



## Role Description

### Trustee

3 positions available

Our rivers are facing a crisis, besieged by development, urban and agricultural runoff, the discharge of raw sewage and the relentless exploitation of water resources. As climate change exacerbates droughts and floods, the very essence of our rivers, and the life they sustain, hangs in the balance.

At the South East Rivers Trust (SERT) we are working hard to respond urgently to this crisis. We believe that when rivers thrive so do people and nature. Our vision is that rivers in the south east are clean, healthy and rich in biodiversity. Our mission is to protect and restore rivers and catchments and provide increased resilience to a dramatically changing climate and the many pressures our precious rivers face. Our ambition is to grow our organisational capacity to be even more effective in each of the 12 river catchments in our footprint.

The Board of Trustees is SERT's governing body, responsible for setting SERT's strategic direction and providing oversight. We have a strong and committed group of Trustees who bring a wealth of experience and expertise.

**Following a review, we are seeking three new Trustees to join the Board who will bring expertise in one of the following areas:**

- Farming, Agriculture, Landownership
- Design and delivery of large technical or engineering-based projects
- Environment Agency/water company/relevant government background
- Community engagement

SERT seeks to be as representative as possible of the communities we serve and we particularly welcome interest from candidates from groups currently under-represented on the Board of Trustees.

The pack contains information about SERT and the role of our Trustees. We look forward to hearing about how you could help us achieve our vision.

*Steve Laking*

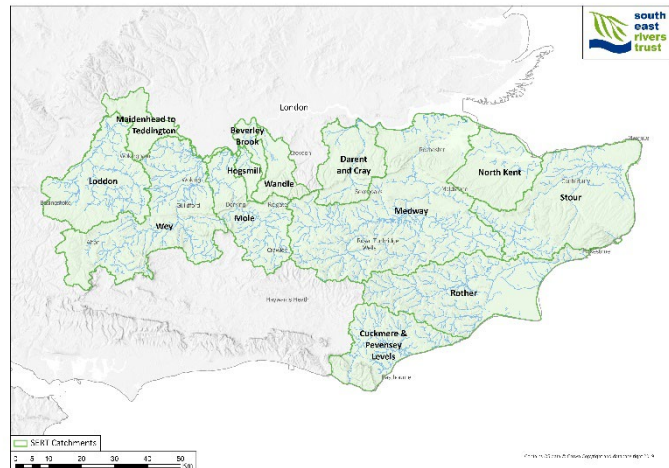
Chair, South East Rivers Trust

## The South East Rivers Trust

The South East Rivers Trust (SERT) is the river restoration charity for south east England. We believe that when rivers thrive so do people and nature. Our vision is for rivers in the south east to be clean, healthy and rich in biodiversity. Our mission is to protect and restore rivers and catchments and provide increased resilience to a dramatically changing climate and the many pressures our precious rivers face.

We were founded in the late 1990s to conserve and restore the River Wandle in South West London, but now work across 12 river catchments in the south east from Basingstoke to Dover: the Beverley Brook, Cuckmere & Pevensey Levels, Darent & Cray, Hogsmill, Loddon, Kentish Stour, Medway & North Kent, Mole, Rother, Wandle and the Wey.

We inspire lifelong stewardship for rivers by inspiring and empowering people of all ages to experience, enjoy and understand their local rivers, and to take action to protect them.



*The SERT Area*

We restore, renaturalise and reconnect rivers, removing barriers to fish migration and enhancing habitats. We improve water quality through wetland creation and construct natural flood management measures to protect communities and surrounding land.

We work in partnership with a wide range of stakeholders including local government, non-governmental organisations, educators, local communities, NGOs, landowners and businesses. We work with farmers to promote sustainable land and water management ensuring healthy soils, tackling water scarcity, and boosting biodiversity.

We are river and riparian conservation experts. All our work is led by data and evidence, using research and monitoring to target positive action. Using this data and our expertise, we host catchment partnerships – bringing together stakeholders to challenge and collaborate on the best outcomes for rivers.

SERT is a member of the national Rivers Trust movement, which comprises over 60 local trusts. The Trust's core values are central to all it strives to achieve, including bringing positive energy, expertise, increasing good relationships, and delivering to a high standard, making a real difference to rivers and their catchment areas.

Over the last 20 years, the Trust has grown from one to nearly 40 members of staff. It benefits from a committed and expert team, a strong reputation with partners, and a healthy financial reserve and cash flow, predominantly driven by project funding.

The Trust is at an important point in its development. It seeks to: build long-term sustainability into its income, systems and processes; to ensure effective coverage and engagement across all of its catchments;

to diversify its activities as it embraces changes and trends across the environmental sector. We are seeking additional Trustees to help us do this.

SERT is a registered charity and a company limited by guarantee.

## **The Board Of Trustees**

The Board of Trustees is SERT's governing body. The Trustees are responsible for ensuring that SERT pursues its charitable objectives, for good governance and financial sustainability. The Board sets SERT's strategic direction and oversees delivery by the Management Team. The Trustees carry the responsibilities of company directors of SERT.

