

Chair of Trustees

March 2023



Plantlife

CHARISMA
Charity Recruitment

Introduction

David Hill CBE

Chair of the Board of Trustees

Thank you for your interest in taking on the role of Chair of Plantlife, a position I have been immensely privileged to hold for 8 years.

Plantlife is entering an ambitious next chapter in our 34-year history, ramping up our intent to secure a world rich in wild plants and fungi. We are passionate about our mission and work tirelessly to deliver our ambition, both to benefit plants and fungi, and to engage as diverse a cross-section of society as we can reach. We are now looking for an exceptional Chair to lead the charity in the hugely exciting times ahead.

The new Chair will relish the chance to offer strategic leadership at a transformational and challenging time. They will be leading a highly engaged Board of 12 Trustees to govern Plantlife, alongside the CEO, leadership team and a staff of around 70, to help us build on the tremendous work achieved so far across the UK and internationally. You will have an interest and awareness in the inter-connectivity of the challenges we face in climate, nature and society and will want to contribute solutions and offer hope. You do not need to be a botanist but an interest in the natural world and the wider work of Plantlife would be invaluable to support your leadership.



The new Chair will oversee the contribution Plantlife makes to the conservation of habitats and species across the UK; on our own nature reserves and through our projects, delivered alone and in partnership. They will help Plantlife to continue to grow our funding from donations by members and supporters, from grants and charitable trusts, companies, from project funding and through our pioneering land management advice. Our recent growth in supporters and our financial stability is enabling us to play an increasingly important role in shaping conservation in the UK and beyond.

If the challenges and the excitement of our unique, dynamic and ambitious charity appeal to you, I look forward to your expression of interest in joining us.

Thank you again.

David

Plantlife

About Us

Plantlife is the international conservation membership charity working to secure a world rich in wild plants and fungi. We are the only UK membership charity dedicated to conserving wild plants and fungi in their natural habitats and helping people to enjoy and learn about them.

Wild plants and fungi are the foundation of all life on Earth. Plantlife promotes the importance of all plants and fungi for a sustainable and healthy planet working across all key plant ecosystems and habitats, with foci on specific habitats and species depending on need. Our current focus in the UK is on grasslands and temperate forests, due to their acute vulnerability, and on the recovery of at-risk species. We are increasingly active internationally through our work on Important Plant Areas.

Besides our applied conservation work, Plantlife initiated and leads on the annual engagement campaign of No Mow May, which is now in its fifth year, and is the biodiversity boosting movement that has captured the imagination of gardeners and the public in Britain and across the globe. The rallying call encourages people to 'do nothing for nature' - to put their lawnmowers away during the month of May - and let the Spring wildflowers bloom. Participation has boomed year-on-year and we are hoping 2023 will see wilder lawns embraced as never before. We were also recently announced as one of seven strategic partners of The Prince of Wales's Charitable Fund supporting our science and impact work.



Plantlife

Founded in 1989, Plantlife now has over 15,000 members and many more supporters. We enhance, restore, protect and celebrate our natural plant and fungi heritage through working on our own land, with land managers, other conservation organisations, public sector bodies, the private sector and the wider public. Through our work we connect people with nature so that everyone in society can better understand, enjoy and help protect the natural world around us.

Plantlife owns and manages 23 nature reserves and land, covering close to 5,000 acres/2,000 hectares across England, Scotland and Wales. We carry out conservation and outreach work on our own land and in partnership with many others. We advise land managers and publish best practice guidance. We carry out research and gather data to inform government policy. We engage people of all ages and abilities in plant conservation and education and give everybody opportunities to enjoy wildflowers. In the UK we work closely with many other organisations including Rethink Nature, a grouping of seven species focused organisations.

Plantlife collaborates and influences on the world stage to share our passion and achieve our goals. We work overseas by contributing to international conventions on climate and biodiversity and we are a registered Observer at the UN Convention on Climate Change. In addition, our work with the Global Partnership for Plant Conservation was instrumental in the creation of the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation and the initiation of Important Plant Areas across the world – planning their conservation with governments, conservation organisations and community groups. In 2022 we were recognised by the Environment Funders Network as one of the top 10 impactful eNGOs in the UK.

