



# Appointment of Chair

March 2026



**The Ocean Conservation Trust is a charity dedicated to protecting and restoring the Ocean so that it can sustain life on Earth.**

Through conservation, education, and community engagement, we work to reconnect people with the Ocean and inspire action to safeguard marine environments for future generations.

**Ocean-focused.**

The Ocean is at the heart of everything we do. We work to protect marine ecosystems, restore habitats, and ensure the Ocean can continue to support both wildlife and people.

**Educational.**

Education is central to our mission. By increasing understanding of the Ocean and its importance, we empower individuals, schools, and communities to make positive choices for the marine environment.

**Collaborative.**

We work in partnership with scientists, communities, organisations, and businesses to create meaningful and lasting change for the Ocean.

**Innovative.**

We use research, practical conservation, and creative approaches to develop solutions that help restore Ocean health and address the challenges facing marine environments.

**Responsible.**

We are accountable to the communities, partners, and ecosystems we serve, ensuring our work is transparent, evidence-based, and focused on creating lasting positive impact for the Ocean.

**Life within the Ocean impacts all life on Earth providing every second breath of oxygen we breathe and capturing one third of human carbon emissions. The Ocean is a magical, inspiring place, containing a myriad of extraordinary life forms. It needs to be preserved.**

The mission of the Ocean Conservation Trust is to protect our planet's most valuable eco-system by instilling Ocean optimism, by inspiring people through our habitat restoration work and through visits to our National Marine Aquarium in Plymouth, and by educating and informing the public at home and overseas. This is a pivotal moment for the Trust, and we are looking for a Chair with the leadership skills and vision to help secure the longterm future of the UK's National Marine Aquarium and strengthen governance during an important period of transition.

Working in close partnership with the Board of Trustees and the Chief Executive Officer, the Chair will support the Trust in realising its ambition to be a globally respected voice for Ocean Conservation and ensure the financial resilience required to sustain and scale impact. If you are an inspirational leader with the determination to carry our torch from the front, who wants to make a positive difference to the world, I would urge you to contact me for a confidential discussion and apply to be our new Chair.



**Jerry Roberts**  
**Interim Chair**



# About us

**The Ocean Conservation Trust exists to restore and protect the Ocean, centered around people and positive action. Our focus is on pro-Ocean advocacy and habitat restoration.**

The Ocean Conservation Trust (OCT) is a leading force in marine conservation. We are a global charity working towards our vision of a healthy Ocean through advocacy, research, and action. Facing threats like overfishing and pollution, the Trust works on innovative solutions through education, and community engagement.

We seek to provide programmes centred around a deeper, more meaningful and emotional connection with the Ocean. Our centre of Ocean excellence, the National Marine Aquarium, is pivotal in inspiring and encouraging pro-Ocean behaviour.

From local projects to global initiatives, we work to inspire individuals to protect our Oceans. By promoting a sense of responsibility, we empower people to become guardians of the Ocean's beauty and biodiversity. Collaboration is key, and we work with governments, NGOs, scientists, and communities to safeguard marine habitats and species.

Over the last 10 years, the OCT has been transitioned from the National Marine Aquarium in Plymouth to an international Ocean conservation charity, with a clear Ocean conservation strategy, built around 3 core Ocean programmes: Ocean Habitats Restoration, Oceans Advocacy and Ocean Experiences.

The OCT's success goes beyond protected areas or saved species. It's about raising awareness of the Ocean's importance for all life on Earth, and a future with healthy and thriving Oceans.

Our core values of Positivity, Respect, Integrity, Diversity and Engagement, flow through everything we do, our culture, and the wellbeing of our staff of over 100. They support our mission to inspire a global movement to promote and encourage a wave of positive behaviour towards our Ocean.



# Our Strategy & Programmes

**We know the Ocean is a key solution to combat the problems of our changing climate. A healthy planet needs a healthy Ocean, but unsustainable human activity continues to significantly harm the world's Ocean.**

Our five year conservation strategy (2022-2027) is our response and sets out our goals to ensure a thriving Ocean:

1. Connecting as many people as possible to the Ocean.
2. Restoring and protecting habitats and species.
3. Influencing locally, nationally and internationally.
4. Delivering Ocean and climate education programmes.
5. Evolving sustainably.

We put people at the heart of our mission, connecting them with our Ocean.



