



THE NATIONAL
FOREST

Appointment of Trustee (Communities & Enterprise)





Welcome to the National Forest

Dear Candidate

We are delighted that you are interested in being considered for the role of Trustee of the National Forest Company (NFC).

The National Forest is about so much more than trees; it is pioneering new ways of working to transform landscapes, lives and livelihoods. The last three decades have seen the NFC drive forward delivery of the National Forest, taking it from a leap of faith to the success story we see today: a restored forest landscape; an emerging visitor destination; and communities that are connecting with nature. As a charity with an ambitious Vision to 2050, highly experienced and dedicated Trustees, and a small but exceptionally committed staff team, the NFC is well placed to meet the challenges ahead.

As we strive to deliver an exciting programme with government, businesses, partners, and communities, we are looking for a new Trustee to join the Board and our Communities & Enterprise Working Group.

You will bring the knowledge, commitment and challenge to help us innovate, diversify our thinking and meet stretching targets for nature, communities and enterprise.

Now is a time of growth, influence and impact; locally, as we continue to create the National Forest in the Midlands, regionally, as we connect landscapes to develop the Midlands Forest Network, and nationally, as we work with government to establish a suite of new national forests.

If you share our vision of hope and feel excited by the prospect of helping us to lead one of the most inspiring initiatives in the country, we would love to hear from you.

Dr Tony Ballance
Chair

The opportunity



The National Forest Company is now seeking to appoint a new Trustee to bring enthusiasm, ideas and expertise to support the organisation's development. They will replace the chair of the current Tourism, Recreation & Communities Working Group.

It will be essential to secure an individual of the right calibre, experience and outlook to steer our work on access and engagement as well as enterprise and growth. This role would suit a professional with expertise in community engagement, education, health and wellbeing or sustainable tourism, whether an executive looking for a development opportunity, an experienced non-executive director, or an individual pursuing a portfolio career.

This is an opportunity to work with a highly professional charity that is achieving extraordinary results through its passionate staff, Trustees, Ambassadors, and supporters locally, regionally and nationally.

As a Trustee, this is an opportunity to enjoy a diverse and interesting programme, a stimulating environment, and a voice on the national stage.

The National Forest Company relies on the experience and commitment of people of all ages and backgrounds. It operates as an inclusive organisation and welcomes applications from all.



About the Forest



The National Forest is one of the country's most ambitious and highly regarded environmental projects, transforming 200 square miles across parts of Derbyshire, Leicestershire, and Staffordshire.

Established by government in the early nineties, it was the first new broadleaved forest to be created in England for over 900 years. As a growing environmental, economic and social asset, the National Forest is enhancing the landscape, improving quality of life and growing forest-related businesses.

The Forest provides a national demonstration of the value of the natural environment to drive regeneration and showcase policy and practice, research and development in the heart of the country.

The National Forest links the two ancient Forests of Needwood in the west and Charnwood in the east, restoring a landscape scarred by coal mining and heavy industry, providing opportunities for everyone to engage with woodlands near to where they live and work.

A lot has been achieved since 1991. More than ten million trees have already been planted, with forest cover increasing from around 6% to more than 26% across the area. Thousands of hectares of land have been converted to woods and other habitats, using a range of grants for farm diversification and urban greening, restoration of former coalfield and mineral sites, and community planting schemes. The result is a dramatic transformation where trees frame the landscape, wildlife is returning, and a woodland culture is emerging.

Social and economic regeneration of the area has been as rapid as the landscape change, with former industrial towns and villages becoming increasingly attractive to residents with accessible natural greenspace on their doorstep. Major visitor centres, such as the National Memorial Arboretum have matured, and new attractions including the Hicks Lodge Cycle Centre and the National Forest Way are contributing to a vibrant visitor economy now supporting more than 5,000 jobs.



Our Vision to 2050



The National Forest model is held up as an example of best practice, demonstrating landscape scale change, establishing ground-breaking planning policies, pioneering successful grant mechanisms and delivering improvements in biodiversity, economic impact and quality of life.

- Over 8,000 hectares of habitat have been transformed since 1991
- 76% of households have access to greenspace within 15 minutes' walk
- 90% of schools in the Forest now enjoy regular outdoor learning sessions
- Over 8 million visitors enjoy the Forest each year
- More than 750,000 tonnes of carbon have been sequestered

The new Vision, *Transformation through Forests*, now goes further, involving continued work in the National Forest, enabling of new national forests, and plans to champion a Forest Network for England.

