Essex & Suffolk Rivers Trust

Applicant Pack

Trustee Appointments 2026-27

November 2026



www.essexsuffolkriverstrust.org/recruitment

Essex and Suffolk Rivers Trust. Registered Charity Number 1157392. Company Limited by Guarantee Number 08834787.
Registered in England. Registered Address: Red Gables, Ipswich Road, Stowmarket, IP14 1BE

About Essex and Suffolk Rivers Trust

The Organisation

The Essex and Suffolk Rivers Trust (ESRT) is an independent environmental charity set up in 2013 dedicated to improving and protecting rivers in Essex and Suffolk, making them a better place for people and wildlife.

We work with farmers, residents and organisations to provide advice and resources for their communities. We bring together the people, knowledge, data and intelligence to take action to help our rivers thrive again.

We are a proud member of the Rivers Trust movement, the umbrella organisation which works across the UK and Ireland leading a movement for change in our rivers.

Our Vision

In Essex and Suffolk, only 10% of river stretches in the rivers and estuaries we work in are reported to be at good ecological status. This is the result of historic changes to the rivers, pollution, and climate change. Our region is one of the driest and hottest parts of the country with rainfall by 2040 predicted by the Met Office to be significantly below the national average. We are increasingly affected by flooding from extreme rainfall events. Many of our key species are threatened through habitat loss and climate change.

On the positive side, we have some of the most iconic rivers and internationally important estuaries in the UK. Most importantly people who live and work near them care about their future.

Our Vision is that the rivers and estuaries of Essex and Suffolk are rich in wildlife, loved and cared for by local people, and protected for future generations.

Our Strategy

Our strategy to 2030 is to work with partners and communities in four areas to:

- Restore natural processes and habitats.
- Protect our land and water.
- Inspire people to get involved.
- Build resilience for future generations.

Our projects and work areas are developed in service of our strategy which will deliver for people and wildlife across the waterways we look after. The Trust has grown very rapidly since 2023. We now have nine employees and last year our gross income was some £680,000.

About the Trustee Role

The Trust is registered as both a charity (No. 1157392) and a company (No. 08834787). Our Board members are both Trustees of the Trust and Directors of the Company. Four Board members act as the Trust's officers: Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Treasurer and Secretary.

In line with widely accepted good practice, we aim to maintain a Board of 12 Trustees. Following various retirements over the last couple of years, we are now looking to appoint five new Trustees.

Our Trustees work collectively with our Trust Director to guide the strategic direction of Essex and Suffolk Rivers Trust and support the delivery of our vision. As the organisation continues to develop, we are looking for people who are keen to contribute their skills, knowledge and experience to help shape our future.

This is an opportunity to help guide a growing environmental charity at a time when rivers face significant challenges but also present important opportunities for positive change. Our work takes place within a changing landscape of environmental policy, land management and funding, making effective governance, strategic thinking and partnership working increasingly important.

As a Trustee, you will contribute to the strategic development, good governance and financial sustainability of the Trust. Working alongside fellow Trustees and the Director, you will help ensure that the organisation remains effective, resilient and focused on delivering its charitable purposes.

We welcome applicants with a range of backgrounds and experiences who share our commitment to healthy rivers and thriving communities. You do not need to be an environmental specialist to make a valuable contribution to the Board.

Duties & Responsibilities

There is no specific time commitment required from Trustees. There are usually four Board meetings each year (one incorporating a site visit), and an annual strategy day. Board members may also join meetings of the Trust's two catchment partnerships and support other Trust events. The minimum commitment is likely to be one day per month on average.

ESRT Trustees are collectively responsible for the strategic governance, direction, and oversight of the Trust, both as a charity and a company. Trustees must ensure that the ESRT fulfils its charitable purposes, uses its resources wisely, remains financially resilient, and complies with all legal and regulatory obligations. Trustees are volunteers and must act solely in the best interests of the Charity, in accordance with UK charity law and Charity Commission guidance.

In particular, ESRT Trustees are expected to:

1. Ensure that the ESRT carries out its purposes for public benefit

- Ensure that ESRT carries out the purposes set out in its Articles, avoiding 'mission creep'.
- Plan what ESRT will do, and be clear about what the Trust needs to achieve.
- Be able to explain how all of ESRT's activities are intended to further or support its purposes.
- Understand how ESRT's work makes a difference and benefits the public.

2. Comply with the ESRT's governing document and the law

- Ensure ESRT complies with its Articles of Association.
- Ensure that ESRT complies with charity law, company law, and all other relevant legislation (Employment, Health & Safety, Safeguarding, Data Protection, etc).
- Ensure that statutory returns, annual accounts, and reports are accurately prepared and submitted on time to the Charity Commission and Companies House.

