

**Planning and Biodiversity Officer**

**Introduction**

[Warwickshire Wildlife Trust](http://www.warwickshirewildlifetrust.org.uk/) (WWT) is one of the 46 UK Wildlife Trusts. Established in 1970 we are a grass roots organisation in every sense governed by 14 trustees elected from a membership of 23,500 people, 99% of whom live in the county, and supported by more than 600 active volunteers. We manage an estate covering 1,000 ha in Warwickshire, Coventry and Solihull and no one living or working in that area is more than 6 miles from one of our 65 nature reserves. More than 25,000 local children joined in our environmental education programme last year, and thousands more people came to our two visitor centres at Brandon Marsh and Solihull, or took part in our vibrant and varied programme of events.

As members of the federal structure of Wildlife Trusts we are part of a collective covering the whole of the UK with 800,000 members, 40,000 volunteers and 2,500 nature reserves, working together through a small central unit (the [Royal Society of Wildlife Trusts](http://www.wildlifetrusts.org)). The Wildlife Trusts have a vision of a society where there is more wildlife, more wild places and more people with a strong connection to the natural world. We believe that human beings are part of the natural world, valuable in its own right and as the foundation of our health and wellbeing, as well as our economic prosperity. Being physically and emotionally in touch with wild plants and animals, and with places where they thrive, contributes to our mental and physical health.

The Planning and Biodiversity Officer is a key role representing WWT’s position influencing policy and planning frameworks, with considerable external liaison work. It delivers WWT’s essential work of securing positive outcomes for wildlife through the planning system. The post also supplies technical support and information to Trust staff, using GIS (QGIS).

This post is responsible for the submission of formal responses to major infrastructure projects, local authority local plans and planning development applications. Supporting and recruiting volunteers to check planning lists, the post holder will lead WWT’s contribution to planning responses to maximise positive impacts for wildlife and people across Warwickshire, Coventry and Solihull.

During 2018, scanning of planning application weekly lists highlighted 118 applications of which 53 were followed up in detail. We engaged in pre-application discussions with a further four major schemes.

WWT responded to 7 spatial planning consultations including:

* Core Strategies/Local Plans for North Warwickshire, Nuneaton and Bedworth, Rugby borough councils
* Detailed work, advocacy and consultations responses on High Speed 2

• Stratford DC consultation on the draft Development Requirements SPD

• Warwickshire County Council: Minerals Plan consultation

More information is available at <http://www.warwickshirewildlifetrust.org.uk/planning>

Gina Rowe, Living Landscapes Manager

Warwickshire Wildlife Trust

**Job Description**

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| **Accountable to:** | Living Landscapes Manager |
| **Location:** | Brandon Marsh Nature Centre, Brandon Lane, Coventry, CV3 3GW |
| **Salary:** | Grade 2b £19,768-£27,050 |
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| **Liaison with:** | Local Authority Strategic Planning and Development control staff, HS2, NGOs, community groups, individuals |
| **Responsible for:**  **Hours:** | Planning Liaison Group; Volunteers  Full time, 35 hours per week. |

**Job Purpose:**

The purpose of this post is to develop and deliver WWT’s Planning responses to major infrastructure projects, strategic plans and development control across Warwickshire, Coventry and Solihull.

