



National  
Trust

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# For everyone, for ever

Chair of the Board  
of the National Trust







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# Welcome to the National Trust

Thank you for your interest in chairing the Board of the National Trust.

We hope you enjoy reading this document which captures the National Trust as it is today and outlines our ambitions for the future.

The National Trust protects and cares for places so people and nature can thrive. We look after hundreds of houses and close to a million objects along with vast areas of coastline, countryside and green spaces, for everyone's benefit. With our staff, members, volunteers and supporters, we're the biggest conservation charity in Europe. Now we are seeking a new Chair. The Chair is the most senior volunteer in an organisation that relies on many thousands of volunteers, who give millions of hours of their time for our cause every year.

2020 marked 125 years since the foundation of the National Trust. We expected to hold celebrations, continue or complete important and exciting nature and heritage conservation projects, and welcome record numbers of visitors to our places. The pandemic changed all that, for the National Trust as for so many others. For the first time ever, we were forced to close all our houses, gardens and offices. It was a huge shock to all who work or volunteer for the organisation.



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Octavia Hill, one of the National Trust's founders, once said that without space 'we cannot reach that sense of quiet in which whispers of better things come to us.' More than a century later, her words feel more relevant than ever. The pandemic has not affected every person equally, and those living without access to nature or culture were particularly affected by lockdown restrictions. Our legacy from this period is a renewed determination to ensure that everyone can enjoy nature-rich green spaces on their doorstep and benefit from local heritage and the shared cultural spaces that help bring communities together.

As we recover from the pandemic, we will continue to play our part in supporting the nation. The National Trust remains steadfastly committed to the values of our founders and to helping everyone enjoy the special places in our care for the long term. The scale of our conservation ambitions remains undiminished, with significant programmes underway to protect the historic built heritage and collections of the nations we serve, and to restore the health of our natural world.

We're looking for an exceptional candidate. Someone who will bring different experiences and new ideas together with the skills and talent to Chair the Board and Council and support our Director-General, Hilary McGrady, and her Executive Team in the delivery of our strategy. Someone who wants to become part of our story. We hope you'll be inspired to apply.



*Paul Roberts, Senior Member of Council  
and Chair of the Nominations Committee (Chair)*







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# About the National Trust

In 1895 our founders, Octavia Hill, Sir Robert Hunter and Hardwicke Rawnsley set up the National Trust so that natural and historic places could be protected for future generations. They believed that nature, beauty and history were for everyone and wanted to open up the special places they came to care for, for everyone, for ever. The original values of this trio of pioneers are still at the heart of everything we do 126 years later.

As Europe's largest conservation charity, we look after special places for the nation to enjoy. We rely on our millions of members, volunteers, staff and supporters to care for more than 250,000 hectares of land, more than 500 historic houses, castles, parks and gardens, over 780 miles of coastline and in excess of one million works of art. We operate across England, Wales and Northern Ireland, and we are completely independent of the UK Government financially and in terms of governance. We are constituted under a number of Acts of Parliament and are regulated by the Charity Commission.

Over the past 18 months, the National Trust has responded to the unprecedented challenges which arose due to the Covid-19 pandemic. While managing lockdowns and re-openings, we faced difficult decisions as we looked for a way to contend with our significantly reduced visitor income and the resulting financial loss. These decisions meant re-shaping our organisation to make us leaner, more flexible and more resilient so that we could readily adapt to the quickly changing environment. We are confident that we are emerging from the pandemic with the right resources in place to implement our strategy.

As we look beyond the pandemic, our 21<sup>st</sup> century ambition remains to meet the needs of an environment under pressure and the challenges and expectations of a fast-moving world. We want to continue to maintain the highest standards of care for everything we look after, while working in a way that feels relevant and necessary to people and their day-to-day lives.





