

Candidate Information Pack

Trustee Recruitment 2024

Look a
little closer
at wildlife



Discover
adventure in
learning

Welcome Letter

Thank you for your interest in being a charity trustee at Field Studies Council. We champion field studies in and beyond educational curricula. We encourage curiosity for the natural world. We practice and promote sustainability.

This information pack gives you information about the charity, starting with our Vision, and the current (but under review) text of our Mission and Values before outlining our day-to-day activities and example projects, and ending with more on the roles of trustees.

We aim to have between 12 and 16 trustees and recruit new trustees regularly. This year we are for the first time using Trustees Unlimited to help us find three new trustees, with a view to increasing our diversity of thought, experience and representation across the trustee body as a whole.

Our Strategic Plan to 2032 identified eight goals. Our current priorities for trustee recruitment, taking into account the experiences and other attributes of continuing trustees, are informed specifically by two of those goals:

- to pioneer and deliver learning for increasing numbers of people and more diverse audiences with outdoor experiences available within an hour of 80% of the UK population include inner city; and
- to have a residential estate configured to offer a gateway to high value landscapes that enables the delivery of a quality customer experience;

and by our desire to stay up to date with the quality of hospitality provision in our centres.

Field Studies Council helps people to understand and care for the natural world, and equip them for the decisions they will need to make as citizens on climate change and biodiversity loss, at home and in the workplace. Please join us to help the charity in this important work.

Pete Higgins
Chair of Trustees, January 2024

Vision, Mission and Values

Vision

Inspiring everyone to be curious, knowledgeable, passionate and caring about the environment.

Mission

Creating outstanding opportunities that inspire everyone to engage with and care for the environment.

Values

Delivering first-hand experiences
Providing opportunities for everyone
Sustainability for the future
A caring attitude



Our Work

Fieldwork and outdoor learning courses for schools, colleges and universities

- Primary school trips offering first-hand adventures in nature, from day visits to first overnight stays and activity-packed residentials.
- Secondary school and college courses tailored to particular curriculum requirements or syllabus, with relevant practicals and fieldwork content.
- University fieldtrips where students come to our centres for their research and fieldwork.

A network of UK residential and day centres, and a range of places in which to learn

- Much of our day to day activity is in providing opportunities to learn through first-hand experiences of the natural world at or nearby our network of learning locations across England, Scotland and Wales (and previously Northern Ireland).
- These include buildings which were originally country houses, a Victorian coastal fort (there's an Iron Age fort in the grounds), a mill house (Flatford Mill as famously painted by John Constable), and a marine research centre which retains its aquarium and research vessel.

Natural history and leisure courses

- For beginners, enthusiasts, students, or professionals, we offer both in-person and online natural history courses including those specially designed for young people keen to deepen their knowledge and hone their skills. We have arts, crafts and family holidays inspired by nature too.



Our Work 2

Wild ID Guides

- We have expanded our role as a leading publisher of accessible wildlife identification guides. We collaborate with volunteer recorders, families and professionals to ensure that we provide what they need.
- Our guides identify flora and fauna, fungi and footprints. Our wildlife publications and gifts are for all ages and abilities, from those with a general interest in nature to specialists in their field.

Stay with Us Holidays

- FSC Trading Ltd - our trading subsidiary - uses our facilities to provide holiday opportunities when those facilities are not in use for charitable purposes, which is principally in the summer holidays.

Online Education and Biodiversity Training

- Thousands of adults have learnt practical biodiversity skills through our training courses. We've launched learning pathways to help wildlife enthusiasts, gardeners, professionals, and young people seeking green careers.



Our Work 3

The Green Influencer Project

We helped young people become influencers and take action in their community and education setting. Our project, led by one of our senior tutors, worked with 11-14 year olds in Birmingham. A lively secondary school raised awareness of plastic pollution and then how to reduce it. The green influencers created art for an exhibition on plastic waste on their school's Earth Day, hosted a litter pick and persuaded their school leaders to change their waste collection company to offer more recycling options.

Forgotten Places

We've transformed how 13,000 people engage with trees in seven coastal towns with low tree canopy cover, including Portsmouth, Brighton and Hull. Evaluation shows huge increases in knowledge in trees for the people involved, plus related actions to protect new and existing trees. Field Studies Council worked with the tree planting charity, Trees for Cities, who led the Forgotten Places project. Trees for Cities also delivered popular volunteer planting days to transform community skills and tree populations where needed most.



