Information Pack

Board of Trustees
Autumn 2020
A Welcome from the Chair of the Board of Trustees

The Marine Conservation Society is the UK’s leading charity for the protection of our seas, shores and wildlife. For over thirty years MCS has been the voice for the sea for all the fascinating creatures that live beneath the waves, for our breath-taking coastal environment, for all those who make a sustainable living from the sea and for everyone who simply enjoys visiting the beach and our glorious coastline.

We have been able to take our messages further than ever before and with a re-invigorated sense of purpose for the future, our strategy review empowered us to make big strides towards our vision of seas full of life – seas and coasts where nature flourishes and people thrive. We have updated our website and reenergised our campaigning and communications. We are now implementing our new strategy which will include increasing our reach across the UK and growing our teams to have maximum impact. An exciting opportunity exists to ensure that MCS continues to be the UK’s leading charity for the marine environment enabling ever more people to appreciate the importance of healthy seas, including for our climate and the air we breathe.

MCS is a small but experienced team – 78 staff and, currently, 14 trustees. As part of the succession planning of the Board we are now looking to welcome a new trustee who will bring commercial law experience and governance skills as well as a network of their own which can be drawn upon to further the aims of MCS.

We are looking for an experienced individual who wants to use their legal expertise to help shape the Charity’s future, is willing to dedicate time and energy to the cause and to our people, and who shares our passion for MCS to grow and be even more impactful.

We are committed to an organisation and Board which are reflective of our society, and which can offer insight and views that enrich our work. We are particularly interested in applications from groups which are typically under-represented on boards.

We hope you will want to join us and help us transform the marine environment for the benefit of everyone, and we look forward to receiving your application.

Thank you for your support.
Amanda Nobbs OBE, Chair

If you would like a brief chat about the role, please contact Joanne O’Hagan, Head of HR & Facilities at hr@mcsuk.org
Strategy

Our vision
Seas full of life - seas and coasts where nature flourishes and people thrive.

Our mission
To lead political, cultural and social change for healthy seas and coasts that support abundant marine wildlife, sustainable livelihoods and enjoyment for all.

Who we are
Our scientists, campaigners, volunteers, advocates, data experts, fundraisers, divers and researchers are all passionate about creating a sustainable future for our seas.

What we stand for
Science and people - our staff, volunteers, supporters and partners - are at the heart of everything we do.

We act because everyone relies on the ocean to survive, from the air we breathe to the food we eat. By helping people to discover, value and enjoy being connected to our seas, we can all make better decisions today, which will ensure seas full of life for future generations.

We believe in fair, open and accountable democratic institutions, in an inspired and engaged society that values the sea and in businesses that are sustainable.

We are committed to being inclusive and promoting diversity.

What we need to achieve
We need to stop taking too much out of our seas – MCS will work to ensure sustainable use of the seas by minimising harm when we harvest resources, for example, through fishing.

We need to stop putting too much into our seas – MCS will work to prevent and clean up marine litter and pollution, and to minimise damage from development and climate change.
Our Story

The Marine Conservation Society (MCS) grew from the hard work and forward-thinking of a great number of people, many of whom still actively support us today.

There was a growing awareness about the state of our seas in the early 1970s, especially amongst scientists and SCUBA divers, who devised Underwater Conservation Year 1977.

This event was especially championed by the late Bernard Eaton, together with eminent scientists and public figures including HRH The Prince of Wales, who continues his unwavering support for MCS as our President today.

The event gave momentum to form the Underwater Conservation Society, with a single paid project officer (firstly Dr Charles Sheppard then, for many years, Dr Bob Earl). The name “Marine Conservation Society” was officially adopted and registered with the Charity Commission in 1983.

Since that time, MCS has achieved major successes in protecting special wildlife, tackling sewage problems, helping the seafood-buying public, and influencing Government and industry.

Today, more than 11,000 supporters fund our work through membership, donations, and turtle adoption schemes.

And more than 15,000 MCS volunteers clean up our beaches each year, and help us tackle marine litter at source.

Many millions of people are now aware of our vital work through our sustainable seafood, pollution and wildlife programmes, wildlife recording surveys, campaigns and education work.

We operate from an office in Ross-on-Wye, Herefordshire, with locations in London and Edinburgh. We employ a team of over 75 people, based in these offices and working remotely in the regions.

