

Head of Public Engagement

CANDIDATE PACK

CEO WELCOME

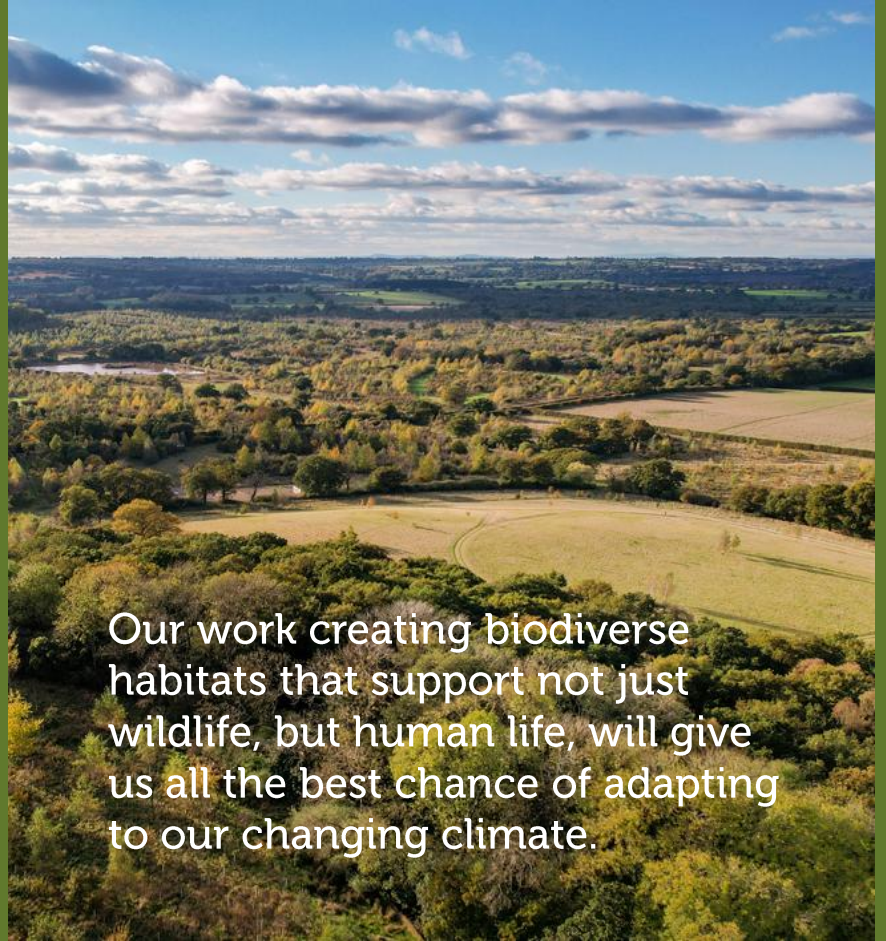


The Heart of England Forest is helping to reverse centuries of woodland decline by creating and conserving a huge broadleaf forest in the heart of the country, a place of enduring natural beauty, protected and secured for generations to come.

We take our mission very seriously; it has never been more important to invest in our natural environment. Our work creating biodiverse habitats that support not just wildlife, but human life, will give us all the best chance of adapting to our changing climate. The Forest is home to an incredible array of habitats, including new tree planting, mature and ancient woodland, grassland, heathland, farmland, and wetland, that enable animals, plants, and people to thrive. As the Forest grows, eventually covering 30,000 acres, so too will the benefits to both our health and that of the natural world.

We have made some positive changes to how we will operate going forwards, and the new role of **Head of Public Engagement** plays an important part in this. Thank you for your interest in the Heart of England Forest. Please take a read of this candidate pack and I very much hope that you will be inspired to apply and help shape the future of this fantastic charity.

Andy Parsons



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OUR PEOPLE

We value our people; we are proud to be a [Real Living Wage Employer](#) and a [Disability Confident Employer](#).

Our amazing community of volunteers helps us with all aspects of creating and managing the Forest all year round, including tree planting, wildlife and habitat surveying, managing footpaths and assisting with our education programmes. We are proud to have been awarded the [Queen's Award for Voluntary Service](#), recognising the incredible support our volunteers give to the charity.

[Read more here](#): [Heart of England Forest volunteers recognised with Queen's Award | Heart of England Forest](#)



JOIN US

Maintaining and managing the Forest in perpetuity for the benefit of people, wildlife and the environment is our biggest challenge.

This is an exciting time of growth and development for the Heart of England Forest. With our Chief Executive, we are reinvigorating our ambitious vision and updating our strategy to deliver one of the most significant resources for climate change mitigation and nature recovery in the country.