More About Field Studies Council

Our centres

We are an environmental education charity, best known for providing residential and day field trips for those studying biology and geography. But our mission is to create outstanding opportunities for everyone to learn about nature.

We have welcomed over 3.7 million visitors since we opened our first centre in 1946. In 2023 123,000 or so learners visited our centres: most were aged 25 and below and were in school or university groups. We (the Charity and its trading subsidiary) employ 325 or so people and in an accounting context have annual turnover in the range £15m to £20m.

We ensure all young people can increase their environmental knowledge and connect more with nature. We help broaden horizons and show what they could do with their knowledge and passion for the natural world. We have heard their calls and have set up training pathways and experiences not easily gained elsewhere.

We campaign and work with like-minded organisations to engage stakeholders and policy makers, showing just what a valuable multipurpose tool outdoor learning can be in tackling a range of pressing policy concerns: education attainment and engagement across the curriculum, improving mental and physical health and wellbeing, developing much needed technical and scientific knowledge and skills.



Role Description

The Field Studies Council Board of Trustees has overall legal responsibility for the direction and control of Field Studies Council. It's also accountable for compliance with relevant legislative and regulatory requirements. So as a trustee you have legal duties and responsibilities. Trustees are both charity trustees and company directors. The day-to-day operations are conducted by Field Studies Council staff and volunteers under the overall leadership of the trustees.

To serve as a trustee you must be over the age of 18 and not be disqualified because of bankruptcy, unspent criminal convictions for offences of deception or dishonesty, or a legal order for removal/disqualification as a trustee or company director. It is a criminal offence to act as a trustee while disqualified. As a trustee you must act at all times in the interests of Field Studies Council.

Beyond the statutory duties the charity sees the role of each trustee as being to:

- Discharge your statutory duty to act in the way you consider, in good faith, would be most likely to achieve the charity's charitable purposes for the public benefit;
- Actively and constructively participate in the governance of the charity and ensure, so far as you are able, that the Board and its committees function effectively;
- Focus mainly on strategy, performance and assurance, rather than operational matters;
- Be independent in thought and judgement and use your expertise, knowledge and experience in serving the charity, subject to any confidentiality obligations owed to others; and
- Be a well-informed, enthusiastic and energetic representative of the charity and, when and to the extent requested by the Board or Management, participant in its day to day business and activities.

Person Specification

Who are we looking for?

You will bring diversity of thought and outlook, as well as new perspectives to the organisation. You will improve board decision making and outcomes for an increasing range of members of the public, especially children and young people.

You simply need to be:

- Passionate about providing high quality outdoor learning opportunities for everyone, not just those who can afford it
- Be ready to speak up and be heard, and
- Have available time and commitment for Field Studies Council

You may have had limited opportunity to explore nature, and you might be new to outdoor learning. And not every Trustee needs to be an academic, ecologist or environmentalist or have charity trustee, company director or equivalent experience. We are in particular looking for individuals who are able to bring their skills and expertise in the following areas:

- Hospitality, tourism and leisure
- The delivery of inner city projects for young people
- Strategic management and development of a property portfolio

We are committed to promoting equality, valuing diversity and working inclusively across our organisation and to reflect this are keen to have a more diverse Board. Field Studies Council is an equal opportunities employer and welcomes applications from all backgrounds.

Terms and Conditions

The work of a trustee is unpaid however expenses are reimbursed and appropriate training will be provided.

Field Studies Council currently has 12 trustees. The Board of Trustees usually meets three times a year, as do the three main Board committees (Audit & Risk Management; Education Strategy; Finance & Administration). Most trustees serve on one of the main committees. Although most meetings are virtual, trustees meet face to face with each other and senior staff once a year.

One special feature is that all trustees are expected to visit a centre once a year to see and have hands on experience of the delivery of the Charity's charitable purposes.

The minimum time commitment equates to about ten days each year.



How to Apply:

Please provide us with:

- An up to date CV detailing your relevant experience and including the details of two referees (who will not be contacted without your prior consent).
- A supporting statement addressing the criteria in the person specification and your motivations for applying.

All applications should be sent to applications@trustees-unlimited.co.uk with your full name and Field Studies Council in the subject heading.

If you have any difficulty uploading your application or if you would like to have an informal and confidential discussion about the role, alternatively please contact Melissa Baxter on: melissa.baxter@russam.co.uk | 07789 985 229

Closing date for applications: Monday 4th March 2024

Interviews with Field Studies Council: Week commencing 18th March 2024

