



Forestry Commission

Briefing pack for the appointment of

Chair of the Forestry Commission

**CLOSING DATE: Midday on Thursday 4th
September 2025**





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Dear Candidate,

Thank you for applying for the position of Chair of the Forestry Commission (FC).

I am seeking an outstanding individual to lead FC's board. This is a high-profile non-executive role at the heart of the UK's forestry and timber sectors, and offers a unique opportunity to influence policy and drive growth. FC's significant contribution to Defra's missions to kickstart nature restoration, economic growth, and accelerate to net zero means you will be joining as Chair at an exciting and pivotal time.

The nation's forests are some of the most popular natural spaces in the country, visited by millions of people. They are the largest supplier of Forest Stewardship Council® (FSC®) and Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC) timber in England. They are the largest Park Run provider in England. As the world's second largest importer of timber, the UK benefits greatly from FC's work.

The Forestry Commission plays a key role in sustainably managing and promoting the UK's forests and woodlands, creating new woodlands and employment opportunities, regulating tree felling and woodland management, and monitoring compliance with environmental law. FC creates rural jobs, driving economic growth, and is committed to breaking down barriers and creating opportunities for workers transitioning from declining industries, supporting the rural economy, healthier futures for all and a more resilient NHS.

FC is headed by a Board of Commissioners, comprising a Chair and up to 10 other Forestry Commissioners. As Chair, you will play a pivotal role in guiding the country toward a nature-positive, net-zero future. You will collaborate across sectors to manage more land and trees than any other organisation in England. You will help shape landscapes that benefit people, wildlife, and timber production, fostering resilience in the face of climate change. You will need to be confident in facilitating the sector to move towards a more sustainable financial footing, with less reliance on public finance and more use of private finance. You will have a track record of working with Ministers, senior government officials, the scientific community and local communities.

I am looking for a Chair who can set a clear strategic vision, drive forward the organisation's priorities, and demonstrate a record in senior leadership roles, directing good decisions. Passionate about the organisation's priorities and challenges, the ideal candidate will work closely with key stakeholders, providing support and constructive challenge to steer the organisation, and representing the Commission to the general public. They will also be creative about delivering nature recovery and thinking about innovative ways the public estate can be used to improve access.

The Chair will need to support a more strategic and joined up approach to environmental regulation, with a stronger emphasis on collaboration with other regulators and clearer accountability for delivery. This means greater involvement in shared governance structures and a shift towards more outcome-focused delivery.

I am particularly keen to hear from candidates who can bring diverse perspectives, lived experiences, and innovative ideas to our work. Reflecting the full breadth of our society's diversity is essential to achieving our mission of a sustainable and equitable future. Boards of public bodies like the Forestry Commission are most effective when they mirror the communities they serve.

MARY CREAGH CBE MP

**Parliamentary Under Secretary of State
(Minister for Nature)**



Defra Group leads on the fundamentals: the food we eat, the water we drink, the air we breathe. It encompasses food, environment, biosecurity, trade and more. Defra is a policy, growth, science, delivery and international department.

Defra's work is fundamental to delivering the government's five missions – by building economic resilience through better flood defences, protecting against biosecurity risk, climate adaptation and nature-based solutions; creating jobs and attracting investment in our water and waste sectors; working with our sectors, such as food and drink; and ensuring that all missions are rural-proofed.

To achieve these goals, we are committed to appointing high-calibre individuals from diverse backgrounds to the boards of our public bodies. By drawing on a wide range of skills, knowledge, and experiences, we can make our work more effective, resilient, and accountable to the public.



Equal Opportunities and Diversity

The UK government is committed to promoting equality of opportunity and ensuring that no one experiences unfair discrimination or harassment on the grounds of race, ethnicity, national origin, colour, sex, gender identity, marital status, disability, sexual orientation, religious beliefs, or age.

