Suffolk Wildlife Trust

Warden

West Suffolk Woodlands

Credit: Eleanor Church

The Opportunity

The West Suffolk Woodlands Warden is a key member of the West Area Reserves Team, working under the direction of the South West Suffolk Senior Warden to deliver high-quality conservation management across Bradfield Woods, Bulls Wood, Bonny Wood and Combs Wood, while supporting work on other West area reserves as required.

The post leads on turning the Trust's conservation objectives into practical action: producing and updating reserve management plans; planning and delivering habitat management works; coordinating ecological monitoring; maintaining machinery, equipment and site infrastructure; and overseeing contractors and compliance, including consents, budgets and reporting.

A major part of the role is recruiting, developing and leading volunteers to support conservation work across the reserves, ensuring excellent standards of health and safety at all times. The role also includes public engagement, helping to ensure a welcoming and accessible experience for every visitor. Friendly, organised and hands-on, the Warden is a visible ambassador for Suffolk Wildlife Trust, raising awareness of the Trust's work through day-to-day engagement, events and communications that support the mission to bring nature back.

Credit: Mark Hamblin

Our Nature Reserves

Across Suffolk, the Trust cares for 50 reserves covering over 2,900 hectares (7,100 acres), protecting a wide range of habitats and providing opportunities for people to connect with nature. Visitors are encouraged to help protect these precious sites by sticking to paths, keeping dogs on leads and following on-site guidance.

In West Suffolk, the Trust looks after some outstanding woodland reserves, including Bradfield Woods, Bull's Wood, Bonny Wood and Combs Wood - a cluster of sites that showcase the richness of Suffolk's ancient woodlands, with habitats shaped by traditional management and careful monitoring.

These reserves offer everything from spring woodland wildflowers to botanically rich coppice and rides and they play an important role in restoring biodiversity across the wider landscape. West Suffolk is also home to the Trust's Lackford Lakes visitor centre near Bury St Edmunds & Bradfield Woods, helping welcome and inspire visitors while supporting the Trust's mission & strategic plans.

Bulls Wood

Bonny Wood

About Suffolk Wildlife Trust

Suffolk Wildlife Trust is the county's nature charity, protecting and restoring Suffolk's wildlife.

Founded in 1961, we have led conservation efforts across Suffolk for more than 60 years, safeguarding some of the county's most important wildlife areas as nature reserves.

Our Mission: Brining Nature Back to Suffolk

Our Vision: A wilder Suffolk, where nature is thriving and abundant, because everyone is united in valuing nature and doing more to help.

As a grassroots organisation, we deliver our ambitious work by inspiring people & empowering communities to care for, and act for, nature. Alongside this, we manage 50+ nature reserves & two visitor centres (Carlton Marshes & Lackford Lakes) and we advocate for wildlife across the county.

In the decade to 2030, we are committed to scaling up our work across the county. Our aim is for 30% of Suffolk to be connected and well looked after for nature by 2030, so that species and habitats can recover and thrive, and for 1 in 4 people to be actively helping to achieve this.

Cuckoo

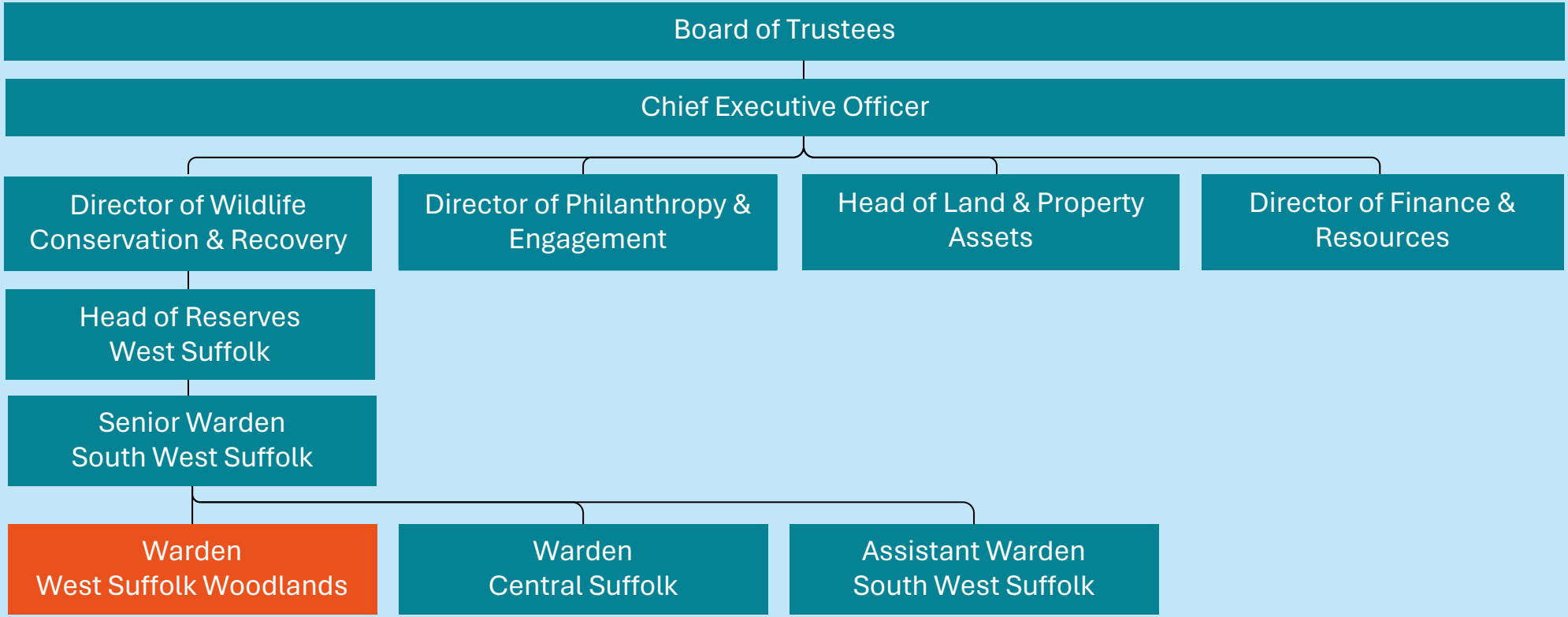
Suffolk Wildlife Trust is an organisation that makes a difference.