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# Nature, beauty, history

## For everyone, for ever – our strategy 2020 to 2025

Last year pre-pandemic, we updated our strategy - *Nature, Beauty, History, For Everyone, For Ever*. It emphasises our charitable purpose of delivering public benefit for everyone through our work. It focuses particularly on the conservation challenges facing the nation today. As well as continuing to look after the places in our care, this means playing our part in addressing the decline of nature and the impacts of climate change. It is also about broadening and deepening visitors' experiences at our properties and focusing more of our work on the green and historic urban places that are important to the people who live there.

The pandemic, however, saw the world change rapidly, and plans for working towards our renewed goals were heavily affected. Less capital expenditure was available and there were fewer opportunities for our people, contractors and partners to deliver projects. This prompted us to pause and reflect on what was needed at that time. We adjusted our short-term plans and reviewed our long-term plans to help us recover from the impacts of the pandemic on our people and finances.

The Trust's core purpose, to care for nature, beauty and history throughout England, Wales and Northern Ireland, continues to guide us as it has for the past 126 years. Our overall strategy remains the same, but our organisation has changed. It has been a challenging year but, we are leaner, more flexible and ready to focus our efforts on our biggest priorities: caring for places and giving them a sustainable future; improving the state of nature in the UK; addressing unequal access to nature, beauty and history where people live; making sure our places keep evolving, attracting people to care for them and inspiring them; giving people more opportunities to get involved and support our work; and being an inclusive, welcoming and sustainable organisation.

Our plans require leadership, imagination and commitment—qualities that we seek in our volunteer Trustee Board, our volunteer Council and our Executive Team, and ones that we hope will inspire a call to action from people across the nation.

You can read more about our strategy [here](#).



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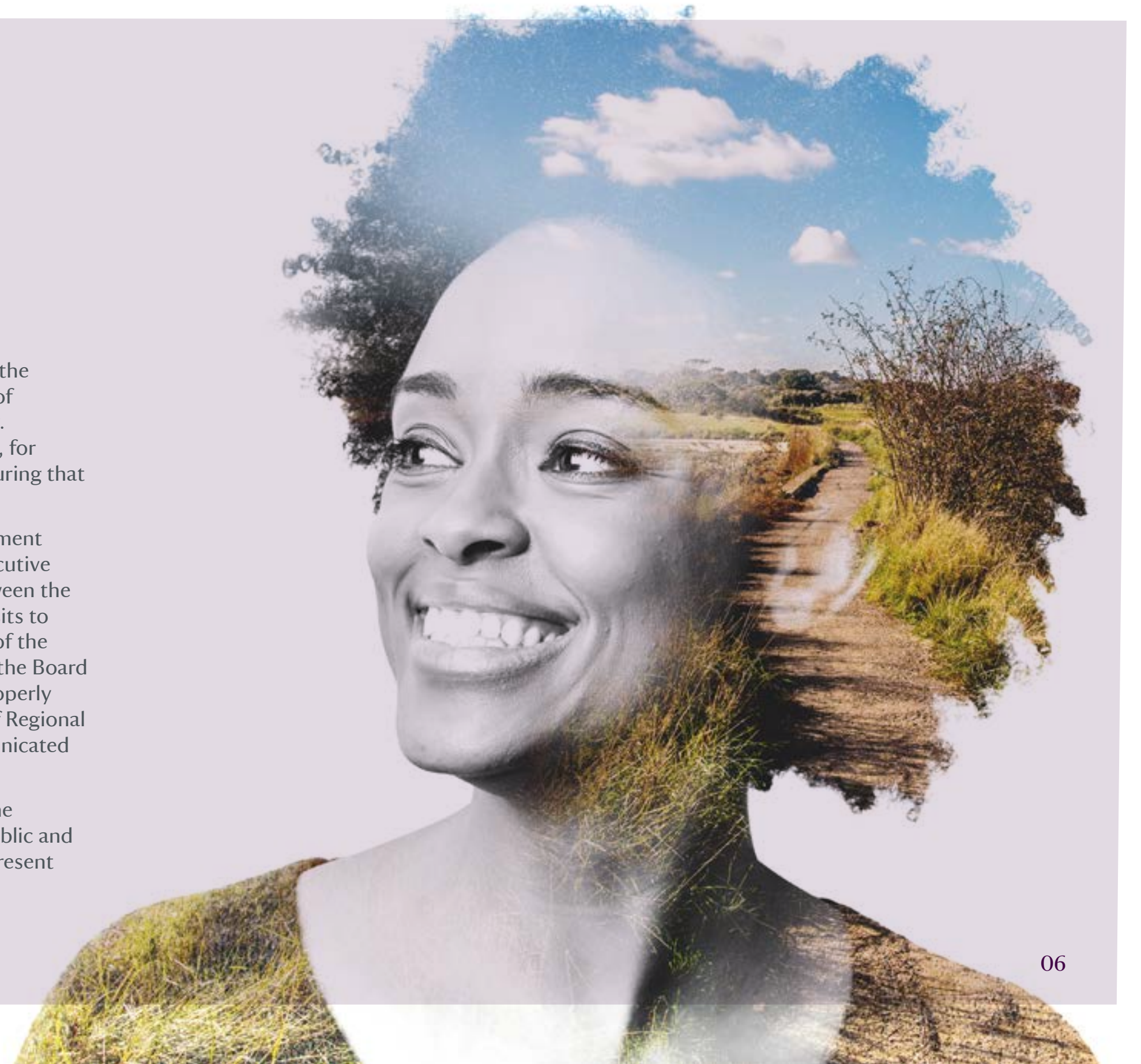
# Chair

