



WHITLEY
FUND FOR
NATURE



Charity People
PERMANENT AND TEMPORARY



Deputy Director (Maternity Cover)

March 2026



About Whitley Fund for Nature (WFN)

WFN is a UK-registered charity that champions and funds outstanding grassroots leaders working to conserve wildlife and support communities across the Global South. Since our founding in 1993, WFN has channelled £26 million to more than 220 conservation leaders in 80 countries across Africa, Asia and Latin America.

Our Award winners are courageous, locally-rooted changemakers delivering science-based, community-driven solutions that create lasting benefits for wildlife, landscapes and people. We provide more than funding. Through Awards, training and strategic communications support, we raise the profile of our winners and amplify their impact internationally. We maintain close, long-term relationships with our grantees, helping to strengthen local NGOs and build conservation leadership capacity where it is needed most.

We fund in regions where financial resources are often hardest to secure but where investment can deliver transformative impact.

Our annual income of £2.6m is raised through a diverse portfolio of family foundations, trusts, individual donors, corporate partners and international NGOs. WFN is governed by a dedicated Board of Trustees and delivered by a dynamic, mission-driven team committed to excellence and measurable impact. The charity benefits from the high-profile support of our Patron, HRH The Princess Royal, and Ambassadors including David Attenborough, Kate Humble, Tom Heap, Miranda Richardson, Danielle de Niese and Alastair Fothergill.

Together, we work to spotlight proven conservation solutions and ensure grassroots leaders receive the recognition, resources and networks they need to thrive.

Our Vision, Mission and Values

VISION

A future where communities and wildlife thrive together on a healthy planet.

MISSION

To halt and reverse the loss of Earth's biodiversity and wild places, working alongside local people. We achieve our mission by:

- Providing funding, recognition, and training to proven grassroots conservation leaders working across the Global South.
- Supporting the long-term growth and scale up of impactful conservation solutions backed by science.
- Raising the profile of conservationists' work and their ability to effect positive environmental change.

VALUES

Integrity – At WFN we act with integrity in all we do, fostering a culture that is responsible, uplifting, transparent, inclusive, and unified in achieving our mission while holding ourselves to the highest standards. We are accountable to the conservation leaders we champion and to the partners who support us.

Science-driven – We support evidence-based conservation work across the Global South that is informed by the latest science and founded on community involvement. We monitor and evaluate the impact of our activities, publish our results, and use them to drive our future actions.

Collaborative – We work collaboratively, actively seeking to partner and exchange learnings with others who share our vision. We foster collaboration among our international network of Whitley Award winning conservationists to enable the growth of proven conservation solutions and nurture their ability to effect positive change.

Ambitious – We are ambitious; a pioneer in the field of funding grassroots conservationists, we seek to continually move the dial for environmental protection. We actively listen and respond to the needs of our award winners and think outside the box to catalyse impact on the ground. We aim high, celebrate conservation success, and remain optimistic about our future and the difference we can all make.





The Position

ROLE

Deputy Director (Maternity Cover)

PURPOSE OF ROLE

To support the Director with the strategic leadership of WFN, delivery of the charity's mission and objectives, and meeting the financial targets of the organisation. The Deputy Director primarily oversees the charity's fundraising partnerships, communications and PR, and works together with the Director on the planning and delivery of events.

REPORTS TO

Director

PLACE OF WORK

Central London office

CONTRACT

14 months fixed term contract (Maternity Cover), Full-Time or Part-Time 4 days (pro-rata, 3 days per week in the office)

SALARY

£58-60,000 p.a. (pro-rated for part time) commensurate with experience

TIMELINE

- Application Deadline: 12pm Friday 27th March
- 1st Stage Interview: Tuesday 7th April
- 2nd Stage Interview: Monday 13th April

Role Summary

Whitley Fund for Nature (WFN) is seeking an experienced and strategic senior leader to join us as Deputy Director on a maternity cover contract. This is a pivotal role at the heart of a respected international conservation charity, offering the opportunity to help steer strategy, strengthen operations, and drive income generation during an important period for the organisation.