We actively encourage applications from individuals of all backgrounds and are committed to fostering diversity in public appointments. All appointments are made on merit, following a fair and open competition process regulated by the Office of the Commissioner for Public Appointments.

Disability Commitment

We are dedicated to supporting candidates with disabilities and are proud to hold Disability Confident Leader status. We guarantee an interview for any applicant with a disability whose application meets the minimum criteria for the post.

To ensure an inclusive process, we are committed to making reasonable adjustments where possible for candidates with disabilities. If you require any adjustments to support your application, please refer to the 'How to Apply and Submit Your Application' section below. Further information about the Disability Confident Leader scheme is available via the Disability Confident logo displayed above.

The Forestry Commission (FC) is a non-Ministerial Government Department that has a vital role to play in helping the Government achieve its objectives. It is headed by a Board of Commissioners, comprising a Chair and up to 10 other Forestry Commissioners, made up of non-executive and executive appointments.

The FC was established a century ago as a body serving Great Britain (GB), but the departure of Wales from the Commission in 2013 and Scotland in 2019, means that the FC's work will be primarily in England.

Forest Services are part of the FC that provides expertise and support in order to expand, protect, improve and connect England's woodlands. Forest Services regulate and incentivise landowners to encourage new tree planting and to help keep private forests, trees and woodlands under sustainable management. The plant health team inspects imports and exports on wood, as well as our forests, and manage outbreaks to minimise the impacts of pests and diseases.

Forestry England is England's largest land manager, caring for the nation's forests to benefit society. Forestry England are practical multipurpose forestry experts. As well as supplying over one third of the nation's homegrown timber, Forestry England test ground-breaking approaches to adapt to climate change, address the biodiversity crisis and improve people's health and wellbeing, on a scale like no other. As a public corporation Forestry England draws on diverse income streams to grow the natural capital of our forests.

Forest Research provide the evidence base for UK forestry policy, practice and innovation. They are internationally renowned for the delivery of applied forest science, by providing research, evidence, data and services in support of sustainable forestry. Forest Research's work informs the development and delivery of UK Government and devolved administration policies for sustainable management and protection of trees, woods, forests and natural resources sectors.

About the Forestry Commission

As Chair you will provide visible leadership and strategic vision for the Board of Forestry Commissioners in line with its statutory objectives, set the overall strategic and operational direction of the FC with ownership of the FC Strategy 'Thriving for the Future', ensure good governance and, together with the Board, hold the executive to account. You will understand and promote the role of the FC in implementing Government policy for English forestry, in both the public and private sectors, and in contributing to a range of other Government policies. You will be able to balance priorities and command confidence and respect at the highest level with Ministers across Government and with partners across the country.

We are seeking a Chair who can maintain a positive and constructive relationship with the forestry sector and the devolved administrations, shape the delivery arrangements for forestry policy in the future and promote a positive and constructive relationship with everyone that works with the FC including other Defra bodies, other Government Departments, regulators, local government, local communities, business and industry and other interest groups.

Key Responsibilities and duties:

- Responsibility for the leadership of the FC; setting the direction, and driving increased efficiency and effectiveness in line with Government's strategic priorities;
- Implementing Government policy for forestry in England whilst maintaining a positive and constructive relationship with the sector; representing the FC and promoting and maintaining

Group, across government and the devolved administrations; building relationships and helping remove barriers to joint working to make the best use of resources available and maximise outcomes and benefits;

- Overseeing the FC in promoting and championing the benefits of forestry including economic growth, green finance, leisure and recreation, health and wellbeing, water quality and flood prevention amongst others;
- Chair the Board of Commissioners and maintain oversight of the functions delegated to Forestry England, Forest Services and Forest Research through membership of the sub-boards. Building and maintaining effective, cohesive and focussed Boards, including annually assessing performance. Providing support and constructively challenging the senior executive team when necessary;
- Line management responsibility for the Chief Executive; and promoting a culture of equality, diversity and inclusion across FC.
- A campaign to recruit three new Forestry Commissioners to the Board will launch shortly. It is anticipated that the Chair Elect will be involved in aspects of the appointment process. Chair candidates will be kept informed of the Commissioner campaign timeline as it progresses.

