



Cheshire
Wildlife Trust

**Let's bring wildlife back together -
for everyone, everywhere**





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Purpose and impact of the role

We have reached a tipping point. Wildlife is in freefall both locally and nationally and our climate is in crisis. By 2030 we must see nature recovering, wildlife returning and ecosystems restored and we need many, many more people on nature's side.

Cheshire Wildlife Trust is a fast-growing environmental charity which is part of the UK-wide federation of Wildlife Trusts. With the local support of over 17,500 members and almost 1 million members nationally, you will be a part of a dynamic organisation which is at the forefront of bringing wildlife back. Your role will help achieve our 2030 goals to put nature into recovery, mobilise at least 1 in 4 people to be on nature's side and ensure that the environment plays a full role in addressing the climate crisis. In short, we need to create a [Wilder Cheshire](#).

This position is part of the Advocacy team. The team leads Cheshire Wildlife Trust's efforts to reduce the threats to nature by challenging systems, protecting and defending nature in decision making and holding others to account.

The role of Principal Planning Ecologist is a Principal Technical Officer position where the main purpose is to deliver agreed objectives that contribute significantly to achieving a specific strategic goal and the work of a department both directly and by advising colleagues at all levels.



The specific purpose of this position is to:

- Lead the ecology assessment of potential threats to nature in Cheshire and prepare evidence-based positions to inform our advocacy work.
- Produce high quality and timely responses to policy and development consultations and brief the advocacy team on ecological impacts or other issues relating to nature.
- Build and maintain relationships with key contacts, stakeholders and peers to ensure Cheshire Wildlife Trust's position is understood and to advocate for nature-positive outcomes.

Overview

Title: Principal Planning Ecologist

Responsible to: Advocacy Programme Manager

Term: Permanent

Salary: £39,040 – £44,689 (Rank 2)
Starting in the region of £39,040

Hours: Full-time/35 hrs per week.

Location: Bickley Hall Farm (SY14 8EF). This is a hybrid role.

Main duties and responsibilities



- Lead ecological assessment of policy, planning and infrastructure proposals to identify risks and opportunities for nature
- Inform the Trust's position and lead on responses to Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects
- Support campaign development with robust evidence and policy framing
- Develop clear, evidence-based organisational positions and advocacy priorities
- Produce high-quality consultation responses, briefings and technical reports
- Translate complex or incomplete information into clear recommendations for action
- Identify precedent-setting cases and advise on when escalation or campaigning is required
- Build and maintain relationships with technical stakeholders (planners, regulators, experts)
- Track policy developments and emerging issues to inform proactive advocacy
- Hold decision makers to account on their biodiversity commitments and advocate for implementation of best practice standards

- Provide environmental evidence, planning leadership, advice and technical expertise to colleagues across campaigns, programmes and projects. This includes contributing to the Trust's work on Biodiversity Net Gain, Local Nature Recovery Strategies, Neighbourhood Plans, Local Wildlife Sites, and the review and challenge of Environmental Impact Assessments
- Provide expert advice on planning matters to different internal and external audiences. This may include giving evidence at local planning examinations, hearings or inquiries
- Represent Cheshire Wildlife Trust at external meetings
- Report advocacy outcomes so they can be measured and communicated to a wide audience.

Strategy, delivery and managerial responsibility:

- No direct responsibility for others but may supervise the work of 1-2 FTE rank 3-6 officers
- Required to advise colleagues at all levels on technical matters
- Reports to either a Programme Manager or Senior Leader and is responsible for delivering specific technical and/or complex pieces of work.





Legal responsibility:

- Expected to comply with the limits and authorities set out in CWT's Financial and General Schemes of Delegation
- Required to comply with the Health & Safety at Work Act, General Data Protection Regulations, fundraising regulations and CWT policies and procedures
- Required to work within the limits set out in your individual competency record and to undergo competency based training as required
- Responsible for ensuring that project and contract work is carried out safely, lawfully and in line with relevant internal and external policies and regulations.

Relationships:

- Expected to be an ambassador for Cheshire Wildlife Trust responsible for upholding the Trust's reputation, image and level of service
- Expected to promote membership at all available opportunities and engage positively with potential and current supporters
- Responsible for developing and maintaining relationships at all levels internally and with relevant influential external stakeholders.

Person specification

Knowledge and experience

You will have expertise in a particular field, demonstrated through at least 7 years' relevant experience, or a Level 5 qualification, or membership/fellowship of a relevant professional body in one or more of the following fields: Environmental Science, Ecology, Town and Country Planning, Community Engagement or Environmental Management.