Working closely with the Director and Board of Trustees, you will support the development and delivery of WFN's strategy, ensuring clear KPIs, sound governance, robust financial oversight and effective organisational planning. You will play a central role in Trustee Board processes, annual reporting, budgeting and risk management, helping maintain the highest standards of professionalism and accountability.

You will line manage the Head of Partnerships and Head of Communications, support the Head of Media, and foster a collaborative, high-performing team culture. Alongside leadership, you will work closely with the fundraising team to steward major donors, sign off high-value proposals and reports, attend pitches, and help secure new funding to meet ambitious income targets.

The role also includes strategic oversight of communications and PR, ensuring messaging remains compelling, mission-aligned and globally relevant.

A key highlight is co-leading delivery of the prestigious Whitley Awards, working alongside the Director to guide event planning, donor engagement, communications campaigns and production oversight for this internationally recognised celebration of grassroots conservation leaders. We are looking for a confident, solutions-focused leader with strong governance experience, a track record in major donor fundraising, and the ability to balance strategic oversight with hands-on delivery.

This maternity cover presents a unique opportunity to contribute at senior level within a dynamic, mission-driven organisation working at the forefront of global conservation. If you are a collaborative and values-driven leader ready to make an immediate impact, we would love to hear from you.

Job Description

OPERATIONS

At WFN we are committed to our mission to conserve the natural world, we work as one, taking personal responsibility for our collective success, we make it fun and support one another. We operate professionally and responsibly, holding ourselves to the highest standards. Central to this is a clear strategy and operating procedures, backed by a committed Board of Trustees and talented team, working collaboratively to achieve our objectives and uphold our organisational values.

Strategy

- Support the Director and the Board to set and implement WFN's strategy, and to continually evolve it in response to current and changing needs, including idea contribution, the setting of targets, and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).
- Deliver WFN's annual Away Day with the Director and a facilitator, bringing together the team and Board to discuss strategy in a participatory fashion.
- Ensure all activities contribute to achieving the charity's vision, mission and objectives.

Governance

- Support WFN's quarterly Trustee Board Meetings in March, July and December.

- Support preparation of TBM/AGM documents, including an agenda, management accounts, updated actions from the prior meeting, KPIs and Operations Report, GANTT chart, Budget and Risk Register.
- Circulate subsequent actions to the team following the meetings.
- File copies of papers and documents (e.g., finalised minutes, signed accounts and conflict of interest forms) required for our audit records.
- Draft the Trustees Report for WFN's annual audited accounts, together with the Head of Finance (HF), for Director approval.

Management

- Work with the Director and team members to create an organisational GANTT chart to reflect the charity's activities and workflows throughout the year.
- Manage the Head of Partnerships (HP) and the Head of Communications (HC), providing day-to-day support, facilitating priorities management, performance reviews, monthly 1-1s, career development, training and goal setting inc SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timebound) targets. Provide day-to-day support to the Head of Media (HM), who is managed by the Chair of Trustees.
- Oversee performance reviews and Self-Appraisals

annually in June and Mid-Year Reviews in January for the HP and HC to review progress towards agreed targets and support them in doing this for those they line manage.

- Support the Director where needed in making recommendations to the RemCo for annual salary and cost of living reviews in June.
- Deal with any arising staff issues and disciplinary action as necessary, seeking legal support if required.
- Collaborate with relevant team members on staff recruitment and induction.
- Oversee annual leave requests for line reports.

Budget

- Work with the Director and HF to draft the budget for Trustee approval in July.
- Help ensure the organisation's financial needs and targets are met and budgetary delegation procedures are followed by all budget holders.
- Follow the charity's financial procedures, negotiate, and agree terms with the suppliers of all activities delegated to your post and ensure the costs of the activities do not exceed the budgeted level without appropriate authority.





