



Recruitment pack: Communications Director



www.freshwaterhabitats.org.uk

About Freshwater Habitats Trust

Freshwater Habitats Trust is the UK's leading charity for all freshwaters. We are an evidence-based conservation organisation that works to protect UK and European freshwater wildlife through practical conservation projects, innovative applied research and policy development.

Our organisation is respected nationally and internationally, and we work with statutory organisations, NGOs, academic institutions and private partners throughout the UK and Europe. Since our foundation in 1988, we have developed a strong track record of using research and practical conservation experience to inform freshwater policy, conservation practice and biodiversity recovery.

Freshwater Habitats Trust operates nationally through a diverse portfolio of conservation, research and policy projects. These projects support our mission to protect and restore freshwater biodiversity while generating the income that sustains our core charitable activities.

As Freshwater Habitats Trust continues to grow its influence and impact, effective communications are increasingly important in helping us reach policy makers, funders, partners, supporters and, where relevant, the wider public. The Director of Communications will play a critical role in ensuring that our communications activity strengthens the organisation's reputation, extends our reach - especially with decision makers and legislators - and supports our strategic objectives.



Role

The Communications Director is responsible for leading and developing Freshwater Habitats Trust's communications function and ensuring that communications play a central role in delivering the organisation's strategic goals.

As a member of the Senior Management Team, the Communications Director contributes to the overall leadership, management and development of the organisation. Working closely with the Senior Management Teams, and project teams, the post-holder will develop and implement a communications strategy that enhances the visibility, credibility and influence of Freshwater Habitats Trust.

The Communications Director will provide strategic oversight of all external and internal communications activities, ensuring that the organisation maintains a strong and consistent voice across all channels and audiences. The post-holder will lead on reputation management, media engagement, stakeholder communications and brand development, while supporting fundraising and policy objectives through effective communications.

The role will also act as a senior advisor to colleagues on communications matters and identify opportunities to increase awareness of Freshwater Habitats Trust's work among government, legislators, policy makers, funders, the media, partners and the wider conservation sector.



Membership of the Senior Management Team

The Senior Management Team (SMT) is a collective decision-making body. It focuses on the following areas of activity:

- Setting and driving organisational vision and strategy - including lead roles on strategic groups reporting back to SMT monthly (Research, Fundraising, Operations, Policy, Communications and Finance).
- Decision-making on organisational structure.
- Defining, authorising and driving financial strategy, budget and annual plan
- Oversight and decision-making on recruitment.
- Decision-making on fundraising opportunities.
- Decision-making on external communication and reputational considerations
- Identification and management of risk.
- Organisational Operations - oversight and approval of activity in the following areas:
 - policies and procedures
 - culture and values
 - communication.

As a member of the Senior Management Team this role will:

- Collaborate with the SMT in setting a clear vision and strategy for the organisation.
- Be responsible for organisational policies, procedures, budgets and annual plans, with particular emphasis on the Central Team
- Be responsible for change management and strategic initiatives for Freshwater Habitats Trust.
- Manage a process of regular and effective communication and reporting across Freshwater Habitats Trust where lessons are learned, analysed and applied.
- Represent Freshwater Habitats Trust in external meetings, technical meetings, and with partner networks.
- Foster a positive and resilient team culture that embraces and adapts to change, promoting innovation and continuous improvement.
- Attend Board of Trustee meetings and report as requested by the CEO.

Strategic leadership

- Develop and deliver a communications strategy and annual plans to support the organisation's mission, priorities and long-term ambitions.
 - Contribute to the overall strategic direction of the organisation as a member of the Senior Management Team.
 - Work closely with the Senior Management Team and colleagues across the organisation to identify opportunities to raise awareness of our work and its impact.
 - Advise the SMT on communications, reputation and stakeholder engagement matters.
 - Provide advice and support on communications, media and stakeholder engagement matters to colleagues across the organisation.
 - Help ensure communications are considered as part of organisational planning, programme development and fundraising activities.
 - Monitor and evaluate communications performance and identify opportunities for improvement and innovation.
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Media and public relations

- Lead the organisation's media relations programme.
- Build and maintain relationships with key journalists, editors and media outlets.
- Identify opportunities to promote Freshwater Habitats Trust's science, conservation achievements and expertise through national, regional and specialist media.
- Manage media enquiries and act as a senior point of contact for communications issues.
- Support colleagues undertaking interviews and public-facing activities.
- Help position Freshwater Habitats Trust as a leading voice for freshwater conservation in the UK.
- Work with project teams to maximise media and communications opportunities across the organisation.

