

Networks for Nature Project Manager

40 hours per week, temporary contract until December 2028

We are Chester Zoo

We're not *just* an amazing, award-winning visitor attraction that's home to over 37,000 incredible animals inside 128 acres of stunning gardens. We're not *just* the UK's most popular zoo. We're a major wildlife charity that's committed to the recovery of endangered species, globally. And, as the world faces an extinction crisis, we're making a hugely significant contribution to conservation at a time when it's needed most. We are Chester Zoo and we prevent extinction.

The Role

We now have an exciting new role for a Networks for Nature (NFN) Project Manager. This role is part of the *Networks for Nature* project team.

Networks for Nature spans c60 square miles from the River Dee to the River Mersey, including Chester and Ellesmere Port. This is a collaborative partnership project working with Cheshire West and Chester Council, The Land Trust, Cheshire Wildlife Trust, Canal and River Trust, and Sustrans with the aim to drive nature recovery in a mixed-use landscape, creating diverse habitats for species to thrive now and for years to come. We will empower communities to have an active role in conservation action and stewardship and will focus on making nature more accessible to and inclusive for everyone to enable connection and improve wellbeing. To find out more about Networks for Nature visit [Networks For Nature | Conservation at Chester Zoo](#).

The NFN Project Manager will be responsible for leading the project delivery team, maintaining good communication with and consulting with the project partners, ensuring adherence to and delivery against the project activity and action plan, record keeping and reporting to project governance bodies and multiple project funders.

The NFN Project Manager will be accountable to the internal Chester Zoo Project Board and a Steering Group comprised of project partners, who have oversight of the project. The NFN Project Manager will track and monitor project budget (c.£5million) and ensure that all spending is in line with the agreed budget. The NFN Project Manager will be supported in these tasks by the Senior Community Participation and Engagement Manager and will line manage a Project Administrator who will help with the day-to-day administration of the project.

We're looking for someone who can:

- Matrix manage the project delivery team to ensure adherence to and delivery of the project activity plan throughout the delivery phase.
- Influence project partners to ensure that planned conservation action and engagement activities are taking place according to timescale and budget detailed in NFN project activity plan.

- Provide regular reports to Project Board, and the Project Steering Group, ensuring that internal and external stakeholders are kept apprised of project progress and any areas of risk.
- Work with the Trusts and Foundations Manager to manage relationships with National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) and other funders for the project. Lead on reporting to the NLHF, ensuring compliance with all reporting requirements to ensure successful drawdown of the c.£4million grant.
- Manage the allocated budget for the delivery phase c.£5million working within the agreed budget and proactively seeking approvals and reporting variances to the Senior Community Participation and Engagement Manager, Director of Conservation Education and Project Board as needed.
- Work with Chester Zoo Science Department and external contractors to evaluate the impact of the project, including gathering evidence and case studies.
- Advocate for the project at internal and external forums, conferences and networks, ensuring widespread community, conservation sector and stakeholder buy-in to Networks for Nature.
- Ensure that all project activities are safe and appropriately risk assessed, liaising with specialist staff and Health and Safety Advisors as appropriate. Ensure all project activities are compliant with all legislation and best practice guidance, including safeguarding, Construction and Design Management, GDPR, Health and Safety and Copyright.

What makes Chester Zoo a great place to work?

Well, where do we start? Here goes...

We're a huge team of conservationists, scientists, educators, animal welfare experts, marketers, visitor experience professionals, environmental policy influencers; the list goes on. Each and every one of us is on a mission to make Chester Zoo the best in the world, and our planet a better place.

As the UK's biggest and best zoo, we have ambitious goals, exciting plans, and there's always lots going on here. We're an inclusive and diverse organisation, made up of over 600 permanent and 500 temporary team members, and we know how important it is to invest in our colleagues to help boost their career development. We have ambitious goals, and we want you to be with us for the long term on our exciting journey.

Our working environment could not be more different from a typical office – where else can you see critically endangered orangutans from your office window, or stroll among rare giraffes and tigers on your lunch break?

The Package

- Temporary contract until December 2028
- 40 hours per week, generally Monday-Friday with occasional need for evening or weekend work
- Salary £39,833.82
- 33 days annual leave plus the option to buy or sell up to 5 days (pro rota)
- Staff pass so you can visit the zoo during your time off, plus multiple complimentary tickets for your friends and family
- Cycle to work scheme
- Healthcare plan and employee assistance programme
- Discounted gym membership
- Discounts on cinema tickets, restaurants, high street shops and more via Perks
- Pension scheme with generous employer contributions up to 9%

Our Requirements

- An understanding & affinity to the organisation's mission, vision & values, with a strong interest in the conservation of UK nature and in community-based conservation work.
- **Substantial experience planning, leading and managing large-scale, multi-year projects** with demonstrable project management skills and knowledge, experience of working collaboratively with project partners, matrix managing project teams and tracking project progress, ideally in a conservation, community engagement and/or education environment.
- **Experience leading partnership management**, facilitating meetings and coordinating events to ensure partners and key stakeholders are well informed and engaged.
- **Experience of managing and influencing the work of others, with and without authority.** The post holder may reasonably be required to direct activity to achieve the project's goals across multiple internal teams, volunteer groups and external partner organisations.
- Good working knowledge of the protection and restoration of nature – ideally within the context of terrestrial **UK habitats and species**.
- **Understanding of community work** and insight into the challenges and benefits of working with community groups, schools and the general public to achieve conservation goals.
- **Attention to detail** and critical thinking skills are essential.
- **Excellent communication and presentation skills**, demonstrated through a wide range of experience presenting to different audiences, in meetings and at events, and experience of report writing.
- **IT skills:** Skilled in the use of all key Microsoft packages.
- **Organisational skills:** Excellent time management, administration and planning skills. Ability to manage multiple concurrent projects, meeting deadlines and ensuring appropriate quality control.
- **Interpersonal skills:** Excellent diplomacy and interpersonal skills. Ability to work effectively under own initiative and as part of a team, to work under pressure with positive attitude and also to enthuse and engage others. The role requires the post holder to work extensively across different departments and with external colleagues.

Although not essential, the following would be desirable:

- Full driving licence

Due to the nature of the organisation and the role, this post is subject to a DBS check.

The closing date for applications is **midnight 25th May 2025**

Shortlisting of applications and interviews for the role will take place while the advert is live; the advert will close once the successful candidate is found and it is possible this will be prior to the advertised end date. Candidates are therefore encouraged to submit applications as soon as possible.

Networks for Nature is made possible with The National Lottery Heritage Fund, thanks to National Lottery players.