**Key Responsibilities:**

1. ***Planning Policy*** 
   1. Assess and analyse relevant national and local planning strategies and plans, including Local Development Frameworks, Green Infrastructure studies and strategies, the Warwickshire Biodiversity Offsetting and national Biodiversity Metrics system, and write appropriate responses to present WWT’s policies and approach.
   2. Work with local authorities, respond to consultations and attend meetings on strategies and plans, working to secure positive outcomes for wildlife through robust nature conservation policies and appropriate strategic housing and employment land allocations, and infrastructure developments.
   3. Ensure planning and nature conservation objectives are embedded in policies associated with climate change, water cycle and Water Framework Directive, and high quality sustainable design, promoting green infrastructure approach.
   4. Promote Living Landscapes approach of bigger, better and more joined up through spatial planning and development management.
   5. When necessary, present WWT’s point of view with commitment, occasionally in adversarial situations, and in a way which generates support for WWT’s point of view.
2. ***Planning Applications***
   1. Ensure WWT provides expert comment and advice on planning issues in a timely and professional manner.
   2. Develop relationships with contacts in local authority planning departments to ensure clear communication and dialogue at an early stage regarding new developments.
   3. Ensure monitoring of weekly planning application lists of all local authorities in Warwickshire, Coventry and Solihull, identifying major and contentious developments that are likely to have significant effect on wildlife.
   4. Review and respond to pre-application consultations, including EIA scoping and screening consultations. Highlight key biodiversity issues and opportunities, and promote Living Landscapes and Green Infrastructure approaches.
   5. Assess and respond to major infrastructure proposals including High Speed 2, throughout the duration of a scheme to ensure applications deliver benefits for biodiversity. This will include representing WWT in pre-application consultations, planning responses, mitigation/compensation steering groups and Biodiversity Offsetting assessment.
   6. Respond to domestic planning applications that affect statutory and non-statutory sites, Wildlife Trust nature reserves or other features of nature conservation importance.
   7. Engage with developers and consultants to find positive solutions to biodiversity issues and promote opportunities to enhance schemes for wildlife benefit.
   8. Maintain relevant records of responses to planning applications and enquiries, in accessible system which staff and volunteers can use.
3. ***Communication and promotion***
   1. Write guidance papers on using the planning system to enhance biodiversity, for use by planning professionals and the public.
   2. Liaise with statutory agencies, local authorities, NGO’s, local residents and volunteer groups regarding planning issues affecting sites of wildlife value.
   3. Research and assemble information to produce written representations and appear as expert witness if required to give evidence at Planning Inquiries.
   4. Write an annual report of planning work achieved, to inform trustees and colleagues, and for use in wider reports.
   5. Work with the Communications Team to promote our work on planning issues.
4. ***Represent WWT in planning related meetings***
   1. Attend HS2 Ecology Technical meetings, Birmingham Airport Historic Environment, Ecology and Landscape Management Plan steering group, Biodiversity Offsetting technical working group, and other meetings as agreed.
   2. Coordinate, and report on to the Local Nature Partnership and the Warwickshire Coventry and Solihull Planning Liaison meeting and other meetings as agreed.
   3. Support the Director of Living Landscapes to meet developers, consultants, local authority contacts to discuss proposed development at pre-application stage to address issues affecting wildlife.
   4. Represent WWT in discussions on major development proposals as they progress, including monitoring after completion.
5. ***Support the Living Landscapes agenda***
   1. Provide support to the Living Landscapes department by inputting ideas into relevant projects; promote the vision of Living Landscapes internally and externally.
   2. Provide GIS support, including creating maps and analysing data using GIS software.
   3. Maintain the GIS data and files, ensuring up-to-date information is available and organised.
   4. Train and support colleagues and volunteers in GIS mapping.
6. ***General Responsibilities***
   1. Promote the work, mission and vision of WWT at all appropriate times.
   2. Use every opportunity commensurate with other duties to contribute to WWT’s volunteer recruitment, contacts, fundraising and engagement of people.
   3. Ensure a high level of customer service in all dealings with the public.
   4. Ensure continuous development of skills and knowledge required for the post, undergoing training and performance review as required by WWT.
   5. Work within all the policies and procedures of WWT, ensuring own compliance with WWT’s health and safety policies and procedures and that of any resources for whom you are responsible.
   6. Work at all times within the Warwickshire Wildlife Trust’s Equal Opportunities Policy and to promote equal opportunities.
   7. Comply with all legal and contractual obligations concerning the responsibilities of your post.
   8. Supervise and support volunteers as appropriate to your role.
   9. Carry out any other reasonable duties commensurate with the level of responsibility of the post, as requested by your line manager or the Chief Executive.

**Person Specification**

The post-holder will have a range of knowledge, skills and experience. The following is a summary indication of the key requirements for this post.

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| **Experience** | **Essential** | **Desirable** |
| Professional expertise in one or more area of the following:   * UK biodiversity and nature conservation * Planning | **✓** |  |
| Track record of assimilating and assessing technical/planning documents | **✓** |  |
| Project management to fulfil a range of deadlines, often concurrently | **✓** |  |
| Working effectively with external partner organisations | **✓** |  |
| Working with volunteers | **✓** |  |
| Writing formal responses on planning matters |  | **✓** |
| Undertaking practical habitat surveys |  | **✓** |
| Knowledge | **Essential** | **Desirable** |
| UK biodiversity, habitats and management for nature conservation value. | **✓** |  |
| Knowledge of wildlife site designations and protected species and habitats | **✓** |  |
| An understanding of UK legislation and policies regarding wildlife | **✓** |  |
| Landscape scale conservation principles and practice | **✓** |  |
| Understanding of UK planning system | **✓** |  |
| An understanding of key nature conservation issues affecting UK Wildlife | **✓** |  |
| Awareness of Wildlife Trust priorities |  | **✓** |
| Understanding of the implementation of Biodiversity Offsetting/Metrics |  | **✓** |
| Skills | Essential | Desirable |
| Educated to degree or level 4 in relevant discipline/equivalent professional experience | **✓** |  |
| Ecological survey and monitoring systems | **✓** |  |
| Ability to plan, research and analyse large scale and in depth information | **✓** |  |
| Analytical and decision making | **✓** |  |
| Excellent oral and written communication skills, including delivery of presentations to a range of audiences | **✓** |  |
| Good organisational, time management and prioritising skills | **✓** |  |
| Ability to build working relationships with a range of stakeholders | **✓** |  |
| Good listening and interpersonal skills; ability to handle range of enquiries | **✓** |  |
| IT literate with good skills in Microsoft Office and GIS systems, including use of QGIS | **✓** |  |
| Able to use a range of influencing skills | **✓** |  |
| Able to work under own initiative, in teams and in partnerships | **✓** |  |
| Personal Qualities | Essential | Desirable |
| Holds themselves personally accountable for delivering their responsibilities | **✓** |  |
| Understanding and passion for excellent standards in customer service | **✓** |  |
| A full driving licence/able to travel throughout the sub region | **✓** |  |
| Willingness and ability to undertake occasional evening and weekend work | **✓** |  |
| Flexible and positive outlook | **✓** |  |
| Commitment to nature conservation | **✓** |  |
| Commitment to Continuing Professional Development |  | **✓** |