



MOUSEHOLE WILD BIRD HOSPITAL CORNWALL

CEO Recruitment January 2025



Mousehole Wild Bird Hospital
Raginnis Hill, Mousehole
Cornwall TR19 6SR

Charity number: 272145

Welcome from our Chair

I am delighted you're considering applying to be our first Chief Executive, and hope you find the information included in this pack helpful in supporting your decision.

We are proud to have provided rescue and rehabilitation for wild land and seabirds for nearly 100 years from our site in Mousehole and are committed to continuing our critical conservation work for years to come. This historical legacy whilst significant and an important part of our heritage does not guarantee our future.

In establishing the role of CEO, the Trustees have recognised that we need to establish a more strategic approach to the development and implementation of our future plans and a renewed focus on our day-to-day operational culture, controls and management. There are some important issues to be addressed as part of our immediate needs. These include improved financial oversight and reporting, strategic decisions about where we operate from and improving the culture and management of our people. These themes are expanded upon later in this pack. There are also important opportunities to improve our outreach activity, our local and regional profile and to embrace the wider issues facing our environment from net zero to marine pollution.

We believe that with the right leadership, MWBHC can build on these opportunities and make a profound difference in sustaining the wild bird population and specifically those in our care. We are seeking a Chief Executive who shares our passion and commitment and will enhance the important conservation work we undertake every day.

If you are inspired by what you read about us and can offer the skills and experience required to lead us into the future, we want to hear from you.

Jeremy Whitaker, Chair



ABOUT US

Caring for sick and injured wild birds in Cornwall

We are proud of our history, having provided rescue and rehabilitation for wild birds for almost 100 years. Set high atop the cliffs overlooking the picturesque Cornish fishing village of Mousehole, Mousehole Wild Bird Hospital Cornwall provides a safe haven for over 1,000 wild birds every year. We provide care and support for many different species of bird, from herring gulls to robins, from magpies and crows to pigeons and doves. Our aim is to treat and rehabilitate the birds in our care and to return them to the wild.

Context

An outbreak of Avian Influenza (Bird Flu) in August 2022 led to the culling of the entire bird population on site, at that point around 200 birds. This event has had far reaching implications for us and is and will shape our long-term strategy. It led to an enforced closure for 12 months and we operated out of a temporary site during 2023 during which time we only treated young seabirds.

The response to the outbreak was a recognition that we needed to rebuild our activities and our reputation with clinical excellence at our core, with a need to invest in veterinary trained people and the facilities in which they work. This will enable us to treat more birds with better clinical outcomes. We have made limited progress in this area.

During this time, we took the opportunity to deliver some changes and plan for the future. We published our very first strategic plan and developed a new identity and logo, following this up with the launch of a new website, and a successful art auction which funded our temporary site. In 2023 we also started to lay the groundwork for the refurbishment of the main hospital site, working with a local architectural practice and their specialist advisors.

In 2024 we adopted a similar approach by only admitting young seabirds. An outbreak of Avian Flu broke out again in late autumn that year which fortunately meant that the impact on the main breeding season was minimal. We were forced to close to new admissions, but our control measures meant that there was no infection within the hospital.

There are three key strategic imperatives which the new CEO will need to address early in their appointment:

1. Financial stability

The hospital is financially solvent, but annual expenditure currently exceeds income which is not sustainable as it is depleting capital reserves. We need to understand our cash flow as a matter of urgency and to establish a robust annual budgeting process. The CEO will need to work closely with our new treasurer and recently appointed accountants to understand this, control costs and manage income generation. Establishing regular financial reporting to Council will be a key part of addressing this issue.

2. Future operational locations

We can no longer treat seabirds safely at Mousehole and if we are to continue treating them, we need to establish a permanent alternative location. Landbirds can be returned to Mousehole, but we need to understand the economies of obtaining an additional location for seabirds and operating two sites.

The hospital site at Mousehole is held in trust under the terms of which we do not have the ability to take control of it until 2037. Our refurbishment proposals have established an outline cost to improve facilities, but also a major liability in terms of the condition of the drainage system. We need a plan for this site.

The CEO will need to lead the process with Council to establish a sustainable long term location strategy and associated operating plan and the financial resources to implement and fund them.

3. Operational resources

Staff costs make up a substantial part of our operating costs. Steps have been taken to manage costs with the removal of overtime for permanent staff. However operational staff costs overall remain too high and there is a requirement to address this, which includes a significant reduction in the use of seasonal labour.

The growth in volunteers is a major operational issue and a huge opportunity. It is only within the last three years that volunteers have been welcome at all. Numbers are far too low, and their treatment and facilities provided are not where they need to be.

Overall, there needs to be a significant cultural re-set in the way in which the hospital is operated for the care of the birds and the treatment of volunteers. Overall standards of site presentation and maintenance are not as good as they should be.

Proposals to address the culture, operation and organisation structure of the hospital will be an early requirement.

Finances and Funding

As has been indicated above establishing improved financial reporting and controls will be an early objective of the role.