Within the National Forest's 200 square miles there is an exciting programme to accelerate Forest cover towards 33%, transform the Conkers Discovery Centre through major re-development and investment, alongside plans for a new Forest training and employment hub in the Heart of the National Forest.

The National Forest's success has led to the government announcing a commitment in 2024 to create three new national forests. Together with Defra, the NFC launched the first of these, the Western Forest, in March 2025, followed by the second, in the Oxford Cambridge Corridor, in November 2025. A competitive process is currently underway to identify the third in the Midlands or North of England. The NFC is the grant manager for these initiatives, providing strategic support and central services.

Extending outside the 200 square mile boundary, the NFC has partnered with the Woodland Trust to develop the Midlands Forest Network. This includes plans to connect the woodland landscapes across the Midlands using green corridors that integrate trees alongside other land uses, ultimately to create an England-wide network.



How we work



Since 1995, the National Forest Company (NFC) has driven forward the vision for the National Forest in the Midlands. The NFC operates as a small, highly successful organisation that secured charitable status in 2016, whilst also being a not-for-profit body within government working at Arm's Length from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra).

With around 45 staff, 10 Trustees and a wide range of delivery partners, the NFC is well placed to steer future ambitions. The NFC operates with a culture of partnership, and an annual turnover of around £10 million. Our approach is focused on place-based working; channelling funding and advice to support collaboration and enable landowners, businesses, public, private and voluntary organisations and communities to deliver.

The NFC works by:

- Advocating – Inspiring others to join us.
- Collaborating – Working with others to make a bigger impact.
- Demonstrating – Innovating and evidencing everything we do.
- Enabling – Embedding our work to make lasting change.

To find out more about the NFC's work, please visit: nationalforest.org/about



Our values and ambitions



The NFC's work is driven by a set of core values that underpin everything we do:

- **Trees drive transformation** – The starting point for our work is trees. We believe that trees are the catalyst for transformation and that the benefits they provide can be far reaching.
- **Forests are for everyone** – Forests should be inclusive and accessible to everyone. We believe that engagement with Forests should not be restricted by geography, culture or ability so that their impacts can be felt by all.
- **Delivering value and lasting impact** – Investment in Forests provides significant returns. We believe our work provides great value for money and delivers long term change.

The values run through the new Vision with a focus on delivering three ambitions:

- **Forests for Nature** – Transforming landscapes through trees to restore nature and increase resilience.
- **Forests for Communities** – Transforming lives to connect communities and promote wellbeing.
- **Forests for Enterprise** – Transforming livelihoods to enhance enterprise and inspire innovation.

This role will help lead our work on two ambitions, communities and enterprise, chairing a new Working Group and providing support and advice to the Team. These are key areas of work, helping to make forests accessible and encourage greater use, as well as promoting growth in forest-related enterprises to expand the forest culture and economy. This includes work on access, outdoor learning, volunteering, training and skills, arts and creativity and tourism.

This is a critical time for the sector in the face of unprecedented pressures from a changing climate and competition for land use to economic challenges and technological change. Our response is to raise our ambition, bringing a renewed focus on resilience for both the organisation and the National Forest.

For further details please visit:

