

Brief for the appointment of

# Trustees

## Candidate Brief

- **Treasurer and Chair of the Finance Committee**
- **Chair of the Communications and Engagement Committee**



■ ODGERS BERNDTSON

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## About the RSPB

In 1889, Emily Williamson created the Society for the Protection of Birds with one core aim: to fight a fashion for feathers and exotic plumes that was driving birds towards extinction. Emily's efforts soon gathered pace and, after joining forces with Etta Lemon and Eliza Phillips, the movement grew in both popularity and influence, so much so that it was awarded its Royal Charter in 1904. The 1921 Importation of Plumage (Prohibition) Act was eventually passed, marking the RSPB's first successful campaign for nature.



In line with our strategy RSPB 2030, we continue to work in the UK and internationally to advocate for policies that protect, restore, and include nature. The climate crisis is the greatest long-term threat to nature and people, and the RSPB is fighting to make net-zero emissions a reality whilst ensuring the recovery of nature. We push for strong laws to protect and restore nature, such as the ambitious Westminster Environment Act which sets binding targets for air quality, water, biodiversity, and resource efficiency, as well as set environmental principles requiring ministerial adherence when developing new policies. We also work closely with our local government leaders, including on access to nature and greenspace, and tackling climate change in local regions. Whatever the decision-making arena, we advocate for a political and an economic system that recognises nature's value.

We also lead extensive conservation work, with our own hands-on protection of nature at the heart of our organisation. We have been running nature reserves since our first one opened in 1930, now working in all four countries of the UK to protect and restore endangered, threatened, and otherwise vulnerable habitats and species. We conduct our own applied scientific work as practical solutions to the conservation problems we face become even more urgently needed amidst the climate and nature crises. Whether it's deciding how to save a species on the brink of extinction or bringing a rainforest back to full health, for years the RSPB has used science-backed approaches to safeguard wild places and the wildlife that calls them home, in the UK and abroad. Our scientific work further equips us with the information needed to convince governments and other decision-makers to take action.



## Partners

We believe that collaboration is the way we ultimately deliver the best, fastest, sharpest progress at scale. We partner with organisations like BirdLife International, a global partnership we helped form to join up bird and conservation organisations worldwide to strengthen international conservation efforts. We work on delivery on the ground with other landowners, farmers and other eNGOs. We also work cross-sector with businesses like Co-op, with whom we are working to protect, restore, and sustainably manage UK peatland – some of our nature's strongest carbon stores. You can learn more about our funding partnerships, including those that fund us as well as those we fund, [here](#).



A young girl with dark hair in a bun, wearing a bright pink t-shirt, is seated in a wheelchair. She is looking intently at a small object held in the palm of a woman's hand. The woman, wearing a blue RSPB shirt and glasses, is leaning over her. They are outdoors on a grassy area. In the background, another person in a blue shirt is partially visible. The scene is brightly lit, suggesting a sunny day.

## Community Engagement

Connecting people to nature is fundamental to our work. We work hard to make sure nature is accessible to everyone, and everyone gets the chance to feel their own unique connection with it. We run and provide a range of activities to ensure people have the opportunity to engage with nature in their own way, like [conducting your own wildlife surveys](#), [creating your own nature films](#), and [building homes for vulnerable hedgehogs](#). For our part, we are always striving to stay at the forefront of accessible nature, whether that is trialling new schemes at our reserves to [help more young people get access to nature](#), or providing important tools like mobility scooters and binoculars at sites where we can. Our annual Big Garden Birdwatch, on top of giving us a valuable snapshot of how our birdlife is faring, is the world's largest citizen science project. We can always be doing more, and we continue to work to widen the audiences who can see their personal connections to nature and conservation.

# RSPB by numbers



More than a  
**million**  
members

making us one of the  
largest voluntary wildlife  
conservation organisations  
in the world



More than  
**155**

community-  
based local  
groups



Approximately  
**2,000**

established  
staff



More than  
**300**

youth groups



More than  
**11,000**

registered  
volunteers



More than  
**200,000**

youth members



**Financial  
reserves**

to support our long-  
term goals, strategy,  
and sustainability



Volunteers  
who give  
**hundreds  
of thousands  
of hours**

for birds and  
wildlife



Over  
**200**  
nature reserves  
home to  
**80%**

of the rarest  
and most threatened bird  
species in the UK, covering  
over 160,000 hectares



Expenditure of  
**£120m**  
per year

on our  
**charitable  
purposes**



**Multi-million pound**

**Conservation  
projects**

## The Role

The scale of the climate and nature crisis presents an ever-growing challenge to the mission of the RSPB and its partners, as set out in the RSPB's strategy to 2030. In response, the RSPB will continue to be louder, bolder, and more inclusive, bringing more people into action for nature and advocating tirelessly for nature to be included in political and economic planning. We will continue to support and to showcase the amazing biodiversity present throughout our reserves, which cover an area four times the size of the Isle of Wight.