Comprehensive financial reporting is currently extremely limited with the Annual Report being the single significant source of information.

[Download our 2023 Annual Report here](#)

Financial record keeping is entirely manual, however the process of migrating to QuickBooks has been started, but progress has been slow.

In terms of income the majority of it comes from legacies and this has been the case for a significant period of time. Very little is known about the source or motivation for these bequests. A part time (2 days/week) fundraising position was established just over a year ago, which has made progress with local events and has started the process of addressing the opportunity to significantly grow an extremely small membership base.

The largest category of costs is staffing and again the challenges have been set out in the previous section.

Meet our Council (Board) of Trustees

Guiding our direction for the future. Mousehole Wild Bird Hospital Cornwall is led by a knowledgeable and engaged Council of Trustees, each of whom is committed to ensuring the future of the hospital is in safe hands and we are able to support every wild bird who needs our care.

Jeremy Whitaker, Chair

Jeremy is Chair of the Trustee Council and has lived in Cornwall for nearly 20 years. He has extensive board level experience as a statutory director within the rail industry and has served on the management board of Falmouth University. Jeremy is also a Director and Chair of the Community Rail Network Board.

He works as a consultant in the rail industry with clients across the UK and is a Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Marketing.

Michael Larsen, Treasurer

Joined December 2024. *Bio to follow*

Margaret Cass

From her arrival in Mousehole in 1963, Margaret always loved visiting the Hospital with her children. She became involved with fundraising as a volunteer before officially joining the council in the 1970's. She was then elected chair from 1990 until her retirement in 2022 but is still actively involved and until very recently was Treasurer.

Christine Trickey

Christine semi-retired to Cornwall in 2006 having worked in administration for Balfour Beatty for a number of years and became a trustee for Mousehole Wild Bird Hospital shortly afterwards. She's always been interested in birds and enjoys being part of a team with their welfare at heart. She has also served on the Mousehole carnival committee as secretary and is a volunteer gardener for the National Trust.

Robert Houghton

Bob has lived in mid Cornwall with his growing family since 1985. He runs his own management consultancy business working with a wide range of clients across the UK and Europe. He enjoys the great outdoors, has walked the South West Coast Path and is an active volunteer in North Cornwall with the National Trust coast path team.

Sally Crabtree

Sally Crabtree was once a world class gymnast and is now a song-writing poet and children's author. She is also the creative director of Artconnexion UK CIC – an organisation that devises and delivers award winning creative literacy projects internationally. Sally has always had a passion for song birds and is delighted to be working on a current Birds on the Branchline initiative which aims to celebrate and preserve the heritage of songbirds and their habitats along Cornwall's Branchlines.

Wilma Robson

Wilma has always loved birds and has lived in Sennen for many years enjoying the view of the wildlife from her garden and the local coastline. She has supported the hospital for a long time and agreed to join us as a trustee in 2022.

Kate Jones

To follow

Jane Desmond

Jane is semi-retired and moved to Cornwall in 2021, she has extensive board level experience within the bus industry and later in her career went to work as Chief Operating Officer for a Social Enterprise. She still holds a Non-Executive role for UNO Bus, a subsidiary of the University of Hertfordshire.

THE ROLE

MWBHC is seeking an inspirational and visionary Chief Executive to lead Cornwall's only wild bird only sanctuary. This pivotal role involves working closely with the Council of Trustees to shape and steer the charity's direction and leadership. The Chief Executive will be responsible for driving the organisation's growth, ensuring exceptional delivery of our services and caring for and rehabilitating more wild birds, year on year. Additionally, the CEO will serve as the public face of MWBHC, acting as a passionate ambassador for the charity while offering strong support and guidance to our team and volunteers.

Role title: Chief Executive Officer

Responsible to: Chair of the Trustee Council

Accountable to: Trustee Council

Purpose of the role: To provide the highest levels of leadership and to be responsible for the management and administration of MWBHC within the strategic, policy and accountability framework laid down by the Council of Trustees

Together with the chair, to enable the council of trustees to fulfil its duties and responsibilities for the proper governance of MWBHC and to ensure that the council receives timely advice and appropriate information on all relevant matters

Hours: *Full or part time considered (Minimum 21 hours). Requires one weekend in four onsite and occasional events and meetings outside of office hours.*

Salary: £40,000 - £45,000 (*pro-rata if part time*)

Contract: Permanent

Location: On site Mousehole/West Cornwall

Key responsibilities

To provide the highest levels of leadership and to be responsible for the management and administration of MWBHC within the strategic, policy and accountability framework laid down by the Council of Trustees

Leadership

- To lead, inspire and motivate staff and volunteers
- To assist the council in agreeing the values, ethos, vision and mission of MWBHC
- To take a lead in developing MWBHC's strategy and obtain approval of the council
- To develop the work of MWBHC in order to achieve the agreed strategic plan and ensure it delivers on its vision, objectives and strategy
- To ensure that MWBHC's value, ethos and policies are relevant, fair and consistently implemented
- To develop and maintain an environment and culture that attracts and retains the best staff and volunteers
- To create strategic partnerships outside the charity and to act as an ambassador for MWBHC

