



Trustee Recruitment Pack

September 2026

As we approach our centenary year in 2028, help us ensure the future of Mousehole Wild Bird Hospital and our dedication to the care and rehabilitation of seabirds.

Caring for seabirds from around the Cornish coast

Mousehole Wild Bird Hospital Cornwall provides high quality care to sea birds in need of care. Our aim is to treat and rehabilitate the birds in our hospital and return them to the wild.

In 2025 we cared for 10 different species including Herring Gull, Northern Gannet, Great Cormorant and Atlantic Puffin. In total we rehabilitated over 100 patients with a release rate of 74% (the average across other rehabilitation centres is between 40-60%), from stranded seabirds and fledglings to victims of storms, pollution, predators, and disease.

How it all started

Our famous hospital on the Cornish Cliffs was founded in 1928 by Dorothy and Phyllis Yglesias when their younger sister found an injured Jackdaw in her garden.

Over the years Mousehole Wild Bird Hospital has been at the forefront of disasters such as the Torrey Canyon in 1967 and the recent Avian Flu epidemic.

The sisters ran the hospital, with the help of volunteers, up until 1953 when they approached the RSPCA who agreed to take it over in 1953. Staff were employed and the financial and operational burden was taken from the sisters' shoulders.

Times of change

At the end of February 1975, the RSPCA withdrew all financial support due to their own monetary challenges. Dorothy and Phyllis and many of their friends were determined that the hospital would not close, and a public appeal was opened to a tremendous response. At a public meeting held in February 1975 a committee was selected to run the Hospital. On the 28th of July 1976 the Hospital became a charity, funded entirely by voluntary contributions.

In January 1980 saw Dorothy's many years of dedication recognised when she was bestowed with the MBE in the New Years Honours List.

Looking towards the future

As the Hospital approaches its 100th anniversary in 2028, we are reflecting on our future and our offer and facilities so we can continue provide excellent care and rehabilitation for sea birds. It's a pivotal moment for our small, specialist charity. Rising environmental pressures, disease outbreaks and higher demand for wildlife care mean that our offer is in need more than ever.

In recent years our practice and approach have evolved, including the implementation of biosecurity measures to minimise risks to all bird species. However, our focus continues to provide the best care we can for the birds in our care with the aim to return them to their natural habitats as quickly and safely as possible, just as the Yglesias sisters had always intended.

Role of the Trustees

Our Board of Trustees play a vital role in making sure that Mousehole Wild Bird Hospital and Sanctuary Association Ltd (MWBHC) achieves its core purpose. As a trustee you will:

- Contribute to strategic direction and decision-making
- Ensure strong governance and oversight
- Act as ambassadors for Mousehole Wild Bird Hospital
- Provide constructive challenge and support to the executive
- Uphold the organisation's values and mission

Council members have a collective responsibility. This means that trustees always act as a group and not as individuals.

Current priorities

As we approach our centenary year the main areas of focus for the Board of Trustees are:

- Financial sustainability
- A sustainable staffing and operational model
- Fundraising and diversifying our income streams
- Profile raising and public engagement
- Contributing to Cornwall's unique coast and marine environment.

Duties will include

- Contribute to the broader promotion of MWBHC's objects, aims and reputation by applying your skills, expertise, knowledge and contacts
- Approve operational strategies and policies and monitor and evaluate their implementation
- Oversee MWBHC's financial plans and budgets and monitor and evaluate progress (including reviewing and approving annual accounts)
- Ensure that key risks are being identified, monitored and controlled effectively
- Keep abreast of changes in the wider conservation and environmental sectors
- Attend Council meetings adequately prepared to contribute to discussions
- Use independent judgment, acting legally and in good faith to promote and protect MWBHC's interests, to the exclusion of their own personal and/or any third party interests.

As a small charity, there will be times when the trustees will need to be actively involved beyond Board meetings. This may involve scrutinising papers, leading discussions, focusing on key issues, providing advice and guidance on new initiatives, presenting externally, or other issues in which the trustee has expertise.

What we are looking for

We are looking for people willing to bring energy, enthusiasm and commitment to the role, and who will broaden the diversity of thinking on our Board of Trustees for the benefit of the charity.

You do not need previous governance experience, although this is desirable, as an induction will be provided.

Personal skills and qualities

- Willingness and ability to understand and accept responsibilities and liabilities as trustees and to act in the best interests of the charity
- Ability to think creatively and strategically, exercise good, independent judgement and work effectively as a Board member
- Effective communication skills and willingness to participate actively in discussion
- Enthusiasm for our vision and mission
- A strong personal commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion
- Commitment to Nolan's seven principles of public life: selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership.

Currently, we are looking for people with the following skills and experience: HR (Chair of HR Committee), financial oversight (Treasurer), fundraising and income diversification, and PR and communications.

Terms of appointment

- Trustees will be recommended to the Board of Trustees and then formally appointed at the AGM
- Trustees who fail to attend three consecutive Council meetings may be requested to formally resign their position
- All Trustees must become Friends of MWBHC
- This is a voluntary position.

Time commitment

C. 1 day per month which will include:

- Attending 4 Board meetings annually. Currently meetings are held in person at the Salomon Browne Village Hall, Mousehole typically from 6-8pm.
- Attending any additional ad hoc meetings or committees as agreed by the Board of Trustees.

How to apply

If you are interested in this opportunity, we encourage confidential conversations with our Chair Michael Larsen in advance of your application. You can contact Michael on chair@mouseholebirdhospital.org.uk or by phone: 07917 768591.

Your application should consist of a CV or bio, supported by a covering letter outlining your motivations for applying and highlighting how your skills, knowledge and experience meet the requirements of our trustees. We recommend that each document should be no more than two to three pages.

Applications should be sent to chair@mouseholebirdhospital.org.uk

"Governance doesn't sit separately from an organisation's purpose. At its best, good governance keeps us focused on the people we exist to serve, encourages us to ask the right questions and helps turn ambition into meaningful impact".