



BRIEF FOR PROSPECTIVE STAFF
THE ROYAL SCOTTISH SOCIETY
November 2024

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Welcome



Dear Candidate,

Thank you for expressing your interest in The Royal Scottish Forestry Society. We'd be delighted if you'd consider applying to join our team.

We have embarked on an extraordinary, ambitious journey which will see the Society delivered into a secure and sustainable future; it is an incredibly exciting time to join us.

Since its foundation more than 170 years ago as the Scottish Arboricultural Society, we have grown and matured into a charity publishing a semi-academic journal continuously since 1858 and provider of practical forestry education.

Forestry has a key role in addressing some of the pressing issues of our time. Sustainable forest management recognises a dynamic balance over many years between the economic, environmental, and social functions of forests and woodlands, interacting in support of each other. The nature of the forest and the management objectives determine their relative importance. In RSFS we aim to meet the needs for practical forestry and woodland education through supporting those in forestry and woodland management and by promoting sustainable forestry more widely. We are an educational charity open to all those with an interest in Scotland's trees, woods and forests, whatever their focus and priorities.

We are, therefore, seeking people with an eye for detail, strong skills and we need people of integrity with a strong commitment to our aims and a collaborative approach. You will be joining a team with a genuine desire to make a difference. If you have the skills, experience and enthusiasm we are seeking, I look forward to hearing from you.

Wilma Harper
President of RSFS and Chair of CFT



About The Royal Scottish Forestry Society

The Society was formed in 1854. Our focus has always been on education. For several decades, the RSFS offered one of the few qualifications in practical forestry. Modern formal qualifications have replaced this but we still have a role in supporting all those active in forestry to develop their skills and understanding.

We continue to encourage people into forestry, woodland management and related sectors through provision of prizes and bursaries and are currently in the process of reshaping our programme as a result of generous donations from two benefactors.

People learn by seeing real examples and sharing knowledge and experiences. The Society offers a comprehensive programme of regional day events hosted by one of the five regions of the Society and the flagship annual study tour each May.

We publish a journal and a fortnightly eNews giving members a comprehensive round up of current topics and access to peer reviewed articles.

In 1996, as a part of the Millenium celebrations, RSFS established a new charity to acquire and develop a native woodland centre at Cashel, on East Loch Lomond-side. Due to generous grant funding in recent years, Cashel has been able to welcome more than 10,000 visitors a year with an interest in natural ecosystems, native woodland and citizen science.

In 2023, RSFS introduced a Corporate Membership scheme allowing employers to provide membership of the Society to support their professional life and development.

In 2023 the Society went through a period of reflection and began drafting our latest Strategic Plan 2023-2028. The plan is ambitious and will continue the evolution of an institution with continued relevance for today.





Our Mission

We aim to meet the needs for practical forestry and woodland education through supporting those in forestry and woodland management and by promoting sustainable forestry more widely.

Our Vision

We will make welcome, value and support all those with an interest in Scotland's trees, woods and forests, whatever their focus and priorities. To do this we will:

- Provide relevant, practically focussed forestry events;
- Be a reliable and regular provider of information;
- Be a body valued by our membership;
- Be an outward facing and forward-looking land manager through Cashel Forest Trust;
- Work continuously to safeguard the future of the Society by being a well-run and developing charity.

Our Values

As an organisation, we are guided in our work by the following values:

Trust, Integrity, Impartiality

- We must be accountable for the organisation and the work we do in a principled, trustworthy, dependable and transparent manner;
- People understand that they can trust RSFS in all areas of our work;
- We are trusted to spend funds appropriately;
- We remain impartial;
- We do not raise false expectations.

Caring, Empathetic, Supportive

- We are stewards of RSFS for future generations;
- Our actions will be in the best interests of the Society;
- Our decisions for the future will have empathy with the Society's heritage;
- Those who serve as staff, volunteers and supporters will be respected no matter their background nor ability and will be encouraged to develop as individuals, learn new skills and to support others.