Management and compliance

- Oversee and implement recruitment, selection, training, development and performance management of staff in line with good employment practice
- Directly manage the MWBHC team and be ready to step in to fill gaps in operations when required as part of working for a small organisation
- Identify and implement appropriate methods for monitoring the performance of MWBHC and report regularly to the council, on its business, operational and annual plans and against the annual budget
- To ensure that MWBHC is aware of best practice and constantly works to achieve this within any constraints specified by the trustees and resources available

Finance and risk

- To produce regular financial reports and forecast and manage MWBHC's budget
- To oversee and monitor an effective programme of income generation
- To ensure full and accurate reporting including the preparation of an annual report and financial statements to the Charity Commission and Companies House in conjunction with MWBHC's appointed external examiner and accountants
- To regularly review major risks with the council and senior team to ensure systems have been established to mitigate these risks and ensure a risk analysis is carried out when proposing to take on new work from the council
- To ensure that there are effective processes in place to ensure the robustness of external and internal controls, both financial and non-financial

Communications – internal and external

- To ensure brand consistency across MWBHC and ensure it reflects its values
- To develop and implement integrated campaigns and media strategy to raise the profile of MWBHC
- To foster good relations with external stakeholders including, statutory, voluntary and private bodies and the local community
- To scan the external environment for changes that may impact MWBHC and advise the council proactively and to implement any agreed actions

Together with the chair, to enable the council of trustees to fulfil its duties and responsibilities for the proper governance of MWBHC and to ensure that the council receives timely advice and appropriate information on all relevant matters

Strategy and planning

- In partnership with the chair, to ensure that the trustees set the values, vision, mission, strategic objectives and strategy for MWBHC

Ensuring high-quality governance

- To ensure that the council receives all necessary advice, guidance and information on matters relating to current performance, the short and long-term future of the charity, regulatory and legal compliance, and other appropriate issues; and making sure that such advice, guidance and information are timely, honest, balanced and relevant
- To ensure that the staff understand and support the governance role of the council

- To ensure with the chair that the council of trustees reviews regularly MWBHC's charity's governing process and governance structure, and to assist with the council's assessment of its own performance
- In partnership with the chair, to ensure that the council's delegated authority is recorded in writing and understood fully by staff and volunteers, and that all agreed reporting procedures are followed
- To work closely with the council to ensure that it has on it the skills required to govern MWBHC well, and that the council has access to relevant external professional advice and expertise
- To assist the chair in ensuring that there is a systematic, open and fair procedure for the recruitment of trustees, future chairs of the council and future chief executives
- To work with the chair to ensure that all members of the council receive appropriate induction, advice, information and training (both individual and collective)

Council meetings

- To ensure that the council is given the information it needs to perform its duties
- In partnership with the chair, to develop an annual programme of council and other meetings as required
- In partnership with the chair, to ensure that the right and appropriate items reach council agendas and that high-quality papers support each item on the agenda
- To assist the chair in ensuring that the council focuses on its governance role by making sure that the council agenda and papers do not draw the council away from governance and into unnecessary detail and management issues
- To report regularly to the council of trustees on the performance of MWBHC, progress towards the strategic priorities and the achievement of council policies
- To submit high-level policy proposals for the approval of the council or assist the council in the development of these policies, and to be responsible for the efficient and effective achievement of these policies
- To implement council decisions

Relationship with the chair of trustees

- To have regular one-to-one meetings with the chair at which the chair and chief executive can talk openly, discuss progress and problems, agree expectations of each other, plan the council's annual programme and prepare for meetings together
- In close consultation with the chair, to agree respective roles in representing MWBHC and acting as spokesperson at public functions, public meetings and to the media

Requirements

- Management experience in a charity or public sector body
- Experience of developing, implementing, evaluating and monitoring strategic, operational and business plans
- Proven expertise in strategic financial management, with an understanding of budgeting and financial forecasting
- Strong commercial acumen and experience of managing diverse portfolios with alternative income streams

- Experience of securing statutory grant funding and community funding
- A track record of forging successful partnerships and engaging with a wide range of internal and external stakeholders
- People management, leadership and team building skills
- Significant experience of change management

How to apply

If you are interested in this opportunity, we encourage confidential conversations with our recruitment partner, Anna Jay, MD of Public Leaders Appointments in advance of your application. You can contact Anna at: anna@publicleadersappointments.com and 07904 236348.

Your application should consist of a CV and covering letter – of no more than 3 sides of A4 each - outlining your motivations for applying (affinity for our mission etc.) and highlight how your skills, knowledge and experience meet the requirements for our new Chief Executive. Please also include your preference for working arrangements – i.e. full or part time.

Applications should be sent to anna@publicleadersappointments.com by 12 noon on Thursday 6th February 2025 with reference 'MWBHC'.

Following consideration of applications and shortlisting, we will invite selected candidates to for interview. In person interviews are scheduled for Thursday 27th February 2025.

