

## **APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR TO THE SCOTTISH SEABIRD CENTRE BOARD**



**Information Pack for Applicants for the position of Chair of the Board**

**Closing Date: noon on Friday 13 November 2020**

## Background to Our Charity

The Scottish Seabird Centre is a conservation and education charity. Our vision is to help ensure that Scotland's marine environment is healthy, wildlife rich, valued and enjoyed by all. Our core charitable purpose is inspiring and educating people so that they are motivated to take action to care for the marine environment. We strive for impact through activities delivered under four strategic pillars – conservation, education, community and experience.

Our prime location in North Berwick, on the edge of the Firth of Forth, gives us a special opportunity to highlight the biological richness of Scotland's marine environment and its value to society. We use scientific information and evidence to highlight the iconic and internationally important wildlife and habitats in Scotland's marine environment, the services (ecosystem) that it provides to society and the threats faced. We provide people with information which prompts them to think about the actions required to protect it for future generations.



## The Story So Far ...

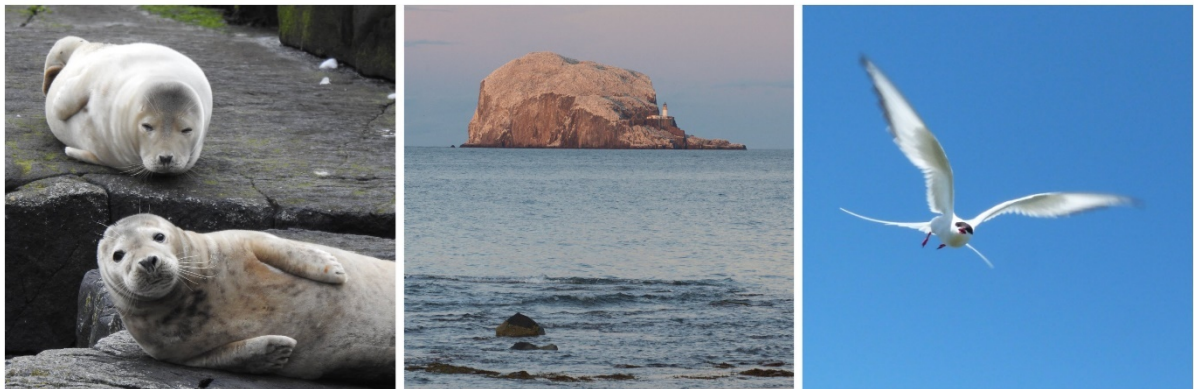
The Centre was originally conceived in the late 1980s by a local businessman and community councillor, Mr Bill Gardner. A keen ornithologist, he had a vision to bring the wildlife of the Firth of Forth, especially the internationally important colony of Northern gannets on the Bass Rock, closer to people by using interactive camera technologies. It took a further ten years of hard work by a team of dedicated volunteers and supporters, and the support of Sir Hew Dalrymple the owner of the Bass Rock, to bring the vision to a reality. Since that time, the Northern gannet population on the Bass Rock has grown to become the world's largest colony – a spectacular sight.

Construction began in March 1999 and the distinctive Scottish Seabird Centre building started to take shape and was opened in May 2000, by HRH The Prince Charles, Duke of Rothesay. Since then the Centre has helped to revitalise the historic harbour area and make an important contribution to North Berwick as a thriving coastal town.

Today our work continues to be supported by our Trustees, our people (staff and volunteers), our members, visitors, funders and donors. We offer a 5-star visitor experience and aim to further develop it as a valued community asset and as a base for our respected conservation, education, science communication and outreach programmes. We will also introduce new digital technologies,

both in our Centre and online, to bring both the story of Scotland's internationally important seabirds and the amazing underwater world of Scotland's seas closer to people.

We want more people to understand our marine wildlife and habitats, the pressure these are under, and the actions that can be taken from a global to local scale to help protect and enhance them for now and for future generations.



### COVID-19 update

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to cause significant disruption to societies and economies across the globe.

In March 2020 and in accordance with government advice, we closed the doors to our 5-star visitor attraction and suspended all education activities. The financial impact of this was significant. Fundraising commenced immediately through the third sector resilience fund and other emergency grants to alleviate the immediate cash flow challenge. This did not resolve the longer term issues as our charity relies on the income generated by the trading company over the peak tourism season (April-September) to build up financial reserves to see us through the shoulder season (October-March).

All but a skeleton staff were furloughed for the duration of lockdown. Fundraising targets were set to ensure the charity was able to cover essential overhead costs and maintenance cover.

In May, we launched the first public appeal in our 20-year history to help us weather the financial impact of COVID19. Our target was £200k and the appeal was backed by renowned naturalist, writer and broadcaster Chris Packham and broadcaster, film maker and writer Simon King. The campaign was picked up across local and national press and TV. It was also shared widely among conservation groups around the country via social media. The overall target was met and in July 2020 we re-opened the doors to our visitor attraction.