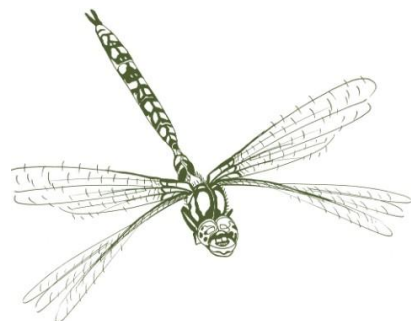


Stakeholder communications

- Increase awareness and understanding of Freshwater Habitats Trust's work among government, legislators, policy makers, funders and strategic partners.
- Develop and maintain strong relationships with organisations and individuals who support or contribute to our work.
- Develop communication approaches that strengthen relationships with key stakeholders.
- Support communications associated with public policy, advocacy and evidence-based conservation initiatives.
- •Oversee major organisational publications, newsletters and stakeholder communications.
- Work with funders and partners on joint communications initiatives.
- Represent Freshwater Habitats Trust at meetings, events and conferences as required.

Digital communications and brand management

- Maintain overall responsibility for Freshwater Habitats Trust's brand, messaging and visual identity.
- Oversee the development of the website, social media channels, digital content and online engagement activities.
- Ensure all communications accurately reflect organisational priorities, values, messages, brand identity, and evidence-based approaches.
- Drive innovation in digital communications and audience engagement.



Team leadership

- Lead and develop the communications function.
- Line manages communications staff, policy staff and support their professional development.
- Build communications capacity across the organisation through guidance, training and support.
- Work with project managers and project officers to maximise communication opportunities arising from projects and programmes.
- Encourage effective collaboration between communications, policy and project delivery teams.

Fundraising and organisational support

- Contribute positively to the leadership and development of Freshwater Habitats Trust.
- Work closely with colleagues to communicate the value and impact of Freshwater Habitats Trust's work to current and prospective funders.
- Support the development of funding applications, strategic partnerships and organisational initiatives.
- Help strengthen the profile and reputation of Freshwater Habitats Trust to support the organisation's long-term sustainability.
- Promote a collaborative and supportive culture across the organisation.



Internal communications

- Work with the CEO, Content Officer and other colleagues to produce a fortnightly internal staff and Trustee update, to support information sharing and engagement.
- Support the CEO and other members of the Senior Management Team with internal communications activities, including presentations.

Additional responsibilities

The post-holder will:

- Work closely and constructively with the Senior Management Team.
- Ensure compliance with organisational policies and procedures.
- Undertake other duties appropriate to the role as required by the Senior Management Team.



Person specification

Qualifications

Essential

- Degree, professional qualification, or equivalent experience in communications, public relations, journalism, marketing or a related field.

