



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs



Appointment of three Independent Members of the Joint Nature Conservation Committee

Briefing pack for applicants

Closing Date 27 November 2023

Reference: APPT06-23



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Ministerial message to candidates

Dear Candidate

Thank you for your interest in becoming an Independent Member of the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC). JNCC is the only statutory nature advisor to all four countries of the UK, the UK Government, and our Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies.

JNCC has been a vital and trusted statutory advisor on nature conservation and recovery for over thirty years, helping to deliver our collective efforts for nature. Beyond the extensive scientific advice JNCC has provided domestically, JNCC plays a critical role internationally. At CBD COP15 JNCC supported the UK to secure agreement for the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF). The agreement has been described as the 'Paris moment for nature' - its goals and targets stretch across many policy areas, recognising how connected nature is to every aspect of our society and setting the foundation for urgent action to solve the biodiversity crisis.

The UK relies on the collective, ambitious effort of England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales, as well as our Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies. It is our unique arrangement of devolved environmental policy and local delivery, which enables each country to prioritise based on the knowledge of their own natural environment and stakeholders, while benefitting from the collective UK strength and expertise. This is where JNCC is so critical to our efforts, having a pivotal role helping to agree how the KMGBF commitments will be delivered across the UK. JNCC's scientific evidence, advice, co-ordination and convening power is helping us accelerate urgent areas, such as creating an effective network of protected areas and assessing our economy's impacts on biodiversity internationally, all while providing opportunities to share our knowledge and learn from each other.

I truly welcome JNCC's new vision – *thriving nature for a sustainable future*. JNCC's mission to turn science into action for nature, people and planet captures the unique value that JNCC contributes to our goals. It is JNCC's ambition for nature recovery, operating holistically at multiple political and geographical scales, with interdisciplinary science at the heart of the strategy, that sets JNCC on the right course for success. I am looking for three Independent Members for the Committee who are passionate about the environment, can drive implementation of JNCC's strategic priorities, capitalise on new opportunities and drive innovation. Inclusion is one of JNCC's core values and I particularly encourage applications from underrepresented groups to ensure membership of the Committee is reflective of our diverse society.

If you have the passion, skills and experience to help deliver JNCC's vision, we very much look forward to hearing from you.

TRUDY HARRISON MP

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Minister for Environment)



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 intimately bound up 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

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 this [link](#). If a person with disabilities is put at a 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 apply](#)' section below.

About JNCC

Vision

Thriving nature for a sustainable future.

Mission

Our Vision and Mission underpin our Strategy to turn robust scientific evidence into action for nature conservation and recovery.

Strategic Priorities

- Use our scientific expertise to facilitate a collective response to the global biodiversity crisis.
- Use our trusted expertise and judgement to evaluate effectiveness of existing policies and advise on the design of new policies and action to progress nature recovery.
- Lead the discussion to align action for nature and climate change to deliver outcomes that tackle climate breakdown and accelerate nature recovery.
- Continue to innovate and advance our learning on nature recovery so that science, technology, and new digital knowledge are applied to drive positive environmental outcomes.
- Work collaboratively to support the transition to sustainable blue/green economies, linking nature recovery to economic prosperity and societal wellbeing.
- Seek opportunities to integrate the value of nature into decision-making by mainstreaming nature recovery into social and economic policy areas.
- Invest in our people and culture to ensure an inclusive, collaborative, and innovative



learning organisation, where staff wellbeing is prioritised, and our partners are engaged and respected.

Values

- **Inclusion:** embrace, respect and accept difference, recognising its importance to JNCC's culture and success in delivering its mission. JNCC will address systemic and structural barriers to enable all its people to thrive.
- **Collaboration:** We convene governments, academia, industry, and civil society to address problems and to develop solutions, supporting and strengthening the resilience of natural systems, which are the foundation for resource security, economic prosperity, and societal wellbeing.
- **Innovation:** We adapt cutting-edge techniques and unique solutions and employ them to help nature recover. We strive for excellence; our agile ways of working allow us to play a courageous role in nature conservation and recovery.

Role specification

JNCC's [Framework Document](#) provides the legal, administrative and financial framework within which the Joint Committee operates and the specific functions of the Committee and the Chair. [Together for Nature: Our Strategy to 2030](#), published in May 2023, outlines the areas of work that JNCC will undertake, focusing on its role in terrestrial and marine nature conservation and recovery, at the UK level, working with the UK Overseas Territories and the Crown Dependencies, and inputting evidence and advice to global nature issues.