You can also find out more about our impact here charity here: [Our impact | Heart of England Forest](#) and in our most recent annual report: [Download our Annual Report | Heart of England Forest](#)

If you are inspired by our vision and our energy and would like to join us in creating an incredible breath of fresh air for the nation, we would love to hear from you.



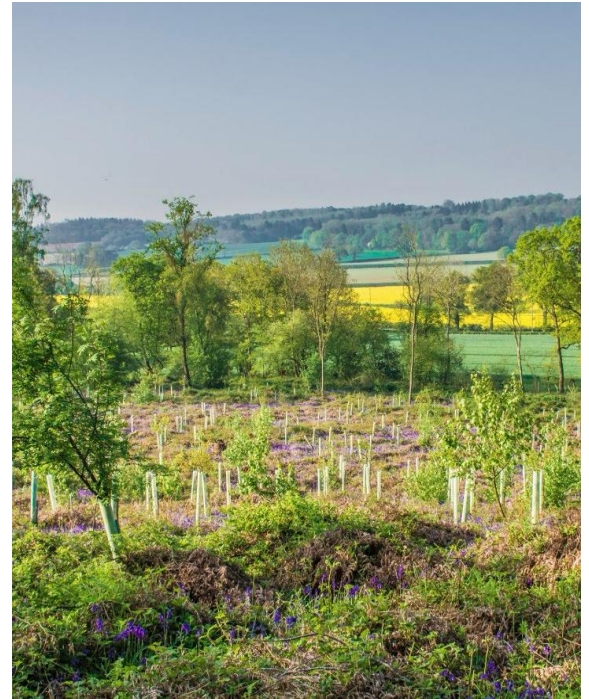
THE ROLE

This is a significant new leadership role at the heart of our five-year strategy.

JOB SUMMARY

In this brand new role, you will bring together our Access and Volunteers, Community and Heritage, and Outdoor Learning teams behind one ambitious, audience-led approach to public engagement. Your remit spans school visits, volunteering, public access, events, heritage activity, digital participation and funded programmes.

You will combine strategic vision with operational grip: creating high-quality and inclusive experiences, building the Forest's profile and reputation, and developing financially sound delivery models that extend our reach and impact.



KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

Strategy, audience and experience

- Working closely with the Director of Fundraising and Engagement and colleagues, create and implement an organisation-wide public engagement strategy, translating the five-year strategy into clear priorities, plans and outcomes.
- Use insight, feedback and data to understand current and potential audiences, identify barriers to participation and shape compelling offers for different communities and user groups.
- Design a coherent participant and visitor experience across physical and digital touchpoints, strengthening connection, trust and long-term involvement with the Charity.
- Champion innovation and apply proportionate service and product-design methods to test, learn, improve and scale successful activity.
- Ensure equity, diversity and inclusion are embedded in audience development, programme design, access and delivery.

Programme and portfolio leadership

- Provide strategic oversight of school visits, volunteering, public events, public access, community and heritage activity, outdoor learning and associated funded programmes.
- Develop a balanced annual portfolio of activity that is mission-led, audience-focused, deliverable and aligned with available resources.
- Alongside the Director of Fundraising and Engagement, curate and lead the annual public events programme, including taking the lead on the Midsummer Reception.
- Work with the Director of Fundraising and Engagement to build effective partnerships and represent the Charity credibly with senior external stakeholders, sector bodies and community partners.
- Ensure delivery across multiple sites is coordinated with Forest Operations and other teams, reflecting land management requirements and the needs of visitors and participants.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES (continued)

Commercial and financial leadership

- Develop and implement robust business and delivery models for education, events, volunteering and public access, balancing public benefit, quality, reach, income and cost effectiveness.
- Lead relevant budgets, forecasts and resource plans; monitor performance and take timely action where delivery, income or costs diverge from plan.
- Assess options for in-house delivery, partnerships and external providers, making clear recommendations based on impact, risk, capability and value for money.
- Contribute to funding proposals and ensure restricted projects are delivered to agreed outcomes, budgets and funder requirements.

Quality, safeguarding and compliance

- Establish and embed consistent quality standards across all engagement experiences, protecting the Charity's reputation and strengthening supporter and participant journeys.
- Ensure health and safety, safeguarding, accessibility, data protection and other relevant compliance requirements are integral to planning and delivery.
- Hold appropriate oversight of operational processes, risk assessments, incident learning, assurance and accreditations where relevant.
- Create consistent approaches to data collection, evaluation and reporting, ensuring information is useful, proportionate and handled appropriately.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES (continued)

Leadership and collaboration

- Lead, coach and develop the three team leads, setting clear expectations and creating the conditions for accountability, collaboration and professional growth.
- Build a cohesive public engagement function from established specialist teams, retaining expertise and improving coordination.
- Collaborate confidently with colleagues at every level and influence decisions where public needs, operational constraints, reputation, income and charitable impact must be balanced.