Please see our [Strategy 2030](#), our latest [annual review](#), and our latest audited annual accounts [MAR 22 FINAL SIGNED.pdf](#).



Our work

Underpinning the health of our environment, wild plants and fungi are the foundation upon which we can help resolve the climate, ecological and societal challenges we face.

Our work spans four strategic areas:



Protect and restore



Connect people with nature



Work in partnerships



Collaborate and influence

Our work

Protect and restore the diversity of wild plants and fungi to enhance our countryside, towns and cities.

We work across the UK's grasslands, mountains, woodlands, coasts, heathlands, arable farmland and peatlands to ensure our more common plant species do not become at risk.

We do this by protecting scarce and important species and habitats, such as hay meadows, chalk grassland, limestone pavement, grassland and blanket bog, and by advancing conservation initiatives and best practice so that plants and fungi everywhere can thrive.

You can read more about our protect and restore projects, which include a Juniper restoration initiative and conservation work in the Brecklands, Burnham Beeches and Braunton Burrows, in these case studies:

[Discovering rare species in the Brecklands](#)

Volunteers working alongside Plantlife to monitor populations of target plants in the Brecklands recorded two significant finds during 2021/22 after discovering rare species at two new sites.

[Joining forces to make meadows](#)

More than 400 hectares of species-rich grassland has been restored thanks to a hugely successful initiative which has engaged more than 12,000 people in vital work to protect valuable meadows across England.

[Working together to bring our most threatened species 'Back from the Brink'](#)

Together with partners, we have helped to transform the fortunes of some of England's most threatened wild plants, fungi and animals by increasing their numbers and placing them firmly back on the road to recovery.

Our work

Protect and restore...

Protecting our peatlands

Our vast and vital Munsary Peatlands Reserve in Caithness has continued to thrive this year with the discovery of record numbers of one of the UK's most threatened plants.

Resurrecting ghost landscapes at Burnham Beeches

The ambition of linking nature-rich hotspots which have been isolated by urban development took a step closer to becoming a reality during 2021/22 thanks to extensive research carried out by Plantlife and our partners.

Restoring our valuable grasslands

Plantlife continued to influence conservation efforts on the national stage during 2021/22 after presenting the findings from a trial designed to safeguard species-rich grassland to the UK Government.

Saving England's lowland Juniper

An ambitious project designed to prevent native Juniper from becoming extinct launched during 2021/22 when Plantlife joined forces with landowners, supported by Natural England, to revitalise the shrub.

Conserving the UK's dynamic dunescapes

Rare plant species are gradually starting to reappear in some of the UK's most threatened habitats thanks to a pioneering partnership project which aims to conserve sand dunes across England and Wales.



Our work

Connect people with nature to improve wellbeing and inspire action to save species and their habitats.

We help people to achieve their goals for the natural world by fostering sparks of fascination and empowering communities to care for and protect the rich and varied environment around them. Our aim is to inspire an increasingly large and diverse audience to work with us to make a difference so that everywhere from stretches of golden sand to swathes of ancient woodland can be protected for the benefit of people and wildlife.

Our initiatives to connect people with their surroundings include projects to celebrate and protect green spaces in Bridgend, work on our nature reserves and our Magnificent Meadows Cymru partnership. Read more about our initiatives:

Making lasting connections between communities and nature

Our Green Links initiative is helping deepen the connection between communities and local green spaces for the benefit of both people and plants.

Magnificent Meadows Wales: Gweirgloddiau Gwych Cymru

Our work with partners is successfully connecting people to Wales' spectacular wildflower meadows while restoring these species-rich grasslands for the future.

Safeguarding our public open spaces

The importance of our restoring and protecting the valuable wild plant habitats found in our nature reserves has been given additional focus this year.

Celebrating a milestone year at Ranscombe

The combined impact of 16 years of conservation management led to noticeable improvements at Ranscombe during 2021/22, with several threatened species recording their best ever years.