Gaining a broader spectrum of support is also essential. The RSPB continues to identify new tools to protect our nature, whether that is through leading our own applied science dedicated to researching new and better forms of conservation, working to unlock creative new funding sources for the sector as a whole, or building cross-sector partnerships to ensure nature is included in the long term plans for our communities, our countries, and our planet.





The time has come to bring new leaders into our Council of Trustees in support of our mission, who collectively steer the RSPB through increasingly urgent – and innovative – waters. Our Council pools broad and diverse expertise from across the RSPB’s leadership, staff, volunteers, wider networks, and their own experiences to ensure robust governance, strategic clarity, and delivery of tangible impact against our goals. The RSPB has also recently completed a wide-ranging governance review to ensure the full utilisation and impact of this expertise, including instituting a network of more inclusive advisory committees.

These are no small tasks, and in order to tackle them, the RSPB has committed, high performing leadership across both its Council of Trustees and Executive Board, dedicating significant time to our work and to each other. As such, our Trustees will likely need to be able to dedicate a minimum of two days per month for this organisation during their tenure. This time includes committee and Council meetings, as well as the preparation required for those meetings, the charity’s Annual General Meeting, meetings with Executive Board members, and other duties on behalf of the organisation, both internal and external.

We appoint our Trustees for a three-year term, with the ability to have this term renewed once. Some of the more specific responsibilities and accountabilities of Trustees include:

### Governance

- Collectively oversee the integrity of the RSPB, including across financial controls, risk management, and other quality controls.
- Ensure that the mechanisms for protecting the integrity of the RSPB are robust and defensible.

- Execute governance responsibilities with the RSPB with care, attention, skill, diligence, independent judgment, and due knowledge, in a way that builds public confidence and trust in the RSPB.
- Act at all times in the best interests of the RSPB and its present and future beneficiaries.
- Avoid conflicts of interest, by declaring and managing any potential conflicts.
- Safeguard the assets of the RSPB, including its finances, its name, and its ethos.
- Hold a duty of care to the RSPB’s staff, volunteers, and other stakeholders.
- Always promote the highest standards of corporate governance.

### Vision and Strategy

- Collectively develop and approve the RSPB’s vision, values, and policies in line with its mission and goals.
- Approve the overall strategy and budget, measuring the RSPB’s progress against its goals and strategy over time.
- Set the tone for the RSPB and lead by example, through the standards of the Council’s leadership, behaviour, and performance, always upholding the values of the RSPB.
- Promote equality, diversity, and inclusion for all the RSPB’s stakeholders in all forums.
- Ensure the implementation of strategy, policies, and procedures are appropriately supported and monitored for impact and effectiveness against clear targets, budgets, and objectives for the short, medium, and long-term.

