

Briefing pack for the appointment of


Secretary of State Members to National Park Authorities and National Landscape Conservation Boards

CLOSING DATE: Tuesday, 16 June 2026



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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.

Image: North York Moors

DEFRA MISSION STATEMENT

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 on <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/about-us/information/disability-confident-guidance-for-applicants/>.

Image: Chilterns



EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

Dear Candidate,

Thank you for your interest in serving as a Secretary of State appointed member of a National Park Authority or National Landscape Conservation Board.

Protected Landscapes are our most iconic and inspiring places. In 1949, post-war government passed legislation for their creation, recognising everyone has a right to access the countryside – from Northumberland’s dark skies to the South Downs’ Seven Sisters. 75 years on, our needs are greater than ever, with nature underpinning our health, economy and climate. That’s why this government will empower Protected Landscapes to become greener, wilder and more accessible.

Covering 25% of England, but half of our priority habitats, Protected Landscapes organisations are essential to nature’s recovery. They provide flood prevention, affordable housing, improve water quality and health inequalities, and provide sustainable food production, green jobs and so much more. As a member, your vision will shape the future of these landscapes, and therefore the nation. You’ll accelerate delivery of our statutory biodiversity targets and international commitment to protect 30% of nature by 2030. You collaborate with local communities, land managers and public bodies to ensure that these living landscapes thrive for people and nature.

This government has committed to reinvigorating Protected Landscapes with new legislation, targets and tools. Members will help shape this bold new deal for Protected Landscapes, so by applying you could be part of something huge. We need dynamic people, with diverse skills and experiences, who will take innovative approaches.

You will also play a vital role in promoting equality, diversity, and inclusion by finding ways to connect people with diverse skills from all walks of life with nature. These landscapes belong to everyone, and it is crucial that Protected Landscapes reflect the full diversity of our nation.

If you are ready to contribute towards this important mission, please apply. Together we can protect and enhance these remarkable places for generations to come.

I look forward to receiving your application!

Mary Creagh CBE
Minister for Nature



MINISTERIAL MESSAGE TO CANDIDATES

Protected Landscapes (National Parks and National Landscapes) welcome almost 270 million visitors a year and are home to internationally important habitats, wildlife, and heritage.

There are ten National Parks, including the Broads, and thirty-four National Landscapes in England. Together, these legal designations cover nearly a quarter of land in England but half of our priority habitats.

Protected Landscapes are essential to nature's recovery, and through this they protect communities from flooding, fight climate change and underpin a sustainable rural economy.

Statutory Purposes

The statutory purposes of the National Park designation 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 a duty to seek to foster the economic and social well-being of local communities within the National Park.

The statutory purpose of a designated area of outstanding natural beauty (known as a National Landscape) is to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the area.

National Landscapes Conservation Boards have a further responsibility to increase the public understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the area of outstanding natural beauty.

National Landscape Conservation Boards also have the duty to seek to foster the economic and social well-being of local communities within the designated area.

If there is conflict between the purposes, Protected Landscapes organisations, with the exception of the Broads Authority, are 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'.

Image: South Downs, Jack and Jill Windmills near Hassocks

Each National Park Authority or Conservation Board is managed by an executive staff team with oversight from Members.

Members make decisions about the actions that each National Park Authority or Conservation Board should take to deliver its purposes.

There are typically between 18 and 30 members, who are appointed in three different ways:

1. by the Secretary of State following national competition,
2. by local authorities,
3. elected by Parish councils but confirmed by the Secretary of State.

This campaign will appoint new Members under the first category. You will be appointed by the Secretary of State for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.

The time, passion and expertise of Members is fundamental to achieving the full potential of England's Protected Landscapes so that future generations can continue to enjoy their special qualities.

As a Member, you could help future generations inherit greener, wilder and more accessible Protected Landscapes.

Image credits: Barton Hills, Chilterns – Aleksandra Warchol



MEMBERS

The overall role of a member is to contribute to the leadership, scrutiny, and direction of the National Park Authority (NPA) or National Landscape Conservation Board (CB) 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 NPA or CB.

The key functions of a member are to:

- Ensure the NPA or CB furthers its statutory purposes.
- Agree plans that ensure the Protected Landscape is available to all parts of society, is relevant and is valued as a national asset for its special qualities.

- Represent the NPA or CB through collaborative working with external stakeholders at a national and local level
- 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.

The successful candidates must abide by the Nolan principles of public service, the 12 Principles of Governance for all Public Body NEDs (attached at Annex A and Annex B) and the Code of Conduct for Board members.

Image credits: Bossington Beach, Exmoor – Dave Thackwell



ROLE DESCRIPTION

We are looking to attract dynamic candidates from a range of diverse backgrounds, who can demonstrate:

- Enthusiasm and a genuine passion for the work of National Park Authorities and Conservation Boards, including their importance to nature, climate and communities.
- An ability to successfully engage with, influence and inspire a wide-ranging audience as an ambassador for Protected Landscapes.
- A demonstrable commitment to equality, diversity, and inclusion.
- An ability to think strategically and creatively, scrutinising complex issues to find innovative solutions.
- An ability to support ambitions to bring new perspective and funding opportunities for Protected Landscapes.

Image credit: Milky Way Dartmoor - Alex Nail



ESSENTIAL CRITERIA

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 16 June 2026**. Once logged onto your account, click on ‘apply for this role’ and follow the on-screen instructions.