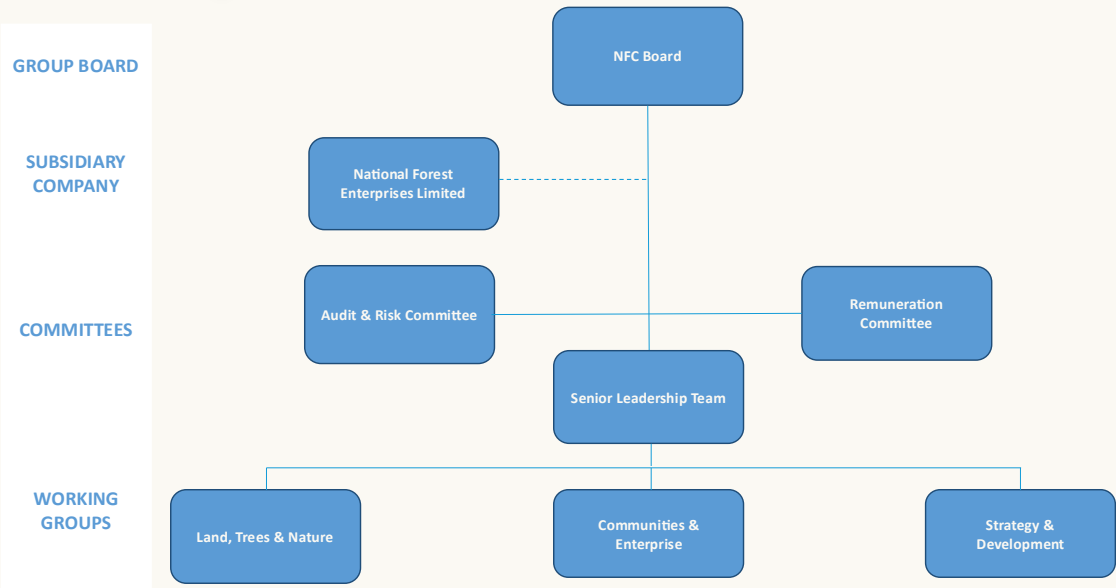
nationalforest.org/about/our-vision

Our governance



The National Forest Company is a charity that operates within central government at Arm's Length from Defra, and is governed by a Board of Trustees. The wholly owned subsidiary company, National Forest Enterprises Ltd, oversees trading activity including the Conkers Visitor Centre which is run by a private operator, Planning Solutions Ltd. Committees and Working Groups provide oversight of activity for the organisation and are chaired by Trustees.

NFC Group structure



The Board is facilitated by the Chief Executive and Senior Leadership Team. The new Trustee will work closely with the Director of Operations who facilitates the Communities & Enterprise Working Group, as well as the wider team.

The role of Trustee



The role of Trustee of the National Forest Company is varied, stimulating and hugely rewarding, knowing that you are contributing to one of the most innovative sustainability initiatives in the country. The responsibilities are as expected for a Trustee of a highly professional Board, with key areas including:

- Committing to the ambitious vision, aims and values of the NFC as it works through an exciting period of change.
- Contributing actively to the Board's role in giving strategic direction to the organisation, setting overall policy, defining goals, and evaluating performance to achieve its aims.
- Ensuring overall governance and compliance for the organisation, contributing to relevant Committees and Working Groups.
- Ensuring the financial stability of the organisation and supporting sustainable income generation.
- Setting an entrepreneurial culture and supporting the Chief Executive, Senior Leadership Team, and wider team members.
- Developing relationships and networking opportunities to raise awareness of the Forest and increase political, media and funding influence.
- Building the positive reputation, credibility and brand of the National Forest.



Board biographies



The current Board comprises the following:

Dr Tony Ballance

Tony is Chief Strategy & Regulation Officer at Cadent Gas Ltd where he leads the company's work to deliver Net Zero through their decarbonisation strategy. Prior to Cadent, Tony was Director of Strategy & Regulation at Severn Trent serving on the Severn Trent Plc Board for eight years. Tony has a background as an economic consultant in the utilities sector, as well as having previously been Ofwat's Chief Economist. He is a Trustee of the Soil Association, a Non-Executive Director of Flood Re and sits on the Board of Cadent's charitable foundation. He chairs the NFC Board and is a member of the Remuneration Committee.



Beth Cambridge

Beth is a senior leader with over 10 years' experience delivering major environmental programmes within the public sector. She is currently Head of Woodland Creation for Forestry England, responsible for operational delivery of Defra's England Tree Planting Programme, including land acquisition and site establishment. With previous roles involving planning and operations as well as community woodlands, Beth has broad experience across the forestry sector, and brings additional skills in strategy and governance, from an Executive MBA. She is a member of the Land & Forestry Working Group.



Penny Coates

Penny is an experienced executive and non-executive director (NED) and a Deputy Lieutenant for Leicestershire. She is a Trustee of the National Space Centre and Leicester Cathedral, a NED of Aurigo International and an Advisor to the Councils of the West Midlands. Her executive career comprised Mars, PepsiCo, Boots and Asda before joining East Midlands Airport as Managing Director. Her previous non-executive roles include Chester Zoo, Loughborough University, The Co-operative society, Supply Pilot, Luton Airport and Melton Building Society, as well as chairing the successful East Midlands Freeport bid. She chairs the National Forest Enterprises Board and is a member of the Audit & Risk Committee.