The Committee, under the leadership of the new Chair, will be responsible to the Defra Secretary of State for the leadership, direction, and effectiveness of JNCC in line with this ambitious new strategy.

Independent members of the Joint Committee will:

- Contribute to the Committee's work in providing UK Government and the Devolved Administrations with effective support for their evidence needs and policies for nature conservation and recovery across the UK, our Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies, and internationally.
- Need to understand the natural environment and its vital importance to everyone including its contribution to improving outcomes for the economy and for society on a sustainable basis. This will include an understanding of natural capital and natural resource management.
- Promote a positive and constructive relationship with a wide range of

stakeholders across the UK and internationally.

- Take a full and active role in the governance of JNCC, appropriate to a non-executive board. This involves providing support to the Chair of the JNCC in holding the executive to account for achieving work programmes agreed in annual business plans and delivering good value for money.
- Assist the Chair in overseeing the executive's delivery of Together for Nature.
- Provide a valuable source of expertise to ensure that the scientific methods and approaches underpinning JNCC's advice and evidence are robust and appropriate for the needs of customers.
- Take a longer-term strategic view to position the organisation to make optimal use of modern technological, computational, and interdisciplinary scientific advances. Given the breadth of JNCC's work in the terrestrial, freshwater, /and marine environments, these include but are not restricted to advances in data and IT, modelling and statistics, earth observation and remote sensing.
- JNCC is accountable to the four government administrations in the UK. It is important for independent members, together with country conservation body representatives, to develop an understanding of legislative and policy changes associated with EU exit and the implications for nature conservation and recovery for the UK.

Essential criteria

Candidates must be able to demonstrate all the following essential criteria:

1. Knowledge and expertise in a field relevant to the work of JNCC such as international or domestic environmental strategy, policy, science or operations, and the ability to relate this to the wider social and economic context and to the ambitions of the four countries of the UK and our Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies.
2. Proven ability to provide strategic oversight, impartial advice, and constructive challenge to ensure that JNCC provides high-quality, cost-effective evidence and advice, and optimises impact on nature recovery.
3. Knowledge and experience of organisational transformation, change management and financial governance in the private, public or voluntary sector.
4. Successful candidates should also be able to demonstrate experience and effective delivery at a senior level in two or more of the following areas:
 - **Interdisciplinary science:** the ability to provide advice on scientific evidence and advice (across the natural and social sciences) and on the principles relating to nature conservation and recovery domestically and internationally.

- **Communications and engagement expertise:** a key element of implementing *Together for Nature* is a strong communications and engagement approach. The ability to provide high-level leadership on stakeholder engagement, messaging and outreach to build trust, enhance decision-making, protect and build the organisation's reputation, and optimise impact
- **Data and digital, including artificial intelligence:** the ability to provide advice on new and emerging technology, including innovation in analysis and communication of evidence to drive nature conservation and recovery.
- **Organisational equity, diversity and inclusion:** the ability to advise on embracing, respecting and accepting difference, recognising its importance to JNCC's culture and success in delivering its mission, and addressing systemic and structural barriers to enable all JNCC's people to thrive, the environmental sector to diversify and to be a good ancestor.
- **UK and international legislation and policy:** the ability to provide advice on the opportunities and challenges for UK and international nature conservation and recovery arising from domestic legislation and global agreements.

Time commitment and term of office

The successful candidate will be expected to make a time commitment of 30 days per annum, which will include four committee meetings per calendar year (in March, June, September, and November/December).

The appointment will be initially for three years, beginning as soon as possible. A further

reappointment of three years may be made subject to satisfactory performance assessment and will be at the discretion of the Chair and Ministers.

Remuneration is set at £9,836 per annum. Reasonable travel and subsistence expenses are paid. The role is not pensionable

The recruitment process

The closing date for applications is noon on 27 November 2023. We expect to have shortlisted by early December 2023, with Panel interviews on 19 February, 26 February and 11 March 2024.

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](#).

The Advisory Assessment Panel will consist of Rachel Bailey (Deputy Director for Environmental Governance and Wildlife Reform, Defra) as chair, Charles Banner (Interim Chair, JNCC), Alice Teague (Deputy Director for Marine and Biodiversity, Welsh Government) and Sarah Mukherjee as the independent panel member.

Interviews are expected to take place at Defra's offices at 2 Marsham Street, London.

Further details about the format will be provided in advance.

These are Ministerial appointments and all candidates deemed appointable by the Panel may meet with the Minister before a final decision is made.

