

TRUSTEE CANDIDATE INFORMATION PACK

November 2022



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Dear candidate,

The trustees are delighted that you are interested in applying to join the Board to help us to take forward our exciting and ambitious vision for the Heart of England Forest.

We are England's largest new native broadleaf forest, and you will be joining us as we embark upon an ambitious 10 year growth plan. There has never been a more important time to take action against climate change and the biodiversity crisis, and grow our next generations of future Forest Guardians who will care for the legacy we are creating for decades to come.

We are looking to expand our Board with additional people who share our vision, and are passionate about creating a 30,000 acre forest in the heart of England. Ideal trustees will have the time to commit; can think strategically and are committed to the Nolan Principles of Public Life.

As a modern Board we are keen to increase our diversity to reflect the people which the Heart of England Forest serves – from the cosmopolitan cities of Birmingham and Coventry to the rural communities of Warwickshire and Worcestershire. We have identified as a Board that we would be better served if we had a wider range of diversity around our Board table, and we encourage applications from people who have a knowledge of the region. Previous trustee experience is not essential, as full training will be given, and we would particularly like to hear from people with experience, skills, and expertise in:

- Living / working in under-represented communities within our region
- Living / working with neurodiversity

We are a small Board of dedicated and widely experienced Trustees, a staff team of 74 supported by an army of volunteers comprising passionate and enthusiastic ambassadors for the Forest, and a range of committed and supportive partners spanning the public, private and voluntary sectors.

If you are passionate about creating, restoring and protecting an incredible woodland legacy; a beautiful forest which positively contributes to the landscape and environment; and an important source of both education and inspiration for young and old alike, we would love you to join us.

*The Board of Trustees,
Heart of England Forest*



Jon Snow (Chair)



Anthony Burton



Nicky Corbishley



Asa Gurden



Alison Hunter (Vice Chair)



Doreen Massey



Steve Price





INTRODUCTION TO THE HEART OF ENGLAND FOREST

This candidate pack will help to give you an insight into the charity. You will see it is a vibrant blend of operations which includes growing and managing a huge new forest for the benefit of people, wildlife and the environment. Not only is the Forest growing, but the scale and reach of our operations is expanding, too.

Our large forestry team includes an internship programme – a year long, paid placement which allows young people, or people changing career, to gain training and experience in all aspects of social forestry. We are also one of the first organisations to deliver the forestry apprenticeship, again as an important mechanism to address the skills gap and improve diversity within the sector. Our Supported Internship Programme launched in 2021. With the aim of supporting young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) to develop employability skills, 100% of our first cohort who applied for jobs with the charity were successful in gaining permanent employment, and are now employed across the charity in our forestry, tree nursery and learning and skills teams. We have developed a specialism in neurodiversity, and see this reflected across our team.

Our learning and skills team delivers all aspects of the curriculum outdoors in the Forest as part of our formal Forest Learning Programmes, working with young people from tots to teens and beyond. We run informal learning programmes such as Mini Foresters, our family learning club, and Young Foresters, inspiring young people to consider future volunteering with the Forest. Throughout this work we are creating our future Forest Guardians, who will care for the Forest long after we are gone.

Our habitat connectivity and corridors allow wildlife to flourish, and we have just completed two new wetland development projects which have already improved biodiversity within the Forest.

Volunteers support all of the work we undertake, and we are very proud to have recently been awarded the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service, recognising the incredible support our volunteers give to the charity.

We have a diversified income stream, which includes profits from our trading subsidiaries, and we have created two marinas, a static caravan park, two touring camping and caravan sites and new holiday cottages which have been designed with sustainability in mind – all popular ways to spend more time in the Forest.

Our organic farm not only brings in income but we also use traditional breeds of livestock for conservation grazing, to help us manage the Forest. And our woodland burial site nestled in a tranquil spot beneath our magnificent ancient woodland adds another string to our bow.

If you are inspired by our vision and our energy and would like to join us in creating an incredible breath of fresh air for the nation, we would love to hear from you.

If you would like an informal discussion about the role, please do not hesitate to ask, and I would be happy to arrange a convenient time for you to talk to myself or one of our trustees. You can also find out more about the charity on our website at <https://heartofenglandforest.org> and in our most recent annual report, which can be found at <https://heartofenglandforest.org/annual-report>

BETH

*Beth Brook
Chief Executive,
Heart of England Forest*





WHAT IS A TRUSTEE?

There are over 170,000 charities registered in England and Wales, which are supported by over 900,000 trustees¹.

Charity trustees are volunteers who have oversight of all of the charity's decisions, and set the direction of the charity, ensuring that it delivers its charitable purpose and public benefit. Trustees work together as a team to provide strategy, scrutiny and support².