What was clear from the response to the appeal is the affinity people have for our vision, our activities and the willingness to support us at a time many individuals and businesses were also struggling.



Although the initial financial crisis was averted, we are currently operating at about 40% of our usual capacity as we move into the shoulder season. This remains challenging but we are now in a position where we can start to refocus on developing a more sustainable funding model to underpin the implementation of our 5-year plan 2020-2025.

## **Governance and Structure**

The Scottish Seabird Centre is a conservation and education charity (SCO25837). The Charity is supported by the activities of its not-for-profit trading activities that are managed by Scottish Seabird Centre Trading Limited (SC183214).

The Charity is led by a Board of Trustees, the Chair and a strong Executive team. Trustees have a breadth of skills and experience and are central to the delivery of the Charity's governance through the provision of strategic leadership and scrutiny. The Trading Company governance comprises two Trustees, an independent member and the Chief Executive.

A scheme of delegation exists which outlines how the Board delegates implementation of the Trust's strategy to the Executive. The Chief Executive is accountable to the Board for the efficient management of the charity and for the development and implementation of appropriate plans to deliver on the Strategy. The Chief Executive is assisted in this task by a senior management team comprising the Finance and Business Support Manager, the Marketing and Communications Manager and the Fundraising Manager.

The Scottish Seabird Centre currently employs 35 people in both the management of its visitor attraction and the development of its conservation, education and community activities. The team is supported by a group of dedicated volunteers. The Charity depends on the income from its not-for-profit trading activities, its valued membership, individual donations and contributions from charitable trusts and foundations. It receives no core funding for its activities and creating a sustainable funding model is one of the immediate challenges that must be addressed to secure the implementation of the next 5-year plan.

## **CHAIR APPOINTMENT**

### **Summary of Role**

We are on a journey to bring our conservation and education charitable activities to the fore. To build on existing partnerships and forge new ones which are aligned with our overall vision and purpose. Our new [5-year strategic plan \(2020-25\)](#) sets out the course we are navigating, to build on our 20 years of history and create a positive legacy for the future.

Scottish Seabird Centre (SSC) is seeking an individual who brings with them specific experience, knowledge and expertise to lead the Board. This is a voluntary role in a national third sector organisation that has important stature in Scotland.

### **Main Duties**

1. Be an ambassador for the organisation, reflecting a passion for its role in marine conservation, education, and wildlife tourism.
2. Board leadership, including chair meetings of the Board of Trustees and AGM.
3. Governance of charitable organisation operations and approaches with a view to ensuring the best long-term interests of the Charity.
4. Guiding, at Board level, the strategic development (5-year view) of the organisation.
5. Inform decisions on direction and priorities of strategic financial, management and impact information.
6. Appropriate delegation of responsibilities, authority and accountability to the Chief Executive.
7. Foster trust between the Board and the team of people – employees and volunteers.
8. Annual review of the Chief Executive's performance and development.
9. Annual review of Board members' performance, seeking input from Trustees and members of the senior executive.
10. Establish and build influential links with key decision makers and opinion formers.
11. Support commercial and fundraising activities of the Charity.



## **Additional Information**

### *Remuneration*

This is a voluntary role, although reasonable expenses for travel and accommodation may be claimed.

### *Location*

The Scottish Seabird Centre is based in North Berwick, East Lothian, where the majority of face to face meetings and events are held. Some overnight travel in Scotland may be required.

### *Time commitment*

The time commitment is about 10 days per annum (4 Council meetings, regular meetings with the Chief Executive and representation of the Charity at stakeholder and partner events).

### *Term*

The Chair (and board members) will serve a four-year term to be eligible for re-appointment for one additional term.

### *Charity requirements*

As a registered Scottish charity, the Chair takes general control and management of the charity. Each charity trustee must meet certain legal requirements and be aware of their responsibilities. More information is available on the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR) website. The Chair must also have an understanding of company law.