The Board of Trustees currently has ten members. The Board usually meets four times per year with meetings usually held in person either in Leatherhead, London, or online. Four Board committees support the Board's work:

- External Policy and Communications Committee
- Finance, Risk and Audit Committee
- Governance Committee
- People and Remuneration Committee

## **Trustee Role Description**

### **Governance of the Trust**

- Monitor the performance of the Trust and ensure that it satisfies all regulatory and legal compliance requirements.
- Ensure the risks to which the charity is exposed are reviewed regularly and systems are established to mitigate these risks without becoming risk averse.
- Ensure that the Trust's financial dealings are systematically accounted for, audited and publicly available.
- Ensure that the Trust is fair and committed to equity, diversity, and inclusivity and that it is open to all sections of the community in its activities.
- Ensure the Trust has a governance structure that is appropriate to an environmental charity of its size/complexity, stage of development and its charitable objects, and that these structures and the governing instruments are reviewed regularly.
- Participate in the work of the Board including serving as chair or member of one or more of the Board's committees.

### **Leadership of the Trust**

- Maintain the Trust's culture in creating a working environment that is welcoming, inspiring and flexible.

- Support the implementation of the Trust's mission, vision, strategy and high-level policies, ensuring that it achieves its charitable, environmental and financial objectives.
- Ensure the Trust hears key stakeholders' voices and views, especially beneficiaries and that it champions diversity and inclusion through this engagement.
- Participate in ad-hoc working with the Management Team on specific areas of interest/priority on behalf of the Board as required.
- Keep up to date on the key issues affecting rivers and catchments, the rivers trust movement regionally, across the UK and the World.

### **Visible Advocate for Rivers**

- Actively promote the Trust to potential donors for fundraising and partnerships.
- Represent the Trust at strategic meetings alongside senior staff, where asked.
- Ensure that, whenever practicable, you visit SERT's local rivers, keep up to date and attend Trust events and have informal opportunities to meet staff and beneficiaries.

### **As a Board Member, you will:**

- Prepare for and attend meetings of the Board and other meetings as required and appropriate.
- Engage openly with other Board members in constructive discussions and debate, recognising that decisions are usually made through consensus and supporting the agreed position of the Board.
- Contribute your own knowledge and experience to guide the development of SERT in a way that is supportive, collegiate and adds value.
- Help foster and maintain positive and constructive relationships between the Board and Management Team.
- Uphold high standards of integrity and probity and support other Board members and the Management Team in instilling the culture, values and behaviours at SERT that are consistent with its purpose and vision.
- Attend any agreed training and development activity.

### **Person Specification**

The Board seeks to be as representative as possible of the diverse communities that our rivers serve. We therefore welcome candidates of any age, race, sex, sexual orientation, religion or belief, and candidates with disabilities living or working in the south east of England. To continue to improve the diversity of our Board, we particularly welcome interest from candidates in groups currently underrepresented on our Board and will endeavour to make reasonable adjustments to overcome any obstacles to participation. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you would like to discuss this in advance of making an application.

### **Expertise:**

Applicants must have expertise in one of the following areas:

- Farming, Agriculture, Landownership
- Design and delivery of large technical or engineering based projects

- Environment Agency/water company/relevant government background
- Community engagement

### **Other essential criteria:**

- A passion for biodiversity, conservation and rivers in the south east.
- An understanding of the role of a charity Trustee (prior experience is not essential).
- A deep, proactive, and reflective attitude towards diversity and inclusion.
- Strategic thinker with ability to analyse complex issues and promote innovative solutions to help the Board think through options, risks and mitigations.
- Strategic thinker with ability to analyse complex issues, helping the Board think through options, risks and mitigations and proactively identifying and promoting opportunities for improvement and innovative solutions.
- Good communication skills and ability to provide constructive and independent challenge.
- Team player, able to work collaboratively with colleagues on the Board and Management Team.
- Willingness to devote time to support SERT.

### **Desirable experience/expertise**

- Experience in writing funding bids and a good understanding of what makes them successful.
- Good knowledge of the funding streams available to an environmental charity.
- Experience in developing successful corporate funding relationships.
- An environmental qualification.
- Professional project management qualification/experience/accreditation.

### **Remuneration**

The role is unpaid, however reasonable expenses may be claimed.

### **Time commitment**

The Board of Trustees meets quarterly for a half-day meeting. In addition, Trustees will be expected to participate in meetings of one or more committees which meet up to four times per year for 1-2 hours. Trustees are also encouraged to participate in SERT activity during the year.

### **Recruitment Process**

To apply, please send your CV and covering letter (max two sides of A4) setting out how you meet the above criteria and what you would bring to the role to [jobs@southeastrivertrust.org](mailto:jobs@southeastrivertrust.org) by 28<sup>th</sup> June 2024.

Please also complete and return the equal opportunities monitoring form (optional).

Candidates will be shortlisted against the person specification and judged solely on merit. It is anticipated that interviews will be held in September.

For more information, see our website: <https://www.southeastrivertrust.org/>. If you have any queries or would like to discuss the role further, please contact us at [jobs@southeastrivertrust.org](mailto:jobs@southeastrivertrust.org).

## **Applicant Privacy Policy**

When submitting your application to us, it is important you are aware of what will happen to your personal data after the position is filled. Please download and read our Applicant Privacy Notice from the website.