WHO CAN BECOME A TRUSTEE?

The majority of people over the age of 18 can become a trustee. You don't need any formal qualifications or levels of experience in order to join a board. We know, for example, that younger people, women, and people from diverse ethnic backgrounds can be under represented on charity boards³ and so we are particularly keen to welcome candidates from these backgrounds to diversify our board and diversify our thinking.

WHY SHOULD I BECOME A TRUSTEE?

There are many benefits to becoming a trustee, including:

- **Boosting your career** – Gaining skills and experience to build your CV
- **Giving back to your community or contribute to a cause you are passionate about** – You can donate your time, skills and energy to something which you find important ... like climate change, or tackling the biodiversity crisis
- **Improving your health and happiness** Working with others to make a real difference.

1 <https://register-of-charities.charitycommission.gov.uk/sector-data/sector-overview>

2 <https://www.gettingonboard.org/free-resources-for-aspiring-trustees>

3 Helen Stephenson, Charity Commission CEO
<https://trusteesweek.org>

WHAT IT'S LIKE TO BE A TRUSTEE WITH THE HEART OF ENGLAND FOREST

I was lucky enough to be invited to become a trustee of the Heart of England Forest by its founder Felix Dennis, who I had worked for as his Director of HR in his publishing company for many years. I didn't really know what was involved in the role - all I knew was that the charity was aiming to create something really quite incredible and unique so I instinctively said yes!

At the time I knew Felix was unwell and would possibly not be alive for much longer so that gave me the added emphasis to learn as much as I could about being a trustee and to spend time with my boots on the ground in the Forest. Our head forester Stephen was particularly friendly and welcoming to me in educating me about the importance of broadleaf trees and Felix's forest vision.

As I settled into the role I knew that the Board of trustees definitely needed someone with my skill set as the charity itself had only just started to develop and have its own employees.

Since then we have formed a fantastic group of trustees, who are genuinely passionate and inspired by their responsibilities to the charity. I have learned so much from my fellow Board members who are welcoming, humble and good fun to be with. We only meet formally four times a year but there is also the chance to be a committee member which is a great opportunity to get to know more about the charity and its work. For example, I chair the Nominations and Governance Committee, as it aligns well with my professional skillset but I'm also a member of the Land Acquisition Committee as I'm super interested in how we are growing our land bank and planting our Forest ...plus it gives me a good excuse to spend time in the Forest whenever I can.



That said we are very flexible and respectful of everyone's time and busy lives. I don't live locally to the Forest - I live in Surrey, work full time and am a single mum of two children so it's often difficult to balance everything. The great thing about my trustee role is that we can meet virtually if needed as we all understand everyone's priorities.

It's an honour to be a trustee of this wonderful charity; it is not only an important cause for me personally but it also provides me with a real sense of purpose and grounding when all around us is so busy and frantic.



Alison Hunter
Trustee and Vice Chair





OUR VISION AND PURPOSE

Planting tomorrow's great native woodland

The charity's vision is to create 30,000 acres of contiguous forest in the heart of England to benefit the environment, wildlife and people for hundreds of years to come. The mosaic of habitats we are creating will help mitigate climate change, enable wildlife to thrive, and provide a haven for people to visit which benefits their health, happiness and wellbeing.

The Forest currently consists of over
7,000 acres of habitat mosaic including:



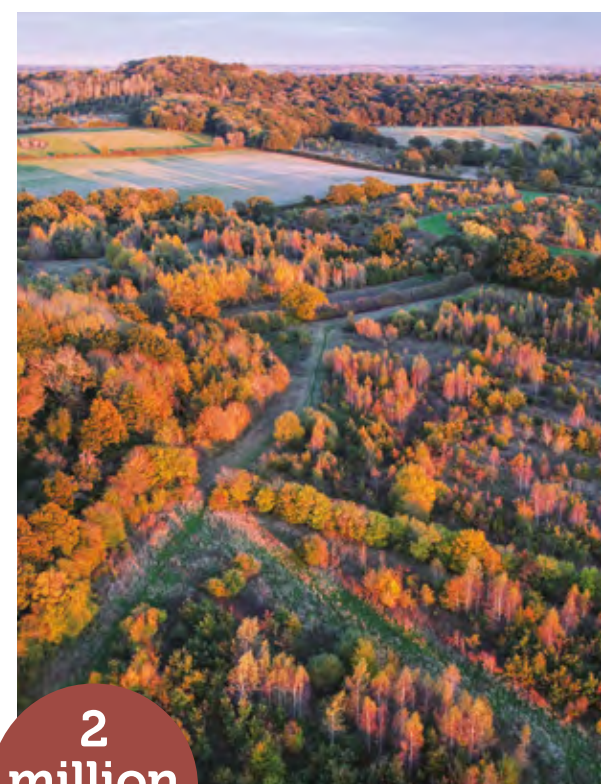
**4,500
acres**

of new planting



**600
acres**

of mature woodland



**2
million
trees**

planted so far



And we have a target of around
300 acres
of new planting every year



OUR STRATEGY

As an ambitious charity, we recognise that trees are just the start. Woodland planting creates far greater opportunities than merely growing England's largest new native forest.

