

# Essex Wildlife Trust

## Job Description



**Job title:** Head of Nature Discovery Centres

**Location:** Abbotts Hall

**Reports to:** Commercial Director

**Manages:** Cluster Managers & Central Operations Manager

### Job Purpose

Essex Wildlife Trust is the county's leading conservation charity, committed to protecting wildlife and inspiring a lifelong love of nature. By 2030 we aim to protect and connect 30% of land and sea and inspire 1 in 4 people in Essex to take action for wildlife.

Our aim is to widen access to nature, provide great wildlife experiences, deepen nature connection, and ultimately encourage the people of Essex to take individual and collective action for wildlife.

Our Nature Discovery Centres are important gateways to nature, allowing us to engage with millions of visitors every year. We are also the largest county-based provider of outdoor education in the UK, providing learning opportunities for all stages of life. We therefore have a unique opportunity to engage with the people of Essex, to communicate the value of the Trust's work, and to clearly articulate why we need their involvement in delivering meaningful change to protect nature and wildlife.

The Head of Nature Discovery Centres is responsible for the operation of the Trust's 11 Nature Discovery Centres at reserves across Essex. The objectives of the Nature Discovery Centres are to engage and inspire communities to protect our wildlife and wild places, and to generate income for Trust, both through their Retail and Food and Beverage offer and by signing up new members and encouraging donations.

With a track record in growing businesses in the hospitality and/or retail sector, a focus on customer service and an entrepreneurial attitude, you will work closely with the Commercial Director, Cluster Managers, Central Operations Manager and all Nature Discovery Centres staff to drive the successful operations of the Nature Discovery Centres. The role requires close working with the Engagement directorate for Education, Marketing and Communications input, the Fundraising function for engagement with customers for membership recruitment, and with People and Culture to drive a high performing, high impact combined workforce of staff and volunteers. A close relationship with the Conservation teams at the NDCs will also be essential.

As a leader, you will have the capabilities to build relationships across the organisation, be a skilled communicator, expert influencer and have strong financial/analytical skills. Your role spans both strategic planning, project and operational delivery and is a key member of the Trust's Operational Leadership Team, working with other Heads of department/function.

This is a challenging and varied role, with changing priorities and multiple workstreams at any point in time.

### Key tasks

Work with Commercial management team and other areas of the Trust to develop and implement plans to drive engagement, income and profitability growth, including:

- Ensure an effective operating approach for the Nature Discovery Centres, based on a "branch" model and with appropriate buy in and accountability, and leveraging knowledge and collaboration across the Nature Discovery Centres.
- Maintain/develop a supportive, collaborative environment and motivated team, in line with the Trust's cultural ambitions, to deliver a united team across all sites and Trust-wide.

- Manage operational performance: Setting budgets and targets, and monitoring regularly, taking action where required; applying simple and effective management information; ensuring ownership and focus by the Commercial management team.
- Working with HR to effectively manage performance and drive the culture of a high performing, high impact team in Nature Discovery Centres. Operating an environment that recognises and values a combined workforce of staff and volunteers and supports workforce retention.
- Regularly undertaking workforce planning to ensure that all roles within the Nature Discovery Centres are equipped to achieve organisational objectives, with the requisite learning and development provided.
- Work with marketing to identify target audiences and implement plans to increase footfall, including the use of innovative interpretation in the NDCs.
- Implement the key strategies – Engagement, Food & Beverage, and Retail - to ensure Nature Discovery Centres deliver an excellent all-round visitor experience, and growing revenue and margin.
- Work collaboratively to improve membership recruitment rates.
- Realise existing income generation targets and develop new opportunities, ensuring the optimum use of all assets.
- Work with the Operational Leadership Team and the Commercial management team to inform performance and key performance indicators, and make recommendations for development/additions where appropriate and impactful.
- Construct informative and relevant written reports and updates to be presented to the Strategic Leadership Team and the Board.
- Continuously improve front and back office administrative processes, seeking efficiencies and productivity gains.
- Enhance engagement to encourage all visitors to take individual and/or collective action for wildlife.
- Work closely with the Fundraising team and external recruiters to increase membership and to positively promote Essex Wildlife Trust.
- Work with Facilities Management to ensure there is an appropriate maintenance plan in place to develop/maintain high quality, welcoming and attractive facilities.
- Support the Commercial Director to manage relationships with Landlords / 3rd Party stakeholders for the Nature Discovery Centres.
- Ensure that processes are in place to effectively monitor and report on the progress and income generated from plans.
- Participate fully as a key member of the Operational Leadership Team, contributing to operational developments and communicating upwards and downwards as required in a clear, professional and united manner.
- Implement actions to support decisions made by the Strategic Leadership Team, Operational Leadership Team, Essex Wildlife Trust & Essex Wildlife Sales boards.

