



**Western
Forest**

Head of Development Recruitment pack



Western Forest

Head of Development

Western Forest – a region connected by trees.

Our vision is a thriving landscape transformed by trees that connects woodland, farms and communities.

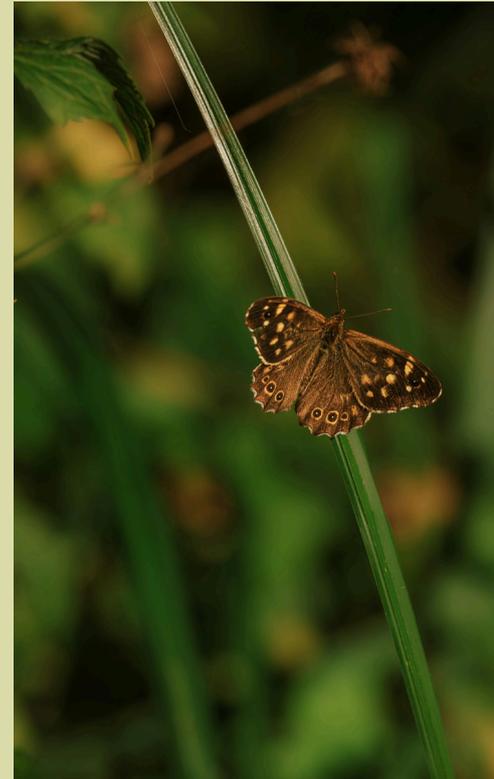
Our mission is to create a new national forest by leading action for trees and woodland.

Reports to the Director, pay scale: £50,000, greater for an exceptional candidate.

Team leadership: Communications; Fundraising; Partnerships.

Location: Bristol with travel across the Western Forest region.

Full time: 37.5 hours per week (part time considered); hybrid and highly flexible working available.



A message from our Director

Hello,

Thank you downloading our pack and for your interest in this role.

If you choose to apply, thank you in advance for your time and energy in doing so.

If you would like to arrange a pre-call, I can be reached on 07950 658 865 or jamiea@westernforest.org.uk

Jamie Audsley



As a country and region, we face an uncertain future. Economic, social, climate and nature crises are intertwining and are only likely to intensify in the decades to come. One focus of our hope comes in resetting our relationship with nature and developing new business models for our land.

A new national forest, the Western Forest, can enable this hope to become a reality and is therefore a critical opportunity for our region of Gloucestershire, Wiltshire and West of England to seize and shape.

Our work will connect woodlands, farming and communities to create a unified landscape with trees at its heart. Improved livelihoods, health and nature will be the key outcomes we focus on as we contribute to supporting our region's growth and resilience for the decades ahead.

Our strategy has three themes:

1. **Forest Creation:** more trees and woodlands that simultaneously benefit both farmers and our wider communities.
2. **Forest Action:** enabling "landscape leaders" of all backgrounds to create the demand and action required for tree and woodland creation.
3. **Future Forest:** the development of our brand, relationships and the journey to a sustainable partnership operating model that enables work to be sustained for the long-term and our vision delivered.

The Head of Development is therefore one of the most important leadership roles in our team. You will shape how partners and people connect with our mission, how they experience the Western Forest and how their support and generosity is translated into real, lasting impact for our future forest. Nature, people's health and rural livelihoods will all benefit from your leadership.

We are looking for a leader who shares our values, believes in collaboration, and is motivated by purpose as much as performance. In return, you will have the opportunity to lead an exceptional team, work alongside committed Board members and colleagues, and play a defining role in shaping a future where our region and its farmers, communities and nature thrive. If you are inspired by our vision and want to use your skills to nurture the Western Forest, I encourage you to go for it and apply.

Seize the moment – start up, scale and sustain a future forest.

