

# Volunteer Information Pack

# Introduction ...



Thank you for the interest you have shown in volunteering for Dorset Wildlife Trust.

This information pack provides an insight into the vital work we do for wildlife and people.

Dorset is a county rich in wildlife and nature, with ancient heathlands and downlands, wildlife rich farmland and an outstanding marine environment, few other places can rival its diversity. Our 43 nature reserves represent all of the major habitats found in Dorset, providing important sources of biodiversity and open access green space for our communities.

However, the world is facing two enormous crises. Climate change and environmental degradation are driving an ecological crisis that threatens everyone's quality of life and Dorset is not immune to the impacts of these crises. Given the chance nature can help to address climate change

but we need to reconnect people with nature and make more space for wildlife. Our work is more vital than ever!

Dorset Wildlife Trust is a great place to volunteer, our friendly and welcoming team is passionate and dedicated to building a Dorset richer in wildlife for everyone. As you read the information in this pack, and perhaps visit the Dorset Wildlife Trust website, I hope you will be inspired by the opportunity to show us what you can bring to our team. We hope to meet you soon.

*Brian*

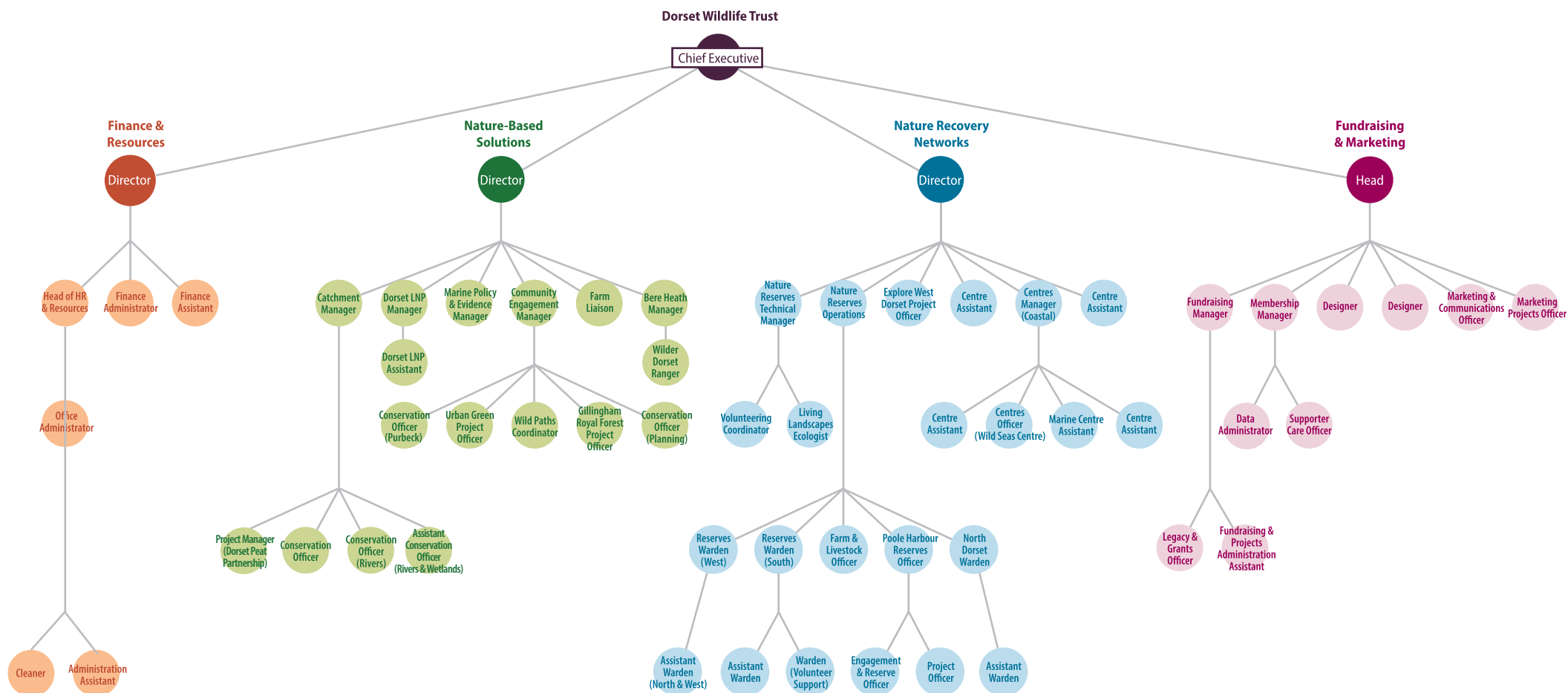


Brian Blease: Chief Executive



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# Team structure...



