



CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

December 2025

ABOUT WILDERNESS FOUNDATION

Wilderness Foundation has been working for nearly 50 years on education and therapy programmes to help children, teens and adults reconnect to wilderness, society and themselves through outdoor facilitation adventures, nature based therapy and mentoring. Their programmes highlight the positive impact of wild nature on personal and social wellbeing. Developing stewardship for nature and wild places is imbued through the teaching of Leave No Trace Ethics alongside volunteering opportunities.

Wilderness Foundation's mission is to preserve wild places and change lives through nature immersive programmes that educate, inspire and reconnect people facing a number of challenges in their lives. They create opportunities for those wishing to learn more about their relationship with the natural world and what they can do to protect it. The content of their Wilderness programmes aims to equip and enable people to acquire skills from within themselves to navigate their futures safely and successfully. Wilderness Foundation are working to keep people healthy and our planet wild!

Wilderness Foundation's work is focused on three key areas:

- **Nature Therapy:** Supporting vulnerable children, teens and adults in personal growth, improved mental wellbeing and resilience. Following science and years of experience they work with wild nature as a therapeutic tool to gain perspective and understanding, and for healing
- **Education:** Environmental and curriculum based workshops for Primary, Secondary and SEN schools as well as our Leadership Academy involving team building and wilderness expeditions. Climate and sustainability education is addressed through the Wild School programme.
- **Environment:** Climate change mitigation around nature, rewilding and sustainability. Inspiring programmes including youth action projects, making positive changes for the environment and nature. The Foundation now has its own 92 acre semi natural ancient woodland which it is managing into the future, as well as seeking out opportunities to create wild corridors around it to neighbouring woodlands.





LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

If you are reading this, you will know that two of the most intractable problems now facing the world are the negative impact of humanity's development on the planet and the alarming growth of mental health problems, particularly in the wake of the pandemic.

I count myself extremely fortunate to have been invited by the WFUK Board to take the Chair at the start of 2021 though my understanding of its areas of operation was limited in the extreme. Since then, WFUK has grown steadily and now provides an exceptional platform for further growth both within its home market of Essex and now further afield.

Since foundation in 1976, WFUK has had the benefit of an exceptionally capable, committed and dedicated CEO who is now looking to reduce her workload by handing the CEO role to younger legs. With the support of the Board, she intends to remain as a Trustee with an involvement in the Social Therapy activities, reflecting her advanced education and passion.

There are a number of organisations engaged in social therapy with links to nature and even more

engaged with conservation in one form or another. But there are not any, to my knowledge, that are engaged in the three core activities of environment, education and social therapy that are the bedrock of WFUK's activities or that integrates the three is such a successful and inspiring way. This accounts for the exceptionally high reputation of, as yet, a relatively small (£1m) charity.

WFUK provides an exceptional opportunity for an energetic individual to take this proven model and develop it further both within its homebase of Essex and further afield. The quality of the platform is strong in terms of financing, systems, accounting and governance. But leading the multiple activities and raising the finance on which WFUK is dependent is a significant challenge that is not for the feint hearted.

I much look forward to meeting with aspiring and motivated candidates who are inspired by the WFUK offering and keen to address the challenges of running a complex organisation.

Vincent Thompson
Chair

THE ROLE

ROLE

Chief Executive Officer

LOCATION

South East with weekly travel to Essex office (3 days a week min)

Candidates need to be able to attend evening and weekend meetings and events in the Essex locale