## The opportunity

The Chair of the National Trust provides direction and leadership to the Board of Trustees and the Council, promotes the highest standards of governance, and supports the Executive Team to deliver the strategy. You'll be responsible for developing an effective and balanced Board, for promoting open debate and collegiate decision-making, and for ensuring that sufficient time is allowed for discussion of complex issues.

You'll support and advise the Director-General, helping her to implement the strategies and policies set by the Board while respecting her Executive responsibility. Part of your role will be to optimise relationships between the Board, the Council, senior staff and volunteers, including through visits to regions and properties. You'll chair the Board of Trustees, meetings of the Council and the AGM (which is broadcast live). As a bridge between the Board and the Council, you'll make sure that the views of each body are properly represented to the other and that the views of the Trust's network of Regional Advisory Boards and specialist Advisory Groups are properly communicated to the Board.

More widely, you'll play an important role pursuing our agendas in the heritage and environmental sectors. You'll maintain links with key public and private sector stakeholders, actively supporting fundraising, and represent the Trust behind the scenes, in public fora and in the media.







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## Who we're looking for

You'll most likely have knowledge of at least one area of the National Trust's work and identify with our broad and balanced agenda. You'll have the experience and credibility to oversee a large, national organisation and an understanding of leadership including the clear distinction of the roles of the wholly non-executive Board and the executive leadership and management, in a charitable setting. With the intellect to grasp issues outside your personal expertise, you'll bring value and insight to debate.

