

JOB DESCRIPTION



Job Title: Chief Operating Officer
Team: Senior Leadership Team
Responsible to: Chief Executive
Responsible for: Operations Team
Direct Reports: Director of Fundraising and Marketing
Head of Finance
Head of People and Culture
Head of Business Development

Grade: G+

ROLE DESCRIPTION

The Chief Operating Officer (COO) is a key leadership role responsible for overseeing the development and delivery of new and existing revenue streams for the charity, and overseeing the financial strategy, sustainability, and operational efficiency of the charity. Reporting to the Chief Executive Officer and working closely with the Senior Leadership Team, the COO ensures the organisation's financial health, financial compliance, and long-term viability.

The COO will lead financial planning for income and expenditure, budgeting, forecasting, and reporting activities, ensuring transparency and accountability in financial operations. The role will oversee cash flow management, investment strategies, and financial risk assessment, ensuring financial sustainability in line with the charity's mission.

The COO will drive income generation strategies, identifying opportunities for fundraising, grants, partnerships, and social enterprise initiatives. They will work closely with fundraising and business development team to diversify revenue streams and maximise financial impact.

The COO will also manage key resources, ensuring efficient allocation of funds, cost control, and value-for-money initiatives. They will develop policies, strengthen internal controls, and ensure compliance with charity regulations and best practice.

A strategic thinker with strong commercial acumen, the COO will play a pivotal role in shaping the charity's future, supporting its growth, and ensuring it continues to deliver meaningful impact in the conservation sector.

MAIN RESPONSIBILITIES

The brief for this role is wide-ranging as befits a senior leader and it is understood that the right candidate may not have direct experience across all the responsibilities listed below but will have the capacity to learn new skills and competencies.

1. **Financial Leadership & Management** – Provide strategic oversight of all financial activities, ensuring sound financial management, reporting, budgeting, forecasting, and

investment strategies. Work closely with the Head of Finance to maintain robust financial controls, ensure compliance with SORP, and provide timely, accurate financial reports to the Board, CEO, and Senior Leadership Team.

2. **Income Generation & Fundraising** – Work collaboratively with the Director of Fundraising and Marketing to develop and implement sustainable income generation strategies, strengthen our core/predictable income streams and ensure revenue supports the Trust's strategic goals. Diversify income streams, including membership growth, fundraising campaigns, grants, partnerships, and commercial ventures.
3. **Marketing & Communications** – Work collaboratively with the Director of Fundraising and Marketing to ensure effective brand positioning, stakeholder engagement, and supporter retention strategies, integrated marketing and communication plans that enhance fundraising efforts and public awareness.
4. **Operational & Resource Management** – Ensure the charity has efficient HR, administrative and operational systems to support its objectives. Work closely with the Head of People and Culture to ensure effective staff recruitment, retention, and well-being, as well as IT infrastructure and facilities management.
5. **Financial Compliance** – Support the Head of Finance in maintaining regulatory compliance with Charity Commission guidelines and financial legislation.
6. **Business Planning & Development** – Drive strategic business development initiatives to support long-term financial sustainability. Work alongside the Head of Business Development to assess new opportunities, partnerships, and commercial ventures and ensure that the Trust's property assets (including holiday lettings and visitor centres) are managed to optimise financial returns and deliver effective engagement.
7. **Strategic Leadership & Advisory** – As a key member of the Senior Leadership Team, provide expert financial and operational advice to the CEO, Board, and Committees. Foster a culture of collaboration and innovation, ensuring financial and business planning supports the Trust's long-term impact.
8. **Regulatory & Industry Best Practices** – Stay informed of changes in financial legislation, charity sector regulations, and best practices. Ensure the Head of Finance and wider team uphold high professional standards and maintain financial integrity.

KEY COMPETENCIES

Senior staff are expected to have a demonstrable track record in the following areas:

1. Passion for the work of Dorset Wildlife Trust and an interest in its mission.
2. **Communications:** Communicate effectively, internally and externally, to deliver organisational vision and goals and actively promote strategic priorities through a variety of media and by positive role modelling.
3. **Personal Behaviour:** Display a professional, positive and flexible approach to work and an ability to respond to non-routine situations by adapting behaviour and actions to circumstances.
4. **Leadership:** Ability to lead, mentor, and support direct reports, ensuring their teams are aligned with organisational priorities. Set clear objectives, oversee work plans and budgets, and foster a high-performance culture within fundraising, finance, resources, and business development functions.