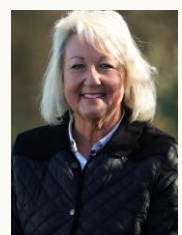
Ruth Evans

Ruth is the Director of Fundraising and Supporters at the Campaign to Protect Rural England. She has extensive experience in fundraising and communications, within the environmental sector for the Queen's Green Canopy initiative and Royal Horticultural Society, and in the social sector for the Samaritans, Mind and Macmillan Cancer Support. Ruth's non-executive experience includes acting as a Trustee for the Women's Royal Voluntary Service (now the Royal Voluntary Service). She chairs the current Development Working Group.



Emma Hooper-Smith

Emma is a Chartered Accountant with 35 years' experience at a senior level in finance, governance and risk. Her long-standing career with Pricewaterhouse Coopers included consulting and business transformation, finance and audit, and risk management. Emma is also a Trustee of a charity in the Arts Sector, Art Reach, acting as Vice Chair and Chair of the Finance Committee. Living in the National Forest, Emma has seen the dramatic changes brought about by tree planting and woodland creation at first hand. She chairs the Audit & Risk Committee.





Anne Jenkins

Anne is Executive Director for Business Delivery across the UK for The National Lottery Heritage Fund. She was previously Director of England, Midlands & East and also Deputy Director of Operations overseeing the regional and country operational teams. As a former Regional Manager of both the East Midlands and West Midlands regions for Lottery, Anne has considerable understanding of the Midlands area. Prior to Lottery she worked in the civil service and had a variety of roles in the Department of Trade and Industry as well as the Government Office West Midlands. She chairs the current Tourism, Communities & Recreation Working Group.



John Lockhart

John is a Chartered Surveyor with extensive expertise in land management, forestry and green infrastructure having been the founder of the multi-disciplinary environmental consultancy Lockhart Garratt in 1998 and overseeing its merger with Nicholsons in 2022. He is also an experienced non-executive with previous roles including the chair of the RICS Rural Professional Board, RICS representative on the Defra Ash Dieback Task Group and the National Tree Safety Group. Most recently, John served as a Non-Executive Director on the Forest Services Board for England and sat on the Defra Planting on Private Land Project Board. He is a member of the Land & Forestry Working Group.



Paul Orsi

Paul is a Chartered Forester and Chartered Surveyor with more than 25 years' experience in the private and voluntary sectors. He is currently Director of Operations for Sylva Foundation, leading on the Environment Programme, Wood Centre and organisational development, as well as having a strong background in innovation and web-based tools. Paul was previously the Rural Enterprises Manager at the Blenheim Estate, responsible for 750 hectares of woodland, SSSIs, agri-environment schemes, tenancies and farm operations. He is also a member of the Forestry Commission's Delivery Advisory Group. He chairs the Land & Forestry Working Group.



Matt Robinson

Matt is a Senior Adviser to the Landscape Finance Lab and an Adviser to Social Finance UK. He has spent his career building leading impact-investing and development-finance institutions. Most recently, Matt spent nine years at British International Investment (BII), where he held senior roles including Head of Strategy and Head of Private Capital Mobilisation. Matt was a founding staff member of Big Society Capital and helped create key market institutions including Access – the Foundation for Social Investment. Earlier, he worked in the UK Cabinet Office and No.10, leading the Social Investment team. He began his career as a development economist, including as an ODI Fellow in Malawi. He chairs the Remuneration Committee.



John Everitt OBE (NFC Chief Executive)

John has worked in the environmental field for more than 30 years and joined as the NFC Chief Executive in January 2015. He was previously Chief Executive of Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust and a former Director of Conservation for The Wildlife Trusts. He has held senior positions on national and regional forums and is currently Chair of the Forestry Commission's Forestry & Woodland Advisory Committee for the East Midlands, a Fellow of the Royal Society for Arts, Manufactures and Commerce, and was awarded an OBE for services to conservation in 2024.