Our Strategic Plan provides an ambitious motivational framework to achieve our aims and has five strategic priorities:



1. **Growing the Forest** involves just that – meeting our ambitious targets to create and maintain a mosaic of forest habitats for both people and wildlife to enjoy.

2. **Optimising Biodiversity** sees us doing more for wildlife. As well as plants and animals which make their home in woodland, our mosaic of habitats encourage animals like otters and water voles in our wetland areas, and colourful spring orchids in our meadows.

3. **Attracting People** is all about finding new ways to engage with people to encourage them to use and appreciate the Forest. We are constantly expanding the activities on offer, in order to grow our active supporter base, encourage local communities to access the Forest and welcome a diverse range of groups.

4. **Learning and Skills** includes formal and informal education, encouraging young and old to be inspired by the Forest. Our volunteering programme provides a range of ways for people to practically support our work and gain skills, get fit and meet new friends.

5. **Strong Governance** is essential as we transition from a dream of a visionary individual into a national charity. It is vital that the charity has robust governance in place to ensure that it continues to operate effectively, efficiently and ethically.



These priorities form the pillars of the Heart of England Forest’s strategy and are underpinned by four cross-cutting themes, to enable us to bring in income and support to continue to grow and maintain the Forest for everyone to enjoy:

- A Communications
- B Fundraising
- C Volunteering
- D Farming and agroforestry

Across the plan we will work towards key social, economic and environmental objectives as part of sustainable development. In addition to our strategic priorities, in 2022 we have introduced two additional priorities – Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) and Climate Change, which are interwoven like golden threads throughout all of our work. Our aspiration is to make the Heart of England Forest somewhere for all to enjoy, and with over 7,000 acres already, there is plenty of space for everyone to find their special place.



TRUSTEE ROLE DESCRIPTION

What does being a trustee with the Heart of England Forest look like?

LOCATION

Face to face Board meetings are held four times a year in the Heart of England Forest. These are currently held on weekdays, but with potential to change to accommodate working patterns, etc. - 2 hours plus lunch networking, plus afternoon site visit. Other meetings are virtual, and video conferencing is available.

Trustees may sometimes be called upon to attend the Heart of England Forest events, or represent the charity at national events, dependent upon availability and skillset.

TIME COMMITMENT

Four Board meetings per year in the Heart of England Forest. Some committee work between meetings, much of which can be done virtually.

EACH TRUSTEE IS EXPECTED TO:

- Use his/her specific skills, knowledge, experience, and perspectives to help the Board reach sound decisions;
- Contribute actively to the Board's role in giving strategic direction to the Heart of England Forest, setting overall policy, defining goals, setting targets and evaluating performance against agreed objectives and targets;
- Scrutinise Board papers;
- Take an active part in discussions;
- Focus on and analyse relevant issues;
- Exercise good, independent judgement;
- Demonstrate commitment to the Heart of England Forest;
- Act in the best interest of the Heart of England Forest;
- Lead by example and actively support the raising of funds for the charity;
- Comply with the policies of the Heart of England Forest, including the policy on conflicts of interest and the Trustee Code of Conduct;
- Devote the necessary time and effort to fulfil his/her role as trustee.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

Experience:

- Successful experience of operating with a committee or within another decision making structure within your professional or personal life. This may include experience in a voluntary capacity.
- Demonstrable experience of building and sustaining relationships with key stakeholders and colleagues to achieve organisational objectives
- A proven track record of sound judgement and effective decision making
- A history of impartiality, fairness and the ability to respect confidences
- A proven commitment to the Nolan seven principles of public life: selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership
- A track record of commitment to promoting equality and diversity

Knowledge, skills and understanding:

- Commitment to the organisation and a willingness to devote the necessary time and effort
- A willingness to bring a diverse range of perspectives to the table.
- Willingness to be available to staff for advice and enquiries on an ad hoc basis
- Good, independent judgement and strategic vision
- An understanding and acceptance of the legal duties, responsibilities and liabilities of trusteeship
- An ability to work effectively as a member of a team
- An understanding of the respective roles of the Chair, Trustees and Chief Executive

A full role description will be provided during your induction



HOW TO APPLY

If you are interested in applying for this role, please send:

- A comprehensive CV, including your recent achievements, and the details of two referees
- A supporting statement, addressing your motivations for applying. This should be no longer than one side of A4.