3. Act in the ESRT's best interests

- Make balanced, informed decisions in the sole interest of the Trust and the public, independent of personal, professional, or other interests.
- Identify, declare, and manage all actual or potential conflicts of interest and loyalty in accordance with the Articles of Association.
- Receive benefits from ESRT only if properly authorised and clearly in the Trust's interests.

4. Manage the ESRT's resources responsibly

- Act responsibly, reasonably and honestly (the duty of prudence).
- Ensure that ESRT's assets are used only to support or carry out its purposes.
- Ensure financial sustainability by reviewing budgets, overseeing management accounts, maintaining appropriate reserves, and not over-committing the Trust.
- Exercise effective risk management by maintaining a robust Risk Register and ensuring appropriate internal financial controls and audit procedures.
- Take special care when investing or borrowing.
- Comply with any restrictions on spending funds or selling land.

5. Act with reasonable care and skill

- Dedicate sufficient time, preparation, and effort to Board meetings.
- Utilise personal skills, expertise, professional knowledge, and life experience to assist the Board in reaching sound, well-considered decisions.

- Seek independent professional or legal advice when appropriate.
- Contribute to the formulation, approval, and review of the Trust's vision, mission, strategy, and annual business plans.
- Monitor operational and financial performance against agreed KPIs and targets.
- Participate in annual reviews of the Board, its committees, and key policies.

6. Ensure the ESRT is accountable

- Comply with statutory accounting and reporting requirements.
- Provide line management, clear delegation, support, and constructive challenge to the Director.
- Ensure clear, open communication and operational transparency with stakeholders, beneficiaries, funders, regulators, and the general public.
- Ensure effective oversight of staff, volunteers, and operational activities through structured reporting frameworks.

7. Safeguarding and EDI (Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion)

- Ensure that robust safeguarding policies, reporting pathways, and protective cultures are embedded across all operations to protect staff, and volunteers.
- Champion equality, diversity, and inclusion across the Trust's leadership, services, culture, and recruitment.

8. Advocacy and Board Culture

- Act as an active ambassador and advocate for ESRT, promoting its mission and maintaining strong relationships with external partners and stakeholders.
- Foster a positive, collaborative, and constructive Board environment that encourages diversity of thought, respectful debate, and collective decision-making.

Person Specification

When completing your application, please keep the following requirements in mind. We are particularly interested to hear from people who:

- Have experience of leading and managing growth within an organisation.
- Can highlight how we could support finance and business in delivering biodiversity and carbon offsets.
- Have experience in developing successful corporate funding relationships.
- Have a background in any of the following areas: financial management, community engagement, marketing, and communications, fundraising and strategic planning.
- Can broaden and deepen the diversity of thought and experience represented in our organisation. We aim to represent and reflect diverse communities.
- Have experience and understanding of land-use and farming and the opportunities available for landowners and environmental organisations to work together to bring positive impacts for all.

It would also be ideal if you had any of the following:

- A desire to tackle nature and climate emergencies, in particular in the water environment.
- A track record of successfully working within or managing a senior team.
- Experience in writing funding bids and a good understanding of what makes them successful.
- An ability to think strategically and discern how to prioritise opportunities that will ensure growth and sustainability.

Following the retirement of our current Charity and Company Secretary, we would particularly welcome applications from anyone with relevant experience who would be willing to take on these roles.

Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion

Essex and Suffolk Rivers Trust is committed to equality, diversity and inclusion. We want our Board of Trustees to better reflect the diversity of the people and communities who use, need and enjoy our rivers.

We welcome applications from people of all backgrounds and experiences, recognising the value that different perspectives, skills and lived experiences bring to effective governance and decision-making. We are keen to hear from people who can broaden the range of knowledge and experience represented on our Board.

All applications will be assessed fairly and on merit. We welcome conversations about any adjustments or support that may help candidates participate fully in the recruitment process and fulfil the role of Trustee.

How To Apply

We invite you to submit a personal statement focussing on why you would like to become a Trustee, your relevant knowledge, experience, and skills and what you would like to offer to the Trust (two pages maximum).

Please send your personal statement along with your CV to recruitment@essexsuffolkriverstrust.org.

The closing date for this role is **11pm on Sunday 29th November.**

No agencies please. We would be happy to discuss the role further. Please contact recruitment@essexsuffolkriverstrust.org with any queries or to arrange a phone conversation with the Director.

Initial telephone interviews will be held in December. Applicants who proceed to the next stage will need to complete a skills audit form and attend an online interview. Successful candidates will need to:

- provide references
- confirm that they are eligible to act as a Trustee and Director
- supply the registration details required by Companies House and the Charity Commission.

Subject to successful completion of all stages, the new appointments will take effect from the next Board meeting on **Tuesday 19th January 2027.**