Suffolk Wildlife Trust

The Wildlife Trusts

We are a registered charity with a Board of Trustees, 1,300 volunteers & 28,000 members. We are part of The Wildlife Trusts – a UK federation of 46 local Wildlife Trusts through the UK that together has a powerful collective voice with over 850,000 members & caring for more than 2,300 nature reserves.

We employs around 100 staff across 15 departments, organised within three main directorates. Each directorate is led by a Director, and each department has an Operational Lead who provides leadership for a key area of activity.



Suffolk
Wildlife Trust

Our Beliefs, Values & Culture

At Suffolk Wildlife Trust, our organisational culture matters to us. It enables us to achieve more for wildlife and it shapes how we work together every day. Your job description explains the three key areas of focus for your role. What is equally important is how you do it. We are a gutsy organisation - we show courage, determination & spirit - learning from experience & embracing new ideas. We are driven by our shared beliefs, organisational values & passion to achieve more for nature and by supporting each other - staff & volunteers - to be the best we can to deliver for nature.

Our Beliefs Anchor Us

Everything we do, and how we do it, is anchored in our fundamental belief in the natural world.

We believe:
Nature has value in its own right.

We all share a responsibility for nature.

Society thrives when nature thrives.

Our Values Guide Us

Our values guide how we operate and the decisions we make, so we can achieve more for nature:

Tenacity: We lead by example and are gutsy in our ambition for nature and in how we use our voice.

Inclusion: We value and respect diverse voices & thinking to advocate and act for nature.

Pragmatism: We are impact-led in the methods, solutions and partnerships we choose to drive nature's recovery.

Our Culture Empowers Us

Our culture is how we work together, supporting each other, and empowering our county, to achieve more for nature:

Nature-led: We are driven by a shared passion for nature and support each other to be the best we can.

Collaborative: We communicate and collaborate brilliantly to amplify our impact and celebrate each other's achievements.

Trusting: Our staff and volunteers are trusted and accountable to deliver our ambition for nature.

Reflective: We are evidence-led, we challenge ourselves, and we embrace new ideas and learn from experience.

Safe: We always work safely and responsibly.

Role Description

Every role has three key areas of focus known as the “Power of 3” to support our mission, vision & strategic goals. Typically, you should expect to spend 80% of your time on the following:

1. Work under the direction of the Senior Warden to ensure Suffolk Wildlife Trust reserves are managed in accordance with conservation objectives:

- Write Reserve Management Plans for all ‘home’ reserves for submission to the Senior Warden.
- Input into agri-environment scheme agreements in conjunction with the Senior Warden and Reserves Officer that help deliver desired management outcomes.
- Produce annual reports and other updates and reports as required for all ‘home’ reserves.
- Assist the Senior Warden with budget planning for all ‘home’ reserves across the West Suffolk Woodlands, supporting the Senior Warden to deliver an affordable and priority focussed budget.
- Plan and undertake the habitat management activities set out in the agreed reserves management plans and/or agri-environment/woodland management agreements.
- Ensure all necessary consents for management work are obtained in advance of work.
- Undertake the care and maintenance for all machinery, vehicles and equipment used across your area including servicing and MOT’s as required.

Dormouse

Credit: Jesse Jacobs

- Prepare tenders, specifications and other relevant contract documents for contractors across your area, ensuring suitable paperwork is in place, such as insurance. Supervise contractors as required to support reserve management.
- Undertake the care and maintenance of reserve infrastructure across the West Suffolk Woodlands range of reserves.
- Undertake and coordinate ecological monitoring to gather conservation evidence that will determine conservation objectives and management actions contained within the relevant management plans. Write reports that capture and demonstrate this evidence.
- Support the running and maintenance of the Bradfield Woods workshop.
- Ensure and support the high standards of welfare for Trust livestock on reserves are met.

