Wild Oxfordshire: *People and Nature – making connections*

**Director: Job Description and Specification**

**1. Overview**

Wild Oxfordshire’s vision is for Oxfordshire’s environment to be rich in nature, healthy and sustainable, for the benefit and enjoyment of all. Our mission and our key strength are bringing people together to work collaboratively to make this vision a reality.

Wild Oxfordshire began life as the Oxfordshire Nature Conservation Forum in 2000, changing its name in 2015 to reflect a change in the organisation’s role and ambitions. Wild Oxfordshire is a membership organisation, a registered charity and company limited by guarantee. It works with the willing and does not seek to duplicate the excellent work of other conservation organisations.

Oxfordshire is a county of immense and diverse environmental activity and knowledge. Ensuring nature is taken fully into account in the economic development agenda, and as part of local decision making depends on access to information about the state of Oxfordshire’s natural environment. For this reason, Wild Oxfordshire produced the authoritative *State of Nature Report in Oxfordshire 2017* from which came actions agreed by members and stakeholders across the county. Wild Oxfordshire’s monthly e-bulletin is open to all to use as a noticeboard to share information on the latest thinking and action on nature conservation in the county. Wild Oxfordshire’s current activity is split into three main areas:

**Conservation Target Areas**

Wild Oxfordshire plays a key role in defining and co-ordinating activity within Oxfordshire’s Conservation Target Areas (CTAs). We have employed a biodiversity officer for more than 15 years to develop and support local partnerships of landowners, conservation bodies and other stakeholders in the CTAs. CTAs now form the core of an emerging Nature Recovery Network for Oxfordshire which we expect to be delivered within a new Nature Recovery Strategy for the county. Wild Oxfordshire has and expects to continue to play a key role in developing, communicating and delivering this strategy, as a key part of our ambition to deliver the recommendations in *State of Nature in Oxfordshire 2017*.

**Community Ecology**

Wild Oxfordshire has a unique relationship with local communities across Oxfordshire. Our Community Ecology Project provides support to 90 enthusiastic local community conservation groups. This network brings a powerful grass-roots element to our strategic work, and links up with the maintenance of nature reserves managed by other member organisations. Maintaining and developing our capacity to support nature conservation within our local communities remains a key strategic objective for the charity.
**Evenlode Catchment Partnership**

Wild Oxfordshire prides itself on its innovation and flexibility. Since 2015, Wild Oxfordshire has hosted the Evenlode Catchment Partnership (ECP) and established, with partners, a high-profile Natural Flood Management pilot project. The ECP facilitates improvements in water quality, enhanced biodiversity, flood management, resilience to climate change and builds greater community engagement with the local rivers, at local and landscape scale. The ECP is set to make a step-change in its ambitions and operation, and Wild Oxfordshire’s role will need to both drive and evolve with this.

Wild Oxfordshire currently employs two part-time staff and contracts a further experienced project consultant, plus financial administrative support. The Board of Trustees has recently completed an organisational review and drafted a new strategy *Championing nature through collaboration*. This review identified the need for a new Director to provide additional capacity and management expertise to help the trustees, staff and consultants respond to new challenges and opportunities and to drive the strategy forward. As part of the strategy it is planned that, subject to funding being secured, there will be an increase in the number of employed project staff plus greater involvement of volunteers.

The strategy document has not yet been prepared for public circulation but will be made available to those applicants invited to interview.

This role will provide an opportunity for an enthusiastic, experienced and committed person to help shape and lead the response to the many challenges that nature faces within Oxfordshire. It is an opportunity to deliver, at a county-wide level, the UK ambition to become the first generation to leave that environment in a better state than we received it.

**2. Job Purpose**

The Director will lead the ongoing development and implementation of the strategy and co-ordinate the day-to-day activities of Wild Oxfordshire’s experienced staff to achieve strategic objectives. The Director will be accountable to the trustees for all aspects of Wild Oxfordshire’s operations including fundraising, finance, communication, marketing and the maintenance of relationships with members, partners and stakeholders.