SALARY

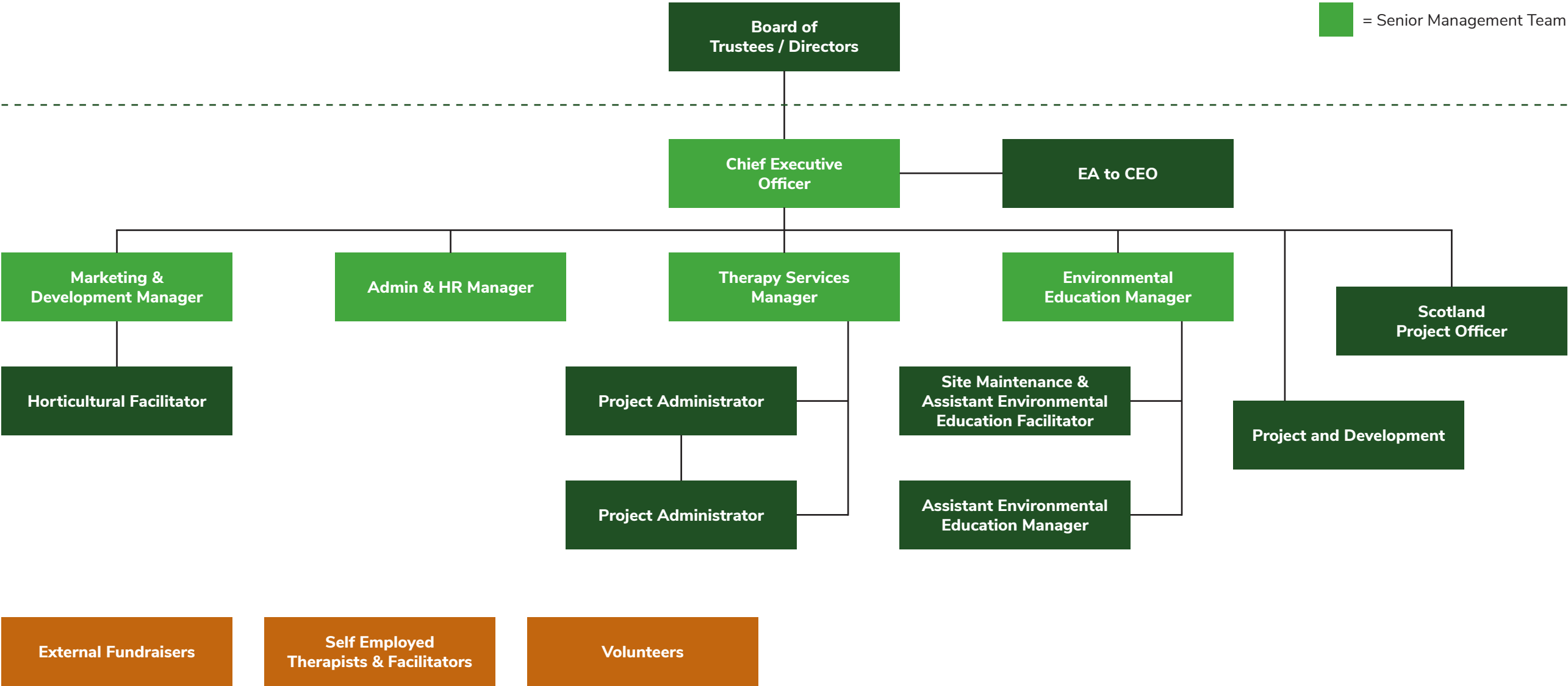
£60,000-70,000

BENEFITS

Staff Pension scheme, 28 days annual leave (Including public holidays) plus 3 days to cover the Christmas period.



OUR STRUCTURE



JOB SUMMARY

After over 20 successful years, the founder CEO Jo Roberts is transitioning out and working with the board of the Wilderness Foundation to search for the organisation's next CEO. They will need to be able to take the organisation to the next level and help it grow and deliver for the future of the organisation.

The CEO at Wilderness Foundation is accountable for leading the vision of the organisation and providing strategic leadership to ensure fulfilment of the mission and its growth. This role is accountable for overall organisational performance, specifically the achievement of the objectives related to strategy and innovation, impact, financial viability, relationships with diverse stakeholders, and organisational effectiveness. Specifically the role will need to be a focal point for resource mobilisation, both in terms of building strategy and also in hands-on income generation.

The selected CEO will have the benefit of support from a strong Senior Management Team and will report to the Board of Trustees on delivery of an agreed strategy. Wilderness Foundation benefits from a strong Board of Trustees with relevant expertise and considerable experience. Governance is exercised through five Committees each reporting to the Board and chaired by a different Trustee with relevant experience.





RESPONSIBILITIES

STRATEGIC ORGANISATIONAL GROWTH

Responsible for the growth of the organization through innovation, development and creation of new external opportunities and partnerships, new donors and fundraising prospects, and as the primary organisational spokesperson.

STRATEGIC PLANNING

Oversees and guides the design and development of the organisation's vision and long-term strategic plan. Ensures operational plans and service offerings align with the strategy and are implemented accordingly.

ORGANISATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leads, develops and manages the organisation in accordance with its mission, values, strategic objectives, policies and systems to enable a fully integrated organisation.

