



Forestry Commission

Briefing pack for the appointment of

3x Commissioners of the Forestry Commission

CLOSING DATE: Midday 2 October 2025



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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

Role of Commissioners:

The Forestry Commission (FC) Board of Commissioners plays an important role in the delivery of the FC's objectives. It sets the strategic direction, provides leadership for FC activities, directs the executive in the conduct of business and allocates resources to meet the FC's objectives. The Commissioners on the Board of Commissioners are listed in **Annex C**.

The Board has an important role in overseeing, monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the FC's strategy, Thriving for the Future, and objectives, building effective strategic partnerships to support the organisation and its aims. It promotes good governance and sound decision making across the organisation.

Commissioners are expected to work collaboratively, contributing effectively and constructively challenging group discussions involving a wide range of subject matter and people, including technical specialists and professionals. The Board needs to formulate and discuss strategic subjects in a coherent and structured way and ensure that communication with stakeholders is transparent and effective.

Commissioners are expected to represent the FC and its values at external events and engage with local teams to help support and promote the work of the FC at an operational level.

Each Commissioner is assigned to a sub-Board of the Board of Commissioners, For these roles the successful applicants will be appointed to the Forest Services Board. Additionally, each commissioner will also be allocated to a Forestry and Woodlands Advisory Committee (FWAC) where they will represent the Forestry Commission and input into decisions and actions made by the FWAC.

Up to two of the successful applicants will be appointed as trustees, representing the Forestry Commission, to the William Robinson Gravetye

Charity of which the Forestry Commission is the sole member.

One successful applicant, in addition to that of the Audit & Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC) Chair, will be assigned as a member of the ARAC to represent the Forest Services Board.

Commissioners are appointed to the Forestry Commission Board by HM King on the recommendation of Defra Ministers and are required to promote the interests of forestry, the development of afforestation and the production and supply of timber. In doing this, they must seek a reasonable balance between the production and supply of timber and the interests of conservation.

Regulation of appointment

This post is regulated by the Commissioner for Public Appointments. For more information, please refer to the Commissioner's website



Terms of Appointment

Essential criteria:

We are recruiting for three new Commissioners. The following essential criteria apply to all three positions:

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

Strategic skills: 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 strategy.

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

We are seeking candidates with expertise in key areas.

In accordance with the Forestry Act 1967, at least three Forestry Commissioners must have special knowledge and experience of forestry. The Board must also have an Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC) Chair.

Therefore, you must also clearly demonstrate **at least one** of the following in your application:

Forestry experience: Significant knowledge of forestry practices and policies, and experience in managing or overseeing forestry-related matters.

Environment experience: A strong track record of delivery on significant environmental issues (including nature and climate) within the private, public or voluntary sectors.

Land management experience: 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.

Audit and Risk experience: An ability to demonstrate recent financial experience in analysing statements and managing complex transactions. This includes, but is not limited to, proven experience in assurance, risk management, and working with audit committees; a recognised qualification in finance and audit.



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 2 October 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

- **Edward Barker** – Panel Chair (Director, Natural Environment, Trees & Landscapes)
- **William Worsley** – Chair of Forestry Commission
- **Penny Coates** – Independent Panel Member (IPM) - Deputy Lieutenant for Leicestershire, Deputy Chair for Chester Zoo and a Trustee of the National Space Centre and of Leicester Cathedral.

Ministers are assisted in their decision making by Panels.

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.

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



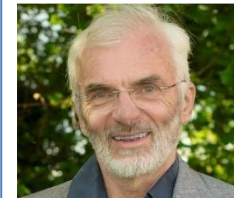
Hilary Allison



Kate Cheetham



Peter Latham



Jo Bradwell



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs



Forestry Commission

