

# Bristol Avon Rivers Trust

Information for individuals considering becoming a trustee



“I never cease to be amazed at the quality and impact of the work BART does across the region, particularly in education, engagement and partnership-building to improve our river and streams. It gives me a deep sense of pride to support this important work.”

Julian Greaves, Trustee & Chair, BART

“I really enjoy being a Trustee for BART. It’s a privilege to apply my skills and experience supporting such a great organisation which is delivering so much for our rivers.”

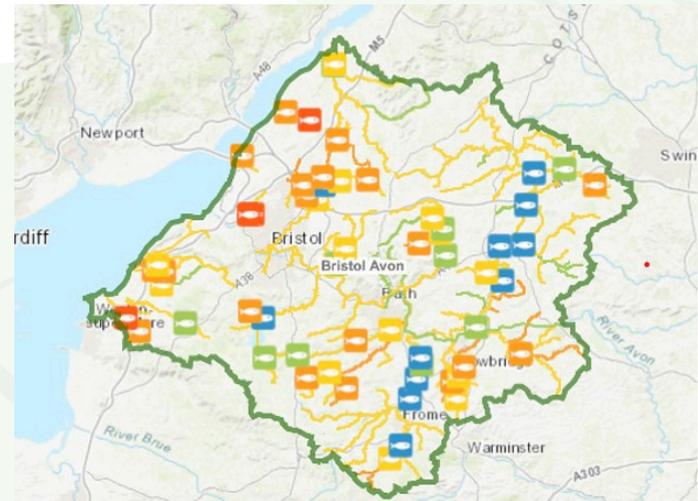
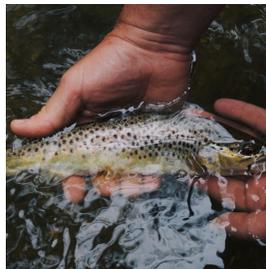
Peter Coleman-Smith, Trustee, BART

[www.bristolavonriverstrust.org](http://www.bristolavonriverstrust.org)

# Our vision

Bristol Avon Rivers Trust (BART) is a charity which delivers education, land and river management advice and practical river restoration work throughout the Bristol Avon catchment.

BART aims to conserve and enhance the status of waterbodies for current and future generations, to re-connect communities to their local rivers and help them better appreciate what they have, also to deliver improvements - to benefit of people and wildlife.



# How BART does this

Since it was set up in 2012 BART has grown substantially. We have succeeded using the expert insight of our staff, the knowledge of our volunteers and through partnerships with a wide range of interested parties (such as Wildlife Trusts, water companies, planning authorities and regulators, the Bristol Avon Catchment Partnership and others). We have also actively engaged with land-owners, community groups and river users (such as anglers and walkers). Essentially we adopt a data driven, collaborative, practical approach.

Recent deliverables include: Natural Flood Management solutions; re-wiggling rivers; action on weirs; farm visits and landowner education; schools work (eg Eels in the classroom); citizen science data gathering (Riverblitz, Riverfly) and creating a Fish Recovery Strategy. BART leads the country in relation to use of eDNA (novel fish sampling methodology) and establishing a comprehensive hub for river related data.

BART is focused on the Bristol Avon catchment, a unique and beautiful network of rivers, streams and lakes, with the Bristol Avon at its heart. Stretching 75 miles from its source in Wiltshire to its confluence with the River Severn near Bristol, the River Avon and its tributaries are the lifeblood of the area – but they are under constant threat, including from climate change and a growing population, with Bristol one of the fastest growing cities in the UK.

BART is part of the wider rivers trust movement and aligned with (though separate from) the national Rivers Trust organisation.

Further information is available via the BART website: <https://bristolavonriverstrust.org>

**BART People** - A team of paid BART employees (including project managers and ecologists) work under our Chief Executive Officer. Oversight for BART is provided by the BART board of trustees. A large team of volunteers helps BART achieve its aims, coordinated by BART employees. For further information visit the BART website:

<https://bristolavonriverstrust.org/who-we-are/meet-the-team/>

**BART Governance** - BART is a registered charity plus operates as a private company limited by guarantee (incorporated 12th March 2012). Liability of members (i.e. the trustees) is limited to £1 each. The Articles of Association for BART articulate how it will regulate its operations and defines its purpose, laying out how tasks are to be accomplished within the organisation, including the process for appointing trustees and the handling of financial records. The Articles are available on request and are held on the BART trustees' sharepoint site. Further official details about BART, including filing status and directors are available via the BART entry on the Companies House website:

<https://find-and-update.company-information.service.gov.uk/company/07986475>

As good business practice and in line with Charity Commission guidance BART maintains a comprehensive risk framework which is subject to regular review by the board. A suite of BART policies, plus in places discrete specific controls, are operated with the BART management and board committed to learning from risk events and near-misses, so all controls are subject to continuous improvement and adverse outcomes are minimised.