General

- Demonstrate and promote the values of the Heart of England Forest.
- Maintain a commitment to high standards of health and safety at all times. Ensure all work is undertaken within the Heart of England Forest health and safety policy and processes.
- Play an active part within the wider Heart of England Forest team.
- Make active use of information and resources gained via personal networks to inform the development of this role.
- Perform any other duties consistent with the role and / or reasonably required by your line manager, and/or the Senior Leadership Team.



YOUR SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE

ESSENTIAL

- Substantial leadership experience in public, community, visitor, learning, volunteering, participation or audience engagement, with evidence of developing and implementing successful strategies.
- Experience of leading managers and multidisciplinary teams through change, building shared purpose, clear accountability and effective ways of working.
- A strong track record of designing, delivering and improving programmes or services for varied external audiences, such as schools, volunteers, communities, visitors, local stakeholders and partner organisations.
- Experience of managing a varied portfolio of activity across multiple sites or locations, including competing priorities, dependencies and operational constraints.
- Demonstrable financial and commercial acumen, including budget ownership, resource planning, business cases and the development of sustainable delivery models.
- Experience of using audience insight, feedback, data and evaluation to shape decisions, improve quality and demonstrate outcomes.
- Experience of building credible partnerships and influencing senior internal and external stakeholders.
- Practical knowledge of safeguarding, health and safety, risk management, accessibility and data protection in public-facing activity.
- Experience of working closely with communications and brand colleagues, with a sound understanding of reputation, messaging and audience journeys.
- Experience of working with environmental, ecological, land management or other complex place-based content, and the ability to make it relevant and engaging for different audiences.

YOUR SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE

ESSENTIAL

- Strategic and imaginative, with the judgement to turn ambition into focused, deliverable plans.
- An inclusive and empowering leader who can coach others, address performance constructively and create a strong team culture.
- Excellent interpersonal, presentation and written communication skills, with the confidence to represent the Charity externally.
- Highly organised and decisive, able to prioritise across a broad portfolio and maintain grip on delivery, budgets, risks and standards.
- Collaborative and influential, able to work across professional disciplines and reconcile different perspectives.
- Curious, evidence-led and improvement-focused, with the confidence to challenge established approaches and learn from results.
- Aligned with the Charity's purpose, strategy, values and standards, and committed to equitable and inclusive engagement.
- Flexible and willing to travel regularly across the region and work occasional evenings and weekends.

DESIRABLE

- A relevant degree or equivalent professional qualification.
- Experience in a charity, heritage, education, conservation, or membership environment.
- Experience of delivering grant-funded programmes and reporting to funders.
- Knowledge of digital engagement and how it can complement place-based participation.



TERMS OF APPOINTMENT

Contract: 1 x permanent

Annual salary: £45,000 - £52,250

Reporting to: Director of Fundraising and Engagement

Responsible for: Access and Volunteer Lead,
Community and Heritage Lead, Senior Outdoor
Teacher

Annual leave: 28 days, plus bank holidays

Additional benefits:

Contributory pension scheme (matched at 4.5%)

Group income protection scheme

Group life assurance scheme (x4 death benefit)

Employee assistance programme

Medical health cash plan

HOURS

Normal working hours will be 37.5 a week, usually between 08.00 and 17.00, Monday to Friday, with occasional evening and weekend work to support events.

LOCATION

You'll be based at our head office in Dorsington. The post holder must have the willingness and ability to travel across the region. Hybrid working is supported.



HOW TO APPLY

If you believe that you are the right person to help take our work and ambition to the next level, we really want to hear from you.

Email your CV and a cover letter outlining how your experience meets the job specification to: jobs@heartofenglandforest.org

The deadline for applications is: Monday 2nd November 2026 - midnight.

The Heart of England Forest is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and vulnerable adults. Applicants must be willing to undergo protection screening appropriate to the post, including checks with past employers and DBS disclosure.

 heartofenglandforest.org  [@heartofenglandforest](https://www.facebook.com/heartofenglandforest)
 [@theheartofenglandforest](https://www.instagram.com/theheartofenglandforest)  [Heart of England Forest](https://www.linkedin.com/company/Heart-of-England-Forest)



DIVERSITY STATEMENT

We are building a culture where diversity is valued, and we can all be ourselves. We still have work to do but are strongly committed to inclusive practices which demonstrate fairness, equality, and anti-racism in everything we do. We will not tolerate less favourable treatment of anyone, especially those with legally protected characteristics, and welcome applications from all sections of all communities.

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Registered Charity Number 1097110
(in England and Wales)

Company Registration Number 4309564
(in England and Wales)