Our work

Connect people with nature...

Ongoing 'managed messiness' campaign picks up pace

A long-running campaign which aims to transform our road verges into diverse wildlife havens by cutting less and cutting later has continued to pick up pace following the launch of a dedicated website.

Boosting nature with the waxcap app

Vital patches of species-rich grassland could be given greater protection against future development thanks to a successful citizen science project to map beautiful and highly-coloured waxcap fungi.

Inspiring our communities

We are passionate about inspiring our supporters and the public to care for the precious natural habitats around them and arrange a variety of activities each year to give people the opportunity to get involved.



Our work

Work in partnerships so that all people and all sectors of society can contribute to tackling the climate and nature crisis we face.

We are convinced that the complexity and urgency of the challenges our world faces can only be successfully addressed through partnership working. By using our skills and knowledge to accelerate plant and fungi conservation and collaborating with others over the next decade, we aim to harness the interest, ability and resources needed to drive positive change at speed.

We carried out a range of projects to help us progress this work during the year, including an extensive mapping initiative alongside volunteers in the Cairngorms and a ground-breaking nature recovery scheme at Bunloit in Scotland. Read more about our partnership projects:

Leading the way to protect and restore grassland for nature and climate

A grassland programme championed by Plantlife and its partners received the royal seal of approval during 2021/22 when it was selected for inclusion in a high-profile report backed by The former Prince of Wales.

Cairngorms Rare Plants and Wild Connections

The second year of the four-year Rare Plants and Wild Connections Project saw the coming together of mountain enthusiasts and cutting-edge science for the first time to help save rare mountain ecosystems.

Recognising the importance of our ancient grasslands

The past 12 months have seen Plantlife work alongside Highlands Rewilding to play a key role in a ground-breaking nature recovery initiative which aims to create a network of biodiverse land across Scotland.

Building resilience in the South West's woodlands

Together with our partners, we now have a better understanding of the action needed to safeguard some of our rarest and most threatened lichens and bryophytes.

Continuing our calls for action on nitrogen

Plantlife continued to lead the call for government action to tackle air pollution during 2021/22 due to the significant threat posed to our wild plants, lichens, fungi and their habitats.

Our work

Collaborate and influence on the world stage to empower societies across the globe to help protect plants and fungi.

Alongside our partners, we make sure that global strategies for nature, people and the climate include the restoration of native plant species and habitats so that we can ensure a healthy, plant-rich world in the future.

We work to make specialist knowledge, expertise and practical resources available for effective conservation action, and to campaign for an end to activities which threaten and destroy wild plant species and habitats.

This vital agenda has been supported during the year by our partnership work to save Scotland's rainforests, as well as a project to set up a Global Important Plant Area Network to identify, protect and restore valuable habitats for wild plant and fungal diversity. Read the full story:

[Championing plants and fungi on the international stage](#)

We continued to fly the flag for global action during the year after launching a collaborative campaign to place the conservation of wild plants and fungi at the heart of global biodiversity agreements.

[Saving Scotland's Rainforest](#)

Together with Woodland Trust Scotland, Plantlife relaunched the Alliance for Scotland's Rainforest (ASR) to unite the efforts of each organisation working to save the habitat and increase the project's impact.



Plantlife

Governance

A registered charity, Plantlife is funded by donations from its members and supporters, by grants and charitable trusts and by our pioneering land management advice and projects. Plantlife has an evolving Group structure with one fully owned trading subsidiary (with its own Board of Directors), focusing primarily on paid for advisory services, and potential for further group diversification.

We are governed by a Board of 12 Trustees, who are both charity Trustees and Company Directors, and we have around 70 staff located across the UK. We also support a team of 1,500 volunteers who work in the field, at events and in our offices.

The Board carries ultimate authority and responsibility to hold the charity 'in trust' for current and future beneficiaries. Board members accept all the duties and responsibilities of the roles. The requirements of Trustees are set out in Charity Commission guidance [1]. Additionally, all Trustees are required to sign and abide by Plantlife's 'Code of Conduct for Trustees'.