What we're looking for

The National Forest Company is looking to appoint a Trustee to fulfil a leadership role for the Board, advising on our Forests for Communities and Forests for Enterprise ambitions, with key areas including:

- Chairing the Communities & Enterprise Working Group, giving strategic direction, defining priorities and monitoring performance.
- Supporting the development of new initiatives including strategy and policy, major projects and research and evidence.
- Developing relationships and networking to create new collaborative opportunities for the organisation and the emerging suite of national forests.
- Setting an innovative culture, supporting and inspiring staff, other Trustees and wider stakeholders.
- Ensuring robust governance and compliance on communities and enterprise issues.
- Reporting to the NFC Board on the work undertaken by the Communities and Enterprise Working Group.

Experience and qualities required

- Senior experience in community engagement, education, health and wellbeing or sustainable tourism working at a strategic level across public, private or charitable sectors.
- Strategic and able to recognise the business needs and opportunities for partners, businesses and communities in the Forest.
- Knowledgeable and influential in their field.
- Team player who wants to work collaboratively and harness the talents of others.
- A natural ambassador who are committed to what we do and able to communicate this to others.
- Be independently minded and not afraid to challenge.
- Knowledge of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) policy and practice would be welcome.
- Have sufficient time to undertake the role.
- Have a clear commitment to and understanding of the vision and values of the National Forest.

Terms of appointment



Role

Trustee (Communities & Enterprise)

Length of appointment

The term is for at least three years, commencing from 1 January 2027, with the possibility of a second term of up to three years.

Time commitment

The Trustee role requires the equivalent of approximately one day per month, to include preparation for and attendance at meetings. The Trustee will be led by the Chair and work closely with the Chief Executive and senior team. They will attend five Board meetings each year, one of which is virtual, and a Board strategy session. Three Communities & Enterprise Working Group meetings are held each year with a mixture of face-to-face and virtual attendance. Opportunities to attend NFC events in London, the National Forest and elsewhere are also available.

Remuneration

This is a 'pro bono' post, and no salary is payable, but travel, training and other expenses reasonably incurred will be re-imbursed.

Location

Board meetings are generally held at the National Forest Company's office in Moira, near Swadlincote, South Derbyshire.



How to apply



To apply for the role, please email through the following documents to us at jobs@nationalforest.org

- Your CV, drawing out relevant experience for the role.
- A supporting statement of up to 1,000 words that addresses the criteria set out in the person specification as well as your interest in our organisation's work.

Please ensure that you have included a telephone number, and if you might have difficulty with the recruitment timetable.

If you wish to apply using an alternative format, please contact Lucy Warren, Head of Resources on 07866 176605 or email lwarren@nationalforest.org

At the National Forest Company we believe passionately that a truly inclusive workplace leads to increased social impact and are committed to building more inclusive teams. To understand how we are performing, we ask that you kindly download our [Diversity Monitoring Form](#) complete and return it to monitoring@nationalforest.org. Please be assured that your responses are kept confidential, separate from your candidate record, are not part of any application you make.

Equal Opportunities

The NFC is an equal opportunities employer and positively encourages applications from suitably qualified and eligible candidates regardless of sex, race, disability, age, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, religion or belief, marital status, or pregnancy and maternity.



Appointment process



Appointment process

The new Trustee will be appointed by a selection panel chaired by the Chair of the Board, Tony Ballance. A recruitment timetable for candidates is provided below. If there are any changes to dates, these will be confirmed with applicants as soon as possible.

Recruitment timetable

- Deadline for applications: **Wednesday 30 September 2026**
- Informal discussions: **w/c 5 October 2026**
- Shortlisting: **12 October 2026**
- Panel interview, including a visit to the Forest and informal meetings: **21 October 2026**

The successful candidate will be invited to observe a Board meeting in December 2026 and attend their first Board meeting, in early 2027.

Further details

If you have any queries about the opportunity or for an informal conversation, please contact Louise Driver, Director of Operations, via email: ldriver@nationalforest.org

The National Forest Company will respect the privacy of any initial approach or expression of interest in this role, whether formal or informal.

Further details of the National Forest Company including copies of the Annual Report and Accounts, staff structure and strategy are available on our website:

www.nationalforest.org



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National Forest Company
Bath Yard, Moira, Swadlincote,
Derbyshire DE12 6BA

Tel 01283 551211

nationalforest.org

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