Job Description

FUNDRAISING

WFN maintains a close personal and professional relationship with supporters, namely family foundations, individuals and Trusts, with whom we build long term partnerships. We raise funds based on winner need and are proud that 85% of donations are used to support WFN's charitable activities, with the remainder split between fundraising and support costs. We seek to grow what we give and actively pursue new partnerships to support our mission.

- Work with the Director, HP, and Partnerships Manager (PM) to achieve WFN's income targets.
- Attend meetings with the HP to maintain relations with existing Major donors.
- Sign off reports to Major Donors giving upwards of £20,000 p.a., drafted by the PM and finalised by the HP.
- Work with the PM, HP, and Director to identify and agree new potential sources of funding/approaches.
- Sign off proposals to new potential donors drafted by the HP and PM.
- Attend pitches to new potential donors with the HP.
- Ensure due diligence is conducted by the HP on all major donors in accordance with our Donor Acceptance Policy to mitigate the risk of receiving funds from inappropriate sources.
- Provide oversight of the WFN NextGen programme, working with the NextGen Committee Chair.

COMMUNICATIONS

WFN champions the sharing of conservation success stories that resonate with supporters and demonstrate we can make a difference. Our communications seek to amplify the work of winners and raise the charity's profile across digital, print and social media platforms to reach a wide audience.

- Approve the communications and social media strategy, drafted annually by the HC and ensure the HC and CA implement it.
- Approve all digital and printed content including e-letters, visual assets, website and annual review/ ceremony programme.
- Support development of WFN's brand to maximise reach and engagement and ensure the brand accurately reflects WFN's values and mission.
- Continually input ideas to ensure WFN's communications remain relevant, engaging, and on brand.
- Ensure the HC and CA produce relevant and timely content for donors, the international conservation community, and public that aligns with our mission, house style and global environmental agendas, and helps to raise the charity's profile and drive engagement.

PR

WFN actively works to secure PR coverage for Whitley Award winners and the charity. Increased visibility helps winners to attract further funding, gain new connections,

and increase political clout – tools which strengthen conservation work. Targeting UK broadsheets, magazines, radio, tv and international papers we seek to put a spotlight on WFN's winners and issues that matter to them, as well as to raise the profile of the charity to aid in fundraising.

- Collaborate with the HM on the annual PR strategy and sign off content throughout the year as required.
- Continually input ideas to ensure WFN's PR remains relevant and engaging.
- Ensure the HM produces newsworthy, relevant, and timely content for press, donors, the international conservation community, and public that aligns with our mission, house style and global environmental agendas, working with the HC.
- Ensure the HM secures coverage of the charity, our events and winners in UK and international media throughout the year, targeting newspapers, magazines, radio, TV, podcasts and online outlets.
- Approve new media opportunities for the HM to pursue.
- Sign off press releases drafted by the HM and HC.
- Sign off annual podcast episodes and related communications.

Job Description

EVENTS

Whitley Awards

The Whitley Awards are the result of an international search to find, fund, train and put a spotlight on outstanding grassroots leaders and their conservation projects. Finalists are invited to London for a week of training and events, culminating with the Whitley Awards Ceremony, where winners receive their Awards from WFN Patron, HRH The Princess Royal in front of 450 guests and many more tuning in via our livestream.

- Together with the Director, lead the team to plan and deliver the Awards Ceremony and other associated events during the Whitley Awards week.
- Support development a ceremony 'theme', together with the HC and Director.
- Work with the HP and Director to develop a donor engagement strategy around the ceremony including guestlist, sponsor matchmaking and HRH reception.
- Approve the Whitley Awards communications and PR campaign each year.
- Collaborate with Director and HC on visual side of event production (graphics, lighting, staging, set design) etc

- Support livestreaming of the Ceremony, together with the HC and CA.
- Support creation of winner films (liaising with external film production company and working with the HC), with final sign off from the Director.
- Support the HC with development of printed communications associated with the ceremony including the annual review and Ceremony programme, with final sign off from the Director.
- Approve winner press releases and agree PR strategy around the Whitley Awards with the HM.