The Plantlife Board includes a Chair, Vice-Chair and a Treasurer, each of whom has a specific role in addition to their role as Trustee. The Chair leads the Board; the Vice-Chair deputises for the Chair, as necessary; the Treasurer is the Chair of the Finance and General Purposes Committee.

Plantlife aims to ensure that all staff, volunteers, partners, clients, contractors, members and the public are treated fairly, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership and pregnancy and maternity.

[1] [The Essential Trustee https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-essential-trustee-what-you-need-to-know-cc3](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-essential-trustee-what-you-need-to-know-cc3)

The role of the Plantlife Chair

The role of the Chair is to lead the Board of Trustees, ensuring it fulfils its responsibilities for the governance of the charity; to work in partnership with the CEO, helping them to achieve the aims of the charity effectively and efficiently; to ensure a positive and productive relationship between the Board of Trustees and the staff and volunteers, and to represent Plantlife at events and meetings requiring Chair-level representation. The position of Chair is unremunerated. All Trustees are encouraged to claim back their travel and other eligible expenses.

Key relationships

- At Board level, the Chair works with all Board members and ensures regular communication with, in particular, the Vice-Chair and Treasurer.
- At staff level, the Chair liaises regularly with the CEO and with other senior staff as required.
- The Chair engages with their informal and professional networks on Plantlife's behalf, as well as interacting as required with Plantlife members and the public.
- The Chair may also represent Plantlife in dialogue with other charity Chairs.



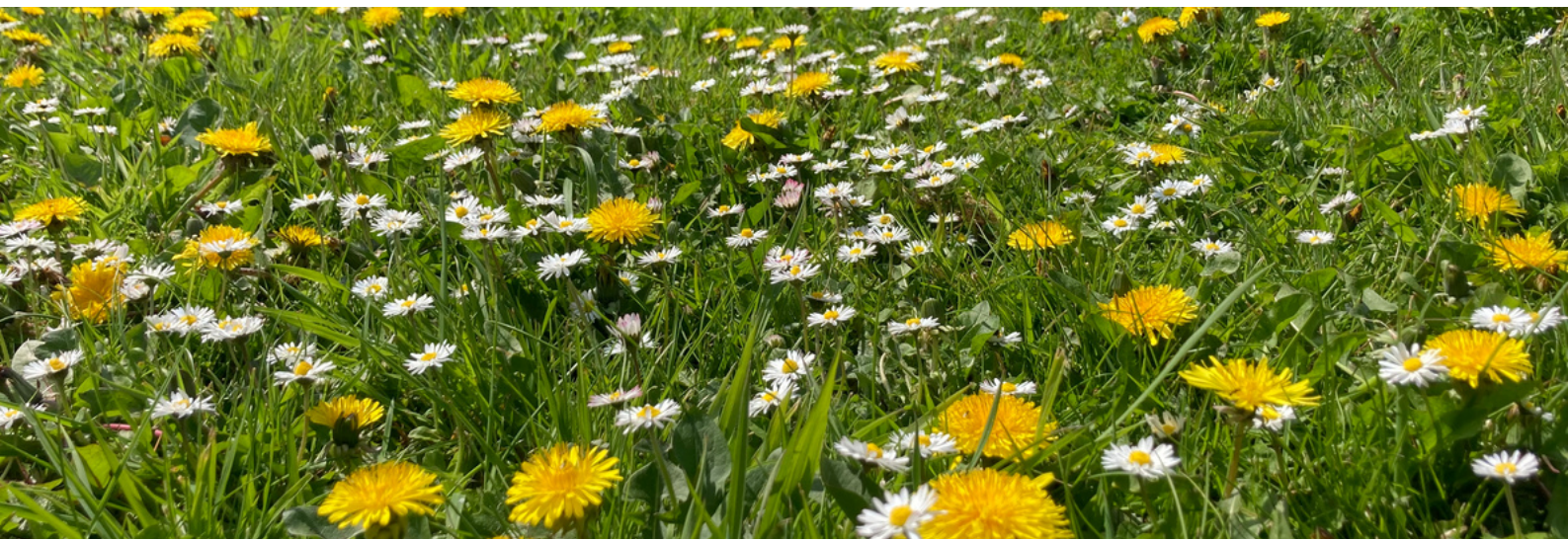
Role description

Skills and experience

The Chair will bring their broad range of skills, experience and contacts to benefit the charity and will be confident in supporting, steering and representing it across a number of contexts.