**BART Financials** - Turnover and assets have grown rapidly in recent years. BART is working to continue building the scale and impact of its work whilst operating in a dynamic and fast changing world. This, plus regulatory direction and long-term planning challenges, poses material strategic risks which the BART board and CEO work hard to manage appropriately. BART seeks to secure funding from diverse sources to limit risk exposure and is now looking to grow its core funding. For further information of BART's financial performance visit the Charity Commission website:

<https://register-of-charities.charitycommission.gov.uk/charity-search/-/charity-details/5040771/financial-history>

## What BART requires from a Treasurer:

BART is a charity governed by a board of trustees who act as directors of the company. Our trustees are accountable to the Charity Commission for BART achieving its public purpose through delivery of its charitable goals. We currently have six trustees, one of whom chairs the trust, another acts as company secretary. Giving their time for free (as with other volunteers) our trustees play a vital role in all aspects of our work bringing the necessary skills and experience to oversee strategic development and direction, risk management and to take decisions on matters of trust policy.

Continued expansion of the trust's work is anticipated and we want to stay on the front-foot, shaping developments in our sector. With exciting challenges ahead we are seeking a new trustee to act as Treasurer. This individual will specifically support the CEO and Finance Officer (who reports to the CEO) ensuring strong financial governance and management of financial risk, with appropriate board oversight.

When recruiting trustees we look for individuals who are team players, passionate about rivers/wetlands and who bring relevant experience to the board. Key skills needed:

- **Strong communicator** – able to explain financial information clearly to non-financial colleagues or trustees plus to effectively support staff regarding ad hoc enquiries
- **Risk-aware** – identifies financial risks and proposes sensible mitigation measures
- **Collaborative** – works effectively with the Chair, CEO, Finance Officer and wider board to support good governance
- **Proactive and solution-focused** – anticipating issues and taking action early to keep finances on track. Able to analyse proposals and examine their financial consequences
- **Prepared to challenge and make unpopular recommendations to the board if necessary**

Candidates with a background in or experience of the following areas are particularly sought:

- **Qualified chartered accountant/financial qualifications and experience**
- **Experience of the audit process**, including procurement/management of suppliers of such services. Some experience of charity finance, accounting and reporting, fundraising, investments and pension schemes

## What BART requires from a trustee specialising in finance – the Finance Director, Cont.

In addition to the general responsibilities shared by all BART trustees (as per BART Delegated Authority policy) the Treasurer will:

- Make sure the charity keeps proper accounts:
  - Oversee, approve and present budgets, accounts and financial statements and reports to the board
  - Make a formal presentation of the accounts at the Annual General Meeting and draw attention to important points in a coherent and easily understandable way
- Review the charity's financial performance
- Take Policy Owner responsibility for establishing, reviewing and updating policies and controls (as required) for finance, reserves and investment
- Ensure the charity has robust and effective financial controls - in place and operating as intended
- Liaise with the CEO, finance staff and with the charity's independent examiner or auditor as required
- Ensure financial information required by statutory bodies (incl Companies House, The Charity Commission, HMRC) is provided and oversee the production of the annual report and accounts, including the corporate governance statement

## What BART requires from trustees, Cont.

Trustees are required to attend four board meetings and the AGM each year (the AGM takes place on the same date as one of the Board meetings) and sometimes other sub-committee meetings. Meetings are usually held electronically. Some additional time will also be required to study papers.

It is strongly recommended that trustees and those interested in becoming a trustee take time to read the guidance provided by the Charity Commission for England and Wales, including becoming familiar with the Essential Trustee publication:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-essential-trustee-what-you-need-to-know-cc3>

It is also very important that whilst operating in a challenging and open manner, the board of trustees consists of individuals who share a common purpose and can work collaboratively as an effective team

## What you will get from the role

As the BART Treasurer you will have a great opportunity to enhance your CV; gain new knowledge, skills and experience; work with a high performing team; enjoy making a demonstrable difference for wildlife and communities (which badly need it). Our current trustees consistently say they enjoy what they are doing.

As required under charity law the post of BART trustee is unpaid.

## The recruitment process onto the board of trustees

1. Applicant reads and considers the BART on-line information plus supporting information (including looking at the Charity Commission guidance)
2. Applicant indicates interest to BART – through a phone call or email to: [info@bristolavonriverstrust.org](mailto:info@bristolavonriverstrust.org). At the same time they submit a CV, short supporting statement (1 side of A4 maximum) and a completed Information to be Disclosed & Declaration Form
3. Interview – informal interview with Chair and CEO
4. BART board consider the applicant joining the board as a trustee – in light of the challenges faced by BART plus also the applicant's CV, supporting statement, interview outcome and content of the Information to be Disclosed & Declaration Form
5. Where the board is supportive, the applicant will be asked to provide 2 references and may be asked for a satisfactory Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) check if they will work with volunteers or young people \*
6. Assuming these checks are met, a formal resolution will be tabled for approval by the board at the next board meeting. Once agreed, the appointee will then hold office as a trustee until the next AGM, at which time the board may reappoint the trustee – subject to both parties agreement

*\* It is not anticipated that this will apply to the Treasurer role. DBS check costs will be covered by BART*



[www.bristolavonriverstrust.org](http://www.bristolavonriverstrust.org)

Charity number: 1154348

Company number: 07986457

Image credits: Mark Briscoe, Steve Field,  
Hunter Bramels & Andreas Schantl

## We are on



Bristol Avon Rivers Trust



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