- 5. Problem Solving and Decision Making:** Anticipate and identify priorities and problems, analyse issues and think creatively to deliver and implement effective solutions and effective decision making
- 6. Knowledge and Understanding:** Maintain a high level of knowledge and understanding around main responsibilities field and work collaboratively with others to share their expertise for the benefit of the organisation.
- 7. Performance Management:** Set clear standards for performance, ensuring organisational goals are met or exceeded while optimising the use of available resources and securing new resources where possible.

OTHER DUTIES

All staff are expected to:

- Act as ambassadors for Dorset Wildlife Trust, maintaining good conduct and demeanour in all interactions with members, volunteers, partners and the public.
- Undertake any other duties appropriate to the post as delegated by the Chief Executive
- Contribute to other Dorset Wildlife Trust activities when required;
- Engender a culture of membership recruitment within the team;
- Abide by organisational policies and procedures laid down in the Staff Handbook, including promoting equal opportunities;
- Ensure that Health and Safety policies and procedures are met in all aspects of the role.

WORKING PRACTICES

The post of Chief Operating Officer is a full time post (35 hrs/wk) 0900 – 1700hrs Monday to Friday.

Some evening and occasional weekend working may be required with time off in lieu. There may be periodic travelling within the county with occasional journeys further afield and occasional overnight stays. DWT pool cars are available but own vehicle may be needed. A valid driving licence is a requirement of this position.

The normal place of work for the post is Dorset Wildlife Trust HQ at Brooklands Farm near Dorchester. However, DWT operates a hybrid working system enabling staff to work from home occasionally in agreement with the CEO.

KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE

- **Strategic Financial Leadership** – A suitable financial qualification or extensive experience in a senior financial leadership role, with responsibility for strategic financial planning, risk management, and income generation.
- **Charity Finance & Compliance** – Extensive experience in managing and reporting on complex accounts, with a strong understanding of charity accounting, SORP, and regulatory compliance.
- **Income Generation & Commercial Acumen** – Demonstrable experience in developing and implementing successful income generation and commercial income strategies.
- **Business Transformation & Change Management** – Proven ability to identify, lead, and implement business change, ensuring financial and operational sustainability.
- **Leadership & People Management** – Strong track record in leading and managing multidisciplinary teams, providing strategic direction and fostering a high-performance culture.
- **Operational & Resource Management** – Understanding of key business functions including finance, HR, IT, governance, and risk management, ensuring efficient resource allocation.
- **Data-Driven Decision Making** – Proficiency in data analysis, performance metrics, and financial modeling to drive informed strategic decisions.
- **Sector-Specific Expertise** – Experience in the not-for-profit or charity sector, with knowledge of funding models, governance requirements, and charity impact measurement.

SKILLS

- **Financial & Strategic Planning** – Ability to develop and oversee robust financial strategies that align with the charity's mission.
- **Stakeholder Engagement & Communication** – Excellent interpersonal and communication skills, with the ability to influence at Board, executive, and operational levels.
- **Problem-Solving & Decision-Making** – Strong analytical mindset, able to assess complex challenges and deliver pragmatic, strategic solutions.
- **Leadership & Collaboration** – Exceptional team leadership, fostering a collaborative and inclusive culture to achieve shared goals.
- **Change & Risk Management** – Ability to identify risks and implement proactive solutions, ensuring financial and operational resilience.
- **Innovation & Business Development** – Capability to **identify and capitalise on new income opportunities**, ensuring long-term sustainability.
- **Negotiation & Contract Management** – Strong ability to negotiate partnerships, contracts, and funding agreements that maximise impact.

PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES

- **Mission-Driven & Ethical** – Passionate about the charity's purpose, demonstrating integrity, accountability, and commitment to nature conservation and the natural environment.
- **Resilient & Adaptable** – Ability to thrive in a dynamic environment, responding effectively to challenges and change.
- **Strategic & Forward-Thinking** – A visionary leader who can balance long-term goals with operational realities.
- **Collaborative & Influential** – A natural relationship-builder who can engage and inspire diverse stakeholders.
- **Empathetic & People-Focused** – A supportive and empowering leader who values diversity and team development.