Throughout the year WFN holds other fundraising and engagement events ranging from intimate dinners with supporters, winner talks, events as part of our Next Gen programme, and major initiatives such as Royal dinners, Galas and Summits which require the DD's assistance. We are planning a Summit in 2026 which will require the DD to support the Director with its delivery.

Other duties as may be requested from time to time. This job description is not exhaustive and may evolve.





Person Specification

ESSENTIAL

- Senior leadership experience within a charity or mission-led organisation
- Experience supporting strategy development and translating it into operational plans and KPIs
- Strong governance experience, including working with Trustees and preparing Board papers, budgets and risk registers
- Experience in or understanding of the conservation, environmental or international development sector
- Demonstrable line management experience, including performance reviews and staff development
- Experience delivering high-profile fundraising or stakeholder events
- Proven experience working with major donors (trusts, foundations, individuals) and reviewing high-value proposals and reports
- Sound financial literacy, including budget development and monitoring
- Experience overseeing communications and PR at a strategic level
- Excellent organisational skills with the ability to manage multiple priorities
- Strong judgement, discretion and decision-making capability
- Ability to balance strategic oversight with hands-on delivery

DESIRABLE

- Familiarity with UK charity governance and regulatory requirements
- Experience working with high-profile ambassadors or patrons
- Knowledge of ethical fundraising and donor due diligence processes
- Experience supporting organisational growth or change

Additional Information

BENEFITS

- Attractive holiday package totaling 24 days plus 4 additional days allocated over the Christmas break. 28 days in total.
- Hybrid working options
- Training and professional development opportunities
- The charity operates a Pension Scheme
- Life Assurance Scheme
- Enhanced Parental Pay
- Access to 24hr Employee Assistance Programme

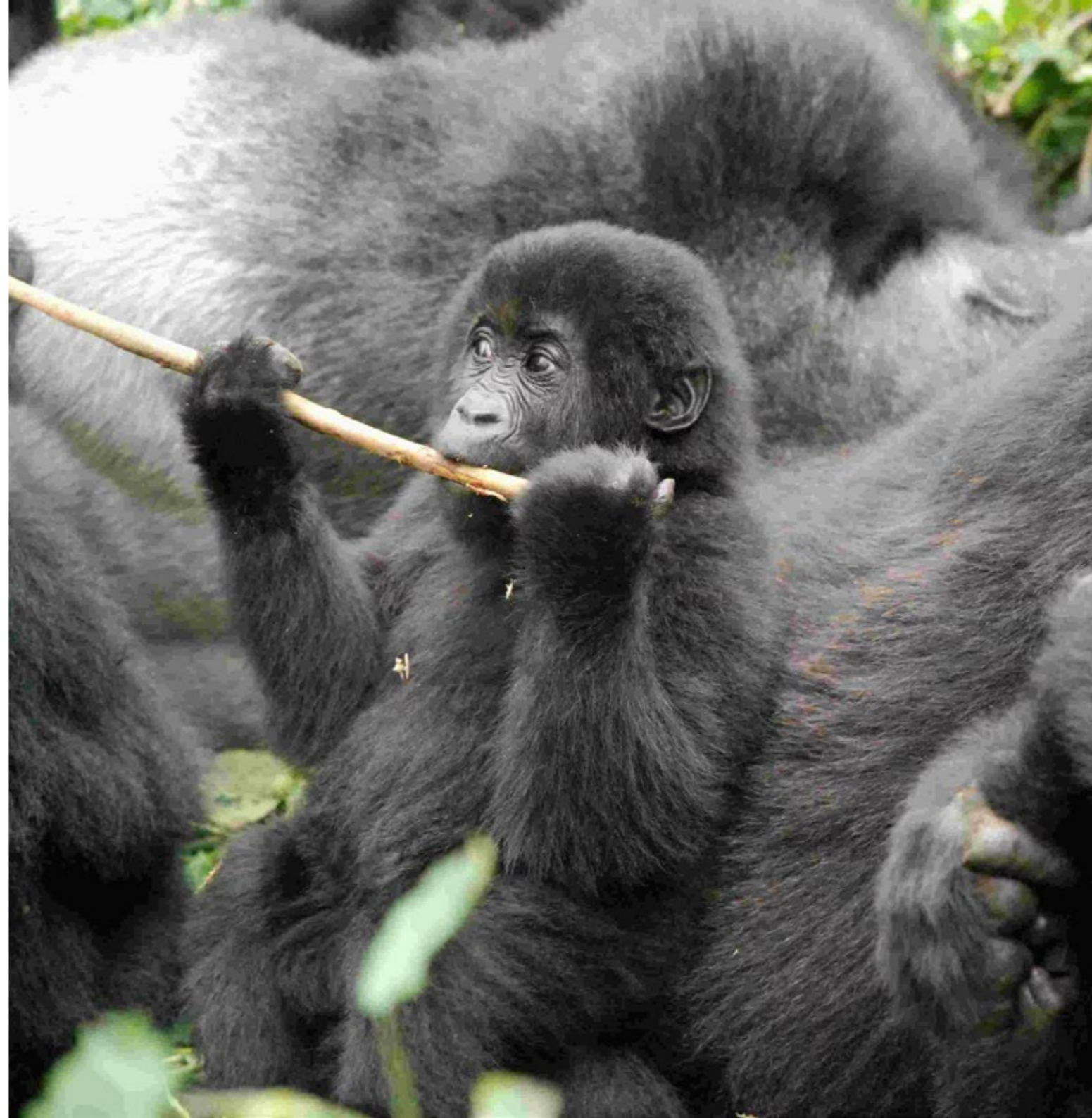
EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