All candidates are required to provide

- A CV, no more than two A4 pages long, detailing your previous roles and education
- A completed application form. **Please use the attached application form which is available for download on the website at the bottom of the page. The website may mention submitting a Supporting Statement but please ignore this, and complete the application form instead.**

You can apply for more than one Protected Landscape. Please ensure you specify for which Protected Landscape you are applying for on the application form, and click on the correct advert to apply. There are three live adverts – National Parks (for the North York Moors, Peak District, Yorkshire Dales, Exmoor, Dartmoor and South Downs), Chilterns National Landscape Conservation Board and Cotswolds National Landscape Conservation Board.

AI must not be used to provide misleading information. While technology can be used in your application, for example to assist with structure, we value authenticity, and advisory assessment panels will use the interview stage to verify the originality of your statements.

If you have any questions about the process, criteria, or roles, the Public Appointments Team is happy to assist. You can contact us at publicappts@defra.gov.uk.

If you require a **reasonable adjustment** or wish to apply under the **Disability Confident Scheme**, you can do so when submitting your application.

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

The closing date for applications to be submitted is Midday on Tuesday 16 June 2026

Image credits: Cotswolds, Seed Harvest.

HOW TO APPLY

Advisory Assessment Panels

Ministers are assisted in their decision making by Panels. This campaign will use individual Advisory Assessment Panels for each National Park Authority or National Landscape Conservation Board. Each panel will comprise the following:

- **A departmental official:** This will be Gabrielle Edwards, Defra Deputy Director for Access, Landscape, Peatland and Soils. They will serve as panel chair and will represent Ministers' views at every stage of the competition.
- **A representative from the public body concerned:** Typically, the Chair of the Authority/ Conservation Board as they can advise on the skills and experience needed for the roles
- **An independent member:** An independent panel member must be independent of both Defra and the Authority/ Conservation Board. The independent member will provide an external perspective. The following independent panel members will be used:
 - Panel 1: **Dr Kirsty McCarrison** (Council for British Archaeology Trustee) for Chilterns, North York Moors, Yorkshire Dales and Peak District
 - Panel 2: **Sandra Witzel** (Transport Focus Board) for Exmoor, Dartmoor, Cotswolds and South Downs.

Role of Panels

To decide, objectively, who meets the published selection criteria for the role and identify 'appointable' candidates. It is then for Ministers to determine merit and make the final appointment. Through the process the Panel's role is:

- to determine which applicants should be shortlisted based on their application.
- to interview each shortlisted candidate and to assess which are appointable.
- to preserve the confidentiality of candidates throughout the selection process;
- to ensure any personal or familial relationships with candidates is declared within the panel and dealt with appropriately and consistently with the principles of fairness and merit

Image credits: Defra, family enjoying a walk



Image credit: Dentdale Sunset, Yorkshire Dales – Lee Beel

RECRUITMENT PROCESS

In 2026 we will recruit thirteen new Secretary of State appointed Members across six National Park Authorities, Cotswolds National Landscape Conservation Board, and the Chilterns National Landscape Conservation Board.

Please state in your application form which Protected Landscapes you are applying to.

Please note that all roles require attendance at meetings in person. Further info on the location, time commitment and remuneration for each is below:

North York Moors NPA

Location: Helmsley, North Yorkshire

Time commitment: 2-3 days per month

Remuneration: allowance of £2,887.35 per annum

Find out more: <https://www.northyorkmoors.org.uk/>

Peak District NPA

Location: Bakewell, Derbyshire

Time commitment: 3-4 days per month

Remuneration: allowance of £2,855 per annum

Find out more: <https://www.peakdistrict.gov.uk/home>

Yorkshire Dales NPA

Location: Leyburn, North Yorkshire

Time commitment: 2-3 days per month

Remuneration: allowance of £3,901 per annum

Find out more: <https://www.yorkshiredales.org.uk/>

Cotswolds National Landscape Conservation Board

Location: Rendcomb, Cirencester

Time commitment: 1-3 days per month

Remuneration: allowance of £225 per annum

Find out more: <https://www.cotswolds-nl.org.uk/>

Dartmoor NPA

Location: Bovey Tracey, Newton Abbot

Time commitment: 2 days per month

Remuneration: allowance of £1,980 per annum

Find out more: <https://www.dartmoor.gov.uk/>

Exmoor NPA

Location: Dulverton, Somerset

Time commitment: 2 days per month

Remuneration: allowance of £3,274.21 per annum

Find out more: <https://www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk/>

South Downs NPA

Location: Midhurst, Sussex

Time commitment: 4 days per month

Remuneration: allowance of £3,990.45 per annum

Find out more: <https://www.southdowns.gov.uk/>

Chilterns National Landscape Conservation Board

Location: Chinnor, Oxfordshire

Time commitment: 1-3 days per month

Remuneration: allowance of £300 per annum

Find out more: <https://www.chilterns.org.uk/>

Image: ©SDNPA

Conflicts of Interest and Due Diligence

If you have any interests that might be relevant to the work of the National Park Authority or Conservation Board, 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.

Expertise

1. 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.
2. Consider the broader mission and duties of your sponsoring Secretary of State, his or her Department and the Government.
3. Ensure compliance with statutory duties and the organisation's Framework Document and act within its powers.
4. Exercise reasonable care, skill, and diligence in the exercise of their authority and judgement.

Scrutiny and challenge

5. 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.
6. 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.
7. 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.
8. 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.

Support

9. 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.
10. 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.
11. 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.
12. Promote the success of the entity having regard to the interests of all members and stakeholders, and all risks



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs