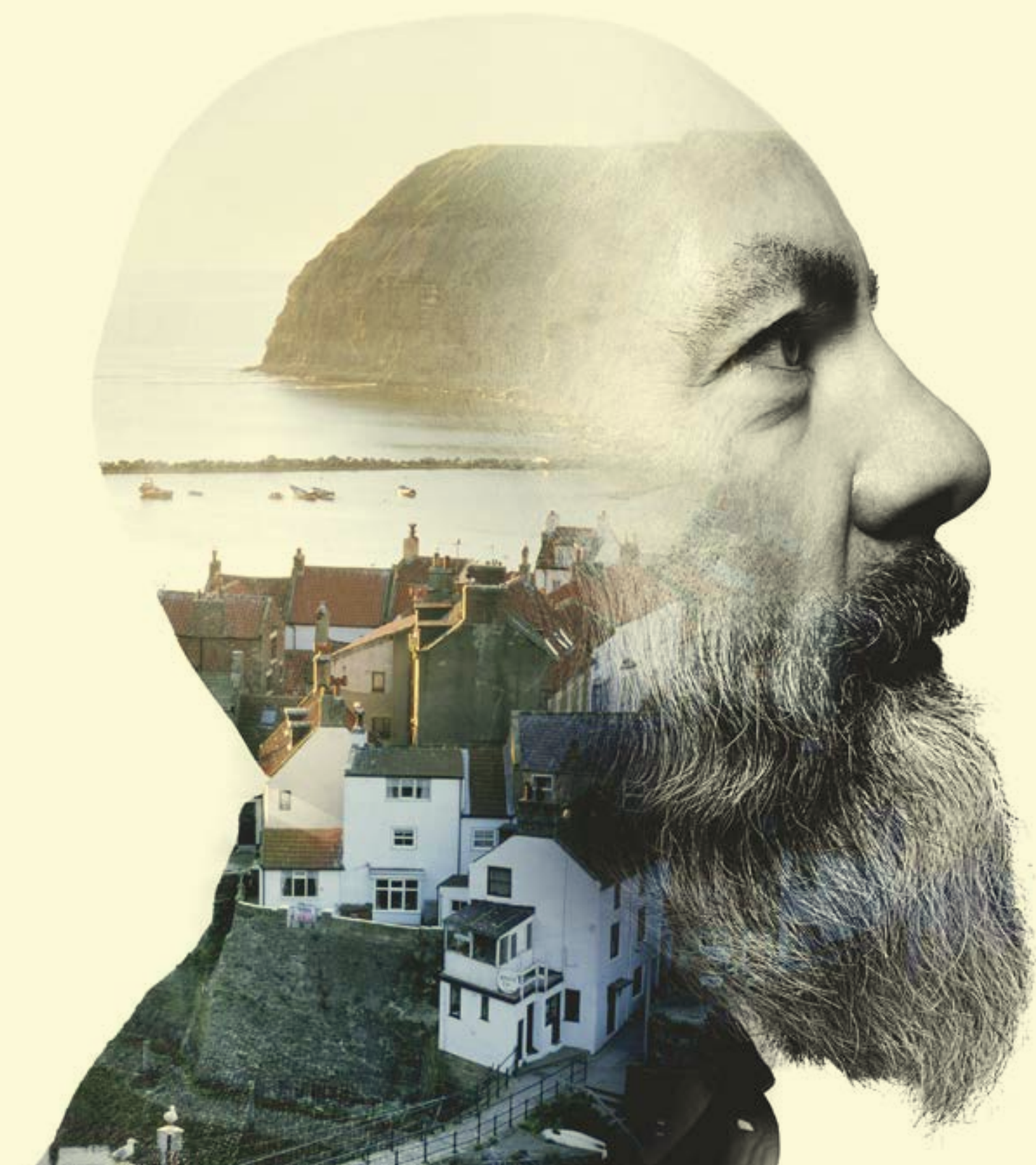
You're likely to have already chaired a board of diverse views and experience and have the leadership ability to harness the talents of Board members, the Council, the Director-General and senior staff. You'll have the ability to chair large meetings skilfully and inclusively, as well as the confidence to lead with authority and humility across a large and complex governance structure while encouraging collegiate decision-making. You'll balance steady leadership with the appetite and conviction to champion an ambitious strategy.

You'll command respect on a national stage and use your networks to strengthen the Trust's ability to convene, inspire and influence others. You'll represent the organisation authentically and have the skill and sensitivity to deal with people of all kinds. As a national institution the Trust is often in the public eye, and you'll be expected to be comfortable with a degree of media scrutiny. In contrast, you'll also be happy to help the Trust behind the scenes with key stakeholders.

You'll have keen political acuity and an appreciation of the role of the Trust and its place in the world. Above all, you'll share our values and commitment to delivering public benefit to the nation.

The role of the Chair is described in section 1 of the Trust's Governance Handbook which you can see [here](#) (appendix D describes the qualities sought). For a summary of the Trust's governance structure, including the specific roles of its Board of Trustees, Council and Executive Team, please see [here](#). For a copy of the Trust's last annual report please see [here](#).





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## How to apply

To apply, please submit your CV along with a covering letter. The preferred method of application is online via [www.odgers.com/83529](http://www.odgers.com/83529) or email your application to [83529@odgersberndtson.com](mailto:83529@odgersberndtson.com)

All applications will receive an automated response. If you prefer to send your application by post, please address it to: Victoria Mayes, Odgers Berndtson, 20 Cannon Street, London EC4M 6XD.

All candidates are also requested to complete an online Equal Opportunities Monitoring (EOM) Form which will be found at the end of the application process. This will assist the National Trust in monitoring selection decisions to assess whether equality of opportunity is being achieved. Information collated from the EOM forms will not be used as part of the selection process and will be treated as strictly confidential.



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# Key dates & personal data

The National Trust has engaged the services of Odgers Berndtson, to whom applications should be sent by no later than 10<sup>th</sup> October. Following a meeting of the Nominations Committee, longlisted candidates will be invited to attend a preliminary interview with Odgers Berndtson in the weeks commencing 25<sup>th</sup> October and 1<sup>st</sup> November. The final interview and assessment process with the National Trust will take place around mid-November. Candidates are kindly requested to diarise these dates.

In line with GDPR, we ask that you do not send us any information that can identify children or any of your Sensitive Personal Data (racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs, trade union membership, data concerning health or sex life and sexual orientation, genetic and/or biometric data) in your CV and application documentation. Following this notice, any inclusion of your Sensitive Personal Data in your CV/application documentation will be understood by us as your express consent to process this information. Please also remember to not mention anyone's information or details (e.g. referees) who have not previously agreed to their inclusion.

We are committed to ensuring everyone can access our website and application processes. This includes people with sight loss, hearing, mobility and cognitive impairments. Should you require access to these documents in alternative formats, please contact: [victoria.mayes@odgersberndtson.com](mailto:victoria.mayes@odgersberndtson.com)







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## Get in touch

For a confidential conversation about this opportunity, please contact:

James Bailey Johnson: [james.baileyjohnson@odgersberndtson.com](mailto:james.baileyjohnson@odgersberndtson.com)

Samantha Colt: [samantha.colt@odgersberndtson.com](mailto:samantha.colt@odgersberndtson.com)

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## Acknowledgements

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**Page 02:** View of Dunster Castle showing its dominant position above the village of Dunster, Somerset.  
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**Page 03:** Visitors stood on the Iron Bridge at Cragside, Northumberland.  
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Visitor with dog at Lindisfarne Castle, Northumberland.  
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Visitors in the garden on a sunny day in August at Polesden Lacey, Surrey. Photo credit ©National Trust Images/Chris Lacey

**Page 04:** The Dragon Bowl Fountain and South Front at Dyffryn House and Gardens, Vale of Glamorgan, Wales.  
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**Page 05:** Visitors in the garden at Melford Hall, Suffolk.  
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Volunteers at Tyntesfield, Somerset.  
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**Page 06:** St Helens Duver, Isle of Wight.  
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**Page 07:** Visitors on a bridge over the Bollin river at Quarry Bank, Cheshire. Photo credit ©National Trust Images/Chris Lacey

**Page 08:** A view of Staithes looking from Cowbar Nab on the North Yorkshire coast at dawn.  
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**Page 09:** View of the house at Dyffryn House and Gardens, Vale of Glamorgan. Photo credit ©National Trust Images/John Millar

Visitors at Ickworth, Suffolk.  
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Visitors exploring the yew garden at Packwood House, Warwickshire.  
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**Page 10:** Visitors in the Cedar Garden at Tredegar House, Newport, Wales. Photo credit ©National Trust Images/James Dobson