seek to be representative of the charity's membership and the people with whom the Trust works. It is also essential that the Board has available to it the knowledge and skills required to ensure the effective running of the charity.

Individual trustees must have sufficient knowledge, both of the role of a Trustee and of the Charity's activities, to enable them to carry out their duties and to represent the Charity at meetings and other events.

This policy sets out how Durham Wildlife Trust intends to recruit a robust, diverse and effective board of Trustees. It also details how members of the Board will be selected to form part of committees.

### **Governance**

Governance arrangements at Durham Wildlife Trust are set out in the charity's Memorandum and Articles of Association and Governance Handbook. All Trustee recruitment must follow the requirements of the Memorandum and Articles and this policy document forms part of the Governance Handbook.

It is the responsibility of the Chair of the Board of Trustees to ensure that Trustee recruitment conforms to the requirements of the Memorandum and Articles and the Governance Handbook, including this policy.

### **Recruitment/Appointment Panel**

When there is a need to recruit Trustees, or to appoint a Trustee or other Trust member as a member of a committee, the process will be managed by a group of Trustees selected by the Board (the Group). Responsibility for recruiting Trustees will not be delegated to employees, although employees may be given specific administrative tasks by Trustees.

### **Skills Audit and Diversity**

Trustee recruitment will take account of the most recent Trustee skills audit and seek to address skills gaps on the Board. Durham Wildlife Trust also seeks to ensure diversity in its Board of Trustees and consideration will be given to ways in which groups that are under-represented on the Board might be reached and encouraged to apply. However, at the point of selection, the Board will not discriminate unfairly on any of the "protected states" as per the Equality Act (2010) or any grounds listed in the Equal Opportunities Policy.

### **Recruitment**

The Trustee recruitment process should begin with the development of a role description

that seeks to address skills gaps and, if necessary, make membership of the Board more diverse. The role description will identify whether the role will require the candidate to provide consent for a Disclosure and Barring Service check to be carried out and the level of check that will be required.

A recruitment plan will then be formulated setting out how the Trustee vacancy should be promoted in order to provide the best chance of recruiting a candidate that fulfils the role description. This may include advertising in the Trust's magazine (if there is time to include it) and on the website, promotion via social media, advertising in the wider media and with volunteer bureaus, and direct approaches to professional bodies, other voluntary organisations and local businesses.

People enquiring to become Trustees will be sent appropriate documentation about the charity and being a Trustee. This will include:

- a copy of the Memorandum and Articles of Association;
- a copy of the latest Annual Report and Accounts;
- the trustee role description;
- a copy of Charity Commission Publication CC3- 'Responsibilities of Charity Trustees'; and
- a copy of the Trustee Recruitment Policy.

In addition, the candidate will be asked to complete an application form, which will include a declaration confirming that the candidate is not legally disqualified from becoming a charity trustee. Furthermore, on receipt of their completed application, all applicants will be vetted using the official registers recording those disqualified from acting as charity trustees. Candidates will also be asked to confirm that they are a current member of Durham Wildlife Trust. Lastly, they will be asked to self-assess against the latest Trustee skills matrix, the responses to which will influence the subsequent interview and shortlisting process.

Arrangements will be made to assist any potential applicant with specific needs in relation to completion of the form or access to the supporting materials.

### **Interview & Selection**

Applicants who appear from their application and skills self-assessment to be suitable, have declared their eligibility, have been positively vetted against official lists and are current members of Durham Wildlife Trust, will be invited to attend a Trustee meeting as an observer. They will also receive further information regarding the role of being a Trustee at Durham Wildlife Trust. This will include:

- a copy of the charity's organisational structure;
- a copy of the Governance Handbook;
- the papers distributed to current Trustees for the meeting they will attend as an observer (information that is commercially sensitive or personal may be removed);
- a copy of the Staff Handbook.

Only those most closely matching the skills required will be invited to attend a trustee meeting. This shortlisting will be carried out by the Group.

The applicant(s) will then be asked to attend an interview by a recruiting panel made up of members of the Group plus any other Trustee felt to have an appropriate skill set for recruitment. The applicant will be asked to provide two references, which will be taken up prior to the interview, and give consent for a Basic DBS check. At the interview the candidate will be asked to declare any conflicts of interest, which will include issues relating to the financial interests of the candidate and other matters that may directly, or indirectly, affect

the reputation of Durham Wildlife Trust. Conflicts of interest may arise as a result of the activities or actions of the candidate themselves or those of their family and friends.

Using the skills audit self-assessment as a guide, an interview will take place aimed at ensuring the candidate would bring value to the Board of Trustees. The interview panel will provide a report to the Board of Trustees that will highlight any potential conflicts of interest and summarise the background and relevant experience of each candidate. This summary will highlight where it is believed the candidate either fills a gap currently identified in the skills audit or what value it is thought they will bring.

As new trustee appointments can only be made at the AGM, depending on time-scale it might be appropriate to present this report and proposal at the next scheduled Board meeting, with a view to voting on whether to co-opt the individual until their appointment can be confirmed at the AGM. The individual concerned need not be present at the Board meeting for any such vote.

