

Appointment of Secretary of State Members to National Park Authorities and Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Conservation Boards

Briefing pack for applicants

Closing Date: Noon on 20 February 2023

Ref: APPT04/22



CHILTERNs
AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY



North York Moors
National Park



South Downs
National Park Authority



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs



The Commissioner for
Public Appointments



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Ministerial message to candidates

Dear Candidate,

Thank you for your interest in becoming a Secretary of State appointed member of a National Park Authority or Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Conservation Board. There has never been a more exciting time to be involved with our National Parks and AONBs.

As a Secretary of State member, you will help to identify new opportunities to achieve the Government's commitment to protect 30% of our land by 2030, and our net zero target. You will also have an important role in championing diversity and inclusion, particularly identifying ways to improve access to our protected landscapes by all parts of society. These landscapes belong to everyone, so we need National Park Authorities and Conservation Boards that reflect our nation.

Delivering these ambitious goals requires passionate and committed people across the protected landscapes family. In recognition of this need, I am seeking enthusiastic and dedicated strategic thinkers who will proudly serve the protected landscapes to ensure they are conserved and enhanced for future generations. Each protected landscape is unique: we require members who can respect local needs while encouraging a coordinated and collaborative approach to national objectives.

If you have the knowledge, skills and experience required to support the nation's National Parks and AONBs, I look forward to receiving an application from you.

The Rt Hon Thérèse Coffey MP

Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs



Defra mission statement

The Defra group is here to make our air purer, our water cleaner, our land greener, and our food more sustainable. Our mission is to restore and enhance the environment for future generations, and to leave the environment in a better state.

This matters because enhancing nature and green spaces enhances lives and livelihoods, contributing to a strong economy. Our wellbeing, our physical and mental health, our love of place and landscape, and our intrinsic need for beauty, awe and wonder, are all closely interconnected with a thriving natural environment.

Appointing high-calibre people from diverse backgrounds with relevant skills, knowledge and experience to the boards of our public bodies will help us to ensure that our work is more effective, resilient and accountable.

Equal Opportunities

The UK government has a policy of equality of opportunity. We aim to promote equal opportunity policies whereby no one suffers unfair discrimination either directly or indirectly, or harassment, on grounds such as race, colour, ethnic or national origin, sex, gender identity, marital status, disability, sexual orientation, religious beliefs or age.

Diversity

We positively welcome applicants from all backgrounds. All public appointments are made on merit following a fair and open competition as regulated by the Office of the Commissioner for Public Appointments.

Disability

We guarantee to interview anyone with a disability whose application meets the minimum criteria for the post. 'Minimum criteria' means you must provide sufficient evidence in your application, demonstrating that you meet the minimum level of competence required for each essential criterion, as well as meeting any of the qualifications, skills or experience required. The Cabinet Office and Defra is committed to the employment and career development of disabled people. To show this we proudly display the Disability Confident Leader logo. More information about Disability Confident Leaders is available by clicking the logo above. If a person with disabilities is put at a substantial disadvantage compared to a nondisabled person, we have a duty to make reasonable changes to our processes where possible. If you need a change to be made so that you can make your application, please refer to the ['How to submit your application'](#) section below.



Introduction to NPA and AONBs

There are ten National Parks (including the Broads Authority), and thirty-four Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, including two Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Conservation Boards in England.

The National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act (1949) enabled the designation of National Parks and AONBs in England and Wales. The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 permitted AONBs to form Conservation Boards to aid management, particularly in cases where AONBs cross several administrative boundaries.

In 2004, Conservation Boards were created for the Chilterns AONB and Cotswolds AONB.

National Parks and Cotswolds and Chilterns AONBs are protected because of their natural beauty and the wealth of opportunities provided for outdoor recreation, being designated nationally and internationally important landscapes. This high-quality environment supports vibrant local economies and communities.

National Parks are administered by individual National Park Authorities.

The Chilterns and Cotswolds AONBs are each administered by a Conservation Board.

Each National Park Authority/ AONB Conservation Board is managed by an executive of permanent staff with oversight from members. Members make decisions about the actions that each National Park Authority/AONB Conservation Board should take to deliver its purposes.

There are typically between 18 and 30 members, either appointed by Defra's Secretary of State, or elected by local authorities or parish councils.



"I have a passion for and enjoy visiting the National Park but I also wanted to contribute to the management at a strategic level and the decision making process."