# Ocean Habitats Restoration: Blue Meadows

Protecting vital Ocean ecosystems, allowing them to regenerate and restoring them to their full health.

Over the past decade our focus has been on seagrasses, as they are one of the most valuable and biodiverse habitats on the planet, and one of the most endangered. In the UK alone, we have lost nearly half of our seagrass beds since the 1930s.

The OCT's Blue Meadows programme brings all of our work together and is a holistic approach to seagrass protection, regeneration and restoration at scale internationally.

We are a leading innovator in seagrass conservation, restoration and management, with over 180 miles of seabed mapped over 4 year period. We are constantly developing initiatives to expand and develop our work, including by developing seagrass tokens, natural capital credits, and apps for water users to make meadows visible.

## Our 5 Year Plan for Blue Meadows is to

- **Protect:** Protect 10% of the remaining UK seagrass (c.700 Ha).
- **Restore:** Develop a blueprint of mass seedling propagation for restoration at scale.
- **Scale:** Restore seagrass meadows at already protected sites and share blueprint for restoring seagrass regionally and internationally.
- **Oceans Advocacy and Behaviour:** Showcasing the ways people can act in more Ocean friendly way by adapting in their lifestyles.
- **Ocean Experiences:** Connecting as many people with the Ocean as possible.



# Ocean Advocacy: #ThinkOcean

Our vision is a healthy Ocean, that continues to sustain all life. By bringing people and the environment together, we can work on solutions to tackle the issues that our Oceans face. We know that having meaningful experiences redefines how people relate to and care for the natural environment. We're encouraging everyone, from individuals to communities, industry to government, to think about their impact on the Ocean and make choices with the health of the Ocean in mind. Our team of marine biologists, educators, communicators, researchers, ecologists, oceanographers and divers are Ocean optimists.

We run a number of national campaigns including #thinkOcean, community and public engagement, global grants programmes, and Ocean literacy initiatives, including delivering the world's first Ocean conservation curriculum. We also contribute to international thought leadership, playing a key role in the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development and our #thinkOcean challenge is a UN Ocean Decade Endorsed Action.



# Ocean Experiences: National Marine Aquarium

Connecting as many people with the Ocean as possible. The OCT operates the UK's conservation aquarium, home to over 5000 animals, which has welcomed 7 million visitors, and over 400,000 young learners since opening in 2000. The National Marine Aquarium is a thriving and well-regarded institution that acts as a revenue generating visitor attraction, an education centre, a community hub, and a research and restoration facility. In 2023, it featured in a 6-part documentary series, 'Secrets of the Aquarium' on the BBC.

All the award-winning experiences we offer are designed to create a love for the Ocean, helping to instil in the public a desire to protect it. We create accessible and inclusive experiences, showcasing the Ocean and all it has to offer. The cultural and learning experiences we offer include snorkel safaris, cutting-edge VR sessions and community based Ocean city clean-ups.

Read more about our impact in Ocean conservation.

What started with a vision to create the UK's National Aquarium, led that team on a journey to expand the Aquarium's ethos beyond the coast of Plymouth, to become the OCT a charity working around the world towards a healthier Ocean.



# Role Description

**This is a pivotal appointment at a defining moment for the organisation.**

The next Chair will help secure the long-term financial future of the Ocean Conservation Trust, helping the charity to realise its ambition to be a globally respected and impactful voice for Ocean Conservation. A major asset for the charity is the National Marine Aquarium (NMA), which requires major capital investment. The Chair will help strengthen governance during an important period of transition from a reliance on the NMA for revenue to a blended funding portfolio

Centred around our visitors, communities, partners, donors, team and trustees, OCT believes that meaningful change happens through connection and collective action. The Trust plays a vital role in advancing practical conservation, delivering habitat restoration at scale, and inspiring pro-Ocean behaviour through its Ocean literacy programmes. The Chair will help ensure these ambitions are pursued with clarity, discipline and optimism for the future

## **Role Purpose**

To provide inspiring, disciplined and strategically astute leadership to the Board of Trustees of the Ocean Conservation Trust, ensuring the organisation fulfils its charitable purpose while securing the long-term sustainability of the charity and a revitalised, digitally transformed National Marine Aquarium. The Chair will guide OCT through a defining period strengthening governance, sharpening strategic priorities across its three core Ocean programmes, and ensuring the renewal and relevance of the NMA as the UK's national aquarium.

