



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs

Appointment of Chair of the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) – APPT03-20

Briefing pack for applicants

Closing Date 3 September 2020



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Ministerial message to candidates

Dear Candidate

Thank you for your interest in becoming Chair of the Joint Nature Conservation Committee.

The JNCC advises the UK Government and Devolved Administrations on UK-wide and international nature conservation; and is the forum through which the four UK Country Nature Conservation Bodies discharge their statutory responsibilities for nature conservation across the United Kingdom, as a whole and internationally.

JNCC provides high quality knowledge, expertise and scientific evidence helping the governments of the UK to achieve their policy objectives, including how the natural environment supports sustainable economic growth and underpins people's well-being.

This is a great opportunity for a high calibre leader to help shape the future of this organisation – as the four governments of the UK look to develop new approaches to managing the natural environment, and we consider how the UK's engagement in international fora develops in the future.

I am looking for an ambitious new Chair for the Joint Nature Conservation Committee; a strong and visible leader who is passionate about the environment, can lead the organisation effectively and efficiently through change, and respond to new opportunities and priorities and drive innovation. I particularly encourage applications from disabled and Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic and younger candidates, and women, to ensure membership of the Joint Committee is reflective of our diverse society.

If you have the skills, passion and experience to lead the Joint Nature Conservation Committee, we very much look forward to hearing from you.

Rebecca Pow

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State



Defra mission statement

Defra wants Britain to be a great place to live. Our work plays a critical role in the wellbeing of everyone in the country through the creation of healthy environments, a world-leading food and farming industry, a thriving rural economy and enhanced protection against floods and animal and plant diseases.

Appointing high-calibre people from diverse backgrounds with relevant skills, knowledge and experience to the boards of our public bodies will help us to ensure that our work is more effective, resilient and accountable.

Equal Opportunities

UK government has a policy of equality of opportunity. We aim to promote equal opportunity policies whereby no one suffers unfair discrimination either directly or indirectly, or harassment, on grounds such as race, colour, ethnic or national origin, sex, gender identity, marital status, disability, sexual orientation, religious beliefs or age.

Diversity

We positively welcome applicants from all backgrounds. All public appointments are made on merit following a fair and open competition as regulated by the Office of the Commissioner for Public Appointments.

Disability

Under the Disability Confident Scheme we guarantee to interview anyone with a disability whose application meets the minimum criteria for the post. By 'minimum criteria' we mean that you must provide us with evidence in your application which demonstrates that you meet the level of competence required for each of the essential criteria, as well as meeting any of the qualifications, skills or experience defined as essential. Defra is committed to the employment and career development of disabled people. To show this we use the Disability Confident symbol awarded by Job Centre Plus.

About JNCC

The Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) is a public body that advises the UK Government and devolved administrations on UK-wide and international nature conservation. The organisation is led by a non-executive Board, the Joint Committee, which brings together members from the nature conservation bodies for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland and independent members appointed by the Secretary of State for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs under an independent Chair.

This is an exciting time for JNCC, with unprecedented levels of public interest in environmental issues. For over 25 years JNCC has provided robust evidence and trusted advice on nature conservation to enable the governments of the UK to achieve their policy objectives. Key areas of work include:

- Producing status and trend information on the natural environment across the UK, through established and new partnerships;
- developing common standards (for example for site identification), in collaboration with the country conservation bodies across the UK;
- providing scientific advice to Defra on major international environmental agreements and advising on biodiversity conservation in the UK's Overseas Territories;
- in the marine environment advising on the identification and management of offshore protected areas, developing approaches for monitoring, and advising on the impacts of activities such as renewables and fisheries.

A theme running throughout JNCC's work is to show how the natural environment supports sustainable economic growth and underpins people's well-being.

Departure from the EU will impact all of JNCC's work. All countries of the UK are developing new and exciting plans for managing land and seas as opportunities arise from leaving the EU. The UK's international relationships will also evolve following EU exit.

The new Chair must lead JNCC's engagement in these changes and its response to them, shaping the organisation and its functions in concert with governments and their nature conservation bodies, and others.

The Joint Committee is supported by a company (the JNCC Support Co) of around 200 staff, mostly based in offices in Peterborough and Aberdeen. The JNCC's budget for 2019/20 is approximately £14 million, made up of core funding provided by Defra, the Scottish Government, the Welsh Government and the Department for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs in Northern Ireland, and funding from other sources provided for specific projects. JNCC is actively seeking to grow its income from wider markets. Further details about the JNCC can be found on the website at: <https://jncc.gov.uk/>.

Role specification

JNCC's [Framework Document provides the legal, administrative and financial framework within which the](#) Joint Committee operates and the specific functions of the Committee and the Chair.

As Chair you will be responsible to the Defra Secretary of State for the leadership, direction and effectiveness of JNCC in line with strategies and plans agreed with Defra and the Devolved Administrations. You will be the primary contact with Ministers for the Committee.

You will provide visible leadership and vision for JNCC, setting strategic and operational direction, ensuring good governance and, together with the Joint Committee, holding the executive to account.