**Yvonne Witter – Peak District National Park
Secretary of State member**

The executive carries out the necessary work to run the National Parks/AONBs and support and advise the members. Staff include professionals such as ecologists, archaeologists/ heritage experts, rangers, planners, and education specialists.

Defra encourages National Park Authorities/ AONB Conservation Boards to maximise funding from a range of sources to supplement the grant they receive from Government.

Statutory Purposes of the NPAs and AONBs

The statutory purposes of National Park Authorities are to:

- Conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage.
- Promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of National Parks by the public.
- When National Park authorities carry out these purposes, they also have the duty to seek to foster the economic and social well-being of local communities within the National Parks.

The statutory purposes of AONB Conservation Boards are to:

- Conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the AONB.

- AONB Conservation Boards have a further responsibility to increase the public understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the area of outstanding natural beauty.
- When AONBs carry out these purposes they also have the duty to seek to foster the economic and social well-being of local communities within the AONB.

The Sandford Principle

- If there is conflict between the purposes for National Parks and AONBs they are both required by statute to place greater weight to conserving and enhancing the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the park, a concept known as the 'Sandford principle'.



"I applied to be a Secretary of State member as I thought I could bring a slightly different set of experiences, skills and a different voice to the Authority."

**Zahid Hamid – Peak District NPA
Secretary of State member**

The role and person specification

We are looking to make Secretary of State appointments to the Chilterns AONB CB, the Cotswolds AONB CB, Dartmoor NPA, Exmoor NPA, North York Moors NPA and the South Downs NPA. The vacancies are shown in the table below:

	Confirmed appointment vacancies
Chilterns AONB CB	2
Cotswolds AONB CB	2
Exmoor NPA	1
Dartmoor NPA	1
North York Moors NPA	2
South Downs NPA	1

The overall role of a member is to contribute to the leadership, scrutiny, and direction of the National Park Authority and further the [statutory purposes](#). Members are not representative of any organisation or group and have a duty to act in the best interest of the Authority on which they serve. Certain [ineligibility criteria](#) apply to these posts.

The key functions of a member are to:

- Ensure the National Park Authority furthers its statutory purposes which are described on page 5.
- Agree plans that ensure the Park is available to all parts of society, is relevant and is valued as a national asset for its special qualities
- Represent the Authority through collaborative working with external stakeholders at a national and local level, including other National Park Authorities
- Agree appropriate policies to meet statutory duties and participate in collective decision making

- Encourage a creative, experimental, and innovative culture, where risks are appropriately managed
- Guide the development of policy and business plans by participating in activities as required including meetings, committees and working groups
- Scrutinise and monitor performance, including providing constructive challenge and oversight of governance
- Ensure there is effective and efficient governance and management in place
- Provide leadership and strategic direction towards national priorities
- Utilise broad knowledge and skills, to manage local and national interests, ensuring the national interest is taken fully into account.

Essential criteria

1. Enthusiasm and a genuine passion for the work of National Park Authorities and AONB Conservation Boards. This includes conserving and enhancing the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the areas, and promoting the public's understanding and enjoyment of the area's special qualities.
2. An ability to successfully engage with and influence a wide-ranging audience in an ambassador role for an organisation.
3. A demonstrable commitment to promote and increase equality, diversity and inclusion.
4. An ability to think strategically, contribute and scrutinise complex plans and policies.
5. High standards of integrity and impartiality to ensure transparency, strong governance, and efficiency.



"If you're thinking of applying, go for it! Think carefully about your skills and experience, and make sure you include anything that might be relevant or could help you bring a fresh perspective. It might be something you did in a previous role, in a volunteer capacity or something you do every day."

Lizzie Bushby – Yorkshire Dales NPA Secretary of State member

Diversity and inclusion

Given our commitment to diversity we would encourage applications from individuals with experience of improving access for people from underrepresented groups and expertise in identifying and improving inclusive communications.

Successful candidates must abide by the Nolan principles of public service (attached at [Annex A](#)), the [Code of Conduct for Board Members](#) and demonstrate the [12 Principles of Governance for all Public Body NEDs](#).



“I wanted to see more diversity in countryside spaces. By applying for this role, I felt that I was becoming part of the change I wanted to see.”

**Dr Geeta Ludhra – Chilterns AONB Conservation
Board Secretary of State member**

Remuneration and time commitment

Chilterns AONB Conservation Board

A basic allowance of £300 is paid to each member. The time commitment is 6 days per annum minimum, potentially rising to 12 days.

Cotswolds AONB Conservation Board

A basic allowance of £225 per annum is paid to each member. The time commitment is 1-3 days per month.

Dartmoor National Park Authority

A basic allowance of £1,788 per annum is paid to each member. The time commitment is a minimum of 2 days per month.

Exmoor National Park Authority

A basic allowance of £2,863.92 per annum is paid to each Member. The time commitment is a minimum of 2 days per month.

North York Moors National Park Authority

A basic allowance of £1500 per annum is paid to each member. The time commitment is a minimum of 2 or 3 days per month.

South Downs National Park Authority

A basic allowance of currently £3748.47 is paid to each member. The time commitment is approximately 48 days per year.



The recruitment process

The closing date for applications is **noon on 20 February 2023**. We expect to have shortlisted by the end of March, with panel interviews at the end of April.

It is essential that your statement of suitability gives full but concise information relevant to the appointment, clearly demonstrating how you meet each of the [essential criteria](#).

It is recommended that you format your statement under five headings, one for each essential criterion. This will make it easier for you to demonstrate how your skills and experience qualify you for the role. You should also read the 'Public Appointments Guidance Notes' which are attached to the advert.

Please also specify for which National Park Authority you are applying.

The Advisory Assessment Panel will consist of a Defra Senior Civil Servant as chair, the chair of the relevant National Park or AONB Conservation Board and an independent panel member (details below).

At the shortlist meeting the Panel will assess each application against the essential criteria in order to decide who to invite for interview. At the shortlist meetings the advisory assessment panel will assess each application against the essential criteria and decide who to invite for final interview. Candidates will be advised by email if they are invited to interview. The panel's composition along with interview dates is outlined in the table overleaf.

Interviews will be held remotely via Microsoft Teams and are expected to last for approximately 50 minutes. Candidates will be advised by email of the outcome of the interview.

Ministers will be made aware of all candidates deemed appointable by the panel. They will then decide who to appoint to the roles advertised.

Interview dates	Defra panel chairs	Organisation chairs	Independent panel members
Chilterns: 27 th – 29 th March	Siôn McGeever Deputy Director for Landscapes, Peatlands and Soil	Paul Mainds bio Chilterns AONB CB	Helen Dolphin MBE Independent mobility specialist and campaigner for improving transport for disabled people. Civil Aviation Authority consumer panel member.
Cotswolds: 12 th & 14 th April		Brendan McCarthy bio Cotswolds AONB CB	
Dartmoor: 30 th & 31 st March	Kris Nursiah Deputy Director for Accountability and Governance	Pamela Woods bio Dartmoor NPA	Joyce Fraser OBE Trustee of the Black Heroes Foundation and Trustee for the Institute of Fund Raising.
Exmoor: 27 th March		Robin Milton bio Exmoor NPA	
North York Moors: 30 th March		Jim Bailey bio North York Moors NPA	
South Downs: 29 th March		Vanessa Rowlands bio South Downs NPA	

How to apply and submit your application

To apply, please send the following to publicappts@defra.gov.uk by the deadline of **noon on 20 February 2023**.

- a CV of no more than two sides of A4.
- a supporting statement of not more than 1,000 words (approximately two sides of A4), setting out how you meet the [essential criteria](#) – make sure you refer to the contents of this document and provide specific examples.
- completed diversity and political activity monitoring form.
- completed conflicts of interest, conduct and advertising monitoring form (please

note the section on [conflicts of interest and due diligence](#) below).

- If you have any questions or require additional assistance to support you in your application, please email publicappts@defra.gov.uk
- Please let the Public Appointments Team know if you are applying under the Disability Confident Scheme.
- To find out more about the work of individual protected landscapes and their vision please see contact details and weblinks below.

Chilterns AONB CB

Deirdre Hanson: 01844 355500
Clerk@chilternsaonb.org
<https://www.chilternsaonb.org/>

Cotswolds AONB CB

Andy Parsons: 07703 717986
andy.parsons@cotswoldsaonb.org.uk
<https://www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk/>

Dartmoor NPA

Kevin Bishop: 01626 831004
kbishop@dartmoor.gov.uk
<https://www.dartmoor.gov.uk/>

Exmoor NPA

Judy Coles: 01398 322250
jcoles@exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk
<https://www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk/>

North York Moors NPA

Judith Seaton: 01439770700
j.seaton@northyorkmoors.org.uk
<https://www.northyorkmoors.org.uk/>

South Downs NPA

Richard Sandiford: 01730 819357
Richard.Sandiford@SouthDowns.gov.uk
<https://www.southdowns.gov.uk/>

Ineligibility criteria

You cannot be considered for Secretary of State appointments to a National Park Authority if you are:

- a serving Councillor of a local authority or parish council making appointments to that National Park Authority; or an employee of such a local authority;
- a serving employee of the National Park Authority;
- a serving Member of Parliament; or the holder of a politically restricted post in a local authority.