Working in close partnership with the Board of Trustees and the Chief Executive Officer, the Chair will help establish OCT as a globally respected Ocean conservation charity and ensure the financial resilience required to sustain and scale impact.

The Chair is accountable for leading the Board of Trustees, ensuring effective governance, sound decision-making, and collective responsibility in support of OCT's charitable objectives and commercial sustainability.



# Key Responsibilities

## Strategic Leadership

- Provide clear, confident leadership to the Board to ensure that OCT:
- Delivers its current five-year strategy across its three core Ocean programmes.
- Maintains disciplined prioritisation between conservation ambition and institutional sustainability.
- Safeguards and renews the National Marine Aquarium as the financial and public engagement cornerstone of the Trust.
- Prepares for, and supports, the development of the next longer-term strategic plan.
- Makes timely, well-informed and sometimes difficult strategic decisions, ensuring clarity of focus and avoiding strategic drift. The Chair will support the renewal, and asset transformation of the NMA, ensuring robust governance and capital oversight.

## Governance and Board Leadership

- Provide high-quality leadership of the Board, fostering cohesion and collective ownership, encouraging inclusive and constructive debate, fully utilising trustee expertise, and ensuring clear decision-making with disciplined follow-through.
- Lead a formal review of board skills, diversity and composition to ensure the Board is equipped for the next phase of organisational development.
- Ensure the Board maintains strong governance discipline, regulatory compliance and risk oversight across both charity and aquarium obligations.
- Review and, where appropriate, strengthen governance structures, subcommittees and trustee engagement to support the next phase of growth and capital development.
- Work with Trustees to promote a progressive Diversity, Equity and Inclusivity culture across OCT.
- Ensure that robust financial stewardship, risk management and health, safety and environmental oversight are maintained at all times.

## CEO Partnership

- Build a strong, trusting and professionally challenging relationship with the Chief Executive Officer.
- Provide support, counsel and constructive challenge.
- Help prioritise ideas within strategic capacity.
- Ensure alignment between Board expectations and executive delivery.
- Support the development and effectiveness of the senior management team.
- Act as a sounding board to the CEO while maintaining appropriate governance boundaries.



# Key Responsibilities

## External Representation and Influence

- Uphold and promote the mission, values and reputation of the Ocean Conservation Trust, raising its profile and credibility nationally and internationally.
- Play an influential role, representing OCT as required across philanthropy, business, civic or political leadership and conservation communities.
- Support high-level stakeholder engagement and relationship-building, including key partners across the region, nationally and internationally.

## Income Generation and Capital Leadership

- Play a leading role in supporting and enabling major fundraising activity, including:
- Capital fundraising for the renewal and transformation of the NMA.
- Philanthropic and institutional funding for OCT's conservation and Ocean literacy programmes.
- Identifying and building strategic partnerships that enhance both impact and financial sustainability.
- Opening doors, cultivating relationships and, where appropriate, directly engaging with major donors and funders.
- Supporting the ambition to diversify income streams and progressively strengthen OCT's financial independence and resilience.



# Person Specification

**The Chair will be an experienced, credible and values-driven leader, motivated by the opportunity to secure lasting Ocean impact while strengthening a nationally significant institution. As Chair, you will act as steward of OCT's purpose, reputation and long-term resilience, holding the organisation steady while enabling it to grow in confidence and clarity.**

You will bring sound judgement, energy, and ethical, inclusive leadership. You will value connection and kindness, listening carefully and building bridges across different viewpoints. You will create the conditions for others to contribute at their best, fostering a respectful and collaborative board culture. Above all, you will recognise that meaningful conservation success depends not only on expertise and strategy, but on bringing people with us, inspiring shared ownership of a healthy, thriving Ocean.

## Skills, Experience & Knowledge

### Essential

- Proven experience as a Board Chair or senior non-executive leader of a complex organisation.
- Demonstrable experience of strengthening governance, board effectiveness and accountability.
- Experience of supporting or leading organisations through significant change, capital development or strategic renewal.
- Credibility and experience in major fundraising or capital campaigns.
- Ability to balance commercial sustainability with charitable purpose.
- Understanding of the governance framework for charities.

### Highly Desirable

- Experience in conservation, environmental or habitat restoration work.
- Experience in visitor attractions, cultural venues, tourism or mixed commercial/charitable models.
- Strong networks in philanthropy, business, civic or political leadership, ideally including the South West region, nationally and internationally.
- Knowledge of zoological/aquarium governance frameworks.