### Financial

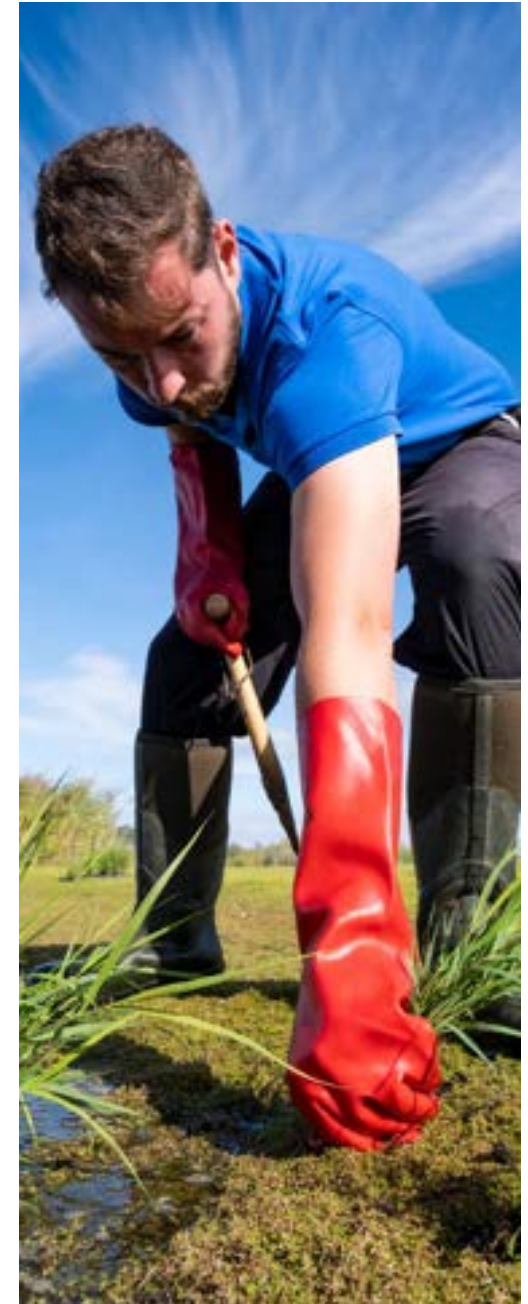
- Ensure that the RSPB applies its resources in a way that optimises impact exclusively in pursuit of its objectives.
- Ensure the proper investment of the RSPB’s funds and its financial stability and sustainability as a charity.

### External

- Promote the RSPB and its development to support the growth of its impact, including through building and maintaining close relationships with the RSPB’s various constituencies and stakeholder groups.
- Contribute to gauging and setting the risk appetite of the RSPB, identifying and assessing risks and opportunities to contribute to risk calculation and management, and sustaining effective risk management mechanisms.
- Represent the RSPB at functions, meetings, and in the wider media, in line with the RSPB’s agreed media, communications, and engagement strategies.

### Internal

- Play an active part in the meetings and deliberations of Council, including through meeting attendance.
- Lead in any Council activities where the Trustee has special or unique knowledge.
- Support the Council to reach sound, collective decisions.
- Uphold and maintain the Council’s ongoing commitments to board diversity, renewal, and succession planning.
- Maintain required confidentiality and discretion about all aspects of the Council’s business as appropriate.



## Treasurer

While financial matters are the responsibility of all Trustees, it is the Treasurer that other Trustees look to for advice, guidance, and assurance on all aspects of the charity's financial management. In addition to the responsibilities of all the RSPB's Trustees, the Treasurer oversees the monitoring of the RSPB's financial management and sustainability. They work closely with the RSPB's Council and Executive Board to assess the state of the RSPB's financial health, with a fiduciary duty to protect the assets of the charity, its financial stability, and its long-term financial sustainability.

Additional responsibilities of the Treasurer include:

- Oversee the effective management of the RSPB's finances and in that capacity serve as Vice Chair of the Council.
- Chair the Finance Committee and keep the Council informed on its activities, including summarising points of ongoing debate or disagreement.
- Potentially chair other entities, such as the Audit and Risk Committee or the board of RSPB Sales Ltd, as appropriate.

- Ensure that proper accounts and records are maintained, prepared, audited, and disclosed in full compliance with all relevant regulation.
- Ensure that the financial resources of the RSPB are properly controlled, invested, and spent in a manner effective to both cost and ultimate impact, in line with the RSPB's mission and other requirements.
- Oversee the continued development and protection of appropriate financial reserves for the RSPB.
- Facilitate Trustees to guide financial strategy and policy, keeping the Council informed of its financial duties and responsibilities.
- Advise the Council and Executive Board on the financial implications of the RSPB's strategy, policies, and plans.

Our next Treasurer will have:

- Experience ensuring the financial health of a structurally complex organisation.
- Understanding of how to create robust, meaningful financial planning and controls which centre an organisation's impact and contribution in addition to its financial viability.





## Chair of the Communications and Engagement Advisory Committee

Communications, campaigns, technology, and engagement are critical to achieving our conservation ambitions, driven by extensive insight and evidence but rooted in the real world. To have the impact we need, we must think and work at scale to maximise the value and potential of our brand. Our approach is ambitious, acting with courage and collaborating with others. This work has included:

- Co-producing the award-winning Wild Isles TV series and launching the award-winning Save Our Wild Isles campaign in partnership with it.
- Working with renowned choreographer Sadek Waff to perform a “human murmuration” as an inspiration for world leaders at CBD COP15, a dance mirroring the beauty of birds moving as one to highlight our power working together to save nature.
- Bringing nature to new audiences, on platforms like TikTok and through our Youth Council.
- Developing a new website that emphasises the urgency and importance of our work and mission.