At WFN we are committed to developing an inclusive and diverse organisation, in which everyone feels supported, valued, and able to be their full selves. We celebrate and respect diversity in nature and among the people and partners with whom we work. We need more people and diversity across the environment sector, and to achieve our vision. We therefore encourage applications from Black, Asian or minority ethnic; disabled; LGBTQIA+; or from lower socio-economic backgrounds. As a small organisation we are committed to

progressing and continuing development across DE&I. Please contact Kevin Croasdale from Charity People (kevin@charitypeople.co.uk) to discuss any additional support you may need to complete your application. Applications are considered solely on your demonstrated suitability for the role.

ACCEPTABLE USE – ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI)

We are collecting CVs and Cover Letters for this role. We understand that applicants may use tools such as ChatGPT, CoPilot or similar as thought partners; however, we are looking for original work which clearly demonstrates how your personal experience makes you a good fit for the role. Please do not submit content heavily reliant on AI as this will be picked up in our selection process. We have a team of real people who review and score your application and a system that helps ensure authenticity – we want to see the real you. During interviews, candidates are expected to respond independently without the use of AI tools.





How to Apply

TIMELINE

- Application Deadline: 12pm Friday 27th March
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To apply for this role, send your CV, contact details for two referees, and answers to the below questions to Kevin Croasdale from Charity People (kevin@charitypeople.co.uk). Please also indicate what your notice period, if any, would be, and send a signed copy of our Candidate Privacy Notice with your application.

- 1. Motivation & Alignment** – What motivates you about joining Whitley Fund for Nature as Deputy Director (Maternity Cover), and how does this opportunity align with your values, professional experience, and long-term ambitions? (400 words max)
- 2. Strategic Leadership** – This role requires balancing strategic oversight with hands-on delivery, providing steady leadership during a defined period of organisational continuity. Can you share an example where you successfully stepped into a senior role to maintain momentum, support colleagues, and keep projects or income streams on track? (400 words max)

This role is not eligible for UK Visa Sponsorship. Only applicants who have the right to work in the UK at the time of application will be considered for this role.



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