2. Lead and manage the Trust's Volunteers and internships/apprenticeships in the West Suffolk Woodlands:

- Lead and manage reserve volunteers.
- Prioritise, plan, write and deliver work schedules for your home reserves in conjunction with the Senior Warden.
- Ensure Health & Safety policies and procedures are communicated and adhered to, including incident reporting, COSHH and HAVs by all staff and volunteers working across the West Suffolk Woodlands.
- Ensure all volunteers are aware of and abide by relevant SWT policies and codes of practice.
- In conjunction with other Wardens maintain oversight of training needs for all volunteers working in your area.

Credit: Paul Holness

3. Develop the role of the reserves as ‘flagships’ for the Trust’s work:

- Work with partner organisations, landowners and colleagues to rebuild biodiversity and deliver the Trust’s Wilder Landscapes vision.
- Raise awareness of wildlife conservation and demonstrate habitat management by being an ambassador, through open days, guided walks and talks as required. Including regular submissions to SWT social media platforms, radio interviews and information to SWT’s magazine.
- Report issues and undertake management work to ensure reserve trails, information signs, interpretation and site infrastructure are safe, clean, on-brand and accessible.
- Contribute as required to funding applications and reporting requirements for grant funded projects on sites.

Person Specification

	Essential
A personal commitment to Suffolk Wildlife Trust's mission to bring back nature.	☑
Suitable higher-level qualifications and experience in countryside management or applied environmental subject, or other relevant land management subject or appropriate equivalent experience.	☑
Previous experience in a similar role, and proven experience with a range of industry standard conservation power tools and large machinery.	☑
Previous experience in volunteer management.	☑
Proven track record at delivering habitat management responsibilities.	☑
Demonstrable knowledge of wetland, woodland, meadow and heathland ecosystems, key species and associated habitat management duties.	☑
Good working knowledge of Microsoft Office 365 (e.g. Outlook, Word, Excel, PowerPoint). Awareness of and willingness to learn and implement appropriate use of task specific software and technology (such as GIS (QGIS), Team Kinetic Volunteer Management and CRM).	☑
Good knowledge of conservation management, including species and habitat conservation priorities in Suffolk.	☑

	Essential
Understanding of agri-environment schemes and Cross Compliance.	☑
Familiarity with Health & Safety requirements, and demonstratable knowledge of safe working practices when working with contractors, volunteer groups, alone or in small staff teams.	☑
Ability to assess risk and capture within risk management processes such as writing of risk assessments.	☑
Be physically fit and able to undertake physically demanding work in all weathers and varied terrain.	☑
Be confident working around water bodies and preferably able to swim.	☑
Able to generate and accept new ideas and be able to think on your feet and get things done.	☑
Able to deal with conflict and find solutions.	☑
Be innovative and seek solutions for effective site management and keeping abreast of relevant issues, legislation and best practice locally and nationally.	☑
Possess great interpersonal skills and be able to proactively communicate effectively with a wide audience.	☑
Be highly motivated and be able to motivate others.	☑
Able to work independently but also as a collaborator.	☑

Credit: Eleanor Church

Terms & Conditions

Terms & Conditions

This is a permanent position working 37.5 hours per week (five out of seven days each week - standard hours are Monday to Friday from 9:00am to 5:00pm) based at Bradfield Wood Nature Reserve. The starting salary will be between £28,088.00 & £30,088.00 per annum depending on skills, knowledge and experience.

Employee Benefits

Annual leave entitlement starts at 33 days per annum (including Bank Holidays), increasing annually to 38 days, plus employees receive an additional day off for their birthday.

We offer a 9% employer pension contribution with no employee contribution required, free 24-hour Employee Assistance Programme, free life insurance from day one of employment, free access to a private GP for themselves and their household and discounts at high street retailers. Staff can also enjoy a 10% discount in our visitor centre cafes, including retail plus public engagement staff receive logo clothing.

As part of our team, you'll join a passionate organisation dedicated to enhancing the natural world, with opportunities to work across some of the most beautiful locations in the county.

Bluebell

Credit: Matthew Clarke

How to Apply

To apply for this opportunity, please submit an application via our website by 9:00am on Tuesday 07 April 2026.

The interviews are planned for week commencing 20 April 2026 at Bradfield Woods.

If you would like an informal discussion about the role, you can email me on will.cranstoun@suffolkwildlifetrust.org.

Thank you for your interest in bringing your talents, experience and skills to Suffolk Wildlife Trust. I look forward to receiving your application.

Head of Reserves (West Suffolk)
Will Cranstoun

Dragonfly

Suffolk Wildlife Trust

Together, we can create a wilder Suffolk for everyone

Registered charity no. 262777