By continuing to grow our wonderful RSPB family of employees, volunteers, members, and supporters, we get closer to our mission to save nature.

In addition to the responsibilities of all the RSPB’s Trustees, the Chair of the Communications and Engagement Advisory Committee helps to guide our communications and engagement strategies. They work closely with the RSPB’s Council and Executive Board, overseeing the charity’s communications, campaigning, and engagement strategies.

These responsibilities include:

- Serve as a leading ambassador for the RSPB, as and when appropriate.
- Facilitate committee members when guiding their discussions, with particular focus on digital technology, communications, campaigning, and engagement strategies and activities.
- Keep the Council informed on the activities and views of the Committee, including summarising points of ongoing debate or disagreement.
- Make recommendations to the broader Council on strategic aspects around communications and engagement, in accordance with the advice of the Committee.
- Work with members of the RSPB’s Executive Board to challenge and sharpen the RSPB’s communications and engagement strategies.

Our next Chair of the Communications and Engagement Advisory Committee will have:

- Experience shaping, implementing, and evolving organisation-wide storytelling, especially in crowded sectors and on complex issues.
- An understanding of how to assess, mitigate, and take calculated risks in communications and engagement strategies to achieve maximum impact, while always remaining loyal to an organisation’s values, mission, and beneficiaries.

## The Individuals

In addition to their role-specific skillsets, successful Trustee candidates will bring:

- A longstanding interest in conservation, and a commitment to the delivery of RSPB's strategy in the context of an increasingly demanding environment.
- Deep subject matter expertise in the area of the Committee they will be Chairing.
- Knowledge and understanding of how their function of expertise contributes to and upholds the running of effective organisations.
- Experience contributing to the successful running of boards, councils, and/or other non-executive committees, including a good understanding of the different roles played by the Executive and Council.
- A track record of contribution to strengthening an organisation's governance and strategic clarity to progress organisational objectives.
- A demonstrable commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- An inclusive leadership style which values tact, diplomacy, and mutual trust, with the ability to listen and engage effectively; comfortable with challenge and debate.
- The ability to inspire the respect of staff, volunteers, and other stakeholders – internal and external – across the RSPB, the wider conservation arena, and beyond.
- Values of integrity, impartiality, fairness, and respect of confidences.





## How to apply

In order to apply, please submit a comprehensive CV along with a covering letter which sets out your interest in the role and encapsulates the aspects of your experience relevant to the required criteria.

The preferred method of application is online at: [www.odgers.com/90475](http://www.odgers.com/90475)

If you are unable to apply online, please email: [evie.day@odgersberndtson.com](mailto:evie.day@odgersberndtson.com)

All applications will initially receive an automated response.

All candidates are also requested to complete an online Diversity Monitoring Form which will be found at the end of the application process. This will assist the RSPB in monitoring selection decisions to assess whether equality of opportunity is being achieved. Any information collated from the Diversity Monitoring Forms will not be used as part of the selection process and will be treated as strictly confidential.

### Personal data

In line with GDPR, we ask that you do NOT send us any information that can identify children or any of your Sensitive Personal Data (racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs, trade union membership, data concerning health or sex life and sexual orientation, genetic and/or biometric data) in your CV and application documentation.

Following this notice, any inclusion of your Sensitive Personal Data in your CV/application documentation will be understood by us as your express consent to process this information going forward. Please also remember to not mention anyone's information or details (e.g. referees) who have not previously agreed to their inclusion.

### Contact details

For a conversation in confidence, please contact:

**Emilia Billett**

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We are committed to ensuring everyone can access our website and application processes. This includes people with sight loss, hearing, mobility and cognitive impairments. Should you require access to these documents in alternative formats, please contact [evie.day@odgersberndtson.com](mailto:evie.day@odgersberndtson.com).

Also, if you have any comments and/or suggestions about improving access to our application processes please do not hesitate to contact us [response.manager@odgersberndtson.com](mailto:response.manager@odgersberndtson.com).



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