The Western Forest

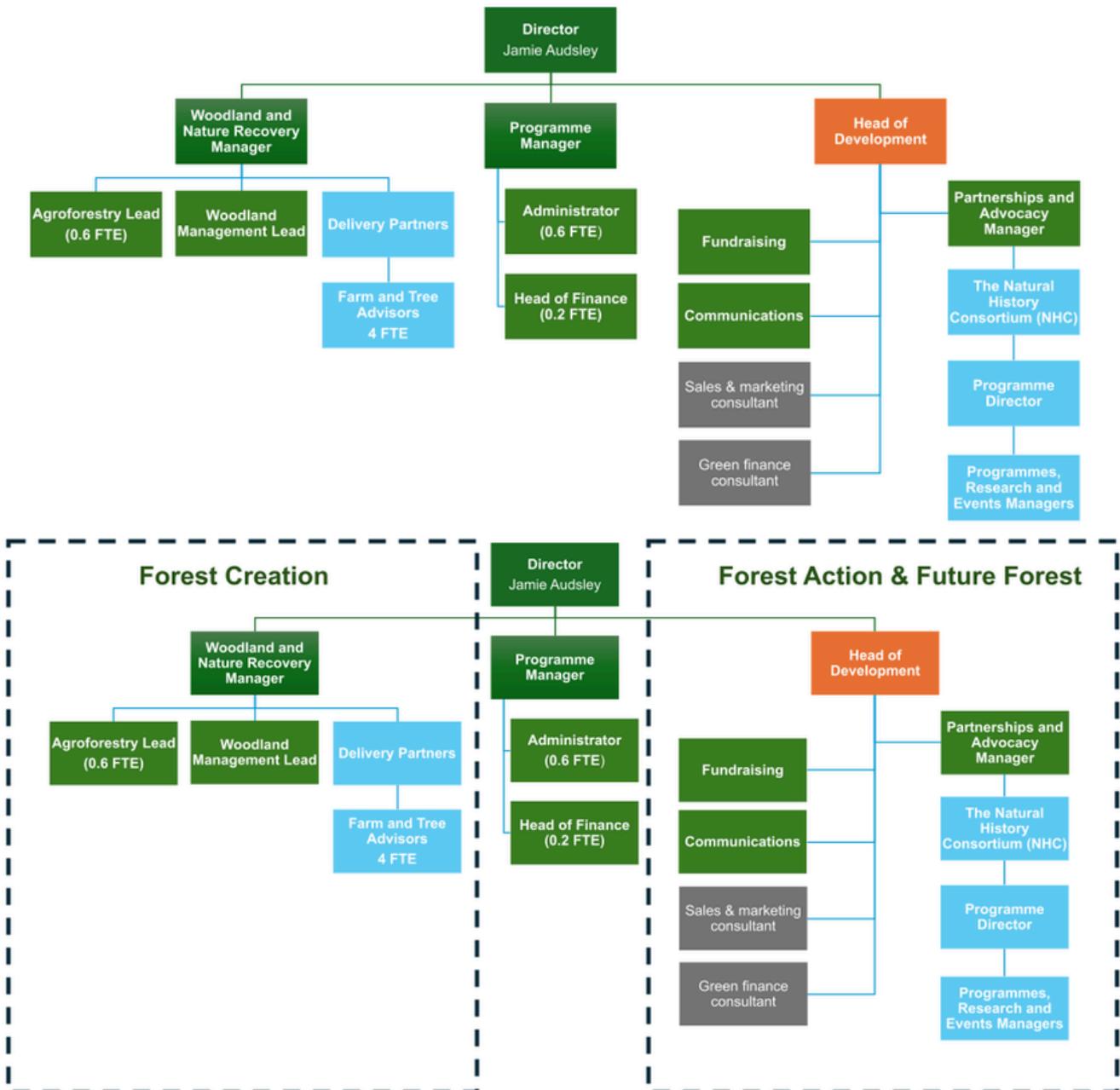
The Western Forest is a bold new initiative – part of England’s National Forest network and hosted by the Forest of Avon Trust – to drive an ambitious mission to restore nature, improve wellbeing, and create a climate-resilient landscape across the West of England.

Currently the Western Forest is a five year, £7.5M government-funded programme. Looking ahead, we will firstly match funding working with our partners, and then develop our income streams with a focus on grant, government funding and corporate partnership.

This is where you come in.



Our organisational structure



Job description

The role in a nutshell

As Head of Development, you will lead and develop one of the Western Forest's most critical functions. Your purpose is clear: to ensure Western Forest is nurtured from start-up, scaled to enable impactful delivery and sustained to ensure it strategically delivers for the long-term. You will lead effective development of our brand, communications, offer to our partners and key audiences, ensuring the Western Forest is strategically supported and funded, enabling us to deliver our ambitions at scale.

This is a senior leadership role with strategic, financial and cultural responsibility. You will shape how people experience, support and champion our work – turning a love of our region's trees, woodlands and landscapes into long-term commitment and investment.

You will achieve this by:

- Forming and then leading a motivated, high-performing team that delivers sustainable results. This team will include brand; communications; marketing; partnerships; fundraising.
- Working with core team roles, delivery partners and consultants to lead collaboration across the three pillars of our work – “Forest Creation” (tree planting, woodland creation, woodland management), “Forest Action” (civil society demand for and involvement in the forest) and “Future Forest” (income generation and future operating models we will create with partners).
- Defining and delivering income generation strategy with Director, team, partners and consultants to include, but not limited to, fundraising, sponsorship, green finance. More specifically, income will likely include:
 - Partnerships with corporates, local authorities, national agencies and government.
 - Grants from UK and international foundations and funding bodies.
 - Community engagement and a supporter base grown through brand, compelling marketing and communications.
 - A pipeline of fundable propositions under the banner of the “Western Forest Prospectus” (already in development), a partner-led approach to investment in our programme and wider landscape, working strategically at regional and national levels.
 - Other potential forms of income, e.g. green finance, impact investing, S106 monies.