In addition you will need to demonstrate knowledge and/or experience of the following:

- An in-depth knowledge of the planning system, and policies relating to nature recovery
- A thorough understanding of ecology within the context of Environmental Impact Assessments and Biodiversity Net Gain as tools for protecting and enhancing nature
- An understanding of ecosystems, habitats and species
- An ability to communicate effectively, with integrity, tact and diplomacy, both verbally and in writing, to a wide range of stakeholders
- An ability to think strategically with experience of translating strategy into deliverable plans
- Able to review and analyse technical and detailed information to identify key arguments
- Able to create accurate and impactful position statements and consultation responses to achieve nature positive outcomes
- Collaborative inclusive approach to working with colleagues, external individuals and organisations to achieve goals.

*You can check whether a qualification you hold is at the right level [here](#).



Skills

You must be able to demonstrate competency in the core areas of responsibility at the level described above.

In addition, Cheshire Wildlife Trust maps the competencies required for each role against the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management's competency framework. The full framework can be viewed [here](#).

The framework is comprised of a set of technical and transferable competencies with four skill levels for each (basic, capable, accomplished and authoritative). For your particular role you will be expected to be accomplished in one or more transferable skill areas.

The competencies required for your role are shown in the table below:

Technical		Basic	Capable	Accomplished
A1-A5	Environmental Assessment			x
E1-4	Education & Knowledge Exchange		x	
M1-M3	Environmental Management		M1	
P1 - P3	Policy, Legislation & Standards			x
S1-S4	Surveying	S1		
SM1-SM3	Scientific Method			x

Transferable skills

- You demonstrate good professional conduct and support and encourage others to uphold professional standards. You consistently lead by example by modelling professional behaviours
- You are able to follow risk assessments and identify safe working practices for yourself and others
- You are competent in presenting complex information confidently and clearly, both orally and in writing. You can demonstrate a wide range of writing styles appropriate to the audience and use your communication skills to inspire and lead others, including those with conflicting viewpoints
- You are able to independently plan, manage and report on formal consultation exercises involving a range of stakeholders, including situations involving stakeholder conflict. You can identify connections and build effective partnerships with colleagues from different disciplines and with other organisations
- You are confident in using a range of common and bespoke software packages and are able to collect, manage and present data
- You are able to work efficiently and to a high standard. You can contribute to achieving, measuring and monitoring targets, as well as to strategic planning. You demonstrate an understanding of customer needs, are able to meet those needs and can deal effectively with members of the public
- You understand equal opportunities and actively support others by demonstrating inclusive behaviour. You are able to set a good example to others and show leadership when required.



Personal qualities

We expect all who work for Cheshire Wildlife Trust to demonstrate the following personal qualities:

- Be passionate about securing a future for local wildlife on land and sea
- Be someone who leads by example and makes decisions based on evidence
- Be proactive, professional and pioneering in your everyday work
- Make sustainable choices
- Be able to work both alone and as part of a team
- Be flexible, practical and well organised
- Be friendly and approachable
- Have the means to travel to our headquarters as and when required.

In addition, this role requires the following:

- Strong and proven organisational skills with the ability to prioritise workloads to meet deadlines.



About us

We are a small and friendly organisation employing around 60 staff supported by a network of delivery partners, volunteers and trainees. The people who work for Cheshire Wildlife Trust are passionate about the natural environment and local wildlife conservation. We have a highly motivated and committed team who are driven to succeed, and we believe that our staff thrive best in a culture of creative freedom within a strategic framework. Many staff are involved in Cheshire Wildlife Trust's activities outside of their duties such as occasional volunteering to help with a wildlife survey or helping run a weekend/evening event.

At Cheshire Wildlife Trust we embrace agile working with a focus on supporting you to achieve your objectives alongside a healthy work-life balance.

We operate a hybrid working policy with most staff working at least part of the week from home and/or out on site.

Our headquarters at Bickley Hall Farm (SY14 8EF) are set in the beautiful Cheshire countryside on a working farm managed by Cheshire Wildlife Trust.

The farmhouse provides our main office space with fantastic views and the opportunity to walk around the farm in your free time.

Depending on your role you may also have the flexibility to work from one of our satellite offices or use a hot desk hosted by a partner organisation.



How to apply

To apply for the position please download and complete an application form and return it to Emma Raine (People & Culture Officer) at jobs@cheshirewt.org.uk

CVs will not be accepted

The closing date for this role is midnight on **Sunday the 4th of October 2026**.

Applicants must have the right to work in the UK. You may be required to undergo a DBS check as part of this role.

Please note that this role is advertised externally as Principal Planning Ecologist to reflect the specialist planning and ecological expertise required. Internally, the post is titled Principal Nature Advocacy Officer.