In addition to the qualities needed by all Trustees, the Chair will also possess the following:

- The ability to focus on strategic direction and achievement.
- The skills to work with others to achieve consensus and outcomes.
- Credibility and commercial acumen.
- Experience of serving on Boards and Board Sub-Committees, ideally of charities or similar organisations, either as a Trustee or Chair.
- The ability to garner the respect and engagement of the Board while embedding good charitable governance.
- A level-headed, calm and effective attitude to support and steer matters in the face of any unforeseen circumstances.
- Good people skills – tact, diplomacy, impartiality and the ability to respect confidentiality.
- The experience, contacts and influence to benefit the work of Plantlife and to ensure Plantlife is able to meet its ambitions.



Role description

Specific responsibilities

- Lead the Board of Trustees in giving firm strategic direction to the charity, setting overall policy, defining goals, setting targets and evaluating performance against agreed targets and ensuring Plantlife meets all legal and regulatory requirements.
- Ensure that new Board members are recruited to fill the vacancies arising, including officers, through an open and inclusive recruitment process.
- Oversee the effective and efficient administration of Plantlife through the CEO – planning the annual cycle of Board meetings, setting agendas and chairing Board meetings. Also ensuring that decisions taken at Board meetings are implemented.
- Liaise regularly with the Treasurer to secure the financial stability of Plantlife and ensure the proper investment of Plantlife funds.
- Liaise regularly with the Vice-Chair to ensure coordination of effort and fulfilment of good governance responsibilities.
- Respond to concerns raised and/or breaches of Code of Conduct by Trustees and to ensure that Trustees, both individually and collectively, behave in accordance with the Code of Conduct.
- Liaise regularly with the CEO – monitoring and managing their performance, undertaking their annual appraisal and supporting as appropriate. This includes co-ordinating the recruitment of a new CEO when necessary.
- Develop and maintain a supportive relationship with staff, recognising the importance of the full range of Plantlife's activities.
- Represent Plantlife at functions and meetings, and act as a spokesperson and advocate as appropriate.
- Garner support from, and delegate to, other Board members to capitalise on collective and individual skills and capacity to contribute.