Key responsibilities

Strategic leadership:

- Provide strategic leadership to Development and Fundraising work, setting clear direction and driving high performance.
- Act as a key member of the Western Forest team, contributing to programme-wide strategy, decision making and senior level engagement with partners and funders.
- Develop and deliver long-term fundraising, marketing, partner and supporter engagement strategies that diversify and grow income.
- Champion a partner, citizen and supporter-centric approach, building a data-led culture aligned with vision, mission and strategy.
- Inspire, develop and lead a high-performing Development and Fundraising team as a visible leader, internally and externally, helping to shape the “Future Forest”.
- Create and support an inclusive, proactive culture that supports wellbeing and continuous improvement.
- Set and monitor performance targets, budgets and delivery milestones.

Income generation & fundraising excellence:

- Oversee annual and multi-year income plans across different funding streams which could include grants, major donors, individual giving, legacies, corporate and other partnerships.
- Drive growth in giving and support through compelling supporter journeys and retention strategies.
- Maintain a strong pipeline of inspiring, fundable propositions aligned to Forest Creation and Forest Action priorities.
- Lead the development of high-value cases for support and funding bids.
- Work closely with the Director and other colleagues to steward senior and strategic funder relationships.
- Ensure all income generation is ethical, compliant, financially planned, and grows public trust.

Marketing, communications & supporter growth:

- Develop and direct integrated marketing and communications strategies that grow and diversify our customer and supporter base.
- Oversee brand development, reputation management and consistent storytelling.
- Ensure communications clearly articulate Western Forest's impact and connect people meaningfully with the forest and nature.
- Lead digital engagement strategies to maximise reach, income and supporter acquisition.

Collaboration & proposition development:

- Work collaboratively with the National Forest network to develop strategic funding bids and partnerships for the benefit of all.
- Work closely with internal colleagues and partners across Forest Creation and Forest Action teams to translate priorities into compelling public propositions.
- Align fundraising ambition with programme capacity and delivery.
- Foster collaboration across teams to deliver unified, high-quality partner, customer and supporter experiences.

Governance, reporting & risk:

- Provide clear, regular reporting to the Director, team and Board.
- Lead robust financial planning, forecasting and risk management for your function.
- Ensure compliance with fundraising regulation, data protection and internal policies.

.....

Person specification

Who we're looking for:

We're respectful that applicants are likely to be stronger in one of either income generation or communications and welcome applications from both, encouraging identification of development areas you may wish to highlight against the below in your supporting statement.

Essential experience and knowledge you will bring:

- Significant leadership experience in development, fundraising, giving, marketing or supporter engagement within a charity or mission-driven organisation.
- A proven track record of sustained income growth across multiple fundraising streams, including grants.
- Experience developing and delivering long-term income strategies.
- A deep understanding of supporter journeys, stewardship and audience insight.
- Success in creating compelling propositions and high-value funding bids.
- Knowledge of brand management, data-led fundraising or marketing experience and digital engagement.
- Strong understanding of UK fundraising regulation and ethical standards.
- Experience leading and developing high-performing teams.
- Experience managing substantial budgets and complex stakeholders.

Desirable:

- Knowledge of the nature, forestry, farming, environmental sectors.
- Understanding of civil society community organising and social action methods.
- Experience of behavioural change approaches.
- Experience supporting organisational change or culture development.

The qualities that matter. We are looking for someone who:

- Is passionate about securing a future for nature, farmers, communities, places and our region (West of England, Wiltshire, Gloucestershire).
- Leads with integrity, evidence and purpose.
- Is proactive, professional, pioneering and prepared to take risk.
- Thinks creatively with a supporter-first mindset.
- Is resilient and comfortable balancing strategy with delivery and leading a development where resource constraints and managing focus will be key.
- Builds trust, inspires others and models our values.

Why join us?

At Western Forest, our values shape how we work as much as what we achieve. We are bold, trustworthy, pioneering and innovative, focused on collective action and grounded in evidence.

This role offers the opportunity to play a defining role in delivering landscape-scale nature recovery, support for communities and enterprise across the Western Forest region, while working alongside passionate colleagues, partners, action takers and supporters.

We welcome applicants who share our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion, and who believe that landscape recovery must involve everyone. In return we offer excellent benefits, professional development and an opportunity to use your skills to deliver impact.

How to apply

To apply for the position, please send a copy of your CV and a covering letter (in PDF format) to info@westernforest.org.uk

Your covering letter should outline the skills, knowledge and experience you would bring to the role, including examples of strategic leadership and impact that demonstrate why you are the right person for this Head of position.

If you would like an informal conversation about the role, you are welcome to contact Jamie Audsley (Director) via email at jamiea@westernforest.org.uk or by phone on 07950 658 865.

The closing date for this role is 23.59 on Monday 6 April.

Interviews will be held on Wednesday 15 April in person in Bristol.

Together, we can create a forest-rich region, where everyone is better off with trees.