**3. Role Responsibilities**

The post-holder will be expected to:-

a) lead the implementation and review of Wild Oxfordshire’s Strategic Plan *Championing nature through collaboration*;

b) play a leading role in generating income to secure the organisation’s long-term future;
c) take primary responsibility for ensuring sound financial operational management working closely with the Treasurer on budget setting, monitoring and financial reporting;

d) develop and lead the recruitment of current and future staff and volunteers, ensuring effective internal communication, and maintaining high levels of morale and professionalism;

e) provide senior line management for and help team members to determine and manage operational priorities, set and achieve targets; monitor performance and where necessary take appropriate action to ensure the organisation meets its commitments and responds to new challenges;

f) identify new strategic opportunities in keeping with our mission that will help to achieve the charity’s vision; work with trustees, staff, member organisations and other partners to respond to these opportunities;

g) act as principal ambassador for Wild Oxfordshire, raising its profile, building successful active collaborations and representing the organisation at high level strategic policy discussions and consultations;

h) oversee the administrative, marketing, statutory reporting and day-to-day operational activity of Wild Oxfordshire including relationships with and development of our membership; GDPR, safe-guarding and such other activity as may be required in running a small charitable company;

i) support the Board of Trustees in their role of governing Wild Oxfordshire.

In delivering the above, the post-holder should have regard to:-

j) being the guardian and champion of Wild Oxfordshire’s values and reputation;

k) reporting on progress to the Board of Trustees and securing their support for proposed activities;

l) ensuring compliance with Wild Oxfordshire’s legal obligations and policies, including those relating to health and safety, wildlife and heritage protection, land use planning and relevant charity legislation;

m) being willing to undertake such other tasks that can reasonably be required as part of this post.

4. Reward and Terms of Employment

The post is currently being offered on the basis of 20 hours paid work per week. The intention is for this to be a permanent post; but as this is dependent on securing sufficient ongoing funding there will be a break clause at 18 months. Confirmation of appointment is subject to satisfactory performance review after six months.
The working hours are flexible subject to meeting the role requirements, noting that the current core office working days are Monday to Wednesday. The salary is £35,000 per annum pro rata. A 9% pro rata pension contribution is provided. Wild Oxfordshire provides twenty-five days paid leave per annum plus public holidays, both pro rata, as well as additional days between Christmas and New Year when the office is closed. Salaries are reviewed annually.

Wild Oxfordshire operates from an office in Little Wittenham an historic village in the heart of rural Oxfordshire, at the foot of Wittenham Clumps in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Some home working may be possible subject to meeting the role requirements.

The Director will be responsible to the Board of Trustees and will be assigned a lead trustee to report to on a regular basis.

Own transport is essential. Mileage will be paid at HMRC rates.

5. Skills, Experience, Qualifications and Personal Qualities

Essential

Excellent organisational and people management skills
A strategic thinker, able to identify and act on long term opportunities and threats and to prepare sound and persuasive plans and proposals
A successful track-record in identifying and securing funding from grant awarding bodies, statutory bodies, trusts, private individuals and other sources
Able to build and maintain strong collaborative relationships at senior level
Strong financial management skills, experienced in managing multiple funding streams
A good communicator, with experience of dealing with the media
A good understanding of nature conservation in Oxfordshire and how this relates to nature conservation and wildlife agendas at a regional and national level

Desirable

Experience in nature conservation-specific project identification, design and delivery and funding
Experience in managing organisational change
A good understanding of local government processes and politics within Oxfordshire
Knowledge of and experience in marketing and promotional activity as they relate to small organisations and the nature conservation sector
A professional qualification in an environmental, management or business discipline relevant to the role
**Personal Qualities**

Passionate about the natural environment

Tactful, diplomatic and sensitive to the needs of staff and others in the Oxfordshire conservation sector

Determined and strong minded, able to take and take responsibility for difficult decisions

Highly motivated and professional, able to demonstrate high standards to others

Willing to explore new ways of doing things and develop new relationships

Wild Oxfordshire is a small charity which wishes to have a big impact. It is important that the post holder has the skills, experience and local knowledge to make a positive impact in a short time.

6. **Application and Interviews**

Applications in the form of a CV and a covering personal statement indicating how you demonstrate the required skills, experience and qualities should be submitted in pdf form to nick@wildoxfordshire.org.uk by midnight Sunday 9th February 2020.

It is planned to hold preliminary interviews in Little Wittenham on Wednesday 19th February 2020. Confirmation for the successful applicant may be subject to a further meeting with the Board of Trustees. Applicants to be invited to interview will be notified by email by Friday 14th February.

Wild Oxfordshire is a registered charity (No. 1131540) and a company limited by guarantee (No. 06828051) www.wildoxfordshire.org