Download our Annual Impact Report and Accounts

Download our Articles of Association
Role Profile

We believe that becoming a Trustee with us will be a rewarding venture for all – we want you to share your expertise, and we will listen to your views. After a review of our current breadth of knowledge and experience on the Board, we are keen to hear from anyone who believes they have time, skills and experience in the following areas:

- Commercial law
- Governance and regulation

Key Responsibilities

- To ensure that MCS complies with its governing document (memorandum and articles of association), charity law, company law and any relevant legislation or regulations;
- To ensure that MCS pursues its objects as defined in its governing document;
- To ensure that MCS applies its resources exclusively in pursuance of its objects i.e. the charity must not spend money on activities which are not included in its own objects, no matter how worthwhile or charitable those activities are;
- To contribute actively to the board of Trustees’ role in giving firm strategic direction to MCS, setting overall policy, defining goals and setting targets and evaluating performance against agreed targets;
- To safeguard the good name and ethos of MCS;
- To ensure the effective and efficient administration of MCS;
- To ensure the financial stability of MCS;
- To protect and manage the property of the charity and to ensure the proper investment of the charity’s funds;
- To observe their duties as a Director of the charity under the Companies Act 2006

In addition to the above, each Trustee should use any specific skills, knowledge or experience they have to help the Board of Trustees reach sound decisions. This will involve scrutinising board papers, leading discussions, focusing on key issues, representing the charity at functions and events, and providing advice and guidance on new initiatives or issues in which the Trustee has specific expertise.

General Duties of Directors (Trustees) under the Companies Act 2006

1. Duty to act within powers
2. Duty to promote the success of the company
3. Duty to exercise independent judgement
4. Duty to exercise reasonable care, skill and diligence
5. Duty to avoid conflicts of interest
6. Duty not to accept benefits from third parties
7. Duty to declare interests in proposed transactions or arrangements
Our commitment to you

The role is unpaid but reasonable expenses relating to travel and accommodation during Trustee and other meetings or certain events are paid for by MCS.

You will be given a thorough induction to MCS and the role of a Trustee with us, including:

- An introduction to the charity’s affairs and finances by the CEO and Company Secretary/Director of Finance & Resources;
- An introduction to Directors, Heads of departments and other key staff;
- Opportunities to get involved in our events and courses to understand fully the work we do;
- Ongoing and comprehensive support from the CEO, Company Secretary/Director of Finance & Resources and other senior managers as required.

What we ask of you

Being a Trustee requires a time commitment for both formal and informal engagements. A term of office is three years and Trustees can offer themselves for re-election for a subsequent term of three years (six years in total). After two terms there is provision in certain circumstances to extend for one further year, particularly with honorary officer positions, such as Treasurer.

Board meetings are fixed at least a year in advance and usually held in March, June, September and December. Attendance is a mix of in-person and remotely via video conferencing, with the majority held in London, but can be at one of our other locations currently in Ross-on-Wye and Edinburgh.

We would expect attendance at all four Board meetings in each year, plus one strategy day per year. However, if you are not in attendance for more than two meetings in a row, the Chair of the Board would need to discuss your ongoing availability and commitment with you. Regrettably, if a Board member misses three meetings in a rolling 12-month period we will need to consider your retirement from the Board if the majority members resolve that the term of office should end.

We would welcome your involvement in our sub-committees and ad-hoc working groups, currently all Trustees are members of at least one of these. We currently have the following sub-committees: Governance & Nominations Committee; Finance, Resources & Risk Committee; Environment Committee and Income, Impact & Profile Committee. The Chair may wish to discuss with you any additional advocacy roles relevant to your specific skills or areas of knowledge which may support and facilitate relationships and networking opportunities with other organisations and fundraising contacts. Trustees are also encouraged to pro-actively offer their support where they can.

We hope that Trustees are able to also attend and engage in a number of our events which take place around the coasts and countryside. We ask that you commit to attendance at a minimum of one event per year; this could be a beach clean, one of our workshops or a fundraising event.
How to apply

Please provide a covering letter which outlines how you believe your skills and interests can be of benefit to MCS. Please enclose a CV with your letter.

Please send your application to HR@mcsuk.org. Deadline for applications: 4 October 2020.

Selection process

Applications will be considered by the Trustees’ Governance Committee and initial interviews will be with members of the panel. From there, a shortlist will be invited to a second interview and if all parties are happy to proceed, we will invite you to attend the Board of Trustees meeting which will be in March 2021. Trustee appointments will be approved after that meeting and confirmed with a letter from the Chairman.

For further information contact: Joanne O’Hagan, Head of HR & Facilities at hr@mcsuk.org Tel: 01989 561574

Key dates

Closing Date: 4 October 2020
1st Interviews: Week of 26 October 2020
2nd Interviews: Week of 9 November 2020

Equality & Diversity at MCS

Everyone can expect to be treated with consideration and respect and MCS is committed to providing an inclusive environment for all. Good working relationships release the full potential, creativity and productivity of each individual, in an atmosphere where everyone can learn and work without prejudice, discrimination, harassment or violence.

We are committed to developing a Board which is reflective of our society, and which can offer insight and views that influence our work. We are particularly interested in applications from groups which are under-represented in marine, environmental and charity sectors and on boards.

Registered Charity No: 1004005 (England & Wales) SC037480 (Scotland)
Registered Office: Overross House, Ross Park, Ross-on-Wye, HR9 7US