## **General**

- Model a culture where creative and innovative solutions are at the heart of new ideas, developed in response to a changing landscape and emerging opportunities.
- Work effectively with colleagues across the Trust and demonstrate the Trust values in all professional interactions.
- Demonstrate and develop skills, attitudes, and behaviours in line with the Trust's Competency Framework.
- Work effectively as part of the Trust's Operational Leadership Team, supporting the Strategic Leadership Team to deliver the Strategic Plan.
- Work closely with colleagues and counterparts across the Wildlife Trusts movement, sharing ideas and best practice, in the spirit of cooperation and continual improvement.
- Undertake any other duties assigned by Senior Leadership Team that are deemed to be within the scope of the role and the contract of employment.

## Person specification

### Knowledge and skills

1. Hold a relevant degree/professional qualification or significant experience in a comparable role.
2. Action orientated, starter/finisher.
3. Excellent financial / analytical skills.
4. Strong, proven commercial acumen.
5. Proven track record in developing income streams / businesses in the retail / hospitality sector.
6. Strong delivery skills – turning plans into results and impact.
7. Professional leadership, role modelling positive attitude and expected behaviours.
8. Open minded, creative thinker.
9. Ability to develop a motivated team.
10. Organised – able to handle multiple elements of the Nature Discovery Centres management and development simultaneously whilst meeting deadlines.
11. Excellent verbal and written communication skills with strong attention to detail.
12. Ability to communicate and influence senior stakeholders.
13. Proven ability to work effectively and build good relationships with colleagues at all levels.
14. Ability to coach staff and volunteers to achieve required performance levels.
15. Strong facilitation skills with the ability to bring individuals with different views together and facilitate an agreed approach.
16. Proactive and enthusiastic with a willingness to take responsibility.
17. Can work individually and in a team environment.
18. Experience of developing operational and financial plans, including setting, managing and monitoring multiple and complex budgets and a proven track record in achieving financial targets.

### Additional information

- The role occasionally requires some evening and weekend working.
- The role requires an interest in working for a charity that is committed to delivering a county rich in wildlife with people connected to nature.
- The role requires the ability to drive, including a full driving licence and use of a vehicle, though pool vehicles may sometimes be available.
- The role is based at Great Wigborough, Essex, but requires regular travel across the county and beyond, with mileage paid for additional travel.
- Some home working will be possible, in accordance with the Trust's hybrid working approach.

### North and South Geographic Clusters

#### North

Abberton Reservoir  
Abbotts Hall (not open to the public)  
Fingringhoe Wick  
Hanningfield Reservoir  
The Naze

#### South

Bedfords Park  
Belfairs  
Chafford Gorges (not open to the public)  
Langdon  
Thameside  
Thorndon Park  
Ingrebourne Valley

### Disability Confident Statement

As a Disability Confident employer, we are committed to offering an interview to anyone with a disability that meets all the essential criteria for the post. Please let us know if you require any adjustments to make our recruitment process more accessible.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_