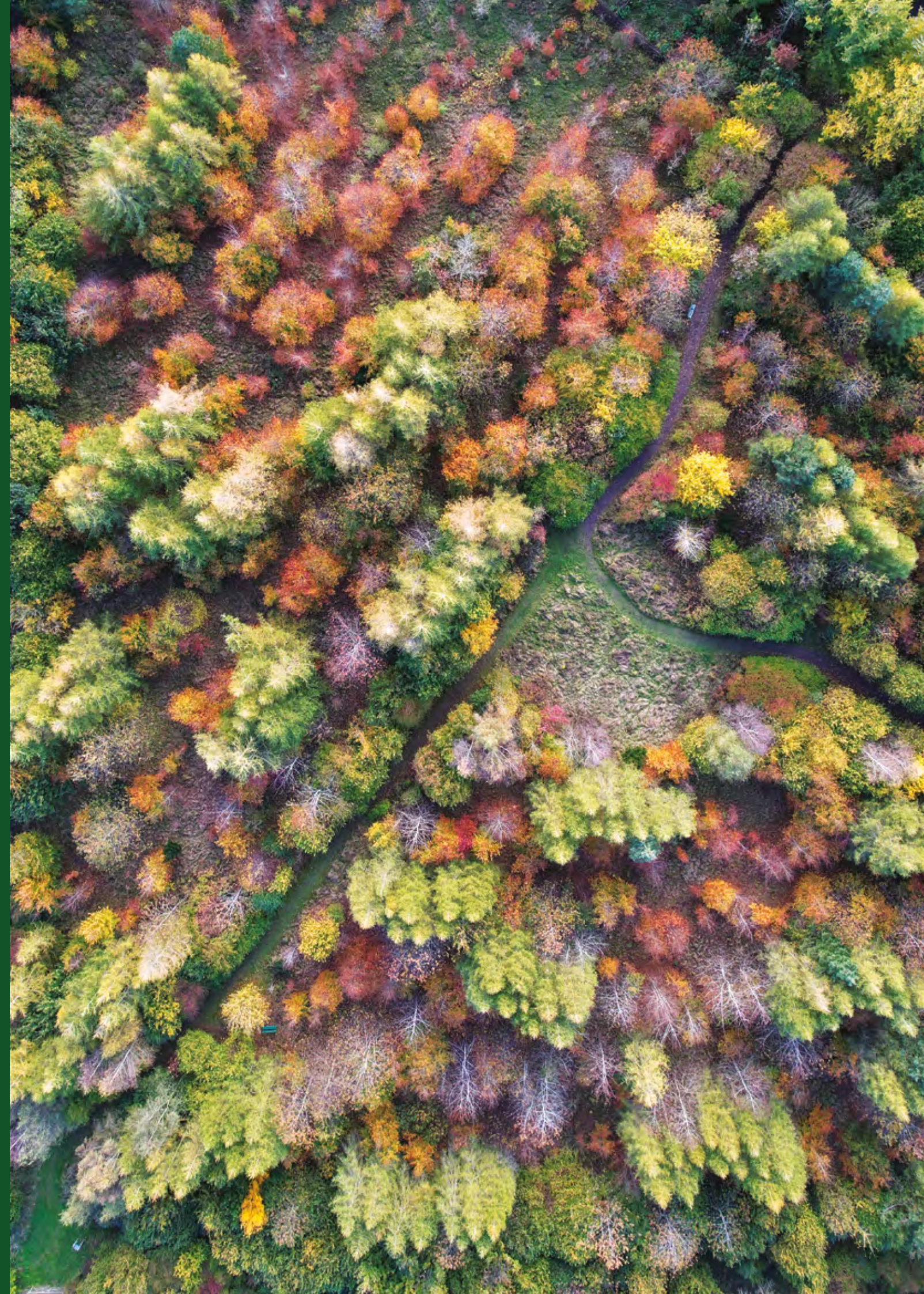
All applications should be sent to **applications@trustees-unlimited.co.uk** with your full name and the **Heart of England Forest** in the subject heading.

Final in person interview date at the Heart of England Forest: Friday 10th February 2023

We can also offer informal conversations with CEO and Vice Chair.

For a confidential discussion about the role, please contact Melissa Baxter:
melissa.baxter@russam.co.uk / 07789 985229.

Closing date for applications:
Monday 9th January 2023






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 heartofenglandforest.org

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 [Heart of England Forest](https://www.linkedin.com/company/heart-of-england-forest)

Planting tomorrow's great native woodland

Registered Charity Number 1097110 (in England and Wales)
Company Registration Number 4309564 (in England and Wales)