## PERSON SPECIFICATION

### SECTION A: Essential Experience, Knowledge & Expertise

Experience/ Skills Required	What does this mean?
<b>1 – <u>Board Leadership</u></b> You will have experience of Board leadership and ability to chair meetings of the Board of Trustees and AGM effectively.	You will have experience in this area drawing on it to contribute to the work of the Board; bringing impartiality and objectivity to decision making.  You will have strong commercial acumen.
<b>2 – <u>Working with Charitable Organisations</u></b> You will have extensive experience of working with charitable organisations.	You have experience of operations, approaches and governance within a charitable organisation and have a view to ensuring the best long-term interests of the Charity.
<b>3 – <u>Strategic Partnerships</u></b> You will have experience of establishing and building influential links to key decision makers	You can demonstrate experience of establishing and building influential links with key decision makers and opinion formers; you have experience of raising income through commercial and fundraising activities to support the work of the charity.  You will be someone with the right and relevant connections for the charity and have the ability to open new links for the charity.  You will have sound knowledge of the public sector and how to access funding.  You will have the proven ability to be an ambassador for the organisation, reflecting a passion for its role in marine conservation, education and wildlife tourism.
<b>4 – <u>Management of CEO &amp; Board</u></b> You will have experience of developing effective working relationships with the CEO, operations team as well as the Board.	You can demonstrate your understanding of the boundaries of management authority and the appropriate delegation of responsibilities, authority and accountability to the Chief Executive.  You will commit to contribute to an annual review of the Chief Executive's performance and development and have the ability to foster trust between the Board and the team of people who run the organisation (employees and volunteers).

	<p>You must be able to demonstrate experience of leading a review of the Board performance annually, seeking input from Trustees and members of the senior executive.</p> <p>You will assess the composite skill set of the Board against the requirements needed and identify and address any skills gaps.</p>
<p><b>5 – Strategy Development</b></p> <p>You will have experience of guiding, at Board level, the strategic development (5-year view) of the organisation.</p>	<p>You have experience of informing, developing and shaping long-term strategic visions for an organisation and can draw on it and contribute to the work of the Board.</p> <p>The strategic guidance must respect the objectives of the charitable trust and be supportive of the long-term financial sustainability of the organisation.</p>
<p><b>6 – Financial Management</b></p> <p>You will have an understanding of strategic financial, management and impact information and experience of using this to inform decisions on direction and priorities.</p>	<p>You can demonstrate a sound understanding of the financial results and projections of an organisation and can demonstrate this to contribute to the work of the Board.</p> <p>This experience will support and guide strategy development as well as short-term decision making.</p> <p>Knowledge and experience of Financial and Compliance Management will inform your role on the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee (FARC) and relationships with auditors, trust stakeholders and supporters.</p>



## SECTION B: Desirable Skills and Expertise

Experience/ Skills Required	What does this mean?
<b>1 – Commercial Experience</b>	You are able to demonstrate experience of working with business/ corporates and an understanding of commercial operations.
<b>2 – Knowledge of Marine and Coastal Management</b>	<p>You are able to demonstrate experience of marine and coastal management and the importance of effective engagement with coastal communities.</p> <p>Knowledge of coastal communities in the Firth of Forth would be particularly valuable.</p>
<b>3 – Digital knowledge and Engagement</b>	You will demonstrate an appreciation of the role in which digital-first approaches can support the implementation of our Strategic Plan and engagement with a wider range of audiences.

## SECTION C: Personal Competencies and Attributes

Personal Competencies & Attributes	What does this mean?
<b>1 - Governance</b>	A commitment to appropriate levels of governance that effectively balances opportunities and risk.
<b>2 - Leadership</b>	<p>A proven track record of success in senior leadership roles with experience of getting the best out of a Board of Trustees.</p> <p>An inclusive, transparent and consensual style.</p>
<b>3 - Equilibrium</b>	Ability to react calmly and positively to challenging situations, balancing conflicting, or competing issues, with impartiality and objectivity.
<b>4 – Communication and influence</b>	<p>Strong communication and relationship building skills, with an ability for building constructive networks and influencing funding.</p> <p>Knowledge of the political, social and economic context that we operate within and an ability to use this to seek out new opportunities/ partnership.</p>

## APPLICATION INFORMATION

### How to Apply

Please submit the following by noon on **Friday 13 November 2020**.

- An up-to-date CV
- A supporting statement no more than two pages long, providing clear evidence of how you meet the requirements within the person specification, what you can contribute to Scottish Seabird Centre and what you hope to gain from working with us.
- The names and contact details of two referees.

If you are interested in discussing this appointment further, you should contact Jill Dryburgh, Business Support Officer, [info@seabird.org](mailto:info@seabird.org)

Please submit applications FAO Jill Dryburgh on, [info@seabird.org](mailto:info@seabird.org)

### Assessment for this Appointment

Assessment will happen in three stages.

1. The nominations committee will assess your CV and supporting statement. The applicants who most closely meet the requirements will be invited to attend the next stage of assessment.
2. Meet the Chief Executive and a familiarisation session at the Scottish Seabird Centre - w/c 23 November 2020.
3. Zoom video interview with the nominations committee - w/c 30 November 2020.

### Nominations Committee

The Nominations Committee will comprise:

- **Stephen Breslin - Scottish Seabird Centre Board - member**
- **Martha Fleming - Scottish Seabird Centre Board - member**
- **Tessa Quinn - Scottish Seabird Centre Board - member**

To make sure that the process is transparent, and the appointment is made on merit, the nominations committee will declare if they know anyone who has applied for these appointments.