In addition, you will have the following responsibilities:

1. Committee:

- ensuring that the Committee has the right balance of skills to deliver its functions and JNCC's business;
- reviewing the work of the Committee and its members' performance annually, and driving forward any necessary change;
- ensuring that the Committee, in reaching decisions, takes account of guidance provided by Ministers, Defra or Devolved Administrations;
- ensuring collaborative working between JNCC, the country conservation bodies, Defra and Devolved Administration bodies, and with other government departments, to make the best use of resources and maximise outcomes and benefits.

2. Executive:

- Appointing a Chief Executive should the post become vacant;
- setting the Chief Executive's performance objectives;
- setting the direction for the executive team and the tone and pace needed to deliver agreed strategies and plans, and responding to changes in the policy landscape; and
- promoting the efficient and effective use of staff and other resources to deliver priorities.

The successful candidate must abide by the Nolan principles of public service (attached at [Annex A](#)) and the [Code of Conduct for Board members](#).

Essential criteria

Candidates must be able to demonstrate all of the following essential criteria:

- Knowledge and expertise in a field relevant to the work of JNCC such as international or domestic environmental science, policy or operations and the ability to relate this to the wider social and economic context and to the ambitions of the four governments of the UK.
- The ability to provide strategic leadership of a complex organisation. This includes providing impartial advice and constructive challenge, alone and with Committee members, to ensure that JNCC provides high-quality, cost-effective evidence and advice to government and other customers; achieving reforms in response to a changing policy landscape; steering a strategy that extends funding opportunities; and visibly leading and representing JNCC, clearly communicating its strategic direction and purpose.
- The ability to provide strong engagement, partnership and relationship management, especially in an environment of multiple evolving positions, building productive and collaborative working relationships with a diverse group of senior stakeholders and partners within the UK and internationally.
- The ability to build an effective team culture and create consensus on strategic direction and practical solutions both within the Committee and in the way the wider organisation does business.

Time commitment and term of office

The successful candidate will be expected to make a time commitment of 2.5 days per week, which will include four committee meetings per calendar year (in March, June, September and November/December).

Appointment will be initially for three years. A further reappointment of three years may be made subject to satisfactory performance assessment and will be at the discretion of Ministers.

Remuneration and expenses

Remuneration is set at £40,059 per annum. Reasonable travel and subsistence expenses are paid.

The role is not pensionable.

The recruitment process

The closing date for applications is noon on 3 September 2020. We expect to have shortlisted by 2 October 2020, with Panel interviews during the week of 2 November 2020.

It is essential that your statement of suitability gives full but concise information relevant to the appointment, clearly demonstrating how you meet each of the [essential criteria](#).

The Advisory Assessment Panel will consist of Edward Barker, Director of Natural Environment in Defra, as Panel Chair, Keith Connal, Deputy Director, Natural Resources Division, Scottish Government and Dr Madeleine Havard as the Independent Panel Member. At the Shortlist meeting the Panel will assess each application against the essential criteria and decide who to invite for final interview.

Interviews are expected to take place remotely by video and will last for approximately 45 minutes. Further details about the format will be provided to you in advance.

This is a Ministerial appointment and all candidates deemed appointable by the Panel will meet with Rebecca Pow before a final decision is made.

How to apply and submit your application

To apply, please send:

- a CV of no more than 1,000 words;
- a supporting statement of not more than 1,000 words (approximately two sides of A4), setting out how you meet the [essential criteria](#) – make sure you refer to the contents of this document and provide specific examples;
- e-mail addresses for two referees;
- completed diversity and political activity monitoring form;
- completed conflicts of interest, conduct and advertising monitoring form (please note the section on [conflicts of interest and due diligence](#) below).

If you have any questions about the appointments process please contact the Public Appointments Team at publicappts@defra.gov.uk.

For an informal discussion about the role please contact Natasha Lewis, Relationship Management on 020 8225 6792 or: natasha.lewis@defra.gov.uk

Completed applications should be emailed to publicappts@defra.gov.uk – please quote reference APPT03-20

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 restrictions order;
- you fail to declare any conflict of interest.

Conflicts of interest and due diligence

If you have any interests that might be relevant to the work of JNCC, 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 publically 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 and Cabinet Office.

The Commissioner for Public Appointments

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/>

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/578498/governance_code_on_public_appointments_16_12_2016.pdf

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/regulating-appointments/complaints-and-investigations/>

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.

Annex A – The seven principles of public life

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.

Annex B – Current membership of the Board

Professor Chris Gilligan CBE	Independent Chair – University of Cambridge
Dr Hilary Kirkpatrick	Chair – Council for Nature Conservation and the Countryside
Lord Blencathra	Deputy Chair – Natural England
Professor Colin Galbraith	Independent
Professor Ian Bateman OBE	Independent – University of Exeter
Dr Mike Cantlay OBE	Chair – Scottish Natural Heritage
Professor Marian Scott OBE	Independent – University of Glasgow
Professor Melanie Austen	Independent – Plymouth Marine Laboratory
Mr Charles Banner QC	Independent – Keating Chambers
Ms Cath Denholm	Deputy Chair – Scottish Natural Heritage
Professor Michael Winter	Board Member – Natural England
Professor Steve Ormerod	Board Member – Natural Resources Wales
Sir David Henshaw	Chair – Natural Resource Wales



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