Regulation of appointment This post is regulated by the Commissioner for Public Appointments. For more information, please refer to the [Commissioner's website](#)

Remuneration

£49,000 per annum (based on a daily rate of £490)

Time commitment

100 days per annum

Term length

Initial appointment for 4 years

Location

London, Various

Terms of Appointment

Essential Criteria

- **Leadership:** The ability to set strategic vision and drive forward priorities of the organisation. A strong track record in relevant senior leadership roles.
- **An Understanding and Enthusiasm for the Organisation:** A clear understanding and enthusiasm of the work, priorities and challenges of the Forestry Commission, its agencies and the context within which it operates.
- **Effective Stakeholder Engagement:** Strong communication and interpersonal skills, with the ability to build strong stakeholder relationships, including with Ministers, Senior Government officials and external stakeholders. The ability to work closely with the non-executive board and other key stakeholders, providing support, constructive challenge and assurance as appropriate.
- **Judgement:** Effective decision-making skills with the ability to critically analyse a wide range of information to make clear and objective evidence-based recommendations to support the delivery of the organisation's objectives.

Desirable Criteria

- **Experience of Land Management and Forestry:** A strong track record of delivery on significant land management issues within the private, public or voluntary sectors. Knowledge of the key drivers, competing priorities and challenges faced by landowners in England, including nature, climate and biosecurity. Knowledge of forestry practices and policies and experience in managing or overseeing forestry-related matters.





The Timeline

How to apply

To apply you will need to [create an account](#) or [sign in](#) to “Apply for Public Appointment Service” gov.uk by the deadline of **midday on Thursday 4 September 2025**. Once logged onto your account, click on ‘apply for this role’ and follow the on-screen instructions.

To apply, all candidates are required to submit:

- A CV of no more than two sides of A4 with education, professional qualifications and employment history and the names and contact details for two referees
- A statement of suitability that should give evidence of the strength and depth of your ability to meet the essential criteria for this role. Please provide specific examples to demonstrate how you meet each of the criteria (max two pages please).
- Equality information
- Information relating to any outside interests or reputational issues

For further information please email:
publicappts@defra.gov.uk

Advisory Assessment Panel

- **Sally Randall** – Director General for Environment, Defra as the chair
- **Penny Coates** - Deputy Lieutenant for Leicestershire, Vice Chair of Chester Zoo, as the Senior Independent Panel Member
- **Ranjit Baxi** - Founder of the Global Recycling Foundation and 'Global Recycling Day' as the Independent Panel Member

Ministers are assisted in their decision making by an Advisory Assessment Panel.

In undertaking their assessment of candidates, the role of the Panel is to decide, objectively, who meets the published selection criteria for the role, in other words, who is appointable to the role.

The names of all appointable candidates must be submitted to Ministers. It is then for Ministers to determine merit and make the final appointment. Appointments to the Forestry Commission also require Palace approval and a Royal Warrant.

Conflicts of Interest and Due Diligence

If you have any interests that might be relevant to the work of the Forestry Commission, 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.

Complaints

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/>
- [Governance Code on Public Appointments](#)

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.

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 restriction order;
- you fail to declare any conflict of interest.

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.

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



[William Worsley](#)
(Chair)



[Ross Murray](#)



[Richard Stanford](#)
(CEO)



[Sandy Storrie](#)



[Neil Sachdev](#)



[Jennie Price](#)



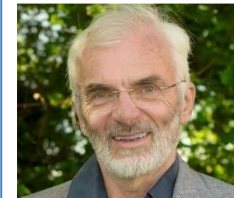
[Hilary Alison](#)



[Kate Cheetham](#)



[Peter Latham](#)



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Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs



Forestry Commission



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