Passionate, Progressive, Collaborative

- We will work in partnership with those who share our passion for Scotland's trees and forests and securing a safe and sustainable future for the RSFS;
- We are progressive in our approach, regularly reviewing and improving our practices and working methods.



Where we have reached in our journey

The Society has achieved a step change in the past five-years. We have developed in our impact, capability to deliver and our income. We believe we have made a transformational change in progress towards securing a sustainable future for the RSFS.

- A strategic review of the Society in 2017 identified 19 actions that required to be taken to bring the Society onto a more sustainable footing. There were completed by 2020.
- Development of our strategy 2023 to 2028 is almost complete and will be achieved by:
 - Improving stakeholder engagement and communications;
 - Establishing and growing a programme of revenue generating practical training days;
 - Diversification of revenue to include fundraising activity through trusts and foundations to support RSFS projects;
 - Improving the effectiveness of our operating model by increasing the level of resource available and a programme of continuous improvement in our business processes.
- In the past 5-years we have brought our Journal, *Scottish Forestry*, onto a more sustainable basis and supplemented it through the introduction of a well-regarded eNews letter delivered to members fortnightly;
- We have materially improved our technology implementation with the implementation of a new membership management system in 2018, technology deployments, new accounting system, revised website with online services. These will be further developed in the next two years;
- A survey of Members has provided broad support for the direction of travel that we are adopting.



Our people



Trustees

The Royal Scottish Forestry Society is a Scottish charitable incorporated organisation (SCIO) by guarantee (charity registration number SC002058 and is governed by a Board of Trustees. The Board is chaired by Wilma Harper and supported by the Vice President and Treasurer. Short biographies of the trustees are available here: <https://rsfs.org.uk/index.php/our-society>

The trustees are responsible for the work that we do and how we do it, including setting and overseeing the delivery of our strategy. There is one Committee, the Operations Committee, the membership of which comprises the three Officers of the charity. Consideration is being given to the formation of a Finance Committee and a Communication Committee.

Administrative Officer

This is a new role, presently vacant, and being advertised. In 2022 the Society reviewed its operating model and began a process of reshaping it. Rhona Lyon ran our membership function and has decided to move on; we have taken the opportunity to reshape that role.

Editorial Service

The editorial service is outsourced to Gavin McGregor, an independent contractor. Gavin is responsible for the publishing process for *Scottish Forestry* and eNews.

Company Secretary and Finance Services

Our secretariat and finance function are outsourced to CGPM Consulting LLP who specialise in charity governance, risk and finance.



Our strategic priorities

RSFS as an organisation

- Developing our day-to-day operations to facilitate planned growth of the Society;
- Diversifying our funding streams to support the delivery of our ambitions;
- Ensuring that there is a fit-for-purpose resource structure suitably trained to deliver our objectives;
- Continuing to develop a positive external profile for the Society,

Our Membership

- Developing a more inclusive and diverse membership to better reflect those active in the sector;
- Reviewing our membership framework, particularly for organisations;
- Developing closer links with key partners and stakeholders.

We will be a provider of relevant, practically focussed forestry events

- Providing Regional Study Days with the level of engagement, focus on the topics and benefit sought by those attending;
- Running an Annual Study Tour providing an opportunity to showcase the diversity of forests and the work of the RSFS;
- Developing our learning & development offering, including support through bursaries and prizes;
- Offering a suite of training days to provide those active in the sector or who are entering it with relevant Continuous Professional Development.

We will be a reliable and regular provider of information

- Publishing information from diverse sources on current research, thinking and forest practice;
- Bringing people together to promote better links and open discussion on forestry topics;
- Developing our Communications to support delivery of key outcomes for the Society;
- Promoting what the Society does more widely.

An outward facing and forward-looking land manager

- Supporting the establishment of a clear strategy for Cashel in support of RSFS and a plan to implement it;
- Supporting the provision facilities and access for education, research, leisure, and wellbeing through the restoration and maintenance of Cashel's natural and built assets.