Knowledge and Experience

Essential

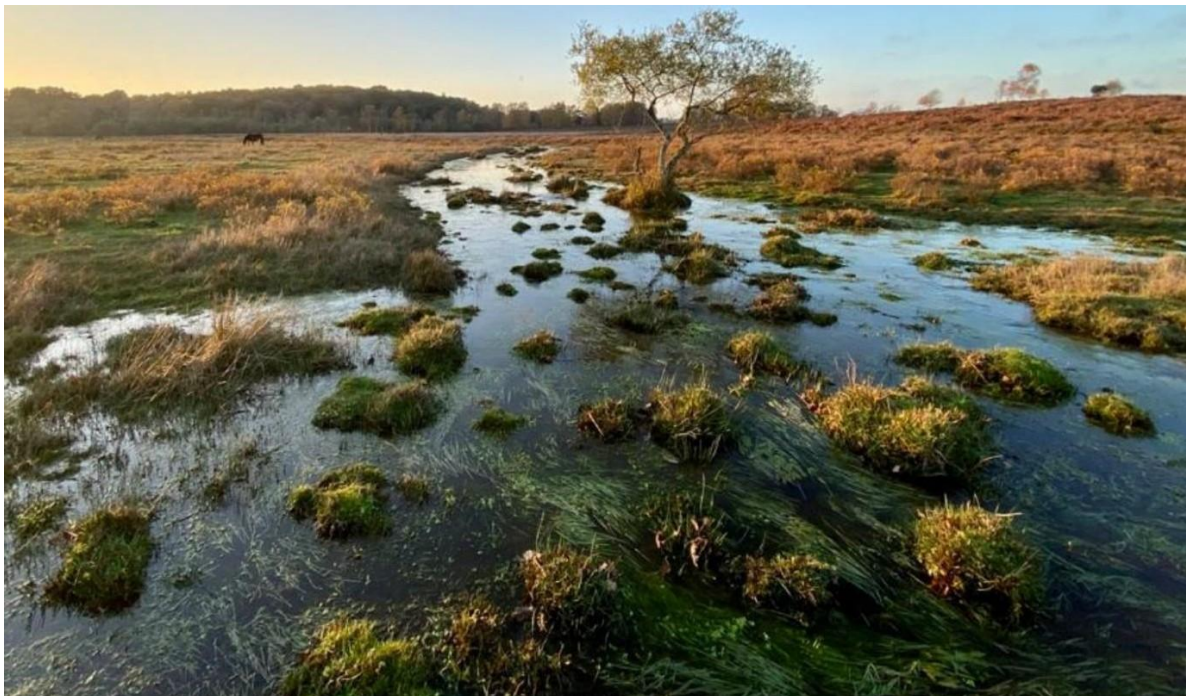
- Significant experience in a senior communications, media, public affairs or external affairs role.
- Experience of developing and delivering organisation-wide communications strategies.
- Strong track record of generating positive media coverage at national, regional or sector level.
- Experience of advising senior leaders on communications and reputation management.
- Significant leadership and line management experience.
- Demonstrable success in communicating complex information to a range of audiences.
- Experience of stakeholder engagement and relationship management.
- Excellent written, verbal and presentation skills.
- Experience of managing staff and supporting professional development.
- Strong organisational, planning and analytical skills.

Desirable

- Experience of working within the environmental, conservation, charitable or public sectors.
- Understanding of environmental policy and biodiversity conservation issues.
- Experience of supporting fundraising campaigns and donor communications.
- Experience of leading digital communications and audience development programmes.
- Established science and / or environment media contacts.

Personal qualities

- Strategic thinker with the ability to see the wider organisational context.
 - Strong leadership skills and the ability to influence at all levels.
 - Collaborative and supportive approach to management.
 - Excellent interpersonal skills and ability to develop productive relationships with a wide range of partners.
 - Highly organised and able to manage competing priorities effectively.
 - Professional, credible and confident communicator.
 - Self-motivated and capable of working independently and as part of a team.
 - Commitment to the aims and values of Freshwater Habitats Trust.
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What we have to offer

Salary: £52,500

Contract: permanent. full-time. Oxford office, hybrid and/or homeworking.

We offer the following benefits:

- The option to work flexibly
- FTE 25 days of annual leave plus bank holidays
- Pension with 6% employer contribution
- Mobile phone allowance
- Working from home allowance
- Free eye tests
- Free Employee Assistance Programme.



How to apply

Please complete submit the following to
info@freshwaterhabitats.org.uk:

- Application form (available to [download from our website](#))
- CV
- Covering letter

Closing date: 17.00 Friday 20th November 2026

First interviews (on Microsoft Teams): w/c 30th November 2026

Second interviews (in person in Oxford): w/c 7th December 2026



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