GOVERNANCE

Acts as link between the Board of Directors, its committees, and the organisation. Executes Board directives as required across the organisation. Creates the organization's long term strategic plan in consultation with and for approval by the Board of Directors.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Ensures financial viability of the organisation through oversight of the consolidated budgets. Reports the financial status of the organization to the Finance Committee on a quarterly basis.

CANDIDATE PROFILE

Wilderness Foundation are seeking a leader with an innovative spirit and a passion for the work of the organisation and have a passion for protection of wilderness and wild spaces, good environmental understanding, as well as being aware of the value of nature therapy and the deeper connection between nature and humans. While Individuals don't need to be an expert in social therapy (or Indeed education or the environment), they do need to have a certain understanding and an empathy for all three aspects of the work and protect the connectivity between them all together. They need to have experience in leading similarly sized organisations (or demonstrate that they have the potential to do so) and navigating similar governance structures. They will Ideally be experienced in engaging with, and reporting to, boards and have excellent people skills for managing staff and engaging with stakeholders. Fundraising experience and the ability to network with a fundraising cap on is essential.

The individual needs to be adept at bringing people together and engaging in an empowered organisation that already has a global footprint, and they will need to be someone with international interest, able to bring in global perspectives and solutions to the foundations current work. They will be strong on resource mobilisation with strong networks amongst organisations and funding markets, with the ability to move the organisation toward a more diversified funding stream.

They will be able to manage the balance between maintaining the organisations innovative spirit, while ensuring enabling processes and operations for an organisation of this size.

Critically they will understand that success for an organisation of the size of Wilderness Foundation is about evolution of the work, rather than revolution. They will be an excellent communicator, a great brand ambassador and will need the commercial acumen to talk business with key stakeholders, internally and externally. Wilderness Foundation is not a large organisation and as such the Incoming CEO will be expected to manage being able to shift between strategic and operational as required, without fear of 'rolling their sleeves up'. They will however have the discipline to not get sucked into the weeds and disable themselves from their strategic duties. Wilderness Foundation is human relationship centric, thus the new CEO needs to be emotionally intelligent and keen to engage with people, with experience of multi-disciplinary teams. They will understand that they will need to be able to engage with different views but bring these together as a single organisation.

Wilderness Foundation are interested in considering individuals new to the CEO role as long as they can convince that they can step up into the role and develop quickly.

A key opportunity is to take a proven format to a wider geographic coverage outside of Essex, with a sustainable growth agenda, whilst safeguarding the organisation's quality of delivery and recognizing the significant increase in risks that over reach can bring if not well managed.





HOW TO APPLY

All correspondence, at this stage, should be via Oxford HR. To apply for this post, click on the “Apply” button on the job advert page, complete our online application form, and submit your CV and cover letter as two different documents, which should be prepared before applying as they will be considered in the application process.

The cover letter should be no more than two pages long and explain why you are interested in this post and how your skills and experience make you a good fit.

The document should be saved in PDF in the following format: Your First Name-Your Last Name-Document Name-Date (mmyy) e.g., Pat-Jones-CV-1225-WildernessFoundation or Pat-Jones-CoverLetter-1225-WildernessFoundation.

Please note that all our clients recruiting in the UK are legally obliged to confirm that the appointee is eligible to work in the UK. As of 1 January 2021, government’s new regulations will apply. For further information visit the Home Office website.

TIMELINE

- Closing Date: 1st February at 0000
- First stage interviews: TBC
- Final interviews: TBC

SELECTION PROCESS

All candidates will receive an update regarding their application after the closing date. We advise candidates to add the role email to their safe senders list and regularly check their spam folder.

EQUALITY STATEMENT

Equality and diversity are at the core of Wilderness Foundation’s values. Staff are expected to work collectively and individually to promote a constructive and sensitive approach to others from a variety of backgrounds, where the work of others is valued and respected.

QUERIES

If you have any queries on any aspect of the appointment process, need additional information, or would like to have an informal discussion, please email at jsawyer@oxfordhr.com in the first instance.

ABOUT OXFORD HR

Oxford HR is a B Corp certified leadership consultancy. Having worked within a diverse range of institutions, from not-for-profits and charities to governments and corporate environments, we've seen the powerful impact that the perfect team can have.

Finding innovative leaders can be a challenge; and yet their transition into leadership is vital to an organisation's mission and success. We work across the globe to search for and support remarkable leaders and teams, improve their board effectiveness and support on a range of leadership functions.

Learn more at: oxfordhr.com





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