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# Our Reserves



**We manage 43 nature reserves for wildlife and people across the whole of Dorset.**

**We also work with other organisations and landowners to protect and connect wildlife sites across the county and inspire local communities and young people to care for wildlife where they live.**



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# Our Facilities



## We have six visitor centres across Dorset

**In addition to the beautiful nature reserves we care for, Dorset Wildlife Trust has six centres which provide a base for office working environments, as well as visitor centre facilities.**

**Brooklands Farm**, situated four miles north of Dorchester, is Dorset Wildlife Trust's HQ and provides the office base for many roles. The building is beside the restored hay-meadow, a haven for wildflowers, beetles and butterflies.

**The Kingcombe Centre** is set within the lovely, newly designated Kingcombe and Powerstock National Nature Reserve.

**The Urban Wildlife Centre** is situated in East Dorset amongst stunning heathland which hosts a multitude of flora and fauna. The centre is an office base for a number of staff and volunteers.

**The Chesil Beach Centre and the Wild Seas Centre** at Kimmeridge host numerous activities and events throughout the year, offering snorkel trails, beach cleans and more.

**The Villa at Brownsea Island** is currently undergoing a huge refit as part of the Wild Brownsea project and is home to some of our Brownsea staff.



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# Our Projects



## A Wilder Dorset – England's first ever community rewilding project

In a bid to tackle the ecological and climate crises, Dorset Wildlife Trust recently acquired a large area of land near Bere Regis. This site, around 170 hectares in total, will showcase sustainable change in land use.

**This site  
will provide  
vital space and new  
opportunities to  
engage the public  
with the natural  
world**

It will give Dorset wildlife much-needed room to spread and regenerate and give the community new space to reconnect with nature, while reducing net nitrates in Poole Harbour.

### **There are three key reasons for purchasing this land.**

#### **First is tackling the ecological crisis.**

The Wildlife Trusts want to see 30% of land being managed in a way which is beneficial to nature in the UK by 2030. This means some currently nature-poor areas need to be restored to allow nature space to rebound and spread.

#### **Second is tackling the climate crisis.**

Restoring nature increases the amount of carbon held in healthy soils, new woodlands and wetlands and reduces outputs of harmful greenhouse gases.

**Third, we aim to help local communities better connect with nature on their doorstep.** More of us than ever are disconnected from the natural world but connecting to nature has huge benefits for mental and physical wellbeing. This site will provide vital space and new opportunities to engage the public with the natural world. Dorset Wildlife Trust is excited to be involving the local community with planning for the site's future, to ensure their voices are heard and they receive real community benefits.



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# Our Projects



## Beavers in Dorset

In February 2021, Dorset Wildlife Trust released two beavers into an enclosed site in Dorset. This landmark project led by Dorset Wildlife Trust is the first of its kind for the county and welcomes beavers back to Dorset for the first time in over 400 years.

Following several years of preparation, including installing a specialist fence to enclose the site and recording baseline data with experts from University of Exeter and Wessex Water, the pair of Eurasian beavers (*Castor fiber*), an adult male and female, have been settling in for a few months now.

The beavers were relocated from Scotland to Dorset under licence from NatureScot. Their new home, a suitably large site of freshwater habitat, is not accessible to the public.

The beavers have been introduced as part of a scientific study and a key focus of the

project is monitoring and recording the impact the beavers have on water quality, flooding and other wildlife. Beavers are known as 'nature's engineers' and their activities, including wetland creation through the building of dams, have the potential to increase biodiversity, filter and clean water, and even reduce flooding by slowing the rate of water passing through rivers and streams during storm events.

**This landmark project led by Dorset Wildlife Trust is the first of its kind for the county**



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