You will be able to claim reasonable travel expenses incurred travelling to and from the interview (please note you may be asked to justify travelling costs if Defra considers the claims excessive). Please let Defra know beforehand if you are likely to claim, along with the approximate costs by contacting publicappts@defra.gov.uk and by quoting reference number: APPT06-23



How to apply

In order to apply you will need to visit <https://apply-for-public-appointment.service.gov.uk/roles> and either [create an account](#) or [sign in](#).

Once you are logged into your account, click on 'apply for this role' and follow the on-screen instructions. To apply, all candidates are required to provide:

- a Curriculum Vitae (CV)
- a supporting statement or no more than 1,000 words, setting out how you meet the [essential criteria](#) – make sure you refer to the contents of this document and provide specific examples
- diversity information
- information relating to any outside interests or reputational issues

You will also have the opportunity to make a reasonable adjustment request or apply under the disability confident scheme before you submit your application.

The Advisory Assessment Panel reserves the right to only consider applications that contain all of the elements listed above, and that arrive before the published deadline for applications.

If you have any questions about the appointments process, please email the Public Appointments Team at publicappts@defra.gov.uk

For an informal discussion about the role please contact Dr Gemma Harper (Gemma.Harper@jncc.gov.uk).

Completed applications should be submitted online at <https://apply-for-public-appointment.service.gov.uk/roles> by the closing date 27 November 2023

Ineligibility criteria

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;
- 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 JNCC, 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 further, 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, 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/>

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/578498/gov

[ernance code on public appointments 16 12 2016.pdf](#)

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 the Privacy Notice accessible through the Cabinet Office's Public Appointments Website (<https://publicappointments.cabinetoffice.gov.uk>) or request a copy of Defra's Public Appointments Privacy Notice 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 – 12 Principles of Governance for all Public Body NEDs

1. Expertise

- Consider and act in the best interests of your organisation and its objectives; delivering the outcomes expected by your sponsor department, ministers and ultimately the public.
- Consider the broader mission and duties of your sponsoring Secretary of State, his or her Department and the Government.
- Ensure compliance with statutory duties and the organisation's Framework Document and act within its powers.
- Exercise reasonable care, skill, and diligence in the exercise of their authority and judgement.

2. Scrutiny and challenge


- Maintain independence from the executive to allow scrutiny of management and in meetings agree goals and objectives and monitor performance and the reporting of performance so that the public who use your organisation receive a high-quality service.
- Satisfy yourself on the integrity of budget setting to deliver objectives and financial information and reporting against budgets, and that financial controls and systems of risk management are robust and defensible. Meet the requirements of [Managing Public Money](#), including supporting the Accounting Officer in fulfilling their duties to provide propriety and value for money in the use of public funds.
- Champion high standards of risk management by ensuring your organisation has effective risk reporting, controls and governance, risk expertise and risk tolerances to effectively manage risk.
- Represent your organisation to the department and to Ministers, as well as ensuring Ministers' views are considered by the executive team of the organisation, as appropriate.

3. Support

- Support the board in succession planning and be prepared to put yourself up for re-appointment, as well as promoting the need for a diverse board.
- Participate in and promote regular reviews of your organisation, as well as the board's own effectiveness, with particular focus on the organisation's purposes and its efficiency in meeting these purposes. Engage in the appraisal process, including self-reflection on your own abilities.
- Listen carefully to, ask appropriate questions of and support management to encourage discussion in a manner that promotes a culture where all perspectives are listened to, while fulfilling the individual Director's duties and responsibilities and respecting and valuing the expertise of the executive team.
- Promote the success of the entity having regard to the interests of all members and stakeholders, and all risks.

Annex C – Current membership of the Committee

Mr Charles Banner KC	Independent Interim Chair (Keating Chambers)
Ms Cath Denholm	Independent Member (Equality and Human Rights Commission)
Professor Tom Meagher	Independent Member (University of St Andrews)
Professor Julian Orford	Deputy Chair of Council for Nature Conservation and the Countryside
Ms Aoife Martin	Deputy Chair of NatureScot
Professor Peter Higgins	Board Member of NatureScot
Lord Blencathra	Deputy Chair of Natural England
Professor Mel Austen	Board Member of Natural England
Sir David Henshaw	Chair of Natural Resource Wales
Professor Steve Ormerod	Board Member of Natural Resources Wales

 **JNCC** Together for Nature
We are inclusive, collaborative, innovative

  **disability**
  **confident**



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 **JNCC**