Time consideration

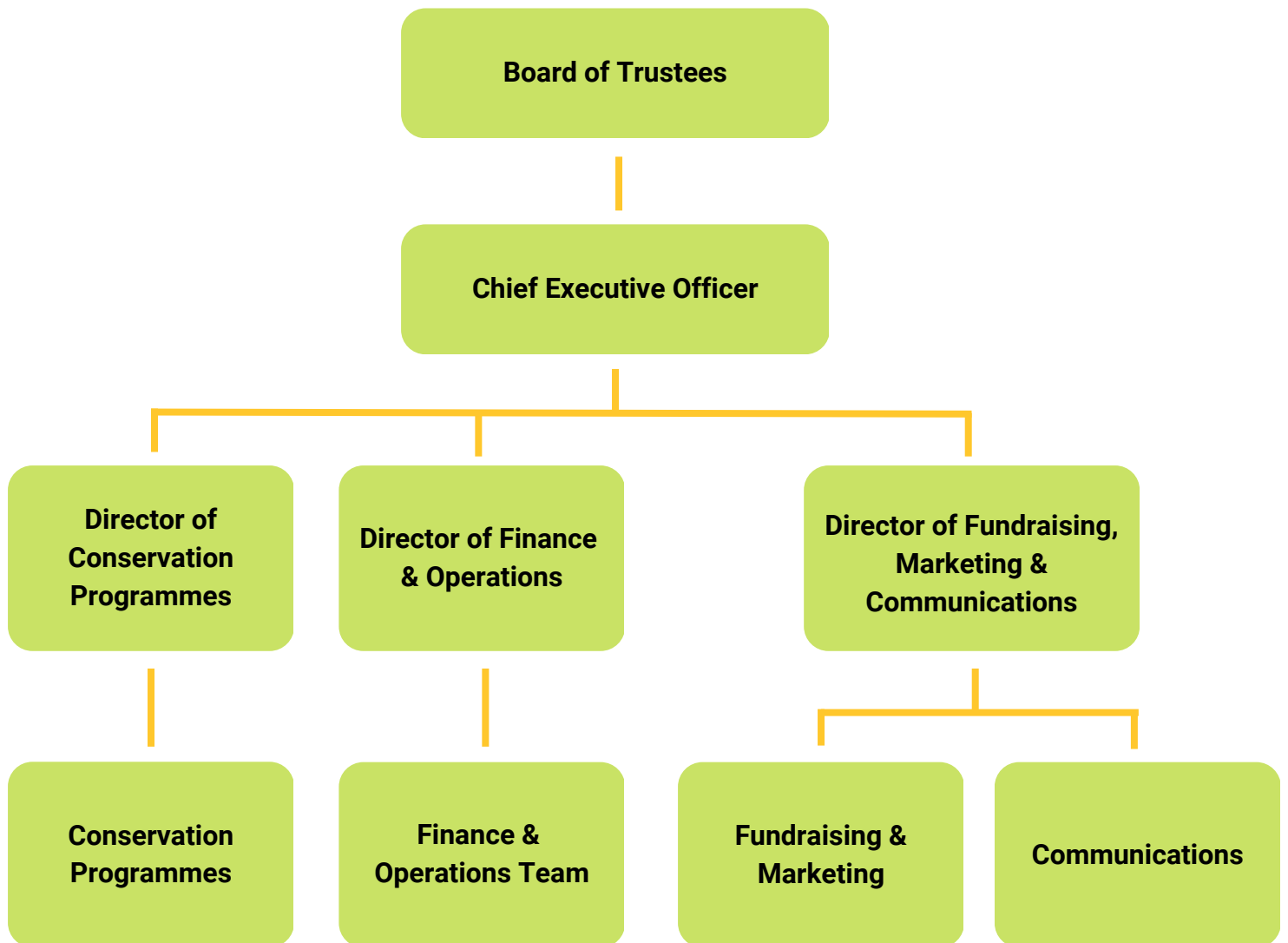
The expected time commitment is 15 to 20 days annually. The Chair will need to liaise as appropriate with the CEO in order to prepare for and attend Board meetings (a mix of virtual and physical), currently held four times a year, as well as occasional events such as the Members' Annual Meeting, Trustee training or fundraising events.

It is important for the Chair to form a mutually trusting and respectful, constructive relationship with the CEO and to be able to meet regularly and communicate effectively outside the Board meetings.

The Chair will represent Plantlife at informal as well as formal networking occasions.



Who's Who at Plantlife



How to Express Interest

Plantlife is working exclusively with Charisma Charity Recruitment.

Expressions of interest should be submitted through the [Charisma website](#) and include:

- A comprehensive CV
- A supporting statement, explaining how you believe you match the requirements of the role and describing any potential conflicts of interest.

For an informal and confidential discussion about the role, please contact: Katherine Anderson-Scott, Principal Consultant of Charisma Charity Recruitment on 01962 813300 or email info@charismarecruitment.co.uk.

We welcome and encourage expressions of interest from people of all backgrounds. We do not discriminate on the basis of disability, race, colour, ethnicity, gender, religion, sexual orientation, age, veteran status or other category protected by law.

- **Closing date: 25th May 2023**

Expressions of interest are being reviewed throughout the process. First round interviews undertaken by Charisma will need to be completed by close of play on 30th May in preparation for shortlisting on 1st June.

- **Interviews with Plantlife are expected to take place: 19th / 20th / 21st June**





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