We are open to candidates from a wide range of sectors. We are not seeking an "Ocean expert" as a prerequisite, we are seeking an exceptional Chair who believes in the power of people to protect and restore the Ocean.



# Person Specification

## Personal Attributes & Values

- A genuine belief in our mission and deep personal commitment to environmental protection and Ocean health.
- Strategic clarity and the courage to make difficult decisions.
- Integrity, sound judgement and independence of mind.
- High emotional intelligence and political awareness.
- Ability to build trust-based relationships while offering constructive challenge.
- Strong presence, credibility and ambassadorial capability.
- Comfortable operating in complexity, able to reconcile differing viewpoints into coherent strategic direction.
- Energy, resilience and determination.

**You will combine humility with authority, listening deeply while holding firm to agreed priorities.**



# Statement on Inclusion

Perrett Laver believes that excellence will be achieved through recognising the value of every individual. A broad range of perspectives, backgrounds and opinions amongst our global community of colleagues is crucial in maintaining our corporate culture of openness, intellectual curiosity, and creativity. We take an active role in supporting under-represented communities and groups in becoming better and more fairly represented in the leadership of all organisations. We know that diverse and inclusive teams have a positive impact on our ability to identify, engage and secure candidates from these groups.

Our commitment to inclusion across race, gender, age, religion, sexual orientation, identity, and experience drives us every day – for clients, for candidate identification and in the recruitment, development and retention of colleagues.

To ensure inclusion on the basis of age, disability, ethnic or national origin, family circumstance, gender, gender identity, marital status, nationality, political or religious beliefs, race, socio-economic background, sexual orientation, we would like to specifically invite applications from under-represented groups.

Buttle UK prides itself on being an inclusive organisation and welcomes applications from all applicants, regardless of race, sex or gender, sexuality, socio-economic background or any other minority or protected characteristic.

## **To support anyone looking to work with us, we commit to:**

- Paying for childcare for the hours in and around the interview process.
- Paying for your travel costs to the office and back for interviews, if these are held in person.
- Holding interviews online if easier for candidates' circumstances.
- Making any reasonable adjustments to support your needs in the application and interview process.



# Privacy Statement

Protecting your personal data is of the utmost importance to Perrett Laver and we take this responsibility very seriously. Any information obtained by our trading divisions is held and processed in accordance with the relevant data protection legislation. The data you provide us with is securely stored on our computerised database and transferred to our clients for the purposes of presenting you as a candidate and/or considering your suitability for a role you have registered interest in.

Perrett Laver is a Data Controller and a Data Processor, and our legal basis for processing your personal data is 'Legitimate Interests'. You have the right to object to us processing your data in this way. For more information about this, your rights, and our approach to Data Protection and Privacy, please see our Privacy Statement.

If you have comments that would support us to improve access to documentation, or our application processes more generally, please do not hesitate to contact us via [accessibility@perrettlaver.com](mailto:accessibility@perrettlaver.com).



# How to Apply

## To apply, please submit:

- CV
- Covering letter, detailing how you fulfil the role description and personal specification

Send to:

[plusportal.perrettlaver.com](mailto:plusportal.perrettlaver.com) quoting reference 8301.

**The deadline for applications is: 09.00BST on Tuesday 7 April**

## Location and Commitment:

The role requires a UK-based Chair, with a commitment to engage in person with the CEO and staff at the NMA in Plymouth, particularly during the period of capital development and organisational renewal.

The Chair is a pro bono appointment with a predicted time commitment of 2-3 days per month, with flexibility to increase during periods of capital fundraising, strategic planning and key stakeholder engagement.

## Process

- Perrett Laver will conduct an executive search process in parallel with the public advertisement of the role.
- Longlisted candidates will be invited to interview with Perrett Laver in late April.
- The Selection Panel will subsequently meet to decide upon a final shortlist for the post with formal interviews due to take place in early-May.

If you require any reasonable adjustments to assist you in the selection process, please advise us of these so that we can make appropriate arrangements.



AMERICAS ASIA PACIFIC EMEA

One, Embassy Gardens,  
Viaduct Gardens,  
Nine Elms,  
London  
SW11 7BW  
[perrettlaver.com](http://perrettlaver.com)