This report will then provide the basis for the information presented on each candidate to members in the membership magazine (and/or online) distributed prior to the Annual General Meeting (AGM). A vote may be required at the AGM if the number of candidates exceeds the number of vacancies.

### **Appointment**

The Board recognises that it has only limited control over the election of trustees at the AGM. It is accepted that members should be able to elect people to the Board who they believe will best represent their interests. However, the existing Board members also have a responsibility to try to ensure that the needs of the organisation in terms of governance are met by those people elected, and that the best interests and reputation of the Trust are protected.

The Board will seek to do this by adopting the recruitment process set out above. This process aims to put forward candidates who are not only eligible for election as a Trustee, but are fully informed about the work of the charity, add to the skills and knowledge base of the Board and allow the Board to better reflect the Trust's membership and the organisations and individuals the Trust works with.

In addition, candidates who have put themselves forward for selection via this recruitment process have demonstrated their commitment to ensuring that the reputation and best interests of Durham Wildlife Trust are protected. When information about prospective new Trustees is presented to members prior to the AGM, that information will state whether a candidate has completed the recruitment process set out in this document and that the process involves the candidate providing references and submitting to interview. It will also state whether the candidate(s) was/were co-opted during the year prior to the AGM, or if this would be the candidate's first potential inclusion on to the Board.

At the AGM the candidates need not be in attendance, even if currently co-opted. While Trustees and members in attendance should have read all the information regarding the candidates, a Trustee will read out a summary of each candidate's application. All in attendance will be reminded which candidates have been through the recruitment process detailed above. A secret ballot will then take place with votes counted by two impartial Trustees.

Those elected Board members who have served their maximum term must retire at each AGM along with any trustees co-opted during the previous year. Where existing Board members are seeking re-election following completion of their first term, they will be put forward for election at the AGM together with other candidates who have put themselves

forward. Existing trustees seeking re-election will be asked to update their skills matrix, submit themselves for interview and a Basic DBS check as set out in this recruitment policy. When information about prospective trustees is presented to members prior to the AGM, that information will state that candidates for re-election who submitted themselves for interview have completed the formal recruitment process. A summary of their application will be read out in the same manner as per new candidates.

Where a Trustee has been co-opted during the previous twelve months and then wishes to stand for election at the next AGM, they will also be asked to submit themselves for interview and a Basic DBS check as set out in this recruitment policy. When information about prospective Trustees is presented to members prior to the AGM, that information will state that candidates who were previously co-opted who submitted themselves for interview have completed the formal recruitment process. At the AGM they will be treated in the same manner as new trustees (see above).

### **Appointment to Committees**

As set out in the Articles of Association, the Board may delegate any of their powers to committees consisting of such members of the Trust as they think fit. Any committee formed operates to a remit set by the Board and reports on its activities to the Board.

Given the potential importance of Committees to the governance of the charity, the appointment of Trustees or other members of the Trust to committees should have a degree of oversight and a process for committee appointments is set out below -

- a. The Trustee Board determines that a Committee is required and sets out its remit. A group of Trustees is selected to oversee the appointment of members of the Committee. This appointment group devises a role description for Committee members.
- b. Potential committee members may express an interest to join or be approached.
- c. The candidate should be provided with appropriate documentation and an explanation of the role.
- d. Their skills should be matched against a role description.
- e. An interview should take place, run by the appointment group and any Trustee deemed to have the appropriate recruitment skills.
- f. In the event of multiple applicants for a lower number of roles, the appointment group will make a recommendation for approval by the Board of Trustees i.e. they would not provide a shortlist but would be tasked with making a final recommendation.
- g. At the next Board Meeting, the recommendation would be made to the Trustees along with a summary of why that individual(s) was being proposed.
- h. If in attendance, the candidate must leave the room and voting is by a show of hands (or secret ballot if requested) by the Board Members in attendance.

### **Recruitment timetable**

Below is an example timetable for the Trustee recruitment process, but timings are subject to change based on when the vacancy arises or when the Trust is made aware of a potential applicant.

#### *January*

Trustee skills audit is presented by the Chair at the Board meeting. Trustees identify whether there are expected to be Board vacancies at the next AGM and consider whether current Board membership is representative of the charity's wider membership and the people with whom the Trust works. Group of Trustees is selected and tasked with managing the Trustee recruitment process.

#### *March*

Promotion of opportunity to be a Trustee, including in DWT members' magazine, online and

via social media. NB: so that the process is not restricted by the magazine's timings, for vacancies that appear later in the year it will be acceptable to advertise on the Trust's website and social media. Recruitment must provide sufficient time for nominations to be received a minimum of 28 days prior to the AGM, as set out in the Articles of Association.

*April/May*

The group of Trustees appointed by the Board undertake the Trustee recruitment process as set out in Trustee Recruitment Policy. The candidate(s) might at this point be recommended to join the Board as a co-opted member, as per the process highlighted above.

*July*

Information on candidates seeking selection as a Trustee is put on a dedicated web page and details are set out in the summer edition of the members' magazine.

*October*

Appointment (or election if number of candidates exceeds number of vacancies) of Trustees at the AGM.