Additionally, you cannot be considered for a public appointment if:

- you become bankrupt or make an arrangement with creditors;

- your estate has been sequestrated in Scotland or you enter into a debt arrangement programme under Part 1 of the Debt Arrangement and Attachment (Scotland) Act 2002 (asp 17) as the debtor or have, under Scots law, granted a trust deed for creditors;
- you are disqualified from acting as a company director under the Company Directors Disqualification Act 1986;
- you have been convicted of a criminal offence, the conviction not being spent for the purposes of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (c. 53);
- you become subject to a debt relief order or a bankruptcy restrictions order; or
- you fail to declare any conflict of interest.

Conflicts of interest and due diligence

If you have any interests that might be relevant to the work of the National Park Authority to which you are applying, and which could lead to a real or perceived conflict of interest if you were to be appointed, please provide details in your application. If you have queries about this and would like to discuss, please contact the [Public Appointments Team](#).

Given the nature of public appointments, it is important that those appointed as members of public bodies maintain the confidence of Parliament and the public.

If there are any issues in your personal or professional history that could, if you were appointed, be misconstrued, cause embarrassment, or cause public confidence in the appointment to be jeopardised, it is important that you bring them to the attention

of the Advisory Assessment Panel and provide details of the issue(s) in your application. In considering whether you wish to declare any issues, you should also reflect on any public statements you have made, including through social media.

As part of our due diligence checks we will consider anything in the public domain related to your conduct or professional capacity. This will include us undertaking searches of previous public statements and social media, blogs, or any other publicly available information. This information may be made available to the Advisory Assessment Panel and they may wish to explore issues with you should you be invited to interview.

The information may also be shared with ministers.

The Commissioner for Public Appointments

This appointment is regulated by the Commissioner for Public Appointments and in line with the [Governance Code on Public Appointments](#), to ensure that it is made on merit after fair and open competition. More information about the role of the Commissioner and the Governance Code on Public Appointments can be seen at:

<http://publicappointmentscommissioner.independent.gov.uk/>

For full details of the complaints process for public appointments, please click on the following link which will take you to the Commissioner for Public Appointments website:

<https://publicappointmentscommissioner.independent.gov.uk/complaints/>

Data protection

Defra is committed to protecting the privacy and security of your personal information and does so in accordance with data protection law including the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). All the information you provide will be used to proceed with the public appointment listed in this information pack and in the case of diversity monitoring information may be anonymised and used solely for monitoring purposes.

For more information about the way we collect and hold your information, please read our Privacy Notice, accessible through the Cabinet Office website:

publicappointments.cabinetoffice.gov.uk

or by requesting a copy from:
publicappts@defra.gov.uk



Annex A - The seven principles of public life

Selflessness

Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest.

Integrity

Holders of public office must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.

Objectivity

Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.

Accountability

Holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.

Openness

Holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.

Honesty

Holders of public office should be truthful.

Leadership

Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.



Annex B – Current Secretary of State Members

Chilterns AONB CB

Colin Courtney
Geeta Ludhra
Paul Mains
John Nicolls
John Shaw
Joseph Stewart
Ian Waller
Elizabeth Wilson

Cotswolds AONB CB

Nicholas Bumford
Katherine Chesson
Brendan Costelloe
Susan Crawford
Benjamin Dent
Ellie Fujioka
Graham Hopkins
Jane Hull
Catherine Le Grice-Mack
Ed Macalister-Smith
Brendan McCarthy
Isabel Ross
John Swanton

Dartmoor NPA

Andrew Cooper
William Dracup
Peter Harper
Naomi Oakley
Pamela Woods

Exmoor NPA

Linda Blanchard
Dominic Elson
Michael Patrick Kelly
Evelyn Stacey
Susan Warren

North York Moors NPA

Ann Allen
Christine Robertson
Patrick James
Abida Nayyar
Sarah Oswald

South Downs NPA

Heather Baker
Annie Brown
Timothy Burr
Melanie Hunt
Maggie Jones
Ian Phillips
Stephen Whale



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